

M I N N E S O T A

EDUCATOR

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2023

**MEA Conference includes
more than 50 workshops,
90 exhibitors**

**New poll finds widespread support
for collective bargaining, unions**



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October/November 2023 – Volume 26, No. 2

The Minnesota Educator publishes every other month. It is one of the union's print and digital publications to educate, inform and organize the community of members. The Educator is reported, edited and designed by union staff members. The paper is printed in LSC Communications' union shop in Menasha, Wisconsin. Find copies of the Educator online at www.educationminnesota.org. Go to the News menu, then Minnesota Educator.

To reach the publication for queries, story or commentary ideas:

Email: educator@edmn.org
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41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

To report a change of address or end duplicate mailings, contact the Education Minnesota membership department:

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By web: www.educationminnesota.org and choose the Contact Us link to send a change of address.

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Minnesota Educator (ISSN 1521-9062) is a bimonthly publication.

Periodicals are postage-paid at St. Paul, Minnesota, and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Minnesota Educator, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103-2196.

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The Minnesota Educator is published for members to share news about education issues and training opportunities for educators as well as union and political news that affects public education in Minnesota.

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: Educators check out the exhibit hall at the 2022 MEA conference. This year, the conference once again features more than 50 workshops and a full exhibit hall with discounts and offers for educators.

It's time to defend our students' freedom to learn

Nearly all Minnesotans agree that our students should have the freedom to learn an honest history, to read age-appropriate books, and to feel safe and welcome as their authentic selves in their local public school.

But that freedom is threatened again this year as national groups have moved into Minnesota to influence the school board elections, especially in the Twin Cities suburbs and Duluth.

The activities of far-right groups including Moms for Liberty, the Leadership Institute, Turning Point USA, American Majority Action and Mass Resistance have alarmed educators and allies alike.

They have collaborated with homegrown organizations that don't share our vision for schools that respect all students and staff.

And at a time when we're facing a mental health crisis among students and educators, they've brought disinformation and conspiracies to the debate about how to support members of our school communities.

A national consultant hosted by the Minnesota Parents Alliance told parents in April to forbid their children from talking to counselors and social workers, or taking surveys, because "the government" was building psychological profiles and plotting to manipulate them into surrendering their Second Amendment rights.

The Minnesota Child Protection League, which is on the Southern Poverty Law Center's list of anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups and has promoted the MPA, has announced its own plans to host a national speaker in October who has mocked George Floyd's murder on social media and described social-emotional learning as "... the hypodermic needle that injects identity-Marxist social theories into our kids."

Finally, we're all familiar with the harassment of media specialists and the shouting calls at school board meetings to remove books that affirm and nurture the love of reading in LGBTQ+ students. I worry that we're near hearing similar calls to ban books about Martin Luther King Jr., Ruby Bridges and the Holocaust, which is happening in other states.

The level of paranoia and strange claims would almost be funny if the stakes were not so high. One throughline connecting the groups, national and local, is an intense

opposition to unions of educators.

In most election years, voters would reject candidates expressing such extreme views or carrying the endorsements of such groups. However, without attention-grabbing races for governor or the Legislature at the top of the ticket, many Minnesotans may stay home. That's dangerous.

The big money Minnesota group, Freedom Club, has partnered with American Majority Action to increase turnout of voters who oppose unions and welcoming schools, including by adopting new tactics to persuade voters to take advantage of Minnesota's early voting laws.

Why? Because the 2023 elections for school boards and other local offices, are in the battleground areas where control of the Legislature—with its power to hold corporations accountable—will be decided.

As a July email from the club to its supporters said, "This summer we begin to lay the groundwork to elect conservatives to local school boards in 2023, with our sights firmly set on reclaiming the Minnesota House in 2024."

Educators are focused on educating and supporting our students, and negotiating contracts that will provide living wages and affordable health insurance for our families, but we've found ourselves in the dress rehearsal for the next fight for the Legislature.

Defending our vision for inclusive, safe public schools will not be easy, but if each educator in a contested school board district takes time to volunteer for a union-endorsed candidate and remembers to vote, we can prevail.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

Don't forget – there's an app for that!

Stay up to date, find events, get a digital membership card and more with Education Minnesota's mobile app. The free app is available for all iOS and Android devices—including tablets.

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Search for "EdMN" or "Education Minnesota" in the app store on your device.

Get your digital membership card

- Tap on the "Membership Card" icon.
- Tap "List of Locals" to find the official name of your local. Some of them are long and complicated!
- Tap "My Membership Card," then enter your first name, last name and the official name of your local.

Problems?

Contact us at 800-652-9073 or webmaster@edmn.org.

Getting social!

Educators use social media as a way to connect with their communities, colleagues and the world. We will feature posts from Education Minnesota members and locals each issue! Make sure to follow Education Minnesota on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Pinterest!



Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

Congratulations, Ashley Brown of Anoka Hennepin, for being this issue's winning submission!

We love seeing all of the places where you are reading your Minnesota Educator!

Email a photo to educator@edmn.org or share it on social media using #mneducator of where you are reading your Minnesota Educator to be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Target gift card! Submissions are due Nov. 10. Happy reading!



Educators in the news!

Education Minnesota members are often interviewed in their local newspapers or TV station. We will feature a quote each issue!



Both sides came to the table in good faith. Considering the looming teacher shortage, both sides agreed that it was important that ISD 186 offer a competitive package in order to retain and attract the excellent educators the parents and students of the district have come to expect.



– Education Minnesota Pequot Lakes President Angie Klein said in an article in the Pine and Lakes Echo Journal on Sept. 11 titled "Pequot Lakes School Board, union agree on teachers' contract." The article shares that salary increase in the new contract are 8% in the first year and 2.5% in the second.

Public poll finds Minnesotans supportive of educators, bargaining

Minnesotans and especially parents overwhelmingly support educators, schools and our union's right to negotiate, according to a recent poll.

Education Minnesota did a statewide poll of Minnesotans this August to gauge their support for educators, schools and collective bargaining. The poll was done to inform our union and provide better support for our locals and members, especially during negotiations.

The poll included adults of all ages and from all parts of the state and an oversample of parents.

Funded in part through a grant from the National Education Association, the poll results will be used to inform a statewide media campaign to help support locals during bargaining and with the asks our members are making at the table.

What did the poll find?

Minnesotans are overwhelmingly favorable toward educators (76 percent). **Public school parents are almost universally (89 percent) favorable toward educators.**

Two-thirds of Minnesota voters are favorable toward their local neighborhood public school, and a majority give their local public schools a positive rating (55 percent excellent/good).

Minnesotans either think that their local public school needs more resources (41 percent) or can provide a quality education with their current level of resources (39 percent), while only 10 percent think schools could do with less resources. **Most public school parents (55 percent) say their local public school needs more resources.**

All Minnesotans and especially parents want to increase educators' salaries. **A 63-percent majority think educator salaries should be increased**, while 3 percent want to decrease and 23 percent want to keep salaries the same. **More than two-thirds (69 percent) of public school parents want to increase the amount educators are paid.**

Two thirds of Minnesotans (67 percent) favor collective bargaining, including over half (54 percent) who strongly favor, while only 20 percent oppose.

The top contract issues for Minnesotans, when asked a list of possibilities, are providing educators with quality and affordable health insurance, reducing the educator shortage and providing more mental health care for students and educators.

When asked about providing educators with quality and affordable health insurance, 92 percent of Minnesotans approve or strongly approve. Two-thirds (65 percent) strongly approve.

The idea of reducing the educator shortage resonates with Minnesotans—61 percent strongly approve of reducing the educator shortage, and overall 85 percent of Minnesotans approve of this. **This is even higher among public school parents, 91 percent of whom approve.**

More than 80 percent of voters approve of providing more mental health care for students and educators. A majority (53 percent) strongly approve.

Minnesotans also support **ensuring life skills like confidence, decision-making and communications skills (75 percent strongly approve), providing an honest, accurate and age-appropriate education (74 percent strongly approve), and creating a safe and welcoming school environment where all students can thrive (72 percent strongly approve).**

How do these results connect with what our locals are asking for at the bargaining table?

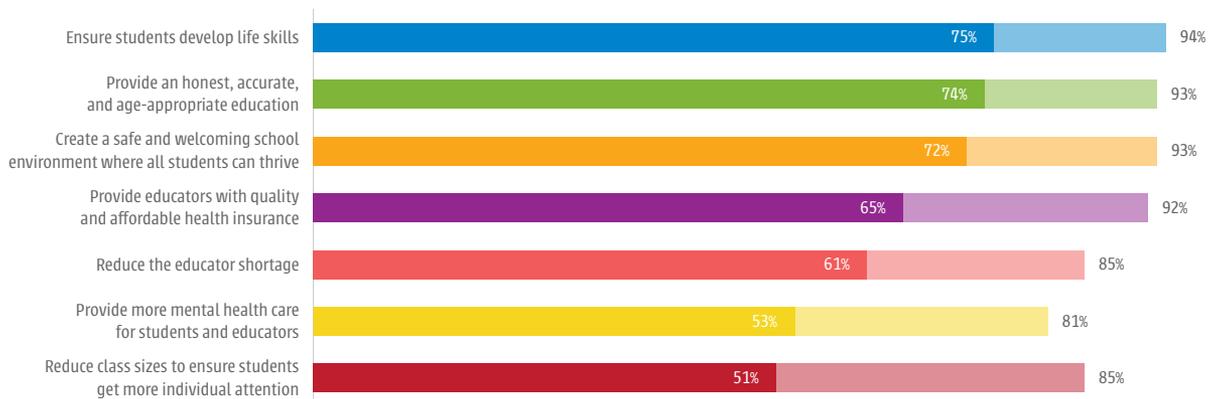
The poll found that Minnesotans believe everyone deserves a quality education, but know educator shortages have created burnout in addition to low salaries that make it hard to attract and retain quality educators.

The poll found that Minnesotans also believe we need to pay educators more/what they deserve/what they are worth, because it enables them to develop a trusted relationship with every child and provide a quality education.

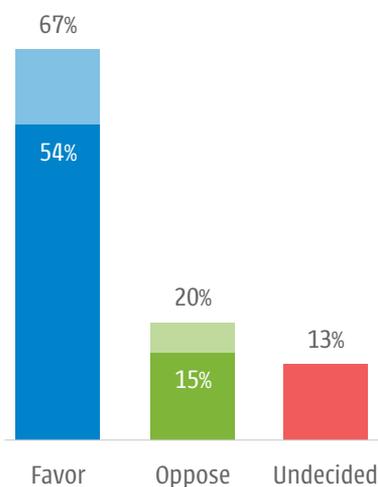
These statements can inform our local union's asks at the table, as well as the messaging we share with the district, parents and community members as we continue to bargain the contracts that all Minnesota educators deserve.

The poll also showed that as we move toward the next legislative session, we can use the results to show the support Minnesotans have for educators and making sure educators are supported in their work—whether that's new investments in the school funding formula, pension reform and supporting our right to collectively bargain. The poll tells us that Minnesotans know that investments in educators can help improve outcomes for students by reducing burnout and addressing the educator shortage.

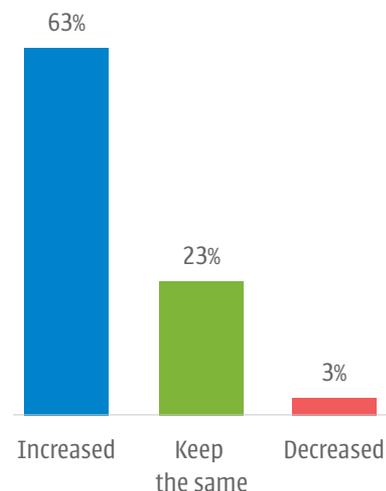
What issues would you support your local educators bringing to the table and making a priority in contract negotiations?



As you may know, every two years, educators in each of Minnesota's public school districts negotiate new contracts with the school district administration. Do you favor or oppose the right of Minnesota educators to collectively join together to bargain for improved wages, benefits and conditions?



Thinking more about your local public school, do you think the amount that educators are paid should be:



First-ever Uplifting Voices event connects, engages members

Education Minnesota's first-ever Uplifting Voices: A Racial and Social Justice Event brought members from across the state together Aug. 4 at the Wellstone Center in St. Paul.

Planning for the event started in April 2022, with the core team comprised of both MEA FIRE (Facing Inequities and Racism in Education) staff and members from our Racial Equity Advocate program. The members designed the event to look and feel different than other events, centering on interrupting whiteness, racial equity, social justice, and creating a space for folks from underinvested communities to feel welcome and able to participate and share.

"This was really member driven," said Claire Torrey, an REA program participant and elementary media specialist in Eastern Carver County Schools. "When we talked about this with the REAs, everyone said 'We need this.' We wanted to make sure that people know we aren't alone in doing equity work in schools across the state."

The event was open to all Education Minnesota members who wanted to connect and talk about social justice unionism and racial justice in our schools, union and communities.

"We need to share our voices in a non-restrictive way," said Valarie McWilliams Jones, an achievement specialist in Wayzata who served on the planning team.

"We wanted the event to be a place where people can tell their stories and learn from each other"

The event featured sessions and speakers, as well as open spaces for attendees to connect and share.

Session topics included multi-perspective storytelling, restorative practices, dismantling ableism and understanding community cultural wealth in the classroom.

Torrey presented a session on restorative practices. She is a trained circle facilitator and works with her district's equity department when possible.

"The presentation was well-received," she said. "We had a good diversity of people who have experience and were new to sitting in circle and with restorative practices. We discussed what we can do with students and how can we help carry some of this over into society as a whole."

For McWilliams Jones, a big piece of the event was centering the voices of educators of color.

"People of color have solutions and want to be leaders in education, but we aren't always seen in trainings, or we end up having to do the training if it's about equity,"



The event was open to all Education Minnesota members who wanted to connect and talk about social justice unionism and racial justice in our schools, union and communities.

she said. "We want to learn from everybody, and our white allies need to step up and not be silent."

It was important for Education Minnesota to host an event like this, said McWilliams Jones.

"Educators of color need their union, too," she said. "We need multiple voices at the table to make sure all educators and students are heard and served."

Members are already looking forward to planning for the next event.

"It's really different from other events," said Torrey. "Everyone should plan to come next year and participate, learn and grow as an educator and human."

Thank you to the members of the planning team – Sack Banuvong (Rochester), Annette Davis (Robbinsdale), Amanda Hofer (Owatonna), Valarie McWilliams Jones (Wayzata), Shannon Kusnier Smith (South St. Paul), and Claire Torrey (Chaska) and Education Minnesota staff Jonathan Kim, Emily Mateo, Ilissa Morrow, Elizabeth Pettersen and Jessica Wilson.

If you would like to be the first to know about the next Uplifting Voices, or engaging in equity work within Education Minnesota, please reach out to Jonathan Kim at jonathan.kim@edmn.org.



The first-ever Uplifting Voices event featured exciting artwork, food and "swag."

What did members say about the first-ever Uplifting Voices event?

"It was so well organized and inclusive, just incredible. As I sat in the opening ceremony, I thought about how great it would be if kids in our schools felt that sort of inclusivity everyday. It's a goal to aim for."

"What I loved was how well we were treated, how warm everyone was and I kept thinking 'I wish all conferences were run like this.' It was truly a day of learning, camaraderie and belonging."

"It was inspiring to see and how I can think of actions in a typical day to help everyone be successful!"

"This conference was a great experience! The presenters were so knowledgeable and presented their information in a way that made participants feel comfortable asking questions. The food and swag was the best I have had from any conference I have attended. The planning team clearly cared deeply about this conference and it showed. Thank you for the great learning opportunity!"

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MEA professional development offerings for ESPs

The MEA Conference and MEA Online professional development offerings include a lot of great content for education support professionals.

Two classes featured at the in-person MEA Conference from 1:15-2:15 p.m. are directly focused for ESP members.

When Can I Afford to Retire for ESPs

A workshop by Charlie Mylrea, an EFS Advisor who works with educators.

The answer to this question depends not only on how well you have planned financially, but also on what your plans are in retirement. While you are working, your income comes from your paycheck. In retirement, your income will come from three sources: your pension, Social Security and any savings you have accumulated in accounts such as 403(b)/457/IRAs and savings. You will learn about various investment plans and the differences between them so you can plan what will work best for you with your other sources of income in retirement.

Teachers and ESPs: Building a Collaborative Working Relationship

A workshop by Education Minnesota staff Melissa Del Rosario, a former teacher, and Londel French, a former ESP.

This training provides an overview of the history and evolution of our two unique professions and highlights strategic differences both inside and outside the classroom for our licensed and non-licensed educators. Participants will leave this session with tangible strategies that help us maximize our collective impact in schools while building an environment together that fosters better outcomes for our students.

Other sessions that might be of interest to ESPs include:

- Mandated Reporting and Student Maltreatment Program Overview
- Schools Are No Place for Hate: Empowering Educators to Respond to Bias Incidents in Their Community
- Advocacy & Political Leadership: Building Educator Power Together

- eLibrary MN and EbooksMN: Free Curriculum, Reading, Reference and Research Resources
- Measure the Squishy Stuff: How to Quantify Culture
- Proactive Playbook
- Relighting the Burnout Flame
- Finding Coherence in the Midst of Classroom Chaos
- Three Wellness Hacks Every Educator Needs
- Crossing Over Racial Barriers
- Classroom Management Strategies That Work!

In addition to the in-person conference, Education Minnesota offers multiple free, online professional development opportunities for ESPs on its platform MEA Online. The site also includes access to all of the National Education Association's online trainings.

Trainings on MEA Online include specific support for ESP negotiators, such as:

- Certified Negotiator Program for Education Support Professionals, and
- ESP Costing Spreadsheet.

Trainings for of interest to all members include topics such as:

- Community Engagement: Building Relationships for the Schools and Communities Students Deserve
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Through a Racial Justice Lens
- Race Talk Messaging: What, Why and How
- Three Frames of Unionism
- Trauma I: Understanding Trauma and the Brain.

The NEA also offers multiple ESP professional growth opportunities including live and recorded webinars, microcredentials and more. To see all of their free offerings for ESPs, go to www.nea.org/professional-excellence/professional-learning/esps.

Want to learn more about the MEA Conference and other free professional development offerings? Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/professional-development.

Education Minnesota's 2023 MEA conference returns to an in-person only event for union members

Attend your union's largest professional development conference on Thursday, Oct. 19, at the St. Paul RiverCentre. This year there are over 50 workshops and 90 exhibits focusing on student and educator mental health, racial equity and social justice, relicensure courses and much more. The MEA conference is only open to Education Minnesota members and those studying to become educators.

For more information on the 2023 MEA conference, visit www.educationminnesota.org/events/annual-events/mea-conference.

What to expect this year

- All attendees must register by Friday, Oct. 13. Register early as classes fill up.
- The exhibits will be located throughout the ballroom level with the workshops.
- Attendee check-in begins at 7:30 a.m. If you plan to attend the general session, please leave enough time to find parking and to receive your badge.
- The general session starts at 9 a.m. and workshops start at 10:45 a.m.

Free child care for Education Minnesota members

Education Minnesota is offering free child care for children 6 months–12 years old while members attend the MEA conference. Registration is required, so sign up when you register for the conference.

Continuing education credit

You may be able to earn general continuing education credit for attending the MEA conference. In addition, some sessions might help you fulfill state relicensure requirements. You will be emailed attendance certificates for the sessions you attended following the conference. Check with your district's continuing education committee on whether you will receive credit.

Quick facts

When: 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 19

Where: Saint Paul RiverCentre

Admission: Free and open to Education Minnesota members and aspiring educators only.

Registration: edmn.me/mea2023

Check-in: Opens at 7:30 a.m.

General session: 9-10:30 a.m.

Workshops: 10:45 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

Exhibits: 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Where to park

Closest ramps

- RiverCentre Ramp, 150 W. Kellogg Blvd.
- Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd.
- Lawson Ramp, 11 5th Street West

View more parking options at www.stpaul.gov/parking-saint-paul

Health and safety protocols

To keep attendees and trainers safe and control the spread of COVID-19 and more in our communities, Education Minnesota strongly recommends, but does not require, that all attendees, regardless of vaccination status, wear face coverings at the MEA conference. Any attendees who test positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms shortly after the conference should contact Education Minnesota so that we can notify trainers and other attendees. If you have any questions or concerns, please let staff or trainers know as soon as possible so they can be addressed before the conference. We appreciate your support in keeping us all healthy and safe.

MEA workshops: Oct. 19

Location	9-10:30 a.m.	10:45-11:45 a.m.	11:45-1:15 p.m.	1:15-2:15 p.m.
Ballroom A	General session and keynote speaker	Schools are No Place for Hate: Empowering Educators to Respond to Bias Incidents in Their Community	Lunch break	Utilizing Healing as a Racial and Social Justice Practice
Ballroom B		Exploring Gender: Helping Cisgender Teachers Support Transgender Students and Staff		Teacher of the Year Panel
Ballroom C		Mandated Reporting and Student Maltreatment Program Overview		Degrees, Not Debt
Ballroom D		Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space		Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space
Room 1				
Room 2		Advocacy and Political Leadership: Building Educator Power Together		When Can I Afford to Retire (ESPs)
Room 3		Life Jacket Leadership: Engage Students and Keep Them From Drowning in a Sea of Overwhelm		Proactive Playbook
Room 4		Using Children's Books by BIPOC Authors to Teach the New Minnesota Economic Benchmarks		Social Justice Through a Critical Race Theory Lens
Room 5		eLibrary MN and Ebooks MN: Free curriculum, reading, reference and research resources		Autism in the Classroom: A Personal Narrative
Room 6		Classrooms That Matter: Create Authentic Learning Experiences With PBL		AI and School Climate: A Synergy for Change
Room 7		Enhancing STEM Curriculum With Virtual Simulations		Continuum of Care Available for Disabled Students
Room 8		Positive Behavior Interventions*		Student Mental Health*
Room 9		Reading*		Reading*
Room 10		The Attitude of Gratitude		Serious Math-Serious Fun
Room 11		Recognizing and Combating Antisemitism in Schools		Teachers and ESPs: Building a Collaborative Working Relationship
Room 12	Competency-Based Assessment and Learner-Centered Grading	Minnesota Stories: Media in the Classroom		
Room 13	Measure the Squishy Stuff: How to Quantify Culture	Your Students DO Have the "Math-Gene"		
Room 14	Education Minnesota Retired Fall Breakfast	PELSB Panel and Discussion		
Room 15				

Schedule subject to change. Go to www.educationminnesota.org for more information.

2:30-3:30 p.m.	3:45-4:45 p.m.	Location
Finding Coherence in the Midst of Classroom Chaos	Classroom Management Strategies That Work!	Ballroom A
Connecting Instructional Practices to Co-Teaching and Student Experience	Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)*	Ballroom B
Finding and Incorporating Diverse Books into Your Existing Lessons	Co-Regulation: Regulation, Stress Response and Small Group Application	Ballroom C
Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space	Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space	Ballroom D
		Room 1
When Can I Afford to Retire (Teachers)	Ethnic Studies in Minnesota	Room 2
LifeSmarts: Consumer and Financial Education	Poetry Out Loud: Celebrating Student Voice	Room 3
What can a School Library Media Specialist do for you?	Engaging K-6 Students Through Integrative STEM Lessons and Activities	Room 4
Three Wellness Hacks Every Educator Needs	Inspiring Youth to Speak Truth to Big Tobacco	Room 5
Relighting the Burnout Flame	Somebody Else's Shoes	Room 6
Changing Lanes: Identifying and Supporting At-Risk Students	Tap Away Stress	Room 7
Positive Behavior Interventions*	Student Mental Health*	Room 8
English Learners*	English Learners*	Room 9
Meet and Confer	See the 1 in 20: Supporting Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	Room 10
Networking: Navigating Expansions to Exclusionary School Calendars	Crossing Over Racial Barriers	Room 11
STAGE: Minnesota Music and Secondary General Music Curriculum	Leveraging Developmental Resilience in the Face of Adversity	Room 12
Gradual Release of Responsibility	Help Your Students Experience Energy	Room 13
Creative Native 101: Empowering the Indigenous Imagination	Special Education Survival Guide for Tier 1, Newer Special Educators and Aspiring Educators	Room 14
		Room 15

Classes highlighted and noted with an * cover one of the state's teacher relicensure areas.

MEA Exhibitors

The MEA Conference includes an exhibit hall with vendors who have an interest in sharing information, discounts and freebies with educators. The exhibit hall will be open from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on the same ballroom level as the workshops at the Saint Paul RiverCentre Thursday, Oct. 19.

Exhibitors who will be at the conference (list subject to change):

All Are Welcome Here	eLibrary Minnesota and Minitex	Perpich Center for Arts Education
American Federation of Teachers	Escape the Vape	Pickles + Ocho
Animal Rights Coalition	ESI Member Benefits	Proof Alliance
ANSR	Expedition Credit Union	Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP)
Augustana University - Sioux Falls, SD - Graduate Education Programs	ExploreLearning	Renaissance
Aviben	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission	Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Bell Museum	Hatch Early Learning	Schatz Benefit Group
Bemidji State University - School of Graduate Studies	History Theatre	Science from Scientists
Bethel University	Junior Achievement North	SEA LIFE at Mall of America
Blair Clinton	Kami	Security Benefit
Brittany Wagner, keynote speaker	Knights Chamber	Securus ID Inc.
Brown Babies Puzzles	Lifeworks Services	See Carrie Color
Camp Fire Minnesota	LNC Book Works	SpEd Forms
CARE Counseling	Mental Health Minnesota	Teaching Channel
Climate Generation	Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom	The Raptor Center
CLIMB Theatre	Minnesota Children's Museum	The Science Museum of Minnesota
CSP Global	Minnesota Council on Economic Education	The Teacher Stress Solution
DiveOne	Minnesota Department of Education	TIE (Technology & Innovation in Education)
Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented	Tradition Mortgage
Edpuzzle	Minnesota Historical Society	Travelers Auto & Home Insurance
Education Minnesota Aspiring and Early Careers Educators	Minnesota State Chess Association	University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development
Education Minnesota Foundation	Minnesota Zoo	University of Minnesota Morris
Education Minnesota Member Engagement	Minnesota Field Trip Library	University of St. Thomas, School of Education
Education Minnesota Photo Booth	MPGL Entertainment	Valleyfair
Education Minnesota Political and Legislative Advocacy	Multiplied Good	Vote Run Lead
Education Minnesota Professional Practice and Advocacy	NEA Member Benefits	Winona State University Graduate Studies
Education Minnesota Retired	Ordway Center for the Performing Arts	Youth for Human Rights
Educators Lifetime Solutions	Our Minnesota Community	
EFS Advisors	Palmer's Sustainable Vitality, LLC	
	Papa Lemon Historical Fiction Books	

Don't miss the MEA keynote speaker - Brittany Wagner, academic counselor featured on Netflix documentary series Last Chance U

Brittany Wagner is a nationally respected athletic academic counselor and motivational speaker best known for her role as the breakout star of the hit Netflix documentary series, Last Chance U. Recognized for her compassion, encouragement, and no-nonsense attitude, Wagner guided many young men to academic and professional success despite run-ins with the law, extreme poverty, abandonment, and often a complete lack of academic preparedness. She has helped more than 200 football players academically qualify for nationally respected NCAA Division I schools, and all of the students Wagner advised who are currently playing in the NFL also hold college degrees.

Wagner is also the author of Next Chance You, a motivational guide to personal success. Delivering practical strategies to help readers overcome obstacles, develop a growth mindset and get out of their own way, she shares personal stories and lessons learned— from her own life and those she has counseled.

Can't make it to the MEA Conference in person?

Get the professional development you need from the comfort of your home or classroom through trainings on our online learning platform MEA Online! Improve your professional practice, earn CEU credits for relicensure or build your union understanding and power.

MEA Online features all courses currently needed for relicensure.

All MEA Online courses are done asynchronously, at every individual's own pace. The site also saves your progress, and automatically awards CEUs to your account and to your email upon each course completion.



The best part? These courses are FREE to active Education Minnesota members.

Looking for a specific relicensure course?

Education Minnesota is proud to offer free courses to our members that meet the state's teacher relicensure requirements.

What relicensure classes will be at the MEA Conference on Oct. 19?

- 10:45-11:45 a.m. - Reading and Positive Behavior Interventions
- 1:15-2:15 p.m. - Student Mental Health and Reading
- 2:30-3:30 p.m. - English Learners and Positive Behavior Interventions
- 3:45-4:45 p.m. - Student Mental Health, English Learners and QPR (Suicide Prevention)

What about the other relicensure courses?

MEA Online has all relicensure courses available for free and for members to take at their own pace.

On MEA Online are Cultural Competency (four sections), English Learners, Reading, Student Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Positive Behavior Interventions and Instructional Strategies (which meets both the PBI and the Accommodations and Modifications relicensure requirements.)

Note: The Minnesota Legislature passed a law this year requiring training for K-12 teachers about the "cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Minnesota Tribal Nations," in order to renew their license. Currently, Education Minnesota's Cultural Competency training meets the requirement for teachers renewing next year, but after that they need a specific training. Education Minnesota is currently in the beginning stages of creating a training for this new requirement and are working to get something available to members during the 2024-25 school year.

Who do we need to move in order to achieve better pensions?

Education Minnesota's Pension Advisory Group is meeting and preparing their plans for the next legislative session, and as soon as plans are created, they will be released to members. Until then, we've been sharing educational resources to help members understand the landscape of our educator pension system in Minnesota.

What pension plans cover Minnesota educators?

Educators from Education Minnesota are in all of these systems: Teachers' Retirement Association (TRA), St. Paul Teachers' Retirement Fund Association (STPRFA), Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) and MSRS (Minnesota State Retirement System).

- PERA or Public Employees Retirement Association is a set of five defined-benefit pension plans. Non-licensed employees of public-school districts fall under the General Plan.
- TRA or Teachers' Retirement Association is a defined-benefit pension plan for most Minnesota public education teachers, licensed school staff and some administrators.
- SPTRFA or St. Paul Teachers' Retirement Fund Association is a defined-benefit pension plan for anyone employed in a St. Paul Public schools' position which requires a teacher's license.
- MSRS-CERP is a defined-benefit pension plan that covers certain correctional officers and other specified Department of Corrections and Human Services employees, including some teachers, who spend at least 75% of their time directly responsible for inmate or patient care.

Who makes the decisions on pension plan reforms?

The board of trustees overseeing each of our pension plan systems is often the beginning or end of any plan discussion. The board makes decisions on administration of the plans, hires the executive director and sets other policies that aren't in state statute. These boards, their staff and their executive directors

are influential when decisions or changes are being considered at the Legislature as well. These boards are made up of a mix of elected pension plan members and appointees from certain groups or government agencies.

Pension plan boards' responsibilities include:

- TRA: Oversee administration of the pension fund; establish rules, policies and procedures for administering the plan; approve an annual budget; retain an actuary to assess the financial status of the plan; determine member appeals; and appoint the executive director. It's an eight-member board (five teacher representatives are elected and three are appointed).
- SPTRFA: Governed by a 10-member board that serves as a fiduciary to members and beneficiaries. Nine of 10 board members are elected by membership for staggered three-year terms. One ex-officio board member is appointed by the St. Paul Public Schools School Board.
- PERA: This plan's board approves its operating budget, decides legislative policy and priorities and hires the executive director. In addition, trustees establish policies and procedures that govern PERA operations; hear and rule on appeal matters of disabilitants, retirees and members; and direct the dissemination of information to PERA members. This board has six appointees from different groups and five elected board members.
- MSRS: The board sets policies, hears disability and benefit appeals, and oversees the administration of all MSRS plans for state employees, as well as the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP) and Minnesota Deferred Compensation Plan (MNDCCP) for all public employees.

What is the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR)?

In Minnesota, many decisions on pension improvements have to be made through legislative action.

The LCPR is a joint legislative commission, with both Senators and Representatives, that discusses, considers and recommends pension legislation. The LCPR is the cornerstone for pension discussions, and members are looked to by the full Legislature for recommendations. From statute: "The commission consists of seven members of the Senate appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration and seven members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker. No more than five members from each chamber may be from the majority caucus in that chamber. Members shall be appointed at the commencement of each regular session of the legislature for a two-year term beginning January 16 of the first year of the regular session."



Stay engaged and informed in the fight for fair pensions

Showing up

Education Minnesota will host events during legislative session focused on improving educator pensions. Show up and bring your colleagues!

Speaking out

Contact your legislators. Ask for a meeting, or give a quick call or email. Your legislators are there to represent you, and they'll appreciate hearing your thoughts on educator pensions.

Leaning in

Activate your colleagues and engage with your local and state union. We're stronger together, and we can't achieve reform without everyone's voice.

Resources

Learn more on Education Minnesota's pension web page!



Join the Education Minnesota Pension Advocacy Network on Facebook!



Sign up for pension email updates!



What does politics have to do with my classroom?

Who makes the decisions on these important issues?

Your salary	School board, union
School budget	School board
Class size/workload	School board, state Legislature, governor
Length of school year	School board, state Legislature, governor
Health benefits	School board, union
Due process	School board, state Legislature, governor
Retirement benefits	School board, state Legislature, governor
Testing	Federal, state, school board
Hiring practices	School board, state Legislature, governor
Teaching credentials	Federal, state, governor
Standards	State board, state, federal
Unemployment compensation	Federal, state, governor
Textbooks	State, school board
Negotiated contracts in higher education	State Legislature, local union, governor
Higher education credentialing	Governor
Campus repairs and upgrades	State Legislature

In our union, we have strength in numbers to change things when we:

1) Vote. 2) Hold elected officials at the local, state and national level accountable for enacting a visionary public education agenda and giving educators and students what they need to succeed and feel supported.

Why does our union engage in politics?

"Politicians decide what we teach, how many students we teach and how long you need to teach before you can retire. Everything about our job is political," said Ternesha Burroughs, Education Minnesota-Osseo president and current PAC chair.

"We are passionate about our profession," said Heather Mathews, a special education teacher in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan and current PAC vice chair. "We became educators for this reason. Our students deserve what they need to be well-educated in our public school system. We are advocating for them. We are advocating for public education. We are advocating for each other. Our strength is in our collective power to do so."

Political Action Committee Refund Request

Thousands of members of Education Minnesota decide to contribute to the union's political action committee. The PAC is one of our main tools to bring the educator voice to the policy debate by electing people who will listen. Those PAC dollars go back to local unions to help them win school board and levy elections, as well as support pro-public education candidates at the state and national level.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. b, I hereby request the following:

_____ Please refund to me \$25 of my Education Minnesota's dues that will be contributed to the general account of Education Minnesota Political Action Committee for the 2023-24 academic year.

Non-U.S. citizens should request this refund.

**ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE
REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.**

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Email address: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Political Action Committee contribution will not affect membership rights or benefits. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests MUST be received by the Education Minnesota Political Action fund:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

**Checks will not be mailed until
the end of November, after all
forms have been processed.**

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Refund Request

Contributions to this foundation will provide financial support for innovative programs initiated by Education Minnesota members, locals and affiliates that promote educational access for learners and excellence in teaching. Grants also support professional development for education support professionals and higher education faculty.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. c, I hereby request the following:

_____ Please refund to me my \$5 foundation assessment that would be contributed to the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for the 2023-24 academic year.

**ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE
REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.**

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Email address: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning assessment will not affect Education Minnesota membership rights or benefits but will make you ineligible to receive a grant from this foundation. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests must be received by the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

**Checks will not be mailed until
the end of November, after all
forms have been processed.**

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

Delegate selection for 2024 NEA RA opens Nov. 6

The National Education Association Representative Assembly, the major decision-making body for the NEA, is scheduled for July 3-7, 2024 in Philadelphia.

All active Education Minnesota members are eligible to run to be a state-credentialed delegate for the NEA RA. The filing period opens on Nov. 6 and closes Dec. 8. Do not submit the forms before the filing period begins. Forms are also available to complete and submit electronically on the Education Minnesota website.

Elections will take place on a date to be determined in February, if necessary.

Nominations for state-credentialed student delegates open Nov. 6 and close Feb. 15. Elections will take place on a date to be determined in April, if necessary.

Funding information for state-credentialed delegates

To receive funding, state-credentialed delegates must be in attendance for the entire Representative Assembly, beginning with the first caucus meeting through adjournment the night of July 7. State-credentialed delegates are expected to attend all caucus meetings and to be on the convention floor for all proceedings.

Funding includes: Airfare—travel arrangements to be made through the designated travel agent and direct-billed to Education Minnesota (alternative transportation will be reimbursed up to a predetermined amount); the cost of a double-occupancy room at the delegation hotel (to be direct-billed) for an authorized number of nights; and reimbursement for meals and other convention-related expenses (with original itemized receipts). Substitute costs for state delegates working in year-round school settings will be covered as outlined in the Education Minnesota Financial Policy for Governance and Members.

Mileage to and from the airport is reimbursable at 20 cents a mile, along with the cost of airport parking.

No funding is available for Category 2 delegates, those who are retired or inactive members.

Funding information for small locals

A funding program is available to help locals with 150 or fewer members send a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly or the American Federation of Teachers Convention. Local presidents will receive information. If you have any questions around the small local grant program, please contact Vice President Monica Byron at monica.byron@edmn.org.

Filing Form for NEA RA State-Credentialed Delegate

This form must be filed with the Elections Committee of Education Minnesota. Please print clearly.

I, _____, hereby submit my name for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 3-7, 2024 in Philadelphia.

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 3-7, 2024 in Philadelphia. I further certify that the nominee is eligible for state credentials as a delegate from:

Active Member – Election District: _____ (K-12; statewide affiliates; and school-related personnel)

Category 2 (inactive NEA life member and not an Education Minnesota Retired member)

Please complete the following information:

Name: _____ Local: _____

Home address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Work email: _____ Personal email: _____

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 6. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 8, 2023.

Scan and email completed form to elections.committee@edmn.org, submit by mail to: Elections Committee, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 or by fax to: 651-767-1266. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within seven days after submitting, inquire by email to elections.committee@edmn.org.

Note: Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion on the Education Minnesota website. The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org by Dec. 15, 2023.

(For official use only)

This filing form was received on _____ by _____. Membership was verified on _____ by _____.

Filing Form for NEA RA State-Credentialed Delegate: Student

This form must be filed with the Elections Committee of Education Minnesota. Please print clearly.
I hereby submit my name for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 3-7, 2024 in Philadelphia.
I further certify that the nominee is eligible for state credentials as a delegate from:

Student

(must be an Education Minnesota Aspiring Educator member)

Please complete the following information:

Name: _____ College: _____
 School address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____
 Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____
 Work email: _____ Personal email: _____
 Summer address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 6. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Feb. 15, 2024.

Scan and email completed form to elections.committee@edmn.org, submit by mail to: Elections Committee, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 or by fax to: 651-767-1266. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within seven days after submitting, inquire by email to elections.committee@edmn.org.

Note: Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion on the Education Minnesota website. The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org by Feb. 22, 2024.

(For official use only)

This filing form was received on _____ by _____. Membership was verified on _____ by _____.

Apply for funding to attend the AFT Convention next July

The American Federation of Teachers will hold its biennial convention July 22-25 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, TX.

The biennial AFT convention is the most important policymaking body for the union. Delegates will consider an array of issues through resolutions as well as constitution and bylaw measures.

Delegates also will elect the AFT president, secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and the vice presidents for the national union.

All AFT convention delegates are local delegates and must be elected at their local union level

There are no state-elected delegates for the AFT convention. Local presidents will receive an information packet from the AFT that includes how many delegates their local can send, a tentative schedule, hotel information and conference forms.

Education Minnesota will provide funding for one local delegate from each election district, one ESP local delegate, and one Higher Ed local delegate (a total of 28 funded delegates).

To be eligible for funding, members must first be elected from their local as a local delegate.

Complete the funding interest form at edmn.me/AFTConvention_funding by Dec. 8.

Names of state-funded local delegates will be selected by a drawing the last week of January. Funding includes airfare, hotel accommodation and meals, along with additional convention expenses.

For questions on state funding, contact Janel Engesser at 800-652-9073 ext. 4867, 651-292-4867 or janel.engesser@edmn.org.

2024 AFT Convention July 22-25 in Houston, TX

To be considered for state funding, please fill out the Funding Interest Form at edmn.me/AFTConvention_funding.

Forms must be submitted by Friday, Dec. 8.

Selection will be made the last week of January.

If you have problems with the online form, please contact Janel Engesser at janel.engesser@edmn.org or 651-292-4867 or 800-652-9073, ext. 4867.

Teacher of the Year nominations open

Nominations are now open for the 2023 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award, and remain open through Nov. 15.

Nominations can be submitted online by accessing a simple nomination form on www.educationminnesota.org.

Eligible nominees must meet these criteria:

- Teach in a public or nonpublic pre-K through 12th-grade school or ECFE or Adult Basic Education program, working at least 50 percent of the time directly with students.
- Hold a bachelor's degree and a Minnesota teaching license.
- Have completed at least five full years of teaching by the nomination deadline.
- Intend to teach in Minnesota during the 2024-25 school year.

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year is in its 60th year as the state's official recognition program honoring excellence in education.

Education Minnesota organizes and underwrites the program, which means the union handles only the business of running the program, not the selection process.

Program and award support also comes from Education Minnesota ESI, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation and Expedition Credit Union.

Find out more about the selection process, eligibility, past recipients and more at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards-and-honors/teacher-of-the-year.



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: Minnesota Educator
 2. Issue Frequency: Monthly
 3. Issue Date: 09/13/2023
 4. Annual Subscription Price: \$25
 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12
 6. Annual Circulation: 77,965
 7. Total Number of Copies (Net press run): 78,115
 8. Paid Distribution: 65
 9. Total Paid Distribution: 65
 10. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: 77,950
 11. Total Distribution: 77,965
 12. Copies not Distributed: 150
 13. Total (Sum of 10 and 11): 78,115
 14. Paid (Sum of 8 and 10): 65
 15. Paid (Sum of 8 and 10): 65

13. Publication Title	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
Minnesota Educator	09/13/2023	78,115	74,551
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation			
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run):		78,115	74,551
b. Paid Distribution (Sum of 8b(1), 8b(2), and 8b(3)):		77,965	74,336
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 8b(1), 8b(2), and 8b(3)):		77,965	74,401
d. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 8c(1), 8c(2), and 8c(3)):		0	0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 8c(1), 8c(2), and 8c(3)):		0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 8d and 8e):		77,965	74,401
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers at page 410):		150	150
h. Total (Sum of 8f and 8g):		78,115	74,551
i. Paid (Sum of 8f and 8g):		100	100

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

16. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Karen Stenoff, Editor
 17. Date: 09/13/2023
 18. Publication of Statement of Ownership: Publication of Statement of Ownership is a general condition of publication of this statement is required, but may be printed in the October/November issue of this publication. Publication not required.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

Visit ESI at the MEA conference

ESI Member Benefits provides support and resources to Education Minnesota members and their families. As your first point of contact, we can connect you to programs and services for all life stages and situations. Benefits include travel discounts, discount shopping, budgeting and financial planning, home mortgages and much more.

Stop by our booth to receive your MEA conference bag and learn more about the benefits available to you.

Over 90 exhibitors will be available from 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. With information from colleges and universities, curriculum materials, mental health services, technology products, and equity information and resources, you will not want to miss the exhibits this year.

Register to attend an ESI seminar at the MEA conference!

When Can I Afford to Retire?
Members with a PERA pension (ESPs)
Session 2 - 1:15-2:15 p.m.

When Can I Afford to Retire?
Members with a TRA pension (teachers)
Session 3 - 2:30-3:30 p.m.

41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 651-292-4856 800-642-4624

esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org

Paid for by ESI, not by dues. ESI is self-supporting; revenues provide benefits, service and consumer education for members. What do YOU want to know? Send questions to esi@edmn.org.



ESI



Education Minnesota
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

2023-24 Education Minnesota Foundation grants

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has multiple grants available this year. For details about the grants and how to apply, go to www.edmnfoundation.org. There's a grant waiting for you!

Professional Development Grants for teachers, ESPs and higher education faculty

Awarded twice a year, ESPs and teachers may request up to \$2,000, and higher education faculty may request up to \$3,000 to take the lead in acquiring and sharing new skills and knowledge. These skills might include new instructional ideas, technology, working with parents, attending a conference, etc. A Professional Development Grant can also be used for groups to either attend professional development or be trained at their worksite if all members are from the same district or union.

Deadlines: Nov. 3 and April 5

National Board Certified Teachers Scholarship

Members can receive \$500, up to \$1,000 per application, to go toward the NBCT application process. Deadline: Nov. 3

Classroom-Focused Grants

Applicants may request up to \$3,000 for a project you design now and implement in the upcoming school year. These grants are available to licensed personnel who wish to improve their practice and student achievement. Deadline: Dec. 1

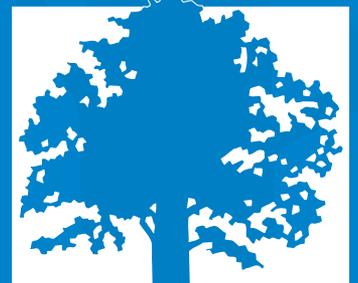
Second-Year Classroom Grants

Previous classroom-focused grant recipients may request up to \$3,000 to expand on their original objectives, and who have the potential to realize additional goals based on the learning and outcomes of their first grant. Deadline: April 5

IMPACT Grant

IMPACT Grant projects must be coordinated by an active member of Education Minnesota who has teamed up with a nonprofit organization or their local union/school district. Approximately \$15,000 is available for one year. The budget should reflect a one-year project. Deadline: Jan. 5

EDUCATION MINNESOTA
FOUNDATION



for Excellence in Teaching and Learning