

M I N N E S O T A

EDUCATOR

DECEMBER 2025 / JANUARY 2026

**Rochester's
Monica Eggert
is the 2025-26
ESP of the Year**

**Members
reflect on
experience
as NEA Global
Learning
Fellows**



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

2025-26 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 licensed educators, ESPs and higher education faculty

- Awarded twice a year, ESPs, licensed teachers 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. 7 and March 6

National Board Certified Teachers Scholarship

- Members can receive \$500 per component, up to \$1,000 per applicant, to go toward the NBCT application process.
- **Deadline:** Nov. 7

Classroom-Focused Project 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. 5

Second-Year Classroom-Focused Project Grants

- Previous classroom-focused project 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:** March 6

IMPACT Grant

- IMPACT Grant projects must be coordinated by an active member of Education Minnesota who has teamed up with a nonprofit or community organization. Approximately \$15,000 is available for one year. The budget should reflect a one-year project.
- **Deadline:** Jan. 2

EDUCATION MINNESOTA
FOUNDATION



for Excellence in Teaching and Learning



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

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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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Love for public schools won this fall, and it can win again in 2026

When 200 parents and supporters of public schools show up on 24 hours notice to protest the influence of big outside money on school board elections, you know Minnesotans are fed up with the attacks on educators and public schools.

That's just what happened in late October outside the Coon Rapids Civics Center while a lecturer from a right-wing think tank spoke inside. It was another example of the love and support for educators shown this fall, and an opportunity for partnership and progress in the future.

On Election Night, 44 of 47, or nearly 94 percent, of school board candidates endorsed by local unions of educators won their races. That's an improvement over 2024, when union-endorsed school board candidates won 75 percent of the races.

In a familiar trend, groups from outside our districts spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on school board seats with hopes of spreading their agenda. The numbers are still coming in, but more than \$200,000 was certainly spent by the 1776 Project PAC of Virginia; Excellence Minnesota, which is run by the same GOP operative who leads the Minnesota Parents Alliance; and a political group funded by a wealthy family in the north metro.

But even with all that money, MPA-endorsed candidates won only one of 11 in school board races this year. Why? Organized people beat organized money. Educators advocated for their public schools with remarkable engagement, making more than 100,000 calls to voters this fall.

The results also show that voters are tired of the relentless, cruel attacks on educators and students from these groups and the candidates they support. Our communities said they want all students and educators treated with kindness and respect, and for every student to get a great education - and they're willing to say so in rallies and on social media.

The outpouring of support didn't end with school board candidates. Our union staff worked with local members in 35 local school districts on 51 referendum questions and passed 39 of them, or 76 percent—the highest success rate since at least 2019. We won in Annandale, Crosby-Ironton, Farmington and Wheaton—all districts that had

lost referendum elections before.

Outside of electoral politics, parents have turned out for contract campaigns. In Minneapolis in November, for another example, 400 parents, community leaders and students occupied the district headquarters to demand a fair contract for educators that included smaller class sizes.

When educators, parents, and community members unite behind shared goals, they create the political power to elect school boards and to pressure districts to settle contracts. That same power can elect pro-education candidates to the Legislature and move current lawmakers closer to life-changing policies around pay, pensions, health care and working conditions for educators and students in 2026, if our union can build on what we saw this year.

Of course, most educators didn't have a school board race or a levy referendum in November. They may still feel like our schools are under siege, and educators are targeted, not trusted, by their neighbors.

For them, I offer a quote from one of my favorite writers, Langston Hughes, who once wrote about how expressions of support like we've seen in many districts this fall can heal the heart. "When people care for you and cry for you, they can straighten out your soul," he wrote.

As we all wind down and head toward winter break, my New Year's wish for Minnesota's educators is that we all feel more of the love, and less of the hate, in our communities and come back in 2026 with our souls rested and ready to finish the school year strong.

In unity,



Monica Byron,
Education Minnesota President



Monica Byron



Congratulations to Debbie Loomis of Westonka for being this month's contest winner!

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 Visa gift card and be featured in the next issue of the Minnesota Educator. Happy reading!

Debbie reads her Educator while in Philadelphia, PA, visiting family.




Educators in the news

“No one wants to strike, but district leaders have left us no choice. For nearly seven months, we’ve waited for serious solutions to the real problems facing our students and schools. Instead, we get delays and dismissal. We are ready to reach an agreement as soon as possible, but we are also fed up and ready to take a stand.”

Minneapolis Federation of Educators Teacher Chapter President Marcia Howard in an Oct. 28 KSTP article titled, “Minneapolis teachers union approves strike as mediation with MPS continues.”

Getting social!


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

-  facebook.com/educationminnesota
-  [@educationminnesota](https://www.instagram.com/educationminnesota)
-  [@educationMN](https://twitter.com/educationMN)
-  [@educationminnesota](https://www.tiktok.com/@educationminnesota)


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 Osseo on Facebook:

-  Search Facebook for: Education Minnesota-OSSEO

Follow Spring Lake Park on Facebook:

-  Search Facebook for: Spring Lake Park Teachers United

“Every child has a story to tell:” Meet Monica Eggert, 2025 ESP of the Year

2025 Education Support Professional of the Year

Monica Eggert is one of those people whose genuine openness immediately puts those around her at ease. “I come in every morning as my true authentic self. I have a trusting ear and a solid heart. What you see is what you get,” she says.

Like many people, Eggert doesn’t like talking about herself. She’d much rather talk about the students she works with at Rochester Alternative Learning Center, where she is a special education ESP. However, as Eggert and I set up in the hallway so that she can greet students as they arrive for the school day, she opens up about her background and the path to her current role.

Eggert’s current work as an ESP is a second career—or third, depending on your point of view. She first went to school to be a certified nursing assistant, but

her CNA schedule did not work once she became a parent. Partly to help address her need for childcare, she took a job working in a daycare, which she stayed in for 25 years. Because of her work background, Eggert serves as the backup school nurse in the afternoon, in addition to her classroom duties. She views her time as a backup nurse as another opportunity to connect with RALC students. “I can still do what I do to help support and be there with them,” she says. “From what I do in the building to back there often coincides.”

As a special education ESP, Eggert provides support to students in the classroom. RALC has mixed classes, with special and general education students learning together. Eggert makes it a point to help special education students while making sure they don’t feel singled out. On “student-centered learning”

Wednesdays, where students get to pick which activity they do, Eggert offers her students the chance for one-on-one support if they need to get caught up on work. “I basically go wherever they need me,” she says. “Sometimes that looks like [providing individualized instruction], sometimes that looks like sitting in the parking lot with a student for half an hour. My big goal is to make sure they feel safe here.”

Creating an environment where students feel safe is baked into the culture at RALC. The school maintains a food pantry for students who do not have food at home, and a full closet for those who find their wardrobes lacking. They provide childcare for students who are also parents, a night school for those who need to work during the day, and a “safe and sober” school for students in recovery or who



Students express themselves through painted murals on the walls.



A food pantry is available to students who may not have food at home.

come from families that have struggled with addiction. The walls are adorned with murals painted by students, inviting students to join in the creation of a positive environment. In the middle of a group of classrooms stands a glass-walled room called the “panopticon,” which is available for students who need one-on-one instruction, separation from their peers to concentrate or who need a quieter environment. One of the many notable things about Eggert is that she greets every student by name each morning, a tradition she’s kept for the 10 years she’s worked at RALC. “The key to me is that each of these students has a story to tell, and I don’t yet know that story,” she says. “But I want to know each and every one of their names. I want them to know that they are somebody, that they matter, that I see them.” This simple practice reminds students of their individuality, which helps build trust between

them and the educators who support them. Building this trust with students makes Eggert incredibly effective at her job. The conversation moves from her work with students to her work with colleagues—Eggert treats her coworkers with the same individualized attention she gives the students. “Colleagues often say to me, ‘well, I’m just an ESP. I always remind them that they aren’t just anything. We are the eyes and the ears in these classrooms and hallways ... you are a vital part of the team who supports students and colleagues every single day,’” she says. She prides herself on her mentorship, particularly in helping promote a respectful and inclusive school culture. She encourages her colleagues to embrace flexibility to connect more deeply with the students they support. “We don’t want them just to feel welcome; we want them to feel they truly belong,” she says.

“Monica genuinely loves our building and the people within it,” said colleague Kimberly Hewitt in nomination materials for the award. “Her relationships with staff are impressive ... and her reputation for excellence precedes her. Teachers frequently request her in their rooms because they know she is reliable, skilled and a true team player.” Eggert is quick to emphasize that the dedication and support of her colleagues is a big part of what makes her successful in her role. “We support each other, and that’s what makes us a good team. They deserve their recognition and I have to thank and appreciate all of them for making me who I am,” she says. As Education Minnesota’s ESP of the Year, Eggert will receive a \$1,200 honorarium and her choice of iPad or Chromebook. She will also receive an expenses-paid trip to NEA’s education support professional conference in spring 2027.

Seven other ESPs recognized as finalists, semifinalists for ESP of the Year

Education Minnesota also recognized four other ESPs from across Minnesota as finalists and three others as semifinalists for ESP of the Year.

There were 32 nominations this year. Of those 32, eight chose to submit portfolios that included essay responses and recommendation letters.

The recipient of the ESP of the Year award is recognized at a reception at Education Minnesota headquarters and at their school later in the year.

2025 Semifinalists

Ivon Gonzalez, paraprofessional, Escuela Bilingüe Green Central

Gonzalez has worked for Minneapolis Public Schools for 25 years. She said her mission is to be a role model and a trusted adult for students so that they look forward to going to school. "I wanted to be someone I didn't have, that friendly face I could approach or talk to when I needed to," she said in nomination materials.

"Ms. Gonzalez goes above and beyond every single day," said Norma Alejandro-Mattson, assistant principal at Green Central. "She approaches every task with dedication, professionalism and heart."

Mary Navarro, special education paraprofessional, United South Central High School

Navarro is a 20-year educator who has spent 19 of those years in the special education room at United South Central. In her work, she focuses on developing student agency and advocating for their needs to ensure that they have the resources to be successful. "I listen to the students when they have something to say, as sometimes that is what kids need...someone to show them they matter," she said in nomination materials.

Navarro has served as a mentor for new paraprofessionals and in many leadership roles in her union. In June 2024, she became president of her local and will serve on the negotiating committee for the first time.

Shannon VerDuin, print room professional, Stillwater School District

VerDuin strives to make students at Stillwater Area High School feel welcome. She has started several clubs for students to help connect those with similar interests. She began with K-pop club about 10 years ago, but eventually expanded to include Anime Club and the Asian Student Union.

VerDuin's print room is decorated with Hello Kitty plushies and other Sanrio characters, which she uses to connect with staff and students alike. "Everyone at SAHS knows me as the Hello Kitty person ... [the collection] has been a connection-maker, especially with [students with autism]," she said.

2025 finalists

Toni Corrado, special education paraprofessional, Farmington Area Schools

Through building trust and fostering independence, Corrado creates an environment where students feel seen and heard. Corrado's work has contributed to a more inclusive school culture, fostering relationships between the special education and general education students.

"I've built strong relationships with the bus drivers that transport our special education students," Corrado said in nomination materials. "These interactions help create a consistent and caring experience for our students. When everyone involved in a child's day is working together, the student benefits from a sense of stability and trust."

Kristina Ersfeld, building nurse, Farmington Area Schools

As a building nurse, Ersfeld is responsible for the health and safety of 600 students, including many students who don't always have access to medical care outside of school. She connects these families with health care resources and provides information about food, housing or medical cost assistance, if needed.



From left: Secretary-Treasurer Ryan Fiereck, finalist Amanda Phenix, finalist Jennifer Meyer, finalist Kristy Ersfeld, finalist Toni Corrado, semifinalist Shannon VerDuin, Vice President Marty Fridgen and President Monica Byron.

Ersfeld's colleagues praised her commitment to holistic health for both students and staff. "Kristy is an advocate for student wellbeing beyond the nurse's office," said Vanessa Bersuch, kindergarten paraprofessional at Farmington Elementary School. "She leads health education efforts, ensures compliance with safety protocols and steps in whenever help is needed."

Jennifer Meyer, special education ESP, Rochester Public Schools

Meyer started with Rochester in 2018. Since 2022, she has worked at Century High School as a special education ESP. She believes effective education is rooted in presence, care and genuine human connection. With every student, she seeks to build trust and strengthen their sense of agency, proactively communicating with teachers to ensure that each student's needs are met. "Jennifer has a unique ability to accurately assess a student's potential, develop that potential, and effectively hold them accountable through direction

and encouragement," said Michael D. Dusso, head coach of the Rochester Raiders adaptive soccer team, which Meyer also works with.

Amanda Phenix, special education paraprofessional, Waconia Public Schools

Phenix has been a special education paraprofessional for 20 years. In her work with students in the EBD program, Phenix says that developing positive, lasting relationships is essential: "It can take weeks, even months, to earn their trust; but once it's there, [they] begin to open up ... and find success," she said.

"Amanda has a remarkable gift for connecting with students who have behavioral needs," said Olivia Lemke, an emotional/behavioral disorder teacher for Waconia Public Schools. "Her ability to build strong relationships has led parents, on multiple occasions, to request that she continue supporting their child as they transition to high school—a true testament to her impact."



REGISTER NOW!

*We will be hosting our 2025 BIPOC Summit
Dec 12-13, 2025.*

This conference will create space for collective learning, as we lift up the strength and solidarity of BIPOC educators. We look forward to coming together, celebrating the wisdom of our ancestors and the leadership of future generations through this year's theme, Rooted and Rising: Honoring History and Shaping Our Future!

Please follow the QR code below to register!





NEA Global Learning Fellows at Arenal Volcano National Park in Costa Rica.

Exploring education, culture and sustainability: A journey through Costa Rica with NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellows Mollie Bousu, Hannah Johnson and Nichole Markworth

Written by Mollie Bousu, Hannah Johnson and Nichole Markworth. Edited by Heaven Keane.

Each year, the NEA Foundation's Global Learning Fellowship program provides in-depth opportunities for select educators to transform their classrooms to give students a global perspective so that they can thrive in an increasingly connected world. This year's cohort of 46 educators included three teachers from Minnesota: Mollie Bousu, social studies teacher in Burnsville; Hannah Johnson, fourth grade teacher in Osseo; and Nichole Markworth, K-6 music teacher for Lac qui Parle Valley Schools.

Throughout the past year, the trio met with a small cohort to develop lesson plans and a website centered around quality education, which is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to their cohort meetings, all of the fellows met via Zoom several times over the course of the year. Through these meetings, fellowship participants "develop the knowledge and skills to integrate global competency into their daily classroom instruction [and] advocate for global competency in their schools and districts," according to the NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship website.

Fellows spent the back half of June in Costa Rica for an immersive field study. From the heart of San José to the serene Guanacaste coast, they engaged deeply with Costa Rican culture, sustainability practices and learning about the nation's education system. The experience was transformative, offering opportunities to reflect, learn and collaborate in a global context.

On day two, the group kicked off their cultural immersion with a guided tour of San José, exploring landmarks such as the National Theater, National Museum and Mercado Central (Central Market). Day three brought the first school visit to Colegio Técnico Profesional de Puriscal, a secondary school with a technical and vocational focus in the San José province. Students attend school from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. at this school. Once they are in upper high school, students choose a track they wish to join. Students work and learn within these tracks, which include options such as executive, tourism, agriculture, artificial intelligence and more. Many students have jobs, internships or a university lined up after graduation.

Even without all the resources we are accustomed to in the U.S., the students were very happy and appeared to be enjoying themselves throughout our visit. The students had smiles the entire day and were genuinely excited to be at school and engaging with the fellows. The day ended with a visit to the University for Peace (UPEACE), which was established by the United Nations to promote peace education. The fellows attended a workshop hosted by Rey Sirakavit on peace building and sustainable development, where they learned about Costa Rica:

- The country officially disbanded the military in 1948 and redirected a large portion of this spending to education.
- It is ranked as one of the happiest countries in the world.
- Costa Rica provides universal education and health care.
- 35% of the country is set aside as protected land.
- 98% of Costa Rica's energy consumption comes from renewable energy.

- The country is home to one of the world's five blue zones, which are areas where people live significantly longer and healthier lives than average.

There were several meaningful quotes that stuck out to the trio of Minnesota fellows. One such quote is from activist Malala Yousafzai: "The only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and our souls."

Another memorable quote is from Kofi Annan, former secretary-general of the United Nations: "Education is, quite simply, peace building by another name. It is the most effective form of defense spending there is."

Day four brought a visit to the historic city of Cartago, visiting the Basílica de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles. After a traditional Costa Rican lunch, they journeyed to Irazú Volcano National Park for a scenic hike around the country's highest volcano. The evening included a compelling presentation by Costa Rican education researcher Jennyfer León Mena on Costa Rica's education system. Participants learned several interesting facts about the country's education system:

- Costa Rica has a 98% literacy rate.
- Eight percent of the nation's GDP is constitutionally mandated to go towards education (for the U.S., it is approximately 5.4%).
- Nine out of 100 schools offer a full curriculum, defined as an all-day education that includes art, music and P.E.
- Costa Rican schools have split school days, where one group of students attends from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and another group attends from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Principals get extra pay because they are technically teaching in two schools.
- They have centralized hiring and salaries: Individual schools don't pick who their teachers are.
- There are no substitute teachers except for maternity leave. If teachers are gone, they simply don't have that class.
- There is no evaluation process for teachers.
- 40.8% of all Costa Rican students live in poverty.

On day five, the fellows visited two more schools. The first school, Escuela Educación Especial Fernando Centeno Güell, is a primary school in San José with a special education focus. The second school was Liceo San Nicolás de Tolentino, a high school with a general education focus. Fellows spent the day engaging directly with students and staff at each of the schools, discussing teaching practices, equity and student engagement.

The group then traveled north to the lush rainforest region of Arenal. They stopped at a family-owned coffee estate, Hacienda Doka, to learn about sustainable farming and sample a variety of coffee. That evening, the group soaked in the area's natural hot springs before enjoying dinner.

The following day, the group hiked through Arenal Volcano National Park, observing wildlife and exploring hardened lava trails. Participants also toured the Don Juan farm—an organic farm where fellows harvested crops, learned about eco-friendly energy from biodigesters, participated in a sugar-cane harvesting demonstration and tasted traditional dishes.

En route to the Pacific coast, the group toured Palo Verde National Park by riverboat, spotting crocodiles, exotic birds and other wildlife. After a riverside lunch, they continued their journey to the stunning beaches of the Guanacaste region.

The final full day of exploration as a group took fellows to Santa Cruz, a hub of Costa Rican cultural

traditions, and Guaitil, a village known for its indigenous Chorotega-style pottery. A hands-on workshop allowed them to create and understand centuries-old techniques of pottery making. The evening ended with a farewell dinner that celebrated new friendships, inspiration and the shared mission of educational equity.

After a life-changing journey, fellows returned home with fresh insights, stories, connections, life-long friendships, a renewed purpose to infuse their classrooms with global perspectives and a deeper commitment to sustainable development goals. They were reminded to think globally, act locally—essentially, to understand how our actions impact the entire world while taking specific steps to bring change at the local level.

In closing, the group wishes everyone *pura vida*! *Pura vida*, which means “pure life,” isn't just a phrase—it's a mindset of gratitude, joy and living fully in each moment. It's a reminder that sometimes, the richest experiences come not from what we have, but from how we see the world.

We encourage all educators to consider applying for the NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellowship! While applications for the 2026 cohort are now closed, the opportunity will reopen this winter for the 2027 cohort.

For more information about the fellowship, visit <https://www.neafoundation.org/educator-grants-and-fellowships/global-learning-fellowship>.

NEA Global Learning Fellows in Costa Rica.



Overview of common training requirements for educators

This content was prepared as a compilation of the various training requirements for members and their colleagues. If your district is not providing one or more of these trainings to those required to receive it, please contact your building representative or Education Minnesota field staff.

Anti-harassment/violence

For	All employees
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 121A.03: "Sexual, Religious, and Racial Harassment and Violence Policy"
Frequency	Upon hire
Reqs	Discuss "the school's sexual, religious, and racial harassment and violence policy."

Blood Borne Pathogens

For	Positions where the employer determines that exposure to blood borne pathogens is reasonably anticipated (as in, the employee is a designated "first aider.")
Citation	Blood Borne Pathogens
Frequency	At the time of assignment & then annually.
Reqs	In addition to training, some these employees must be offered the hepatitis B vaccine free of charge.

Concussions

For	School coaches/officials in youth athletics.
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 121A.38, subd. 2(b)
Frequency	Initial training, then every three years
Reqs	Concussion in Youth Sports online training program (This must be offered by the MSHSL (not the school district), but members should be aware they are entitled to this training).

De-escalation in security

For	School Resource Officers (SROs)
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 626.8482 (effective 9.1.25)
Frequency	Within six months of assignment; Refresher course due 6.1.27; Mandatory refresher course after three yrs, 40 hr training
Reqs	Security, use of force, and de-escalation tactics

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

ESPs

For	New paraprofessionals
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 120B.363
Frequency	Within first 60 days of supervising or working with students
Reqs	"Initial training in emergency procedures, confidentiality, vulnerability, reporting obligations, discipline policies, roles and responsibilities, and a building orientation"

ESPs

For	Paraprofessionals, Title I aides, other instructional support staff
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 121A.642
Frequency	Eight hours annually (six of eight hours before first instruct. day or within 30 days of hire).
Reqs	Paid orientation or professional development.

ESPs, Special Ed

For	Paraprofessionals whose role in part is to provide direct support to students with disabilities
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 125A.08, subd. 2(1)
Frequency	Before/beginning at time of employment.
Reqs	"[M]ust develop sufficient knowledge and skills in: emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability."

ESPs, Special Ed

For	Paraprofessionals whose role in part is to provide direct support to students with disabilities
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 125A.08, subd. 2(3)
Frequency	Annually
Reqs	Training opportunities “to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills that are specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including: understanding disabilities, the unique and individual needs of each student according to the student’s disability and how the disability affects the student’s education and behavior, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities.”

ESPs, Special Ed, 1:1 assignments

For	Paraprofessionals working alone with a student with a disability
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 125A.08, subd. 2(2)
Frequency	Within five days of beginning to work alone with the student.
Reqs	Paid time “to review a student’s [IEP] or be briefed on the student’s specific needs by appropriate staff.”

Mandatory Reporting

For	Mandatory reporters—professionals & professionals’ delegates engaged in the practice of child care & education
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 260E.065
Frequency	(Local welfare agency is tasked with the training, & can direct mandatory reporters to trainings offered by the Commissioner of Children, Youth and Families) Can be online.
Reqs	The training “must provide an explanation of the legal obligations of a reporter, consequences for failure to report, and instruction on how to detect and report suspected maltreatment.” “[A]t least half of the training time must be spent on how to identify signs of suspected maltreatment or abuse ... [and] must cover the definition of each maltreatment type...”

Nutrition Program

For	School nutrition directors
Citation	USDA
Frequency	Annually, 12 hours
Reqs	Civil rights must be included, food safety must be covered every five years for eight hours.

Nutrition Program

For	School Nutrition Program staff
Citation	USDA
Frequency	Annually, six hrs (three if starting after Jan. 1 and four if part time).
Reqs	Civil rights must be included.

Reading

For	Teachers and support staff who teach or support reading instruction
Citation	READ Act
Frequency	Once
Reqs	Evidence-based reading instruction.

Restraints in Special Ed (restrictive procedures and de-escalation)

For	Any employee prior to being authorized to use restraints on students with disabilities
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 125A. 0942, subd. 5(a)
Frequency	
Reqs	Training must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “positive behavioral interventions; ▪ communicative intent of behaviors; ▪ relationship building; ▪ alternatives to restrictive procedures, including techniques to identify events and environmental factors that may escalate behavior; ▪ de-escalation methods; ▪ standards for using restrictive procedures only in an emergency; ▪ obtaining emergency medical assistance; ▪ the physiological and psychological impact of physical holding and seclusion; ▪ monitoring and responding to a child’s physical signs of distress when physical holding is being used; ▪ recognizing the symptoms of and interventions that may cause positional asphyxia when physical holding is used; ▪ district policies and procedures for timely reporting and documenting each incident involving use of a restricted procedure; and ▪ schoolwide programs on positive behavior strategies.”

School-aged child care

For	Child care staff (sometimes before/after school programs)
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 245A.40
Frequency	Within 90 days of starting work, then every three years.
Reqs	First aid

Seizures

For	Designated staff in seizure action plan
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 121A.24
Frequency	Effective as of SY 22-23
Reqs	To meet the needs of students with a seizure disorder and who may need seizure rescue medication administration; how to recognize, respond and provide medication for seizures.

Sex Discrimination

For	All employees (Additional training required for investigators, decisionmakers, and others responsible for implementing grievance procedures.)
Citation	Title IX
Frequency	
Reqs	The school/district's obligation to address sex discrimination in its education program or activity; the scope of conduct that constitutes sex discrimination; and the applicable notice and information requirements outlined in the Title IX regulations.

Student Safety

For	School staff who regularly interact with students
Citation	Safe and Supportive Schools Act, Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 subds. 3 & 4
Frequency	Within first year of employment & at least every three years.
Reqs	Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent/intervene to stop prohibited conduct; state model policy also includes: complex dynamics affecting the actor, target, and witnesses to prohibited conduct; research on prohibited conduct, including specific categories of students at risk; the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; & internet safety and cyberbullying.

Transportation (other than school bus drivers)

For	Driver transporting students without a school bus endorsement on their license
Citation	Minn. Stat. § 171.02, subd. 2a(d) & subd. 2b(c)
Frequency	Annual
Reqs	Training must be done by "the operator's employer" and must include: "(1) safe operation of the type of school bus the operator will be driving; (2) understanding student behavior, including issues relating to students with disabilities; (3) encouraging orderly conduct of students on the bus and handling incidents of misconduct appropriately; (4) knowing and understanding relevant laws, rules of the road, and local school bus safety policies; (5) handling emergency situations; and (6) safe loading and unloading of students." Type III vehicle drivers have these added expectations: (7) performance of pretrip vehicle inspections; (8) safe loading and unloading of students"

Note: Under recent amendments to PELRA, the employer must allow an exclusive representative (the union) to meet in person for at least 30 minutes of paid time with a newly hired employee within 30 calendar days from the date of hire during new employee orientations (if conducted) or other group meetings.

Nominations open soon for the 2026 Human Rights Award

Nominations for Education Minnesota's Human Rights Award open on Dec. 12. This award, open to active Education Minnesota members, recognizes achievements in the field of human and civil rights.

Nominees should meet one or more of the following criteria through work, contributions or programs:

- The nominee has contributed to the field of human rights, either through a special project, direct services or their life's work and role.
- The nominee has inspired direct action in the cause of human and civil rights.
- The nominee has demonstrated a personal commitment to the promotion and protection of human and civil rights through curriculum and instruction.
- The nominee has initiated or engaged in activities that positively impact the educational, social, economic or political life of the community.

- The nominee has displayed creativity, determination and perseverance in achieving human and civil rights goals.

Education Minnesota accepts nominations without regard to race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation or national origin. The Education Minnesota Human Rights Committee will select the honoree, who is approved by the Education Minnesota Executive Committee. The honoree will become Education Minnesota's nomination for one of the National Education Association's human and civil rights awards.

For more information and to submit a nomination, scan the QR code below or visit educationminnesota.org/news/awards-and-honors/human-rights-award.



Below: 2025 Human Rights Award winner Kasey Wacker with Rodney Rowe, former Education Minnesota secretary-treasurer; Denise Specht, former president of Education Minnesota; and Monica Byron, current Education Minnesota president, at the 2025 Representative Convention.



Filing open for Education Minnesota governing board, NEA director positions

The candidate filing for National Education Association director 3 is now open. Candidate filings for Education Minnesota's Governing Board election zone positions opened Nov. 3.

The current term for NEA director 3 now filled by Marty Scofield will expire Aug. 31, 2026. As a top decision-making body, the NEA Board of Directors includes at least one director from each state affiliate, as well as representatives from retired members, aspiring educators, at-large representatives of ethnic minorities, administrators, teachers in higher education and active members employed in ESP positions. Candidates for this position will file a form by Dec. 12.

Education Minnesota is governed by an elected board, made up of a member from each of the union's eight election zones and three at-large positions. The governing board meets throughout the year to set dues, adopt a budget and carry out directives passed at the annual meeting.

The current three-year terms for all 11 seats will expire June 30, 2026. Candidates for the next three-year term (July 1, 2026-June 20, 2029) will file by submitting the filing form by Dec. 12.

During the filing period, all of these forms are also available to complete and submit electronically on the Education Minnesota website.

Delegate selection for 2026 NEA Representative Assembly closes Dec. 12

The National Education Association Representative Assembly, the major decision-making body for the NEA, is scheduled to be held July 3-7, 2026, in Denver.

All active Education Minnesota members are eligible to run to be a state-credentialed delegate for the NEA RA. The filing period opened on Nov. 3 and closes Dec. 12. 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 in a 15-day window (weekdays only) beginning Feb. 16 and ending March 6, 2026.

Nominations for state-credentialed aspiring educator delegates open Nov. 3 and close Feb. 15. Elections will take place at the 2026 Aspiring Educator Leadership Spring Workshop.

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 6. 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 200 or fewer members send a delegate to the 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 Marty Fridgen at martyfridgen@edmn.org.

Filing Form for Governing Board – At-Large Election Zone

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 – At-Large Election Zone: _____

Three-year term: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029. Election maps located at www.educationminnesota.org.

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Personal email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 3. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12, 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 Dec. 19, 2025.

(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:

NEA Director (Position 3)

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Personal email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on June 1. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12, 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 Dec. 19, 2025.

(For official use only)

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

Filing Form for Governing Board At-Large ESP

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 At-Large ESP

Three-year term: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029. Election maps located at www.educationminnesota.org.

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Personal email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 3. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12, 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: Education Minnesota includes an insert of all candidates in the Minnesota Educator published prior to the election in April and in a Voter Guide distributed at the Representative Convention. Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion in these publications and the Education Minnesota website.

The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org by Dec. 19, 2025.

(For official use only)

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

Filing Form for Governing Board At-Large Higher Ed/Statewide Affiliate

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 At-Large Higher Ed/Statewide Affiliate

Three-year term: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2029. Election maps located at www.educationminnesota.org.

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Personal email: _____

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

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 3. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12, 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: Education Minnesota includes an insert of all candidates in the Minnesota Educator published prior to the election in April and in a Voter Guide distributed at the Representative Convention. Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion in these publications and the Education Minnesota website.

The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org by Dec. 19, 2025.

(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 3-7, 2026 in Denver.

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: _____
 School email: _____ Personal email: _____
 Summer address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 3. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Feb. 15, 2026.

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. 20, 2026**.

(For official use only)

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

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, 2026 in Denver.

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for state credentials to the NEA RA
to be held July 3-7, 2026 in Denver. 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. 3. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12, 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 **Dec. 19, 2025**.

(For official use only)

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



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.

DT261225

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

Securus ID's Data Broker Removal Tool

Data brokers operate in a legal grey area, collecting and repackaging publicly available information from various sources including public records, social media profiles, and government databases. The most common types of data brokers include:



- **Marketing and advertising brokers** - Data brokers such as Acxiom and Epsilon collect and sell demographic information, personal preferences and consumer information histories to advertisers so that they can send you targeted ads.
- **People search sites** - Data brokers like Spokeo and Whitepages create and sell user profiles, which could include your contact information, employment history and family connections. These profiles can be used to perform background checks or reveal your contact details.
- **Financial information and risk mitigation brokers** - Brokerages including Equifax and Experian compile financial information about people to develop credit and risk ratings for financial institutions, insurance companies and other lenders.
- **Personal health information brokers** - Brokers such as IQVIA collect patient records, track prescription sales and monitor health-related behaviors to inform clinical research, pharmaceutical and medical marketing initiatives.
- **Location brokers** - Data brokers such as Cuebiq and SafeGraph track GPS and app-based location data to build traffic, travel, and demographic models for retailers and government agencies.

To learn more about the exclusive Securus ID plans for Education Minnesota members, visit educationminnesota.securusid.com.

41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 651-292-4856 800-642-4624
esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org

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THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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

The 2026 elections are starting now. Your leadership in our democracy is more important than ever!

Get ready for election 2026 at Education Minnesota's political conference

Next year, educators can come together to elect local, state and federal leaders who will respect the promise of public education for all. Together, we can use our voices to create schools and campuses where students and educators can thrive.

The educators of the Education Minnesota political action committee (PAC) have established two key strategies to win the 2026 campaign. They are:

1. Use relational organizing at workplaces to get out the vote of 100 percent of Education Minnesota members, focusing especially on 29,000 members – those who skipped voting in the 2022 election and younger members under 35.
2. Educate Education Minnesota members on the candidate stances on the issues, including educator compensation and union rights, with the online voter guide at edmnvotes.org and through non-partisan worksite literature and conversations.

The Education Minnesota PAC will be launching these efforts at the 2026 political conference Friday, Jan. 30 to Saturday, Jan. 31 in Bloomington. Session details and a tentative agenda are available now on our website at the link below. Registration is open until Jan. 23!

Register today at www.educationminnesota.org/political-conference-registration.