

# 1148er

A Publication of the West St. Paul  
Federation of Teachers  
Local 1148

Affiliated with Education Minnesota, American Federation of Teachers,  
National Education Association, and the AFL-CIO

Volume 3, March 14, 2016  
Election Edition

## Candidates for Officer Positions and Building Representatives

Members of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers were scheduled to vote for the following positions from **Monday, April 11, to Wednesday, April 13, 2016**. Each candidate was asked to submit a short biography with his/her name. Candidates have submitted their names for all available positions. There was one applicant for each position, so in following our Constitutional guidelines, no voting will need to take place. Please find the biographies for each of your newly appointed officers.

Please contact our Elections Committee (Rozanne Crowley, Liz Eul, Shari Niemczyk, or Don Nelson) if you have questions about this process.

### **President:**

My name is Diane Thompson and I am running for President of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. I have served as President for the past eight years. I have been involved with our union since 1995, when I became the Treasurer. I served as Treasurer from 1995 until 2008. I also served as a Negotiator from 1998 until 2008, when I became President.

I have been in District 197 since 1989. I currently teach Math at Heritage Middle School. I have also taught at Somerset and Pilot Knob.

I want to continue as President of the WSPFT because I believe in the mission of our union, an organization working for better salaries, benefits, and support for teachers. I have worked hard supporting teachers in our union for over 20 years. I have participated in many trainings provided by Education Minnesota; Member Rights Training, Certified Negotiators Training, Local President's Training, and Treasurer's Training. I have attended Education Minnesota's Summer Seminar, School Law Conference, Bargaining Conference, and Representative Convention. I attended my first national convention last summer - AFT TEACH in Washington D.C. It was interesting and informative to connect with teachers from all over the United States. I also regularly attend Metro Council meetings to keep informed about other metro locals.

Being an effective President requires organization, planning, listening, and communicating. There are many issues that occur simultaneously, and the President needs to be able to juggle several issues at once. It's a rare day when there are just a few situations to resolve. I believe I possess the qualities it takes to keep our union running efficiently. I care about teachers and the issues they face each day. I care about keeping teaching a middle class career for the next generation of teachers. We need a fair salary, good benefits, and a pension that will help retirees have a decent retirement. Our union has been in existence for over 60 years, and I want to ensure it remains strong for at least the next 60 years.

I ask for your support in continuing to serve our union as President. Thank you.

**Vice President:**

My name is Phil Hayes and I am pleased to announce my candidacy for Vice President of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers 1148. I have spent the last four years as a building representative for Friendly Hills. In addition, I have completed member rights training with Education Minnesota, participated on the district's Educational Policy Committee (EPC) and served as co-chair for the Organizing for Settlement Committee. During my tenure as a building rep, I have developed a thorough understanding of the complexities of our teachers' union.

My primary role as the Vice President should be to advocate for all members of the union. I am committed to serving our union in the years to come.

**Treasurer:**

My name is Hope Alger. I am running for treasurer of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. I have been in the position as treasurer since 2008. I have taught math at Friendly Hills Middle School since 2000. I would be honored to continue serving the union as treasurer. I believe that my knowledge of procedures and experience in this position would continue to be an asset to the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers.

## **Secretary:**

My name is Dr. Kristy Otte. I am running for Secretary of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. My work in the union stems from my commitment to equity and social justice issues in our public schools. For students to be successful, we need to operate in environments that allow us to be successful. Workplace environment, respectful treatment of teachers, fair contracts and benefits, and the ability to have integrity in our work directly connects to the outcomes our students have in our schools. I believe in professionalism in teaching, advocacy for public education, and ongoing, high quality professional development for teachers. This is what unionism in education is all about. Equity, advocacy, and improving schools for students is integral to the work we do. I am an Instructional Peer Coach and ESL teacher who has worked in both middle schools, three elementary schools, and the high school. My experience and training has benefited my work as Local 1148 secretary. I have served WSPFT teachers for 15 years in multiple roles including secretary, building representative, grassroots advocate, member of EPC, Constitution, and Audit committees, and website administrator. These roles have given me a window into issues faced by teachers across buildings, levels, and disciplines. My union training includes attending Education Minnesota's Summer Seminar four times where I was able to receive in depth training in website design, labor issues, member rights and advocacy, local secretary roles, and mediation. Furthermore, I have received training through Education Minnesota in the areas of grassroots advocacy and organizing for settlement. As a representative to EM's representative convention three times, I voted for union resolutions for our 70,000 members across the state. As a delegate twice to the American Federation of Teachers convention, I see the importance of staying connected to the national dialogue around teacher's unions and public education. As secretary, you can expect me to continue my professional development as a union leader through training and outreach. My work includes staying informed of union news and providing context for members through records, the WSPFT website and social media. I hope to continue building professional collegiality between teachers, serve as a resource and liaison for union members, and improve our local through teacher leadership.

## **Negotiators:**

### **Anne Bolsem**

Over the past eighteen years, I have had the privilege of teaching at GEMS as well as serving as an Instructional Peer Coach in the ATPPS program. During this time, I have embraced a variety of leadership positions at both the union and district level as a representative for my colleagues. These roles have provided me the opportunity to develop a global view of both the celebrations and challenges encountered by teachers in a variety of roles, sites, programs, and levels throughout our district. With this big picture in mind, I hope to continue improving our local by speaking on behalf of our members honestly and fairly as a negotiator and member of our Executive Board.

I have served WSPFT teachers as a building representative for over ten years and as a negotiator for the past eight years. During that time, I have participated four times in the biannual Education Minnesota Collective Bargaining Conference to become more knowledgeable in the current issues locals are facing at the bargaining table and to develop my skills as a negotiator. The opportunity to attend the School Law and Liability Conference twice heightened my awareness of recent legal topics and laws

relating to teacher rights. Additionally, I have been a member of both the Educational Polices Committee and the Meet and Confer Committee, engaging in conversations with the school district representatives regarding specific topics relating to processes and procedures. I served on the Teacher Development and Evaluation Writing Committee to create a plan that met the MN State Statute requirements. I have also participated in the District Staff Development Advisory Committee and the Strategic Redesign Advisory Committee. I currently serve on the TDE/ATPPS Oversight Committee and the Garlough Focus Team, and I also work with new staff at GEMS as the Site Mentor. My philosophy has always been to speak up, take action, and be a part of changes, rather than to sit back and watch change occur. I believe I can be a voice for my colleagues, be a representative for individuals as a part of a whole, and be an advocate for all teachers, regardless of site, level, position, or program. I desire the opportunity to continue serving our membership with integrity and authenticity in the role of negotiator in order to work toward an even stronger body of united educators.

### **Jodie Darwitz**

My name is Jodie Darwitz, and after a rewarding two years serving our union as a negotiator, I am seeking re-election for the 2016-2018 term. In August 2000, I began my career in ISD 197 as a fourth grade teacher at Mendota Elementary. I moved to Moreland in 2001 where I taught third and fourth grade for nine years. After ten years teaching at the elementary level, I moved to Heritage, where I taught fifth and sixth grade math for two years. Currently, I am a teacher on special assignment working as an Instructional Peer Coach at Branch Out, Friendly Hills, Moreland, and Sibley. Through my various teaching experiences and work as an IPC, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues at all levels of education throughout our district. This has provided me with a diverse perspective of the unique needs of various programs, teachers, and systems. My commitment to the district and my colleagues is strengthened each day, because I am fortunate enough to be able to experience the amazing talents of the individuals of ISD 197. As a negotiator I bring the ability to consider multiple viewpoints and find value in various opinions. During the past two years I engaged in conversations with members and actively worked to share pertinent information with them. I listened to ideas and concerns and relayed the priorities of members back to the negotiating team. I have a strong desire to ensure a positive work environment that supports each individual to provide dynamic educational experiences for our students. Furthermore, I am willing to explore new possibilities, while acknowledging we may need to let go of some of our past practices to balance our responsibilities. Finally, I understand the importance of balance between our work lives and personal lives.

### **Jeff Nisbet**

My name is Jeff Nisbet and the position that I am running for is a Union Negotiator. I have been a teacher for 27 years, 26 of those years have been spent teaching math at Sibley High school starting in 1990.

I was first elected as a negotiator in 1998 and have been involved negotiating many of the contracts since that time. Over the years I have learned how valuable the Union is and continues to be especially during these challenging times. It has been a privilege to represent the many members of our Union over the years and it would be my honor to continue to do so. Thank you for the support that you have given me during my tenure as a negotiator. Together we make a difference, together we stand.

## **Julie Schiltgen**

My name is Julie Schiltgen, and I am running for Negotiator of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. I have worked in ISD 197 since 2002 and currently teach math at Friendly Hills. I have been a Negotiator for three terms (six years) and am passionate about working for the best contract and benefits for all teachers in our district. I feel it is important to have as much training and experience as possible in order to have the skills to negotiate a competitive contract. We need to keep teaching a profession where teachers are respected. Because of this, I am committed to attending ongoing trainings and meetings at the local, state, and national level. By participating with other union leaders across the country, I can bring ideas back to our local union and help negotiate the best contract possible for our members. Being on the negotiating team takes a commitment of time and energy, and I will always work diligently for the teachers of ISD 197.

I have served in the following positions and on the following committees of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers:

Building Representative	ATPPS Writing Committee
Negotiator	ATPPS/TDE Oversight Committee
Grievance Committee	IPC Interview Committee
Educational Policies Committee (EPC)	Audit Committee
Calendar Committee	Constitution Committee
Teacher Development and Evaluation Writing Committee	

I am always looking for continued training opportunities that will help me become a more skilled negotiator. Throughout my teaching career in ISD 197, I have attended the following trainings and seminars:

Certified Negotiator Training	School Law Conference
Member Rights Training	Ed. MN Bargaining Conference
Ed. MN Summer Seminar	National AFT Conference

I also served on the Education Minnesota Due Process Committee.

In addition, I regularly attend Education Minnesota Metro Area Council meetings. I feel it is important to know the issues that are at the forefront in our district and in other districts throughout the Twin Cities area.

I look forward to serving our membership as a Negotiator. Thank you for your support.

**Building Representatives for 2016-2018:**

Sibley - Glen Skov

Heritage - Eileen Gilligan

Friendly Hills - Don Nelson, Julie Schiltgen

Garlough - Anne Bolsem

Mendota - Julia Poppitz

Moreland - Shari Niemczyk

Pilot Knob - Ikhlas Abdelkhalig, James Autio

Somerset - Liz Eul

Early Learning and Family Resource Center - Rozanne Crowley

## Current Local 1148 Executive Board Members

<b>President</b>	Diane Thompson
<b>Vice President</b>	Don Nelson
<b>Secretary</b>	Kristy Otte
<b>Treasurer</b>	Hope Alger
<b>Negotiators</b>	Anne Bolsem
	Jodie Darwitz
	Stacy Lufkin
	Jeff Nisbet
	Diane Thompson

### Building Representatives

<b>Sibley</b>	Tom Raymond
	Glenn Skov
<b>Friendly Hills</b>	Anne Barnes
	Phil Hayes
<b>Heritage</b>	Eileen Gilligan
<b>Garlough</b>	Lisa Jasper
<b>Mendota</b>	Kathy Cardinal, Julia Poppitz
<b>Moreland</b>	Shari Niemczyk
<b>Pilot Knob</b>	Ikhlas Abdelkhalig
	James Autio
<b>Somerset</b>	Liz Eul
<b>Early Learning</b>	Rozanne Crowley
<b>Sunshine</b>	Julie Schiltgen
<b>TALL Rep.</b>	Kim Zellmer
<b>Government Relations</b>	Mary Houdek
<b>Grievance Committee</b>	Don Nelson
	Julie Schiltgen

# Announcements

## **Technology**

Please use the district's technology appropriately. Do not visit inappropriate sites or send inappropriate emails. Make sure you have a personal email account for your personal email – don't use your district email address for personal use. If you receive an inappropriate email, delete it immediately. Report all SPAM to our tech department. Limit your personal use, especially during working hours. You should not be shopping online, booking vacations, or viewing non-work related YouTube videos during work time. You should also be careful about being "friends" with administrators and teachers on Facebook. You don't want someone to post anything that might cause trouble for you. Be careful what you post on all social media. Remember, the district owns the computer you use and can take it and search the contents at any time.

## **Executive Board Meetings**

Executive Board meetings are usually held the first Monday of each month. All members are welcome to attend. The schedule is also on the WSPFT website. All meetings are in Friendly Hills Room 248.

April 4, 2016  
May 2, 2016  
June 6, 2016

## **Federation Emails**

If you are not receiving Federation emails, contact Diane Thompson.

## **Paycheck**

Make sure to check myView carefully to see that you are getting paid the correct amount. Contact Pahoua Yang with any questions. Keep track of your sick leave days and personal days. Also check your deductions to make sure they are correct.

## **EM Web Site**

The Education Minnesota website is a good place to get information about your union. Please register at <http://www.educationminnesota.org>

## **WSPFT Web Site**

[wspft.mn.aft.org](http://wspft.mn.aft.org)

Please check our website and familiarize yourself with the information contained on our site. Our Secretary, Kristy Otte, works hard to upload important information and keep our website updated and current.

## **Read Your Contract/Know Your Rights**

Please take the time to read your contract and know your rights. If there are concerns about your teaching/supervision/prep time schedule, contact your building rep, Don Nelson, or Diane Thompson. If you are doing curriculum work or supervision assignments, you should get paid



according to the contract. Also, watch carefully for any changes in working conditions. It is easier to resolve these issues when they first occur.

### **Use Negotiated Benefits Wisely**

Please do not abuse or misuse benefits the Federation has worked hard to obtain.

- Participate fully in Professional Development days.
- Honor the intentions of End of Quarter days by working on grades and other teaching tasks.
- Use your sick leave/personal days wisely. Teachers will be disciplined for misuse of sick days.

### **Meeting with Administrators**

Most meetings with administrators go well; however, Federation members always have the right to have union representation when meeting with administrators regarding discipline issues. Please call your building rep, Don Nelson, or Diane Thompson if you need assistance with any issue.

### **Resolving Issues**

We encourage members to resolve issues at the building level first. If unsuccessful, try to resolve issues with the help of the Federation and district level administrators.

### **1148er Contributions**

Members are encouraged to contribute articles and other items of interest to the 1148er. Send items to Diane Thompson at Heritage Middle School or by email.

### **Sunshine**

Please contact Julie Schiltgen at Friendly Hills if you know a teacher who is undergoing surgery or has a death in his/her immediate family. The Federation sends a card and a small monetary gift on these occasions.

### **Preapproval of Credits**

If you are denied preapproval of credits for a lane change, please let Don Nelson or Diane Thompson know right away so the union can decide if it should be grieved.

### **Volunteering**

Be careful about volunteering for too many committees. Remember, what you agree to in September or October when you are fresh from the summer break may become a stressful burden later in the year. Keep in mind you have no contractual obligation to serve on a committee.

### **Your Union Dues**

The money you pay in dues each month is divided among four organizations. Full time teachers pay \$860. The dues breakdown is:

Education Minnesota - \$451  
AFT and NEA - \$238.56  
WSPFT - \$155.44  
Trades and Labor - \$15.00

As you can see, our local uses \$155.44 of your yearly dues. This money goes to pay for officer salaries, office supplies, food for meetings, etc.

If you have any questions about your dues, please contact Hope Alger at Friendly Hills.