

M I N N E S O T A EDUCATOR

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2024

***Willow Lane
Elementary School closes
literacy gap with new
approach to reading***

MEA conference returns Oct. 17



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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THERE ARE 90+ EXHIBITORS WITH 20 WHO ARE NEW THIS YEAR.

With a variety of organizations, educators will find valuable resources and information. Exhibits are open from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

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ESI



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

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Betsy DeVos and why we can't go back on Election Day

If anyone needed more motivation to vote this fall, there's this: Betsy DeVos has gone on the record saying she would like to return to her former job as the U.S. Secretary of Education if Donald Trump is elected president in November.

She told reporters in Michigan she would return to Washington if Trump followed through on his plan to phase out the federal education department. And she said she supports a national voucher program to subsidize exclusive private schools with taxpayer money.

DeVos has lobbied to rollback protections for LGBTQ+ students and coddled greedy loan servicers. As secretary, she turned her department "into a subsidiary of predatory for-profit colleges that saddle students with crushing debt," as The New York Times put it.

DeVos, a billionaire donor with no public education experience before taking the top job, is one of the reasons why thousands of educators are already campaigning this fall. She's a living symbol of why we can't go back.

Instead, we can choose to build on Minnesota's success in 2022 when educators came together to elect pro-education state-level candidates, who took control and passed the most progressive education agenda in America in 2023.

The \$5.5 billion in new spending over the next four years led to the largest pay raises for educators in a generation, unemployment insurance for ESPs, unprecedented care for students who were hungry or struggling with their mental health and launched Gov. Tim Walz onto the national stage.

The same year, Minnesota educators in nearly three dozen districts rose up against MAGA school board candidates who rejected our commitment to respecting every student and guaranteeing the freedom to teach without bans on books and curriculum.

Union-endorsed school board candidates won 85% of their races. Many locals learned for the first time how powerful they could be when they endorsed candidates and organized on their behalf.

Educators in many other states wish they had our success. More than 20 state governments banned

4,300 books in school libraries in 2023 alone. Twenty-nine states have at least one voucher-style program draining money from public schools. Many programs had a scandalous lack of oversight, with school dollars redirected to kayak lessons, trampolines, horseback riding, SeaWorld tickets and home gyms.

The work we've done, and wins we've won, has given us more freedom to decide the future of public schools than educators in most other states. We cannot let the opposition trick us into apathy and inaction through distractions and their weird, homophobic slurs. This is our time, and the public is with us.

Earlier this summer, Education Minnesota polled Minnesota voters, with an emphasis on the parents of public-school students. We asked them to name the biggest strength of their local schools. The answer was overwhelmingly: the educators.

Educators are trusted and respected—even if it doesn't always feel that way—and the public deserves to know our assessment of the candidates from the top of the ticket to the bottom.

So, I hope Minnesota's educators join me at the door knocks, lit drops and phone banks for our endorsed candidates as we tell voters what our schools need, including how to fix the staffing shortage by improving educator pay, pensions and health care.

I like our chances of winning again this year. We're leaders, our vision includes every student, and we're voters. And because, to paraphrase Gov. Walz, you should never underestimate a public school educator. Never.

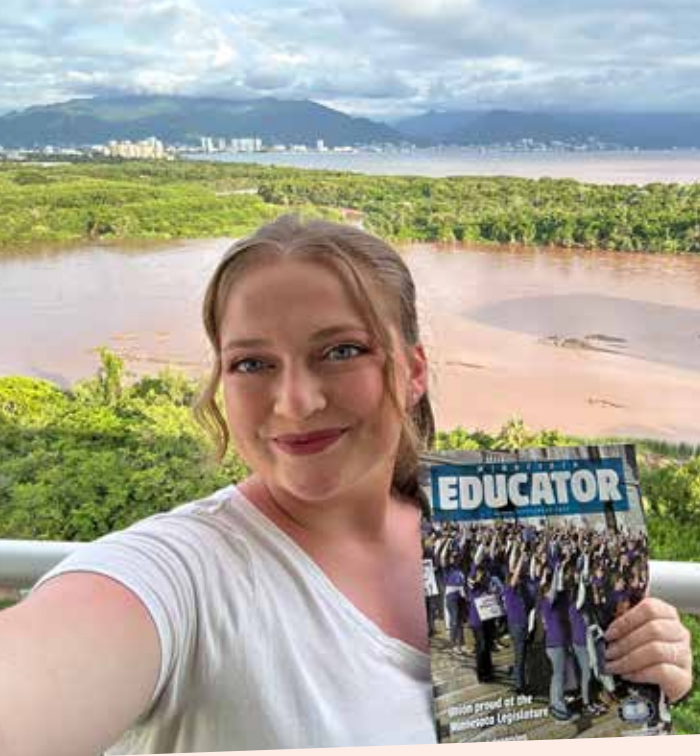
Together,



 @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht



Congratulations to Nicole Olander from South Washington County Schools for being this issue's winning submission!

We love seeing all the places you read your Minnesota Educator. Send a photo of where you're reading your Educator to educator@edmn.org to be entered into a drawing! *Please include your name, your district or local and a one-sentence description of where you are reading.*

The winner will receive a \$50 Target gift card and be featured in the next issue of Minnesota Educator. Happy reading!

Nicole Olander on a balcony in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.





Educators in the news

“We don’t even see the test, so I have no idea if what I’m teaching is even helping the student for the test or matching up with what they’re going to be tested on. But I know my students in my ninth-grade classroom – these test scores are not [due to] a lack of effort because my students work hard day in, day out.”

2024 Teacher of the Year Tracy Byrd in an August MPR article titled, “Teacher of the Year: MCA test scores are not always reflective of students’ knowledge.”

Getting social!


Stay connected with Education Minnesota by following us on our social media channels!

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Connect with your local!

Each issue, we will select a couple of local unions' social media pages to highlight. Make sure to give them a follow to stay up to date on what's happening at the local level.

Follow Education Minnesota Brainerd on Facebook:

-  Search “Education Minnesota Brainerd.”

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-  [@AHEM.7007](https://www.instagram.com/AHEM.7007)

Willow Lane kindergarten team closes literacy gap with new approach to reading

The Willow Lane Elementary kindergarten team was doing everything right. They were using tried-and-true instructional methods. They prioritized parent and family engagement to ensure that students were set up for success at home and school. In every subject, they were providing the very best instruction that they knew how to give.

Yet, the risk of reading failure was only increasing. This problem is not unique to Willow Lane—schools across the country struggle with this issue, particularly those like Willow Lane with a high number of students who receive free or reduced lunch. This rise in risk of reading failure is concerning because it can have serious and lifelong negative impacts, including lower income in adulthood, a higher likelihood of dropping out of school and an increased risk of incarceration, among others.

“Literacy is a social justice issue,” said Dr. Kelly Pylkas-Bock, instructional coach for the White Bear Lake school district. “Literacy is a right that should be afforded to all, and this team works so hard because they understand the life-changing value of literacy for their students.”

“No matter how hard we tried, we weren’t seeing the results we wanted, and we weren’t sure why it wasn’t all coming together,” kindergarten teacher Anna Morehead said.

Willow Lane educators had used a balanced approach to reading instruction. This instructional model taught students to read by using three metacognitive strategies, or cues: semantic (looking at words and pictures), syntactic (using knowledge of how a language is structured), and graphophonic (looking at individual chunks of letters). Phonics and phonemic awareness, both considered foundational to reading, were taught when opportunities arose out of text instead of systematically and explicitly teaching readers to decode the English language.

“We had been teaching reading using the strategies we were trained to use, but we found out those strategies

were actually inhibiting success by limiting the formation of neural connections in the brain,” Pylkas-Bock said. Because these practices focused on reading words as whole shapes instead of looking at each letter or groups of letters to read words, students were more likely to struggle with reading once the words became more complex.

During the 2021-22 school year, the team began Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training, which teaches literacy strategies that are grounded in cognitive science and evidence-based research. The goal is to teach reading in a way that works with the brain’s language development processes instead of against them.

While going through LETRS training, a group of dozens of White Bear Lake elementary educators—including Pylkas-Bock and Morehead—collaborated with district administration on a robust, two-year curriculum identification process. The committee chose a new curriculum called Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) because it met most of the committee’s criteria, especially in the areas of word recognition and oral language skills.

A radically different approach to what had been used in the past, CKLA starts by teaching students letter sounds, as opposed to traditional methods of teaching letter names first. Morehead said this helps students learn to read faster: “Beginning with sounds instead of letter names means they don’t have to think of the letter name and then the sound. This makes it easier for students to identify the letter sounds in words, which means they begin reading faster because we have removed that extra retrieval step.”

The CKLA curriculum starts with a heavy emphasis on word recognition and oral language skills. “We go slow to go fast,” Morehead said. The first two units focus on these building-block skills, such as listening for environmental sounds (which is a precursor for hearing letter sounds) and sound articulation. This focus

provides ample time for students to learn the building-block skills they will use to learn to read, which allows students to begin learning faster when they do finally begin learning to read.

The CKLA curriculum also provides decodable texts—books that contain easy words that students can sound out. “[In previous years] we’d go to the library and the students would check out books, but they couldn’t read them. This past year, we went to the library and students gravitated towards the decodable books because they could actually read them. They were motivated and confident reading those books, which meant they wanted to spend more time reading,” Morehead said.

While this may sound like a return to traditional phonics instruction, Pylkas-Bock and Morehead caution against simply investing in more phonics-based materials. Success also depends on helping kindergarteners build oral language skills. “CKLA begins with nursery rhymes and songs that allow students to simply play with language. This is a fun and developmentally appropriate way to introduce kids to the ways that letters and words help us understand the world around us,” said Pylkas-Bock.

These two components yielded the outcomes the Willow Lane team was working toward.

The results

As White Bear Lake schools began using the new curriculum, literacy rates across the district improved from the 2022-23 school year to the 2023-24 school year. Willow Lane’s student outcomes were among the most successful in the district.

In a composite of early-reading benchmarks, the amount of Willow Lane students who were at or above standards went from 39% to 56%, and the number of students who were experiencing reading failure dropped from 23% to 14%.

Those increases are largely driven by students of color. On word segmenting, one of the benchmarks used to measure literacy, the number of Black students who were at or above standard jumped from 47% in the winter to 71% in spring. The number of students who

could not successfully segment words fell from 24% to only 6%.

These students showed similar improvements with another literacy marker: nonsense words, which measure a student’s ability to decode words. In the winter of 2022-23, 47% of Black students were at or above standard. By spring, 71% of these students were at or above standard.

What made Willow Lane so successful?

The kindergarten team implemented several strategies that contributed to this success. One of those strategies was scheduling focused time where students were grouped according to instructional needs to work on skills they were struggling with.

Another component of their success was intense collaboration. Every person working with Willow Lane kindergarteners—both in and outside of the classroom—was fully committed to the new curriculum and approach. “We were the most collaborative we’ve ever been,” said Morehead. She described how the team would check in every two weeks to see how students were doing and adjust according to what they needed.

Their training and curriculum selections also contributed to their success. While CKLA is a very robust curriculum, the Willow Lane team finds ways to incorporate aspects of the curriculum into classroom play and make the curriculum work for their program. “This team makes it a point to ensure that kindergarten still feels like kindergarten,” Pylkas-Bock said. “A lot of the time, learning is built into play time, so kids don’t even realize they’re learning.”

Training programs like LETRS will soon become standard practice across Minnesota as school districts begin implementing provisions of the 2023 READ Act, which aims to increase literacy rates across the state by requiring LETRS and similar training for elementary and English and Language Arts teachers.

If you are interested in learning more, the Willow Lane team will be speaking at the MEA conference about their experience.

Anna Morehead and Dr. Kelly Pylkas-Bock contributed to this article.

Education Minnesota endorsed candidates

On Nov. 5, Education Minnesota members will head to the polls and vote for the elected officials that will represent us at all levels of government. These elected officials make decisions that impact every part of our jobs, from the amount of funding our districts receive, to the policies that govern our bargaining practice, to our pensions and health care options and more.

We encourage all Education Minnesota members to learn about the candidates that are on your ballot and to use your political power to elect leaders who will support our schools, our educators and our communities. To help you learn more about who is on your ballot, we have put together a list of endorsed candidates.

Over the summer, Education Minnesota members have participated in candidate screenings at the local and statewide levels. All declared candidates, across all parties, were invited to participate in the screening process.

The Education Minnesota Political Action Committee, made up of members from across the state, has recommended the following candidates for election as of September 15. Some candidate screenings are still ongoing, and we will continue to release endorsements throughout the campaign season. Members of Education Minnesota are designated with an asterisk.

Make sure to check out edmnvotes.org for updates!

U.S. Senate

Amy Klobuchar

U.S. House of Representatives

MN-1: Rachel Bohman

MN-2: Angie Craig

MN-3: Kelly Morrison

MN-4: Betty McCollum

MN-5: Ilhan Omar

MN-6: Jeanne Hendricks

MN-8: Jen Schultz*

Minnesota House of Representatives

House District 1A – James Sceville

House District 1B – Mike Christopherson*

House District 2A – Reed Olson

House District 2B – Michael Reyes

House District 3A – Harley Droba

House District 3B – Mark Munger

House District 4A – Heather Keeler

House District 4B – Thaddeus Laugisch

House District 5A – Brian Hobson*

House District 5B – Gregg Hendrickson

House District 6B – Emily LeClaire

House District 7A – Aron Schnaser*

House District 7B – Lorrie Janatopoulos

House District 8A – Peter Johnson

House District 8B – Alicia (Liish) Kozlowski

House District 10A – Julie Hipp

House District 11A – Pete Radosevich

House District 11B – Eric Olson

House District 14A – Abdi Daisane

House District 14B – Dan Wolgamott

House District 15A – Anthony M. Studemann

House District 17B – Jennifer Nuesse

House District 18A – Jeff Brand

House District 18B – Luke Frederick

House District 19A – Jessica Navarro

House District 20A – Heather Arndt

House District 20B – Michael Hutchinson

House District 21B – Jon Wilson*

House District 22B – Sara Nett-Torgrimson

House District 23A – Joe Staloch

House District 23B – Joseph Pacovsky

House District 24B – Tina Liebling

House District 25A – Kim Hicks
 House District 25B – Andy Smith
 House District 26A – Sarah Kruger
 House District 27B – Andrew Scouten
 House District 28A – Tim Dummer
 House District 28B – Mary Murphy
 House District 29A – Chris Brazelton
 House District 29B – Colton Kratky
 House District 30B – Paul Bolin
 House District 32B – Matt Norris
 House District 33A – Jake Ross
 House District 33B – Josiah Hill*
 House District 35A – Zack Stephenson
 House District 34A – Brian Raines
 House District 34B – Melissa Hortman
 House District 35B – Kari Rehrauer
 House District 36A – Janelle Calhoun
 House District 36B – Brion Curran
 House District 37A – Laurie Wolf*
 House District 37B – Kristin Bahner
 House District 38A – Hulda Hitsley
 House District 39B – Sandra Feist
 House District 40A – Kelly Moller
 House District 40B – Curtis Johnson
 House District 41A – Lucia Wroblewski
 House District 41B – Jen Fox
 House District 44A – Peter M. Fischer
 House District 44B – Leon Lillie
 House District 45A – Tracey Breazeale
 House District 45B – Patty Acomb
 House District 46A – Larry Kraft
 House District 46B – Cheryl Youakim
 House District 47A – Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger
 House District 48B – Lucy Rehm
 House District 39A – Alex Falconer
 House District 49B – Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn

House District 50A – Julie Greene
 House District 50B – Steve Elkins
 House District 51A – Michael Howard
 House District 51B – Nathan Coulter
 House District 52A – Liz Reyer
 House District 52B – Bianca Virnig
 House District 53A – Mary Frances Clardy*
 House District 53B – Rick Hansen
 House District 54A – Brad Tabke
 House District 54B – Jean Lee
 House District 55A – Jessica Hanson
 House District 55B – Kaela Berg
 House District 56A – Robert Bierman
 House District 56B – John Huot
 House District 57A – Veda Kanitz*
 House District 57B – Brian Cohn
 House District 58A – Kristi Pursell
 House District 58B – Ian English
 House District 60A – Sydney Jordan
 House District 60B – Mohamud Noor
 House District 61A – Katie Jones
 House District 61B – Jamie Long
 House District 62A – Aisha Gomez
 House District 62B – Anquam Mahamoud
 House District 63A – Samantha Sencer-Mura
 House District 63B – Emma Greenman
 House District 64B – Dave Pinto
 House District 65B – Maria Isa Perez-Vega
 House District 66A – Leigh Finke
 House District 66B – Athena Hollins
 House District 67A – Liz Lee

Annual MEA conference returns this October

Education Minnesota's annual MEA conference will be held Thursday, Oct. 17 at the St. Paul RiverCentre. This event, which is the union's largest professional development conference, will feature dozens of workshops and exhibitors.

Details

The MEA conference is only open to aspiring educators and Education Minnesota members.

All attendees must register by Friday, Oct. 11. Classes fill up quickly, so we recommend registering as early as possible.

- Attendee check-in begins at 7:30 a.m.
- General session: 9:00 a.m.
- Workshops: 10:45 a.m.-4:45 p.m.
- Parking: the closest parking ramps are RiverCentre Ramp, 150 W. Kellogg Blvd; Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd; Lawson Ramp, 11 5th St. West. More parking options are available at www.stpaul.gov/parking-saint-paul
- For MEA attendees, free childcare is available for children ages 6 months-12 years. You can register when you register for the conference.
- Attendees may be able to earn continuing education credit for attending MEA and some workshops may help fulfill relicensure requirements. After MEA, Education Minnesota will email you an attendance certificate for the sessions you attended. Please check with your district on whether you will receive credit.



Don't miss MEA's keynote speaker Micia Mosely, founder and director of The Black Teacher Project

Micia Mosely is the founder and director of The Black Teacher Project, a program of The National Equity Project committed to developing a Black teaching force to transform schools into communities of liberated learning. Prior to leading this work, she was a National Training Specialist with The Posse Foundation. Mosely began her career as a high school social studies teacher before earning her Ph.D. in Education from U.C. Berkeley. She is a published researcher whose work focuses on race and professional development. Also a successful theater artist and performer, Mosely tours the nation with her socio-political stand-up comedy. Learn more at www.blackteacherproject.org.

MEA Exhibitors

The MEA conference includes an exhibit hall with vendors who are interested in sharing information, freebies and discounts with attendees. 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 St. Paul RiverCentre during the conference.

Exhibitors who will be at the conference:

Animal Rights Coalition	Expedition Credit Union	Project Hmong Children's Books
ANSR	Fenworks	Project MOMENTUM
Aris Clinic	Field Trip Adventures	Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP)
Augsburg University	Girl Scouts River Valley	Schatz Benefit Group
Aviben	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission	Scholastic Book Fairs
Bell Museum	Infinite Campus	Science From Scientists
Bethel University	Kami	Science Museum of Minnesota
Business Essentials	Kind Lips in the Classroom	SEA LIFE at Mall of America
Camp Fire Minnesota	Mall of America®	Security Benefit
Center for Creative Leadership	Meridian Behavioral Health	SpEd Forms
Children's Theatre Company	Minitex	Synergy & Leadership Exchange/ Minnesota Service Cooperatives
Chromebookparts.com	Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom	Teaching Channel
Climate Generation	Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling	The Kinetic Teacher
cmERDC	Minnesota Children's Museum	The Raptor Center
CSP Global	Minnesota Department of Education	think2perform Research Institute
Education Minnesota EMAC	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Tradition Mortgage
Education Minnesota Member Engagement	Minnesota Historical Society	Twin Cities PBS
Education Minnesota Pensions	Minnesota State Chess Association	Union Plus
Education Minnesota Photo Calendar	Minnesota Zoo	University of St. Thomas, School of Education
Education Minnesota Political and Legislative Advocacy	MN Council on Economic Education	Valleyfair
Education Minnesota Professional Advocacy and Development	MN Disability Determination Services	Vote Run Lead Action
Education Minnesota Retired	MN350	Winona State University - Graduate Studies
Education Minnesota Aspiring Educators and BRAVE program	MPGL: The Milkweed Holocaust Education Project	Y Adventure
EFS Advisors	Northern Lights Collaborative for Computing Education	Youth for Human Rights International
Equal Rights Amendment Minnesota		Autism Society of MN
ESI		NEA Member Benefits

MEA workshops: Oct. 17

Location	9-10:30 a.m.	10:45-11:45 a.m.	11:45-12:45 p.m.	12:45-1:45 p.m.
Ballroom A	General session and keynote speaker	Cross-Cultural Competence for Educators	Lunch break	Experience Speaking Out Collective through Truth-Telling Curriculum and Children's Mental Health Plays
Ballroom B		Overview of the READ Act		Special Education Paraprofessional Personnel Requirements and Technical Assistance
Ballroom C		Understanding the Needs of Muslim Students		An Introduction to Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities
Ballroom D		Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space: Degrees Not Debt		Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space: Contract 101; what does my contract mean to me?
Room 1				
Room 2		Ethnic Studies Database - A New Resource for Teachers		Art of Multiplication: Crafty Multiplication Activities
Room 3		Dismantling Ableism		Ableism in Education Expert Panel: Nothing About Us Without Us
Room 4		Unlocking Potential+D53: Understanding FASD in the Classroom		Meet and Confer
Room 5		How to Enhance Your Profession and Classroom with a Grant		Beyond the Queen's Gambit; The Benefits of Playing Chess
Room 6		English Learners (Relicensure)*		English Learners (Relicensure)*
Room 7		STEM Equity through Drawing and Feedback		Systems Thinking and Organizational Change towards Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access
Room 8		Minnesota History Day		How to use Elements of Music and Creative Arts to Engage Students with Special Needs in the Classroom
Room 9		Moving from Ivory Towers to the Classroom Walls: Making Publishing in Online Journals Accessible for K-12 Educators		From Chaos to Control
Room 10		Retired Breakfast		Minnesota Stories: Media in the Classroom
Room 11		Teachers and ESPs: Building a Collaborative Working Environment		Recognizing and Combating Antisemitism in Schools
Room 12		Empowering Women into Leadership		Differentiating Instruction Through Proximity to Content
Room 13		It's Not Your Mother's ERA Anymore!		Empowering Educators: Fostering Collective Efficacy for Greater Success for ALL Students
Room 14		Positive Behavior Interventions (Relicensure)*		Positive Behavior Interventions (Relicensure)*
Room 15		Books to Builds: STEM Activities to Compliment Your Favorite Read-Alouds		Hooking Students on Minnesota History

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

2:00-3:00 p.m.	3:15-4:15 p.m.	Location
Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) (Relicensure)*	Designing and Implementing Ethnic Studies in the K-12 Classroom	Ballroom A
Avoiding Ableism and Becoming Allies	Navigating Challenges & Building Resilience	Ballroom B
Intersectionality and the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community	Differentiating for Multilingual Learners with the WIDA Framework	Ballroom C
Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space: BRAVE Early Career Educator Panel	Aspiring Ed and Early Career Networking Space: Art Build	Ballroom D
		Room 1
Get Real: Authentic Learning Experiences Increase Student Engagement and Motivation	The Resilient Educator: How to Navigate Change and Overcome Challenges	Room 2
Podcasting for Literacy with Young Learners	The National Park Classroom: Teacher Tools from Public Lands	Room 3
Finding Coherence in the Midst of Classroom Chaos	The Race to Save Our Girls: One Organization's Approach to Guide Girls from Cookies to College	Room 4
Poetry Out Loud: Celebrating Student Voice	LifeSmarts: Consumer and Financial Education	Room 5
Book Drop: Engaging Children in STEM Through Media Read-Alouds	How Innovative Schools Are Addressing Social Media, Current Events, and Tech	Room 6
Risks and Necessities in Discussing Antisemitism and Racism	Conducting Union Elections	Room 7
EMPOWERing Students through the Arts	Learning Through Play	Room 8
I Didn't Know Kami Could Do That	From Problems to Solutions: Applying Design Thinking	Room 9
Student Mental Health (Relicensure)*	Student Mental Health (Relicensure)*	Room 10
Kindergarten Literacy as Social Justice: Lessons from a Title 1 School's Journey	Teach Smarter, Not Harder with AI as Your Sidekick	Room 11
When Can I Afford to Retire? For Members with a PERA and TRA pension	Minnesota Resources from PBS LearningMedia	Room 12
Reading (Relicensure)*	Reading (Relicensure)*	Room 13
Proactive Playbook	Enhancing Science Materials for Multilingual Learners	Room 14
Critical Thinking Through Questioning: Creating the Questions	MTSS for Gifted and Accelerated Learners	Room 15

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

Filing period open for Education Minnesota officer, governing board, NEA director positions

Candidate filings for Education Minnesota officers and National Education Association director positions are open. Candidate filings for Education Minnesota's governing board election district positions will open Nov. 4.

The three-year terms for president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer will end on June 30, 2025. Currently, these offices are held by President Denise Specht, Vice President Monica Byron and Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe.

The current terms for two NEA director positions held by Jasman Myers and Heather Bakke will expire Aug. 31, 2025.

Education Minnesota is governed by an elected board comprised of one member from each of the union's 26 election districts. The current three-year terms of these members will expire on June 30, 2025.

Eligible members who wish to run for any of these positions must submit the designated filing form to the Education Minnesota Elections Committee by Dec. 13. Forms are available to complete and submit electronically on the Education Minnesota website. They are also printed below.

To be an eligible candidate for any of these positions, an individual must be an active Education Minnesota member at the time of filing and throughout the election process.

Filing Form for Officer

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

I, _____, wish to file for the following position:

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for the following position:

You may only select one position:

☐ **President** ☐ **Vice President** ☐ **Secretary-Treasurer**

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on June 1. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 13, 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 Dec. 20, 2024.

(For official use only)

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

Filing Form for Governing Board – Election District

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

I, _____, wish to file for the following position:

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for the following position:

Governing Board – Election District: _____

(Three-year term: July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028. Election district map located at www.educationminnesota.org.)

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 4. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 13, 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 Dec. 20, 2024.

(For official use only)

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

Filing Form for NEA Director

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

I, _____, wish to file for the following position:

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for the following position:

You may only select one position:

☐ NEA Director (Position 1) ☐ NEA Director (Position 2)

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on June 1. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 13, 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 Dec. 20, 2024.

(For official use only)

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

Delegate selection for the 2025 NEA Representative Assembly

The NEA Representative Assembly, the major decision-making body for NEA, is scheduled to meet in Portland, OR, July 2-6, 2025.

All active Education Minnesota members are eligible to run to be a state-credentialed delegate to the NEA RA. The filing period opens on Nov. 4 and closes Dec. 13. Interested members may file by submitting the designated filing form to the Elections Committee. Filing forms are also available on Education Minnesota's website. Forms should not be submitted until the filing period opens.

Elections will take place in local districts on weekdays during the 15-day window from Feb. 10-Feb. 28. Ballots will be mailed in early February to all local presidents in districts where an election is necessary.

Nominations for state-credentialed aspiring educator delegates open Nov. 4 and close Feb. 15. Elections will take place at the 2025 Aspiring Educator Leadership Spring Workshop, if necessary.

Funding information for state-credentialed delegates

State-credentialed delegates will receive funding to attend the NEA RA, provided they are in attendance for the entire RA, from the first caucus meeting to adjournment on July 6, attend all caucus meetings and are present on the convention floor for all proceedings.

Funding includes airfare 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 convention hotel for an authorized number of nights and reimbursement for meals and other related expenses (with original itemized receipts).

For state delegates working in year-round school settings, substitute costs will be reimbursed as outlined in the Education Minnesota Financial Policy for Governance and Members. Funding is not available for Category 2 delegates, those who are retired or inactive members.

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 2-6, 2025 in Portland, Oregon.

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held
July 2-6, 2025 in Portland, Oregon. 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. 4. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 13, 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 Dec. 20, 2024.

(For official use only)

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

Filing Form for NEA RA State-Credentialed Delegate: Aspiring Educator

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 2-6, 2025 in Portland, Oregon.

I further certify that the nominee is eligible for state credentials as a delegate from:

Aspiring Educator

(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. 4. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Feb. 15, 2025.

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. 21, 2025.

(For official use only)

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

Apply for funding for the AFT TEACH Conference

The AFT TEACH Conference, a biennial event devoted to professional development, will be held July 24-27 in Washington, D.C.

Your local president should have an information packet from the American Federation of Teachers that includes a tentative schedule, hotel and conference registration forms.

Education Minnesota will provide funding for one member from each election district, as well as one statewide/higher education member and one education support professional member, to attend the conference. Please note, pre-conference expenses are NOT covered as part of this funding. Members who would like to apply for state funding should complete the form found at <https://cvent.me/wmrnLL> by Friday, Dec. 13.

The selection of state-funded participants will be made January 2025, and those awarded funding will be notified and sent the necessary information. Priority

will be given to first-time attendees. Funding includes conference registration, airfare, hotel accommodation and meals.

All members are welcome to attend at their own expense.

If you have questions, contact Janel Engesser at 800-652-9073 ext. 4867 or by email at janel.engesser@edmn.org.

2025 AFT TEACH Conference

July 24-27, 2024; Washington, D.C.

To be considered for a state-funded position, please fill out the State-Funded Participant Interest Form at [www.cvent.me/wmrnLL](https://cvent.me/wmrnLL) by Friday, Dec. 13.

Six new laws affecting school discipline and safety

By David Aron, General Counsel

As a new school year begins, educators are busy establishing positive climates in their classrooms, and school buildings and campuses. Many educators are also rightfully concerned with how they should address student behaviors that endanger safety and disrupt learning. In recent years, the Legislature has passed a number of laws that aim to make improvements in school climates. The following is a summary of changes that may affect you and your students.

1. Non-exclusionary discipline law

Passed in 2023, the non-exclusionary discipline (NED) law provides that before a school can suspend or expel a student, they must first exhaust non-exclusionary policies and practices, including referrals to mental health and counseling services. Importantly, the NED contains an exception for student behavior that poses “an immediate and substantial danger to self or to surrounding persons or property.” In addition, the NED law does not prohibit schools from sending a student home for the remainder of a school day, or from removing a student from a particular classroom for misbehavior. Finally, the law requires schools to provide materials and resources to students serving suspensions of five days or longer to allow them to complete all school assignments during the suspension.

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

The NED law is intended to help educators, support personnel, students and their families address the root causes of problematic behaviors and allow students opportunities to remain connected to school while serving longer suspensions. To effectively implement non-exclusionary discipline, schools need to make educators aware of the non-exclusionary discipline options available to them when they encounter disruptive student behavior. Collaborate with your colleagues and seek guidance from your administration so you know what the options are and how you can access them.

This Legal Briefs column, written by Education Minnesota attorneys, is one of an occasional series on legal developments that affect educators.

2. Prohibition on prone restraints and other holds that restrict breathing

Another provision passed in 2023 affects the scope of allowable physical interventions by school staff. The law allows the use of reasonable force on a student only when there is a risk of bodily harm or death to a student or others; force to correct or restrain a student is no longer allowed unless they pose a safety threat. But in 2024, the Legislature removed the requirement that the safety threat be “imminent” for reasonable force to be used. The law also prohibits educators from using prone restraints (placing a student face down) or other physical restraints that restrict students’ ability to breathe or communicate distress. These prohibitions had already been in place for students with disabilities, but they now apply to all students.

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

Although we don’t believe prone restraints were being used on students, this law reflects concern about the danger that they pose because of their potential to restrict breathing. Ideally, staff should be trained in proper hold procedures if they are working in environments where students are likely to become physically aggressive. Staff should also seek clear guidance or policies from administration about whether they are authorized or expected to intervene in fights between students, as districts and schools may vary on this point.

3. School district cell phone policy requirement

A new law passed in 2024 requires all school districts and charter schools in the state to adopt a policy on students' use and possession of cell phones in schools no later than March 15, 2025. The law also requires that "the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals must collaborate to make best practices available to schools on a range of different strategies in order to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment."

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

This law is a response to growing concern about the mental health toll and academic harms associated with adolescents' excessive use of cell phones and social media, especially at school. Since the law does not contain any requirements for these policies beyond the language above, districts and charter schools have wide latitude to craft their policies. The two principals' associations created the legally required guidance in July of 2024, which is available on the Minnesota School Board Association website, mnmsba.org. While cell phone policies are not likely to be a mandatory subject of bargaining, we would still recommend classroom educator representation on any committees or workgroups formulating these policies, since classroom educators will be on the front lines of their implementation.

4. Paraprofessional training requirements

For many years, Education Minnesota has advocated for paraprofessionals and other student support staff to receive better, more consistent, paid professional development early in each school year, particularly as it relates to the specific educational and emotional needs of their students. In 2023, the legislature required and provided funding for school districts to provide all paraprofessionals, Title I aides, and other instructional support staff with at least eight hours of paid orientation or professional development annually. Six of the eight

hours must be completed before the first instructional day or within 30 days of hire. The law also states that "[t]he orientation or professional development must be relevant to the employee's occupation and may include collaboration time with classroom teachers and planning for the school year. For paraprofessionals who provide direct support to students, at least 50 percent of the professional development or orientation must be dedicated to meeting the requirements of this section."

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

This law was a response to countless stories of paraprofessionals, teachers, and parents frustrated with the lack of time for paraprofessionals and other student support staff to receive adequate paid time to prepare for a new school year. We strongly encourage paraprofessionals and union leadership to be vigilant in ensuring that this training occurs and is "relevant to the employee's occupation." Paraprofessionals should also request to review the IEPs of the students they serve during this orientation period, which is guaranteed in another statute, also because of Education Minnesota's advocacy. If there are concerns about a district not providing the training, contact your Education Minnesota field representative for assistance.

5. Student data privacy act

Some schools in Minnesota and around the country have contracted with technology companies to track online behavior by students that may pose a threat to the student or the school community. In 2023, the legislature passed the Student Data Privacy Act (SDPA). In addition to prohibiting technology providers from selling or disseminating educational data for commercial purposes, such as marketing or advertising to students or parents, the SDPA also places restrictions on the use of software that records students, tracks their locations, or monitors their online activity unless one of several listed justifications exists, including when the monitoring is pursuant to a warrant or "is necessary to respond to an imminent threat to life or safety and the access is limited to that purpose."

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

A number of news outlets reported on spyware systems that tracked the online activity of students without their knowledge or permission while they used school devices or Wi-Fi. This law curtails surveillance activity that may have violated students' privacy rights, while still allowing monitoring for students reasonably suspected to pose a safety threat. School administrators and IT staff should familiarize themselves with this law to ensure they are in compliance.

6. Extreme risk protection orders

Minnesota's "red flag" law, passed in 2023, allows certain individuals to request what is called an extreme risk protection order (ERPO) from a court to temporarily prohibit someone from purchasing or possessing a firearm during a crisis when they are at risk of harming themselves or others. The law authorizes a person's immediate family, household, or partners, as well as members of law enforcement, to petition a court for an ERPO on someone's behalf by providing a sworn statement detailing why the person poses a risk of harm to themselves or others if they possess a firearm. If an ERPO is granted, the subject must surrender or transfer any firearms within 24 hours or be subject to a warrant to have them removed by law enforcement.

Reasons for this law and practical tips for educators:

Gun violence and school shootings are an all-too-common fear for students, parents, and educators. While this law is not the only tool to reduce these tragedies, it provides a new mechanism for communities to respond quickly while still preserving the due process rights of gun owners. The law does not allow educators to petition courts for an ERPO on behalf of a student, but educators can and should share any concerns about students who have engaged in threatening behavior and are known to have access to firearms to their administration so that they may contact law enforcement about a potential ERPO.

"Know Your Rights" guide and training available to members

This content is excerpted from a longer "Know Your Rights" manual and training that the Education Minnesota legal department recently created for members. If you would like to view the full guide, contact your Education Minnesota field representative. If you are a local or IO leader and would like to request training from an Education Minnesota attorney on these topics, contact your Education Minnesota field representative as well. We hope this information is helpful in ensuring that you, your colleagues, and your students have a safe and productive school year.



Open a Rewards Checking:
Get \$200!*

EXPEDITION
CREDIT UNION

expeditioncu.com/offer
Get \$200 in 2 easy steps:

1. Open a Rewards Checking
2. Make 2 automatic deposits

*Membership Share with a \$5 minimum opening deposit required & Checking Account requires additional \$5 minimum opening deposit. Receive \$200 Bonus upon opening a new Rewards Checking Account (either Cash Back Checking or High Yield Checking) through 12/31/24. Offer not valid for those who have or had a checking account with Expedition Credit Union in the last twelve (12) months. To qualify for \$200 offer, new checking account must receive two (2) automatic deposits from payroll, pension payment, social security, or other government payments from an outside employer/outside agency (branch deposits, Shared Branch deposits, bank-to-bank transfers, mobile deposits, ATM deposits, or person-to-person transactions do not qualify) totaling at least \$600 within 90 days from account opening. Account must remain open for six (6) months. \$200 Bonus will be deposited into the Rewards Checking Account within 30 days after meeting the requirements. Expedition reserves the right to terminate bonus payout if the qualifications are not met, the account is not in good standing, or if the account does not remain open for at least six (6) months. Limit one account per Member included in promotion. The incentive is subject to federal & state tax requirements. This offer is subject to end at any time. Qualifications & limitations apply. Insured by NCUA.

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 2024-25 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 2024-25 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



NEA Member^{*} Exclusive

A Trusted and Valuable Benefit

As an NEA member, did you know you receive \$1,000 of term life insurance at **no cost** to you? You're already enrolled in the NEA[®] Complimentary Life Insurance Plan, but it's a good time to make sure you've selected a beneficiary.

When you do, you can have some peace of mind that your loved ones will receive their benefit in a time of need. This unique benefit helps ensure educators like you have additional coverage beyond what may be provided through your district. It's just one of the many ways your union membership works hard for you.

**Scan the code or go to
neamb.com/mycomp for a
quick and easy path to update
your beneficiary information.**



^{*}Must maintain NEA membership. This coverage is offered to Active, Reserve and Staff members, as well as to Life and Retired members who are actively employed in education.

DT261024



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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

Teacher of the Year nominations open Oct. 1!

*Nominations for Teacher of the Year open
on Oct. 1 and close on Nov. 15.*

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 61st 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.

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

Minnesota
TEACHER
of the **YEAR**