



CAPSULE

THE KRAMER BROWN NEWSLETTER

Badger, Goodridge, Greenbush-Middle River, Grygla-Gatzke, Kittson Central, Lake of the Woods, Lancaster, Marshall County Central, NWRIC, Red Lake County Central, Red Lake Falls, Roseau, Stephen-Argyle, Thief River Falls, Tri-County, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo, Warroad

Special points of interest:

- KB Recognition Awards
- Kramer Brown Scholarship Recipients
- Paid Family & Medical Leave Act

SPRING 2025

Inside this issue:

From the Field	4
KB Chair	5
Meeting Minutes	6-13
Upcoming Events	19
Scholarship Recipients	20

2024-25 Kramer Brown Recognition Awards

May 2025

The Kramer Brown Recognition Dinner awards banquet was held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at the Legacy Event Center in Thief River Falls. Retirees, Teacher of the Year, Friends of Education and Scholarship winners were honored that evening.



Renee Wahl, Kittson Central Retiree with Mark Christensen Kittson Central Board Representative



Lois Anderson Goodridge Retiree with Jennifer Sargent, Goodridge member

Retirees



Have a wonderful retirement to the 2024-25 Retirees!

Thank You for your many years in the Education Field!



The 2024-2025 Retiring Educators are:

Badger: Lisa Erickson

Goodridge: Lois Anderson

Kittson Central: Renee Wahl

Thief River Falls: Diane Johnson, Julie Kragness & Sherry Miller

Warroad: Bryan Denault & Rose McDonald Johnson

Friends of Education



LaRae & Franklin Frislie Friends of Education with Debra Koebernick, Greenbush-Middle River Board Representative & President



Gene Lunsetter, Grygla-Gatzke President with Randy Larson, Grygla-Gatzke, Friend of Education

Friends of Education



Jennifer Wieland Red Lake Falls President & Cheryl Matzke, Red Lake Falls Friend of Education



Molly Fridstrom Co-President Warren-Alvarado-Oslo, Carol Anderson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Friend of Education & Jeanne Johnson, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Board Representative

Friends of Education Awards:

Badger: Charles Erickson

Greenbush-Middle River: Franklin Frislie & LaRae Frislie

Grygla-Gatzke: Randy Larson

Red Lake Falls: Cheryl Matzke

Thief River Falls: Tim Benedict

Tri-County: Karen Reitan

Warren-Alvarado-Oslo: Carol Anderson

Warroad: Pete Hodgson

Teacher of the Year

Congrats to all 2024-25 Teachers of the Year!

Your dedication is an example for all!

The 2024-25 Teacher of the Year Awards:

Grygla-Gatzke: Andrew Sundberg

Roseau: Soren Olesen

Warroad: Nancy Fisher



Soren Olesen, Roseau Teacher of the Year & Andrew Sundberg, Grygla-Gatzke Teacher of the Year



Thank you to all the local Presidents for the work you do throughout the year!

Presidents recognized are:

BadgerMike Coltom
GoodridgeMariah Kirkeide
..... Stephanie Olson
Greenbush-Middle River Debra Koebernick
Grygla-Gatzke Gene Lunsetter
Kittson Central Kari Jensen
..... Bailey Peterson
Lake of the Woods Bobby Jo Castle
Lancaster Cory Waling
Marshall County Central Michael Thompson
NWRIC Kathleen Kallis
Red Lake County Central Kate Moll
Red Lake Falls Jennifer Wieland
Roseau Leif Eidsmoe
Stephen-Argyle Matt Kroulik
Thief River Falls Stacey Leake
Tri-County Heidi Hanson
Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Molly Fridstrom
.....Elizabeth Murray
Warroad Kristin Smith

Thank you Kramer-Brown Governing Board!

ChairpersonMara Gust, Tri-County
Vice Chairperson..... Heidi Hanson, Tri-County
Secretary..... Marcy Helling, Thief River Falls
Treasurer Alexis Hruby, Thief River Falls

Local Representatives to the Kramer-Brown Governing Board

Badger..... Gretchen Lee
Goodridge Stephanie Olson
Greenbush-Middle River Debra Koebernick
Grygla-GatzkeRobin Johnson
Kittson Central Mark Christenson
Lake of the Woods Nicole Fiala
Marshall County Central Lisa Donarski
NWRIC Kathleen Kallis
Red Lake County Central..... Andrea Eskeli
Red Lake Falls..... Aubrey Knott
Roseau Maranda Peterson
Thief River Falls Stacey Leake
.....Marcy Helling
..... Alexis Hruby
..... Bridget Paulson
Tri-County Heidi Hanson
..... Mara Gust
Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Jeanne Johnson
Warroad Rose McDonald Johnson

From the Field



Kevin Young

As I write this article, we are nearing the middle of May. Many of you are counting the days and only have 7-8 days left in the school year. Once again, I want each of you to know how appreciative we are of the work you do for the students of your community. My hope is you and your students continue to find big successes even though we live in some challenging times. Please keep in mind, the successes are more important than ever, and you need to recognize and celebrate them.

At the legislature, a lot of unknowns still exist with just a few days left before the session ends. It is looking more and more like there will be a special session. There may even be a need for multiple special sessions to address the reductions expected in Washington D.C. I know some of you continue to be frustrated with the lack of change in pensions, but please know Education Minnesota members and staff continue to work countless hours trying to get pension change. We are making progress and seeing support from both sides of the aisle. Hopefully, this will help achieve the pension reform many of you are hoping for.

Don't forget about the work Education Minnesota staff and members are doing in the push for statewide health insurance. Progress is happening, which will hopefully help achieve significant change soon. It is unlikely we will see significant change and movement towards statewide health insurance during this legislative session, but the fact is that progress has been made. Much attention has been brought to the issue which should help as we continue the work for change. One must always remember change like this takes time and we must continue to work for change.

I realize I mentioned this in the past, but since it is teacher appreciation time, I would like you to think about your colleagues and reach out to them with a few words of support and appreciation for the work they do. I also would like you to take some time to reach out to your local leaders, such as your local president, vice president, treasurer, membership contact, and negotiators. Besides teaching, these people have also been working hard to address all the unusual situations that have occurred over the last few years. The time these people put in, on behalf of members, is significant. Much of the work your local leaders do goes unnoticed, but believe me, it is important work. I encourage you to share a few words of support and thanks to these people.

I also would like all members to consider stepping up and getting more involved in your Local Union. At some point, many of your current leaders will need a break and someone needs to replace them. We need members to learn from these current leaders while they are still in their current positions. Please consider getting more involved. A small amount of your time is all we are asking. I believe you will have a better understanding of Unions and their work

by doing so. Unions are like anything else. If you do not get involved, you will get very little out of the Union. Getting involved and becoming a Union leader can be very rewarding and satisfying. Please consider getting more involved. If you have questions how to do this, please contact me.

As always, please do your best to be involved in YOUR Local. TOGETHER we can do so much. I would like all of you to know that I am here to help in any way I can. Whether you have questions regarding your contract, negotiations, health insurance, elections or any other item, please send an e-mail or give me a call. I can be contacted at the Education Minnesota Bemidji Field Office at 1-218-751-5957 or 1-800-622-4971. My e-mail address is kevin.young@edmn.org. Also keep in mind the

Education Minnesota website <https://www.educationminnesota.org/home>, is a great resource for you.

Thank You for all the extra work you do each and every day. It is very much appreciated!!

Have a great





Mara Gust

2024-25 Kramer Brown I.O. Chair

Happy Spring! Days are getting longer outside, and maybe inside, too, as we wind down our school year. I hope everyone is hanging in there during the busy days of May and early June!

It's been a busy year in Kramer-Brown. This year, we hosted the Fall Drive-In, the Overnighter in Bemidji (in cooperation with the Northland United IO), and the Recognition Dinner, as well as other events. Please join me in thanking board members for their efforts this year!

The most recent Kramer-Brown board meeting was in conjunction with the Kramer-Brown Representative Assembly this past March. Delegates who attended this assembly also represent locals at the state Education Minnesota Representative Convention. If you have never attended the Representative Convention, I encourage you to think about it in the future. It is a fun event where you can network with colleagues but most importantly see how our union works at the state level and be a voice for your constituents.

In early May, the Kramer-Brown board hosted its annual appreciation dinner in Thief River Falls. We honored Teachers of the Year, Retirees, and Friends of Education. The recognition dinner is always a special event to mark the end of the school year and celebrate notable people in education. Thanks to the Kramer-Brown board members for their hard work to make this event a success.

For the first time this year, scholarship recipients were also honored at our dinner! It was fun to meet our exceptional young people in person. Kramer-Brown continues to award scholarships to dependents of Kramer-Brown members. Talk to your local board rep for more information on our scholarships! We also have grants available to locals and individual members. All of this is available on our website.

The Kramer Brown-Board will have its last meeting of the year in early June. This meeting, the "summer planning meeting," sketches out all of our events for the coming year--including the Fall Drive-In, coming to you at Lafayette High School in Red Lake Falls on October 1. (SAVE THE DATE!) This Fall Drive-In has relicensure courses as usual, plus some new sessions! As always, you can suggest plans or ideas to your Kramer-Brown representative. We consider all feedback and use it to guide our decisions throughout the year.

Now is a great time to consider joining the Kramer-Brown governing board. We currently have vacancies from several locals. Thank you to our officers, Secretary Marcy Helling from Thief River Falls, Vice-President Heidi Hanson from Tri-County, and Treasurer Alexis Hruby from Thief River Falls for their extra work this year.

I hope this summer you can take some much deserved rest and recharge after a demanding year. Thank you for all you do for your students and each other.

The Kramer Brown Capsule is the official publication of the

Kramer-Brown Intermediate Organization

Capsule Editor - Andrea Johnson

800-622-4971

andrea.johnson@edmn.org

KRAMER BROWN GOVERNING BOARD:

Chairperson Mara Gust, Tri-County
Vice Chair Heidi Hanson, Tri-County
Treasurer Alexis Hruby, Thief River Falls
Secretary..... Marcy Helling, Thief River Falls

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES:

Badger..... Gretchen Lee
Goodridge Stephanie Olson
Greenbush-Middle River..... Debra Koebernick
Grygla-Gatzke..... Robin Johnson
Kittson Central..... Mark Christenson
Lake of the Woods..... Nicole Fiala
Marshall County Central..... Lisa Donarski
NWRIC..... Kathleen Kallis
Red Lake County Central..... Andrea Eskeli
Red Lake Falls..... Aubrey Knott
Roseau..... Maranda Peterson
Thief River Falls..... Stacey Leake
Thief River Falls..... Bridget Paulson
Warren-Alvarado-Oslo..... Jeanne Johnson
Warroad..... Rose McDonald Johnson
Education Minnesota Field Staff..... Kevin Young
Education Minnesota Support Staff..... Andrea Johnson



January 8, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Kramer Brown Governing Board Minutes

January 8, 2025

The Hive/TRF/5:30pm

Chairperson Mara Gust called the meeting to order at 5:40pm.

Members Present: Mara Gust, Heidi Hanson, Deb Koebernick, Alexis Hruby, Stacey Leake, Rose McDonald, Nicole Fiala, Mark Christenson, Aubrey Knott, Robin Johnson, Bridget Paulson, Lisa Donarski, Jeanne Johnson, Marcy Helling, Reid Froiland, and Kevin Young, EM Staff.

- A. Adopt agenda with flexibility/Communications
No additions or objections/Adopted by unanimous consent
- B. Secretary's Report - Marcy Helling
Robin Johnson made a motion to accept the Secretary's Report, second by Lisa Donarski. Motion carried.
- C. Treasurer's Report -Alexis Hruby
A motion was made by Deb Koebernick to approve the KB Budget, second by Rose McDonald. Motion carried.
NOTE: Stephen/Argyle are only local to still pay dues.
 - 1. Audit Report/Reid Froiland
 - a. Financial statement from September 2023-August 2024 were in good standing, with a few suggestions given. Thanks to Alexis Hruby for continuing to do a good job as our KB treasurer.
 - b. A motion was made by Mark Christenson to restate/revise to accept the Treasurer's report for 2024-25 until this current audit, second by Heidi Hanson. Motion carried. Audit report on file.
- D. Old Business:
 - 1. KB/NU Overnighter/March 21-22, 2025/Hampton Inn, Bemidji, MN
 - a. Reviewed agenda items
 - b. Marcy Helling, Mark Christenson, and Heidi Hanson will be there about 3:45-4pm to set up and help Andrea.
 - c. There will be a comedian from Minneapolis on Friday evening. Due to cost increase, there will be no door prizes.
 - d. Alexis Hruby will bring money to Marcy for the \$20 stipend for evening meal.
 - e. NO Pizza and Politics this year.

E. Action Items:

1. Fall Drive-In/RLF/October 2025/ Contact: Aubrey Knott
 - a. Sessions discussed /Meal/Entertainment
 - b. Sessions include: #81 Retirement (2 sessions)
#52 American Indian History
#12 Meet and Confer
#55 PBIS
#77 Mental Health Issues for Adults
Art session (2 sessions) Limit of 20 per session
Technology Session (?)

F. New Business:

1. KB Rep Assembly/February 26/The Hive/5:30pm
 - a. Be prepared to discuss information for RC (if items are available)
2. Teacher Appreciation Dinner/May 7/Legacy Center, TRF
 - a. Registration at 5pm/Supper @ 6pm/Program to follow
 - b. 2 meat meal/\$16
 - c. Retirees, Teacher of Year, Friend of Education, Scholarship recipients
 - d. Decorations: Marcy Helling and Alexis Hruby
 - e. Contact person: Alexis Hruby/Michelle Westerman
3. KB Audit Payment
 - a. A motion was made to pay Reid Froiland \$300 for examination of financial statements for the KB audit by Heidi Hanson, second by Alexis Hruby. Motion carried.
4. School Safety and Discipline Discussion (Mara)
 - a. This was a request from EdMN...lots of local discussions

G. Field Office Report - Kevin Young

1. 2025 Legislative Priorities:

- Teacher compensation - considering legislation with minimum compensation for all teachers; a second minimum for those with a master's degree; a third level for those with a MA+10
- Pensions - considering legislation for retirement at 60 years of age & 30 years of experience; lower base penalties for those 59-64 yrs of age; eliminate current COLA delay for those that retire early; COLA increase from 1.2% to 1.5% in 2028; dedicated funding for future improvements to TRA; NEED PENSION Action Leader from each local.
- Health Insurance - considering legislation creating a mandatory statewide pool for all school employees; could include other public city & county

employees; oversight by labor-management committee; plan would be similar to SEGIP & PEIP High Value Plan; possibility of saving millions of dollars each year in broker fees.

- Keep in mind the legislature can be a Long Game - it can take several years to accomplish goals. It is just the way the legislative system works.
- 2. Local WALs needed: One for health insurance and one for pension reform. Information emailed to all local presidents and the KB IO Governing Board.
- 3. 2025 HITA year - please make sure your HITA Letters to the district and PEIP letters of intent are submitted to the district and copies sent to PEIP (Shawn Byrne); multiple emails have been sent to local presidents and HCAs.
- 4. Audits:
 - Check with your Treasurer's to make sure audits are getting done and copies are sent to the Field Office
 - File 990 e-post card with IRS; take 5 mins each yr.; if not completed for 3 consecutive years, the local will lose tax exempt status which then requires filling out 23 pages of information and paying \$800-\$1000 to regain tax exempt status

<u>Fiscal Period:</u>	<u>Due Date:</u>
July 1 - June 30	due by Dec 31
Aug 1 - July 31	due by Jan 31
Sept 1 - Aug 31	due by Feb 28
Jan 1 - Dec 31	due by June 30

- 5. Negotiations Updates:
 - Negotiator networking sessions held in December. Eleven of the seventeen KB IO Locals had representation at one of the meetings.
 - Several topics discussed including READ Act, District Literacy Leads, Media Center Funding, Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML).
 - April 8 and 9 will be next negotiator update meetings.
 - April 8 meeting will include presentation on PFML - local presidents, HCAs, and negotiators are encouraged to attend. Will be important in the upcoming round of bargaining. Law goes into effect on January 1, 2026. Should the venue change to a more centrally located site.
- 6. KB/NU Overnighter: Bemidji, Hampton Inn; March 21-22, 2025; focus on Bargaining; all sessions have been requested; Registration information will be sent out soon.
- 7. Collective Bargaining & Organizing Conference (CBOC) - January 24/25, 2025, DoubleTree, Bloomington - See Flyer.
 - Registration is open.

January 8, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes cont.

- This conference is for negotiators and those that will support the bargaining team.
 - Locals with financial hardships should contact Andrea Cecconi and Maureen Fourre asap. Links to these folks is included in the CBOC registration information.
8. Fall Drive-In: October 1, 2025, at Red Lake Falls.
 - Need to pick sessions.
 9. Education Minnesota Representative Convention: Registration is now open. The first RC 2025 Update was sent on December 6, 2024.
 - Please remember to follow your C & Bylaws in electing your local delegate(s) and alternate(s).
 - The local president will have to register delegates. Please do this as soon as possible.
 - A reminder that all delegates and alternates that wish to access additional funding from KB IO need to attend the KB IO Representative Assembly on February 26, 2025.
 10. Lobby Days: Lobby days for the 2025 session will be in person and possibly virtual. Watch for information regarding specifics. Locals and IOs are encouraged to set up a lobby day on January 29, the same day as the Rally to Fund Our Future - see flyer
 11. Summer Seminar: This will happen and will be a little different this year. More of a leadership event. More details as they become available.
 12. Visibility in locals: Please send calendar/notification of general membership meetings, events the local is taking part in, school calendars, etc..... I will do my best to attend.
 13. Please make sure the information I share with you at Governing Board meetings is passed on to those in your locals who need the information. Thank You!!!
 14. Other

Meeting Adjourned 8:15pm.
KB Secretary, Marcy Helling

February Meeting:

1. Final Discussions KB/Northland Overnighter/March 22,23, 2024 @ Bemidji
2. Plan Scholarship Committee (Due: March 1)
3. Reminder of Capsule Articles: Jeanne Johnson (bio), Deb Koebernick, Gretchen Lee, Stacey Leake, Maranda Peterson (April 15)
4. Summer Planning Meeting: Tuesday, June 11, 2024 starting at 9:30am at Rutters Birchmont Lodge, 7598 Bemidji Rd NE Bemidji

February 26, 2025 Board Rep Assembly Minutes

Kramer Brown Governing Board Rep. Assembly Minutes (Unapproved until RA 2026)
February 26, 2025
The Hive, TRF @ 5:30pm

Chairperson Mara Gust called the meeting to order at 5:45pm.

Introduction of Governing Board and Guests

Delegate Roll Call: Mara Gust, KB Chairperson, Heidi Hanson, Tri-County delegate; Deb Koebernick, KB board member; Alexis Hruby, KB Treasurer; Marcy Helling, KB Secretary; Nicole Fiala, LOW delegate; Stacey Leake, KB board member; Mark Christenson, KCC delegate; Jeanne Johnson, WAO delegate; Stephanie Olson, Goodridge delegate; Bridget Paulson, KB Board member, Kevin Young, EM Staff.

A motion by Mara Gust to accept the Delegate Roll Call, with a second by Heidi Hanson. Motion carried.

- A. Adopt agenda with flexibility/Communications
- B. Secretary's Report - Marcy Helling
 - a. Stacey Leake made a motion to accept the January KB minutes, second by Deb K. Motion carried.
 - b. Stacey Leake made a motion to accept the KB Rep. Assembly 2024 minutes, second by Heidi Hanson. Motion carried.
- C. Treasurer's Report - Alexis Hruby
 - a. Stacey Leake made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, second by Andrea Eskeli. Motion carried.
- D. Old Business:
 - 1. KB Appreciation Dinner/May 7/Legacy Event Center, TRF
 - a. Menu will include meatballs, chicken, potatoes/gravy, veg., rolls, salad. Dessert will be provided by KB (Marcy)
 - b. Alexis, Marcy, and Stacey will meet to finalize decorations. They will meet at about 4pm that day to organize. Pictures will be taken at the event.
 - c. Certificate, Amazon \$50 gift cards, and a card will be given to the retirees. A certificate will be also given to Teacher of the Year and Friends of Education. The KB Scholarship winners/with 2 guests will be invited.
 - d. The final program will be sent to Executive Board for review. Mara and Alexis may get Google Sheets for the registration.
 - e. Registration at 5:30pm with dinner to follow at 6pm.

f. A contract will be sent to Andrea at the EM Office when finalized. Alexis will check on this with Michelle at the Legacy Event Center.

2. KB /Northland Overnighter/March 21-22/Bemidji, MN

- Marcy will get one \$25 gift card for a 1st time attendee from KB.
- Set-up about 3:45pm (Some volunteered: Marcy, Robin, and Mark)
- Alexis H. will get cash for (\$20) evening meal vouchers to Marcy H.
- Marcy H. will bring the banner for the event and register KB locals.
- 145 have registered the event...49 from KB local.
- KB board members will help at the door for comedian.
- KB pays \$1,000 for part of comedian and a \$20 meal stipend.

E. Action Items:

1. Scholarship Committee

- The committee of KB members are Alexis Hruby, Stephanie Olson, and Bridget Paulson. They will review the scholarships brought to KB. The due date is March 1.
- The scholarship recipients will be honored at the KB Appreciation Dinner in May. Each winner may bring 2 guests. A photo will be added to the Capsule.

2. Individual Grant Request

- Stacey Leake made a motion to accept the grant request from Tri-County, second by Mark Christenson. Motion carried.

F. New Business:

1. EM Rep. Assembly/April 25-26, 2025 (Doubletree, Bloomington)

- One hotel room for one night per local.
- One round-trip mileage reimbursement per delegate
- KB reimburses up to \$175 vouchered expenses: \$125 for a sub and up to \$50 for expenses of food, etc.
- Discussion of Amendments found on educationminnesota.org
NOTE: Register by March 21, 2025.

G. Field Office Report - Kevin Young

1. 2025 Legislative Priorities:

- Teacher compensation
- Pensions - NEED PENSION Action Leader from each local.
- Health Insurance - NEED PENSION Action Leader from each local.
- Locals can still add Action Leaders, but the timeline to access stipends has past.

- Keep in mind the legislature can be a Long Game - it can take several years to accomplish goals. It is just the way the legislative system works.

Current Local Action Leaders:

Local w/ no

Badger - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders
IO)

Bagley (NU

Fosston - Pension Action Leader (NU IO)
IO)

BRIC (NU

G-MR - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

Goodridge

Grygla-Gatzke - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders
NWRIC

Kittson Central - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

SAC

LOW - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

TRF

Lancaster - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders
Warroad

MCC - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

Red Lake - Pension and Health Care Action Leader

RLCC - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

RLF - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

Roseau - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

Tri-county - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

WAO - Pension and Health Care Action Leaders

2. 2025 HITA year - please make sure your HITA Letters to the district and PEIP letters of intent are submitted to the district and copies sent to PEIP (Shawn Byrne); multiple emails have been sent to local presidents and HCAs; hearing a lot about districts using insurance brokers.

3. Audits:

- Check with your Treasurer's to make sure audits are getting done and copies are sent to the Field Office
- File 990 e-post card with IRS; take 5 mins each yr.; if not completed for 3 consecutive years, the local will lose tax exempt status which then requires filling out 23 pages of information and paying \$800-\$1000 to regain tax exempt status

Fiscal Period:

Due Date:

July 1 - June 30

due by Dec 31

Aug 1 - July 31

due by Jan 31

Sept 1 - Aug 31

due by Feb 28

Jan 1 - Dec 31

due by June 30

- Locals/IO missing 2023-24 Audit Report:

Kramer-Brown IO, Bagley (NU IO), BRIC (NU IO), KC, LOW, MCC, RLCC, Roseau, SAC, TRF, Warroad

4. Locals that have not set up E-Pay for dues remittance to Education Minnesota:
Bagley (NU IO), Goodridge, Grygla-Gatzke, NWRIC, RLCC, Roseau, SAC, TRF, WAO, Warroad
5. Negotiations Updates:
 - April 9 Negotiations Update Meeting - PFML Presentation and Bargaining Updates - see flyer
 - Considerations for local unions on four-day school weeks - see handout
6. KB/NU Overnighter: Bemidji, Hampton Inn; March 21-22, 2025; record registration; we will need help checking badges for the Friday night session (members only)
7. Education Minnesota Representative Convention: Registration is now open. The first RC 2025 Update was sent on December 6, 2024.
 - Please remember to follow your C & Bylaws in electing your local delegate(s) and alternate(s).
 - The local president will have to register delegates. Please do this as soon as possible.
 - A reminder that all delegates and alternates that wish to access additional funding from KB IO need to attend the KB IO Representative Assembly on February 26, 2025.
8. Summer Leadership Seminar: This will happen and will be a little different this year. More of a leadership event. More details as they become available.
9. Visibility in locals: Please send calendar/notification of general membership meetings, events the local is taking part in, school calendars, etc..... I will do my best to attend
10. Please make sure the information I share with you at Governing Board meetings is passed on to those in your locals who need the information. Thank You!!
11. Other: Capsule Assignments (April 15)
Rose M., Deb K., Jeanne J. (bio), Maranda P., Stacey L.

NOTE: Bridget Paulson needs a badge.

Meeting Adjourned @ 7:30pm

KB Secretary,
Marcy Helling

Upcoming Events:

KB IO Recognition Dinner - May 7, Legacy Event Center, TRF

Summer Planning - June 4 @ 9:30am at Ruttger's Birchmont Lodge, Bemidji, MN

What to know about the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act

The 2023 Paid Family and Medical Leave Act provides paid time off when a serious condition prevents you from working, when you need time to care for a family member or a new child, for certain military-related events or for certain personal safety issues. Currently, the program is set to take effect on Jan. 1, 2026. While there are Republican-led efforts to delay and repeal the implementation of PFML, they are unlikely to become law.

We have compiled a list of some of the most frequently asked questions to help local affiliates prepare for the implementation of PFML. If you have additional questions, please reach out to your field staff.

How will this program work?

The law establishes a family and medical insurance account modeled after the state's unemployment insurance fund. It will be managed by a new Family and Medical Benefits Insurance Division within the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

You will need to notify your employer at least 30 days before you plan to take leave, if the event is foreseeable. You will need to experience a qualifying event (an event that makes you eligible for leave) of at least seven calendar days and will need to apply to the paid leave program for the leave. You or your family member's medical professional will provide certification of the reason for leave.

What's considered a "qualifying event" for PFML?

The most common PFML-eligible situations will likely be bonding time around a child's birth, adoption or foster care arrangement. With a few exceptions, PFML must be used within the first 12 months after that event.

Caregiving leave could apply to a family member's serious physical or mental illness, an injury that leads to inpatient care or incapacity, a need for recurring treatment or a stretch of recovery. Similar parameters apply to the employee's own medical situation,

including pregnancy or health complications. Leave could also stem from a family member's military deployment or a need to reconnect with someone coming back from active-duty service. The leave may also surround an instance of domestic abuse or sexual assault to the employee or a family member in cases where the employee needs a longer stretch of time away from work.

How is the PFML program paid for? Do I have to contribute to this program to receive benefits?

The initial down payment for the PFML program was made from the 2023 budget surplus. Eventually, the ongoing costs will be split among employers and workers.

The payroll tax (or "premium") will be increased annually, based on actuarial data. The full premium rate is expected to be 0.88%, with a 1.2% cap on total contributions. There are exceptions to lower the cost for employers with fewer than 30 workers. There is also money allocated to help employers hire temporary staff or pay costs associated with employees on leave.

Minnesota workers will contribute to part of the Paid Leave program through shared premiums that will be automatically deducted from your paycheck. The law allows workers and employers to split the premium share up to 50%, but this is eligible for negotiation between an employer and union. For example, if the premium is set at 0.88%, under a 50% split, employees would pay about 0.44% of their wages through automatic payroll deduction to support the program.

Who will be eligible for Paid Leave benefits? Are school districts required to participate?

Most Minnesota employees will become eligible to take paid leave after they have earned about \$3,500 in wages within the state over a period of a year.

All public employers, including school districts, must participate and may not opt out of this program in favor

of a comparable private option. Any school district with fewer than 30 total workers on their payroll will be eligible for a lower payroll tax.

Can my employer deny a request for PFML? Is there an appeal process in the event leave is denied?

Employers do not approve or deny PFML; a leave request under the PFML program is approved by the state agency that reviews claims (DEED). Employees and employers can submit information on eligibility to DEED, which will also establish an appeal process in the event that leave is denied.

How many weeks could somebody be away from their job each year? Once I take leave, when can I take it again?

Family leave and medical leave can be taken on their own up to a maximum of 12 weeks; a combination of family leave and medical leave is allowable up to 20 weeks. Individuals cannot take 20 weeks of only medical leave or 20 weeks of only family leave.

A benefit year is the 12-month period that starts when an individual first takes paid leave; it cannot be taken again until the anniversary of their first usage.

Leave does not have to be taken consecutively. A person who needs to be away for regular health care treatments could work out a schedule where they take leave days here and there for a stretch of time. Applications for leave, along with some kind of certification of the qualifying event, will be submitted through a state-developed system managed by DEED.

Is Paid Leave the same thing as FMLA?

No. PFML is a paid leave program run by the State of Minnesota that entails both wage loss benefits for a covered leave, as well as job protection at the end of a qualifying leave. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 is unpaid, job-protected leave. FMLA and PFML can run concurrently, but an individual would not be able to "stack" or use PFML and FMLA consecutively.

How can I coordinate leave with a member of my family?

Paid Family and Medical Leave will be available on an individual and not family basis. For example, two caregivers of the same child who work for the same employer could take leave at the same time for the same reason. A collective bargaining agreement could, however, place limitations on contractual leave benefits for either "topping up" pay to full wage replacement or using leave concurrently.

How would PFML work when I work for two different employers?

The wage replacement rate will be calculated by DEED based on wage rates from different employers. Employees will be able to appeal the wage replacement rate determination if it appears to be inaccurate.

More information will be shared from the agency as it becomes available.

How is the level of pay I receive on my leave determined?

Our interpretation at this time is that all earnings reported to the state through the wage detail report will be used to determine the replacement wage. DEED's process will account for wages as they are paid rather than possible future wages. Pay from an extracurricular coaching job held at the time of one's leave that is included in a paycheck, for example, would be included in the calculation of earnings. An extracurricular coaching role that is not being paid at the time of leave would not be used as a projection of future income and therefore not used in determining one's pay while on leave.

Letter to my students

Submitted by: Rose McDonald Johnson, Warroad Kramer Brown Rep.

Dear Students of WHS,

As I reflect on my 29 years of teaching at Warroad High School, I find myself filled with gratitude and appreciation for each and every one of you. It has been an incredible honor to be part of your educational journey and to witness the growth, achievements, inquisitiveness, and unique perspectives that you all bring to the classroom each day.

Throughout these years, I've had the privilege of not only teaching, but learning from you as well. Each lesson and every conversation has left a lasting impact on me, and I will always cherish the moments we've shared. The enthusiasm, curiosity, and drive that you've shown have inspired me in ways I could never have imagined when I first began this journey.

I've seen so many of you grow, not just academically, but personally, into strong, thoughtful, and compassionate individuals. Whether we've shared laughter, challenges, or triumphs, it has been a joy to support you along the way.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to teach you, for the trust you've shown, and for the countless memories we've made together. I hope the lessons you've learned in my class have served you well and continue to inspire you as you move forward in life. I'm proud of each one of you and will always be cheering you on, no matter where your paths may take you.

Here's to the past 29 years of learning, growth, and connection. I will carry these memories with me always as I continue learning and growing with each new post-retirement endeavor!

With heartfelt thanks and love,

Rose McDonald Johnson

Introducing

Meet Jeanne Johnson, Warren Alvarado Oslo Board Rep



Hello! My name is Jeanne Johnson. I teach 5th grade at WAO Elementary School. I have been with the WAO school district for the past 11 years as a classroom teacher, and I was a librarian for 5 years prior. I have lived in Warren since 2000. My two amazing children are grown, so I live with my dog, Stella.

I began my teaching degree in Northern Arizona while attending NAU in Flagstaff, AZ. Before completing my degree, I started my family and relocated to Grand Forks, ND, where I finished my schooling at UND in the early 2000s.

I loved my time in the library, and I enjoy my days in the classroom. While I truly enjoy my work with students, I also appreciate the quieter pace of June, July, and August! I love spending time with my grown children and taking "mini" trips with my mom. One of my "someday" dreams is to write a children's book—or maybe even two. Until then, I'll keep turning pages and helping young minds grow.

Legislative session in full swing after unprecedented start

The 2025-26 legislative session is fully underway after a rocky start due to unexpected vacancies in both chambers, a tie in the House and a one-seat DFL majority in the Senate. We have broken down everything that's happened in the Legislature this session, along with how it has impacted our proposed bills.

The Minnesota House of Representatives

Because the November election resulted in a tied House—67 Republicans and 67 Democrats—the two parties first negotiated a power-sharing agreement in December. But in January, DFL Representative-elect Curtis Johnson resigned after a judge found that he did not live in the district, giving Republicans a temporary one-seat majority until the seat can be filled by a special election, which is scheduled for March 11.

Citing this temporary majority, Republicans walked back the power-sharing agreement and argued that they deserved full control of the chamber for the entire session. They also indicated that they would refuse to seat DFL Rep. Brad Tabke, who won his election by 14 votes.

There must be a quorum of at least 68 representatives present for the legislative session to officially begin. To stop Republicans from overriding the will of the voters by unseating Rep. Tabke, DFL members prevented a quorum by spending the first few weeks working in their districts instead of at the Capitol in St. Paul.

While the DFL members were working in their districts, Republican members ignored Secretary of State Steve Simon's declaration that there was not a quorum and elected a Speaker, established committees and held hearings. However, after a court challenge, a judge ruled that any actions taking by Republicans during that time were invalid because a quorum was never reached, therefore the House was never formally organized.

After several weeks of negotiations, Republican Leader Lisa Demuth and DFL Leader Melissa Hortman reached a power-sharing deal in early February, outlined below:

- Allows Rep. Demuth to be Speaker for two years.
- Requires the committees be co-chaired by both parties and requires bills to have bipartisan support to leave a committee.
- Guarantees that Rep. Tabke will be seated.
- Allows for the creation of an Oversight Committee with a Republican majority.
- Specifies that no legislation can pass the chamber without 68 votes, which means any bill that passes the House must have bipartisan support.

To read more of this article that was featured in the Educator please click here: <https://educationminnesota.org/news/minnesota-educator/legislative-session-in-full-swing-after-unprecedented-start/>

Navigating Cultural Appropriation in the Classroom

Educators can help students engage with diversity thoughtfully, avoiding stereotypes and promoting empathy, by fostering understanding and respect for cultural traditions.

Over 350 languages are spoken in homes across the U.S., reflecting the rich cultural tapestry in today's public schools. As classrooms become more diverse, the need for educators to create inclusive environments that honor and mirror the backgrounds of their students while fostering mutual understanding and respect has never been more pressing. Key to this is distinguishing between cultural appropriation and appreciation.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Cultural appropriation happens when elements of someone else's culture are taken and used in a way that strips away their original meaning or disrespects their importance. It can often lead to the exploitation of other cultures. Appreciation, on the other hand, means someone takes the time to understand and honor the culture, often involving collaboration with people from that background.

Take, for example, *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead. This is a holiday that celebrates life, death, and family. It's observed in Mexico and other places, including the United States. If people are interested in celebrating this day, it's not simply a matter of painting a sugar skull or dressing up as a Catrina, a central symbol of the holiday. Instead, they should learn about its significance as a day to honor loved ones who have passed away and consider creating an *ofrenda* (offering) with real understanding of its symbolism.

And so, how does this filter down into classrooms?

RECOGNIZING THE LINE BETWEEN RESPECT AND HARM

"Stereotypes are still present in classrooms," says Tucker Quetone, a retired English teacher and now a Native American liaison for Rochester Public Schools, in Minnesota. "I see it in textbooks, on school walls, and even in grade school activities like coloring pages," adding that this perpetuates outdated and harmful ideas.

He's seen, for example, the misuse of sacred traditions, such as an educator asking students to pick their "spirit animal" or leading an activity where students create dreamcatchers or Southwestern sand paintings. Using "spirit animal" casually, for example, is often considered cultural appropriation because it trivializes its deep spiritual significance in Indigenous culture—where animals serve as sacred spiritual guides tied to specific tribes and traditions.

"Teachers need to understand that these items have deep cultural and ceremonial significance. Making dreamcatchers in class can trivialize their meaning," he explains. Sand paintings, for instance, are very sacred and have to do with ceremonies. Even drumming—you need to be careful because tribes have certain protocols on who can drum."

CELEBRATING CULTURE THOUGHTFULLY

When it comes to cultural appreciation, Quetone shares an example from his time in Rochester.

"We focused on traditional values of local tribes like the Ojibwe, Anishinaabe, and Dakota, such as honesty, respect, and courage. These values were tied to icons—like a turtle or eagle—and [exhibited] on posters in English and the Native languages. This approach celebrated the culture without crossing boundaries," he shares.

To read more of this article that was featured in the Educator but originally appeared in NEA Today featuring Minnesota teachers please click here: <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/navigating-cultural-appropriation-classroom>.



Capsule

NEA Representative Assembly



The National Education Association Representative Assembly, the NEA's major decision-making body, will be July 2, 2025—July 6, 2025 in Portland, Oregon

NEA: We Educate America

Over 9,000 delegates will gather for NEA's 162nd's annual meeting and 101th Representative Assembly. This is an opportunity to unite as one voice for education, teachers, and students.

AFT TEACH Convention 2025

The 93rd convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) will be held in Washington, D.C.
July 25, 2025—July 27, 2025

Go to
<https://www.aft.org/education/aft-teach>
for more information.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

- May 7
Kramer Brown Recognition Dinner,
Legacy Event Center, Thief River Falls, 6:00pm
- May 5-9
Teacher Appreciation Week
- May 6
National Teacher Day
- May 6
School Nurse Day
- June 4
Summer Planning Meeting —Rutgers, 9:30am
- July 2-6
NEA National Convention — Portland, Oregon
- July 25-27
AFT TEACH Convention, Washington D.C.
- August 31
Kramer Brown officer term ends
(treasurer/secretary annually)



May 5-9, 2025



Capsule

Congratulations!!

Kramer Brown IO 2024-2025 Scholarship Recipients

Audrey Gust, Greenbush-Middle River

Allie Sundberg, Grygla-Gatzke

Ruby Geiser, Thief River Falls

Rylan Leake, Thief River Falls



Audrey Gust, Greenbush-Middle River Senior with Debra Koebernick, Greenbush-Middle River board representative and President



Allie Sundberg, Grygla-Gatzke Senior, Rylan Leake, Thief River Falls Senior & Ruby Geiser, Thief River Falls Senior

