Reports to the 2014 Education Minnesota Representative Convention

The union of 70,000 educators
Reports to the 2014 Education Minnesota Representative Convention

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President’s Report

Denise Specht, President

Twelve months ago, delegates to the 2013 Education Minnesota Representative Convention voted for a new vision for their union. Since that day, the Education Minnesota leadership team has worked to turn that vision into policies that benefit our educators and students.

We’ve had our share of victories and setbacks this year, but we remain committed to reinvigorating Education Minnesota with a new emphasis on collaboration, a broader view of education issues and fresh tactics for advancing the bedrock values of educators.

Five principles define our vision:

Educator voice
The chances of education innovations becoming successful improve when educators contribute to the formation, execution and evaluation of those policies. Education Minnesota will continue to bring the educator’s voice to the table at the state and local levels.

Collaboration
The education of a child has always been a collaboration of educators and parents, educators and educators, and educators and their communities. In the future, Education Minnesota must extend this cooperative spirit to like-minded groups and individuals willing to tackle the challenges our students face.

Professional Prestige
We must increase the prestige of our profession if we are to attract talented young people, continue offering high-quality education and maintain our influence over public policy. Education Minnesota will raise the status of our profession by advocating for high standards of conduct and performance for educators in all stages of their careers.

Social Justice
More than 40 years of education research demonstrates that a student’s academic success is determined by the interplay of in-school and out-of-school factors, including a student’s health, security, socioeconomic status and exposure to institutional racism. Education Minnesota will continue to advocate for policies that improve Minnesota schools, but it will also commit resources to mitigating other factors that limit our students.

A Modern Union
Education Minnesota must continue to evolve in its mission, management, communications and technology to remain relevant to the millennial generation of educators and to the general public. A modern union is not afraid of failed experiments, because without occasional failures there cannot be sustained success.

We made progress on each piece of the vision this year, but there is more to do.
Education Minnesota will soon create its own internal think tank to translate the concerns of our members into model policies for the legislature, state education department and even local school boards. This new policy group will be at the center of what we do as a union in the next year and will be key to translating criticisms by educators into solutions for their schools. In another example of how Education Minnesota amplifies the voices of educators, we have continued to bring together our members from E-12 and higher education for conversations on how to create stronger connections between the systems.

The political landscape has never been more difficult for unions, so Education Minnesota has begun an unprecedented outreach campaign to other unions and community groups. We’ve found more common ground than we expected. Supporting each other’s work has been a natural outgrowth of our values. We expect it will continue. Two examples of this collaboration has been our work at the legislature with other labor groups to raise the minimum wage and with the Safe Schools for All Coalition to pass the anti-bullying bill.

Education Minnesota has also engaged everyday Minnesotans directly through a series of community conversations on teaching. We convened meetings throughout the state, from Red Lake to Duluth to St. Paul. Hundreds of people participated and shared their thoughts on what makes a great teacher and how we can create more of them in Minnesota. Our staff members are working on a summary report of those conversations. It will be released later this spring.

Increasing the prestige of our profession can happen person-by-person or by having a conversation with the state as a whole. We’re doing both. In the last year, we used our influence with the media to shine a spotlight on Teacher of the Year Megan Olivia Hall of St. Paul, Education Support Professional of The Year Ingrid Miera of Brooklyn Park, and Kathleen Sims of Foley, the winner of the prestigious Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence from the NEA Foundation. At the state level, we are rolling out a new advertising campaign called “– ed Moments.” It started with a new commercial set in Winona. Delegates will see more examples of the campaign during this year’s convention.

Advocating for social justice and racial equity has always been part of our responsibility to our students. Two generations ago, educators were at the forefront of integrating American schools. Now it’s our turn to cut the school-to-prison pipeline for so many students of color and reduce the bullying of all our students, particularly those in the LGBT and special education communities. We are asking delegates to formalize our commitment to social justice this year with an addition to Education Minnesota’s six statements of principle.

The members of Education Minnesota have worked to keep their union relevant, and we’ve turned back the most direct threats, including the proposed right-to-work constitutional amendment of 2012. However, complacency is the enemy. That’s why Education Minnesota has hired a respected consultant to audit our communications with our members and the public. If we can do better, we should. To start, we are overhauling our website. The design will be clean and modern, while retaining the content on which our members depend.
I’m also proud to announce a new effort to cultivate the next generation of leaders for Education Minnesota. It’s called NextGenEdMN. It will give new educators a chance to network and support each other. More important, it will also give them an official voice in the operation of our union. A modern union can’t reach its full potential without the active participation of all its members.

As I write this, Education Minnesota’s lobbyists and members are advocating for several important bills at the legislature. If we’re successful, we could make real progress toward making health insurance more affordable for educators, reducing the amount of paperwork in special education and bringing a dose of common sense to the 2011 teacher development and evaluation mandate, to name just a few bills. Not only that, we are supporting major investments in our higher education campuses through the bonding bill.

It’s all part of the work done in the past year by the leadership team and our members. It’s been the most difficult—and the most rewarding—job of my life. While I do this job in an office that looks much different from my old classroom in Centennial, I’ve found the reasons I go to work every morning are the same. I suspect they are the same reasons our members do what they do.

We all share a sense of responsibility for preparing students for successful lives. We do it in different ways, and in different jobs, and in different cities, but we all want a better future for our profession and our students. We made progress this year. I know we can go even farther next year.
Vice President’s Report

Paul Mueller, Vice President

Once again, please allow me to extend a very sincere welcome to you the delegates of this 15th Annual Education Minnesota Representative Convention. Thank you for taking the time to do the work of our union at this representative convention. Your engagement on the issues that are before us is the single biggest thing that determines our collective power to deliver the resources our students need to be successful.

This past year, I’ve had the privilege of being part of a number of very successful team efforts within our union, for the purpose of providing outreach and recognition of our membership and the school community. The following projects have been of special interest and are worthy of note:

- AFL-CIO Area Labor Council Affiliation Task Force
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Professional Development Conference
- Chamber of Commerce Membership and Networking
- Election 2013 Education Minnesota Members as Candidates and School District Operating Levies – Outreach and Support
- Minnesota AFL-CIO Convention Education Minnesota Member Involvement
- Minnesota Legislator Contacts and Networking – Issues of Special Interest

Each of these programs has had a positive impact on our members’ ability to be successful in their workplace settings.

The following outline of job duties and activities serves as a partial summary of my responsibilities while serving as the vice president of Education Minnesota this past year:

Education Minnesota Committees

- Budget and Finance
- Community Engagement
- Communicating Our Ideas
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Credentials
- Crisis Fund – Chairman
- Economic Services Incorporated (ESI) Board
- Elections
- Executive
- Foundation Board – National Board Certification Teacher Scholarship Project
- Foundation Board of Trustees
- Governing Board
- Human Rights
- Intermediate Organization Leaders
- Legislative Steering
• National Education Association (NEA) Teacher of Excellence Award – Selection
• Our Profession and Our Union
• Personnel
• Policy Development
• Political Action (PAC)
• Racial Equity Planning
• Representative Convention Rules
• Statements of Principle

**Member Services Work**

• AFL-CIO Area Labor Council Presenter for Full Implementation – Phase #1
• AFL-CIO State Fair Presenter / Participant
• Community Outreach Project Development
• Crisis Fund Assessment Facilitator
• Education Minnesota – Higher Education Summit Participant
• Education Minnesota – Member Campaign Volunteer
• Education Minnesota – Retired Members Supporter and Member
• Education Minnesota – NEA Director Officer Liaison
• Education Support Professional (ESP) Regional Meetings
• ESI Golf Tournament Fundraiser Participant
• Ethnic Minority Member Involvement Plan
• Local Negotiations Rallies and Special Events
• Martin Luther King Breakfast – Education Minnesota Representative
• Settlement Organizing

**Community Outreach Activities**

• Minnesota Minority Education Partnership
• National Education Association – Read Across America Day: Guest Reader
• Metro North Chamber of Commerce – Education Minnesota Member Participant
• Political Party Fundraiser – Dinners and Events
• Teacher of Color – Officer Liaison
State and National Leadership Activities

- American Federation of Teachers – Professional Development Conference
- AFL-CIO General Board – Member
- AFL-CIO Minnesota State – Political Conference Participant
- Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation – Executive Committee Member At-Large
- National Education Association – Board Meeting Officer Training
- National Education Association – Leadership Summit
- National Education Association - Federal Lobby Day Participant
- National Education Association – Higher Education Conference
- National Education Association – Joint Conference on Concerns of Minorities and Women
- National Education Association – Professional Advocacy Committee
- National Education Association – Representative Assembly Atlanta, GA.
- National Education Association – Womens’ and Minority Leadership Training
- National Council of State Education Associations – Leadership Conference Attendee

It continues to be my honor to serve as the Education Minnesota Vice President. Looking ahead for the upcoming year, I will be involved in many of the same activities listed above. In addition, I am prioritizing the following goals to communicate clearly my plan of action for the “14-15” Education Minnesota membership year:

- To drive for a model of full inclusion representing every potential member of Education Minnesota for the purpose of a “continuous membership.” A seamless membership beginning with students and extending through the retired membership ranks. To maximize every member for what they bring to our union movement.
- To continue to implement the full affiliation plan with the Minnesota AFL-CIO Area Labor Councils; recognizing the incredible potential Education Minnesota members have when it comes to working with the labor community for the purpose of moving a collective agenda. Education Minnesota members and staff will be delivering phase two of a three phase plan over the course of three years. The second phase will begin the process of bringing our members to the Area Labor Councils for governance involvement and decision input. I will be doing my best to contribute to this ongoing effort recognizing the tremendous potential that exists when the labor community works together.
Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

Rodney Rowe, Secretary-Treasurer

The beginning of my term as secretary-treasurer has been rewarding, exciting and educational. It is an honor to serve and represent the hard-working members of our union and a privilege to work with President Specht, Vice President Mueller and the elected leaders of Education Minnesota. I have learned a great deal over the past few months and welcome the opportunity for continued growth as we face the educational challenges that lie ahead. I continue to welcome the opportunities to visit your locals, your classrooms and your work places as we strive to grow as an organization and achieve new educational goals in the years ahead.

In addition to my daily responsibilities as secretary-treasurer, I have been involved with the following activities.

Training and Workshops

Training opportunities are offered to treasurer and membership chairs throughout the year. We provided trainings related to local finances, creating a local budget, reconciling membership rosters, conducting local audits, federal requirements, applications and compliance issues. Since the beginning of my term, we have reached out and worked with 250 treasurers, membership contacts and local leaders throughout the state. We have also provided one-on-one assistance to various locals when requested.

Newsletters, Handbooks and Communication

An electronic newsletter for treasurers and membership contacts is sent out on a regular basis providing relevant information to assist them with their work. This year the handbook was distributed to all treasurers in the fall and will only be distributed to new treasurers over the next two years. A handbook for membership chairs was distributed this fall as well. It will be distributed on a yearly basis and contains all the updates for the transmittal of dues, how dues are calculated and the amounts set. Updated resources and a copy of the treasurer and membership handbooks are found in the local leaders section on the Education Minnesota website (www.educationminnesota.org).

Budget and Finance Committee

The secretary-treasurer serves as chair of Education Minnesota’s Budget and Finance Committee. The committee participates in developing Education Minnesota’s annual budget, reviews the financial statement of activities at each meeting, discusses the annual audit, reviews the Education Minnesota Investment Policy and approves grants for Intermediate Organizations.
Committees and Boards

In addition to the above committee, I have served as a member (either active or ex-officio) to the following:

- Governing Board
- Executive Committee
- Budget and Finance Committee, Chair
- Crisis Fund Committee, Treasurer
- Political Action Committee
- Education Minnesota Foundation Board of Trustees
- Intermediate Organization Leaders
- Economic Services Incorporated (ESI) Board, Treasurer
- Constitution and By-laws Committee
- Professional Advocacy Committee
- Policy Development Committee
- Council of Local Presidents
- Educational Support Professionals Council of Local Presidents
- Investment Committee
- Elections Committee
- RC Rules Committee
- Credentials Committee
- Statements of Principle Committee
- Personnel/Employment Committee
- Human Rights Committee
- Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee
- Education Minnesota Retired – Officer Liaison

State and National Activities

- AFT Convention (delegate)
- AFT TEACH (delegate)
- NEA Representative Convention (delegate)
- National Council of State Education Association (conferences/trainings)
- Summer Seminar (presenter)
- United Educators Credit Union Scholarship Selection Committee
- Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program Board of Directors
- Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) – Officer Liaison
- NEA Educational Support Professional Conference (attendee)
Executive Director’s Report

Karl Aaro, Executive Director

In last year’s report to the Representative Convention, I reflected on the tremendous success we had in making education the primary election issue in 2012 and the resulting election of a pro-education legislature. Our members’ efforts in making that happen played a huge role in seeing that in last year’s legislative session there was more funding for education, reversing years of inadequate resources for our schools. While this additional funding has created an improved financial environment, it is only a start on the road to properly funding our schools. As a staff, we continue to be dedicated to seeing that these legislative gains translate into member gains in the workplace and at the negotiating table.

This year, we face challenges on many fronts from negotiations to implementing the new teacher development and evaluation law to bringing transparency to health care bidding for our members. Our members’ involvement in contacting legislators, serving as health care advocates and testifying makes an enormous difference influencing legislative outcomes. Funding, professional development, affordable health care, and special ed reforms, all issues that our members have been seeking, are all getting serious consideration at the legislature this year. The educator voice in developing and implementing these initiatives has been critical to this debate.

While we are encouraged by the last two year’s developments, we are well aware that many challenges remain. We do believe that Education Minnesota is poised to continue to take advantage of our recent gains, to build on those gains and to provide the kind of service that Education Minnesota members deserve and should expect.

On the following pages you will find reports describing the work and activities of the various Education Minnesota staff departments during 2013. These reports will give you an idea of the staff’s broad range of initiatives and contributions, not only to address the day-to-day needs of our members, but to tackle critical new challenges and issues. As you review these reports, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

As I have stated before, I am proud to serve as Education Minnesota’s Executive Director. I am committed to our mission and to the 70,000 members we serve. I look forward to working with you in the days ahead to strengthen our union and to meet the many challenges ahead.

Thanks for all you do.
The Education Minnesota NEA Directors serve as the liaison between the NEA Board and Education Minnesota. NEA directors lobby the U.S. Senate and Congress about issues regarding education as well as help shape policy for the NEA, one of two national organizations to which we belong. NEA directors are elected at the Representative Convention for three-year terms. In addition to three state-elected directors, Kimberly Colbert, Robin Courrier and Don Sinner, we also have two nationally-elected directors, Student Director Chelsea Herrig and ESP Director at Large Pam Mikkelson, expanding our Minnesota team to five.

NEA directors attend quarterly board meetings where we are asked to discuss and make decisions regarding the NEA budget, policy, governance structure, membership and to lobby Congress on educational issues. This year the NEA Representative Assembly will vote to approve the 2014-16 Program and Budget. It is the responsibility of the Program and Budget Committee to present to the board and RA a balanced budget and we continue to be challenged to find ways to assure that our members are served through responsible allocation of dues dollars. Pam Mikkelson serves on the Program and Budget Committee.

As a merged state, Minnesota brings to the NEA a unique perspective regarding governance and membership that most states do not have. This year your directors have been able to lend insight to discussions about the NEA governance structure and the importance of labor affiliations and partnerships in successfully achieving a pro-education agenda.

We continue to bring local concerns to the Minnesota Senate and Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. In May, we will hold our third roundtable where legislative aides from all of our legislative offices will gather to learn through a local, Minnesota lens the critical role federal funding plays in education. We work hard to establish positive relationships with our elected officials and welcome your suggestions and stories to take with us to Capitol Hill.

In an effort to support the election of pro-education candidates, NEA directors are responsible for raising money for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. We work closely with Education Minnesota staffer Jim Meyer, who also assists us with our Capitol Hill lobbying, on promoting efforts such as payroll deduction and the GO Fund to raise these funds.

On a local level, NEA directors are happy to visit local and IO meetings in order to share information and gather stories to take with us to Washington, D.C. Please contact any one of us to attend a meeting. We welcome suggestions, questions and requests for visits. You may contact us at the email addresses listed below. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to hearing from you.

Kimberly Colbert: kimberlycolbert59@gmail.com
Robin Courrier: rcurr1@isd77.k12.mn.us
Chelsey Herrig: chelsey.herrig@smsu.edu
Pam Mikkelson: pjmikk@gmail.com
Don Sinner: dsinner@charter.net
General Counsel’s Report

Christina Clark, General Counsel

The General Counsel manages Education Minnesota’s Legal Department and provides organizational advice and consultation to the Executive Director, Officers and Governing Board. The General Counsel works closely with the managers of each of Education Minnesota’s departments to ensure a consistency of message, a coordination of service delivery and a mutual understanding of goals and mission.

The Legal Department includes staff attorneys David Aron, Nicole Blissenbach, Deb Corhouse, Jess Anna Glover, Meg Luger-Nikolai and Tony Sheehan, paralegal Mary Claire Brengman, and legal secretaries Lisa Enwright and Sarah Turner. Former staff attorney Christina L. Clark returned to Education Minnesota in December 2013 as General Counsel.

The Legal Department provides a wide variety of legal services to members and locals, ranging from job protection matters to contract enforcement and unfair labor practices. In addition, the department provides regular training to field staff and members on legal issues and works closely with field staff to provide prompt and accurate information to members, locals and affiliates.

During the past year, our attorneys have represented individual members and locals/affiliates in grievance arbitration and termination hearings, as well as hearings before the Board of Teaching, the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Bureau of Mediation Services, the National Labor Relations Board, and Minnesota’s district and appellate courts.

A breakdown of the various disputes covered during the past year is set forth below:

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<tr>
<th>Dispute</th>
<th>Cases</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dismissal/Terminations/Non-renewal</td>
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<td>Licensure/Certification</td>
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<td>Suspensions</td>
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<td>Layoffs</td>
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<td>Leaves of Absence</td>
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<td>Longterm Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bargaining Unit Recognition</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refusal to Bargain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement/Severance</td>
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Our Legal Services Program also provides representation to members who are being investigated for possible criminal conduct (26 cases) or maltreatment of a minor (49 cases) in connection with their employment.

A significant portion of our work is proactive, providing advice to field staff and leaders to assist members. Our attorneys handle thousands of calls each year, providing support to members on matters ranging from the issues listed above to staff development, prep time, workload, past practices, social media use, harassment, non-disclosure agreements, personnel files, equipment costs, compensation, health insurance, retirement/deferred compensation benefits, sabbaticals, 1st Amendment rights and everything in between.

Our attorneys have also been investing more time drafting legislation and participating in hearings at the Capitol than in years past.
Last year we identified some emerging trends. Regrettably, this year we report that these trends have become recurrent issues. They include: 1) increases in medical leaves of absence and long-term disability denials; 2) more special education staff being reported for maltreatment of students and incomplete, inaccurate or late paperwork; 3) more employers violating Minnesota’s laws on drug and alcohol testing; 4) more administrators aggressively scrutinizing and disciplining staff who have previously had little monitoring of their performance; 5) increased expectations of employees to perform functions that they are neither allowed to do by law nor trained to undertake; and 6) privatization of bargaining unit work/subcontracting.

This year’s new trends fall primarily into three categories: bargaining, mental health and difficult HR personnel. The impact of the ACA and other health insurance questions dominate the bargaining arena, especially in our ESP units, but there is a significant overall increase in bargaining questions. We are most certainly feeling the impact of the absence of the January 15 deadline for teacher contracts.

Additionally, the time we spend with members facing a mental health issue is significantly greater than in years past. We have a large number of members returning from military service. They are particularly vulnerable to PTSD or other mental health disorders such as combat fatigue. The number of members suffering from a combination of physical and mental disorders has also increased. Each attorney has spent time assisting members who are seeking a long-term disability benefit or who need assistance determining their rights under various protective laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and state statutes allowing employees to take time off for family members who need medical care.

In recent years, many school districts have hired HR directors from the private sector who are not familiar with either the public sector or the unionized framework. They don’t understand “just cause” or “due process” or other public sector employee rights. They often start from the position of “no” and we work with them towards an answer of “yes.”

As usual, the Legal Department conducted many training sessions for leaders and members during the past year on a wide range of issues including social media, legal rights of members and special education challenges. Education Minnesota attorneys continue to be recognized for their expertise, providing training to attorney groups at the state and national levels.

Education Minnesota’s Legal Department is committed to providing high quality representation to our members and locals. We value and respect each of the members and locals who become our clients, whether we are challenging a district’s actions or defending a member against allegations. We are proud and appreciative of you—our members—and can only hope that you feel the same toward our attorneys and staff.
We continue to see districts pushing the boundaries in their treatment of employees – districts requiring paraprofessionals to prepare lessons and provide instruction, principals that failed to evaluate employees suddenly moving to terminate them and schools unilaterally expanding the duty day or subcontracting work of our members to outside vendors. One of our cases involved a school district issuing a multi-page letter documenting an oral reprimand. In another, an employee was given a written reprimand for swearing in class after being out on administrative leave for a full semester.

The legal department conducted dozens of training sessions for leaders and members during the past year on issues including social media use, legal rights of members and special education challenges. Education Minnesota attorneys continue to be recognized for their expertise, providing training to attorney groups at the state and national level.

The Education Minnesota legal department is committed to providing high quality representation to our members and locals. Every day we see your commitment to your students. We are proud to represent you.
Public Affairs Department Report

Brandon Rettke, Director

The Public Affairs Department includes the following staff:

- Bob Afflerbaugh, offset press operator
- Ashley Behrens, public affairs office assistant
- Megan Boldt, public affairs specialist
- Anna Brelje, community engagement coordinator
- Jodee Buhr, lobbyist
- Wanda Cone, executive assistant to the director
- Doug Dooher, public affairs specialist
- Mike Gilmour, DocuTech operator
- Shirliana Glassberg, web/graphic design assistant
- James Haggar, political action coordinator
- Glenda Holste, public affairs specialist
- Shelley Kerber, public affairs specialist
- Bob Lorence, printing and mailing supervisor
- Brenda Mackey, custodian
- Jim Meyer, political organizing specialist
- Kieren Steinhoff, public affairs office assistant
- Eric Widi, art director/graphic designer
- Chris Williams, press secretary
- Paul Winkelaar, membership mobilization specialist
- Brandon Rettke, director
- Ray Rozales, graphics technician
- Jessica Schmidt, public affairs office assistant
- Louis St. Marie, custodian
- Kathy Micheletti, Lobbyist

The following are among the department’s activities and accomplishments since the 2012 Representative Convention:

2013 Legislative Session

The 2013 legislative session marked a historic turnaround for teachers and public education. Instead of attacking educators and their unions, lawmakers made investing in education a top priority.

Our biggest win was the expansion of voluntary all-day, every-day kindergarten for all students in Minnesota. We also successfully fought for increases in general state aid, as well as boosts in funding for special education and public colleges and universities.

The E-12 bill added:

- $235 million to the general education formula over the biennium – or $78 per student in the first year and $80 per student in the second.
- $134 million for district to provide full-day kindergarten starting in 2014. Districts that already offer all-day programs can use the money for preschool programs.
- $40 million for special education
- $42 million for early learning scholarships.
- $10 million for career and technical education
- $103 million increase for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including $78 million to offset tuition.
To fund these investments, the Legislature passed $2.1 billion in tax increases. The new revenue comes from a top-tier income tax increase and an additional tax on cigarettes. The top 2 percent of wage earners now pay a 9.85 percent income tax, up 2 percent points. The tobacco tax increased $1.60 a pack on cigarettes.

School districts also received some additional authority to levy without voter approval and some levies were converted to state aid—providing both property tax relief and a source of additional revenue.

Although this Legislature did not appropriate funds for the impending teacher development and evaluation law enacted by the last Legislature, the 2013 session produced some positive fixes. Requiring 35 percent of evaluations to be based on value-added measures was changed, giving districts flexibility to use either value-added measures or other locally agreed-upon growth measures aligned to standards.

Other bills signed into law in 2013 included measures to:

- Provide $6.7 million in state funding for student assessments over the biennium.
- Replace the GRAD test for high school graduation with other assessments and criteria for earning a high school diploma.
- Require state reading and math tests for grades 3 through 7 be computer-adaptive beginning in fiscal year 2016.
- Provide $7 million a year in state aid to stabilize the St. Paul teachers’ pension fund and $6 million for the Duluth teachers’ fund over the biennium. A study on consolidating the two funds into the Teacher Retirement Association was also authorized.

2014 Education Minnesota Legislative Priorities and Positions

The Policy Development Committee reviewed the 2013 Legislative Priorities and Positions and sent recommendations to the Governing Board for their approval for 2014. The following were approved as the legislative priorities:

- Students thrive when their basic needs are met
- Professional educators drive student growth
- Education is a lifelong process

The Public Affairs Department created 2014 legislative folders that contain information on our legislative priorities and other resources for members to use in lobbying and communicating with legislators. We prepared and included the following issue papers in the kit:

- Health Insurance Transparency and Accountability Bill
- School Employee Health Insurance
- Site-Based Professional Development
- Minimum Wage
- Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act
- Higher Education
The following issue papers have been added as the 2014 legislative session has progressed.

- Aligning Teacher Development and Evaluation Programs
- Special Education
- Sick Leave
- PELRA Definition Change

Updates highlighting events at the Capitol and important calls to action are reported in “Capitol Connection,” which is sent electronically to all members each week during the legislative session. When an issue requires immediate response from members, Education Minnesota emails a special legislative alert.

**Election Background:**

The 2014 election will include races for US Senate, eight congressional seats, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Auditor, 134 Minnesota House seats and at least one constitutional amendment. In addition, we expect to once again see dozens of local levies on the ballot in addition to hundreds of school board races. All of the statewide seats are currently held by Democrats and all of the incumbents are seeking reelection. The DFL holds the Minnesota House with a 73-61 majority.

One key factor in the campaign will be the likely (significant) decrease in turnout from the 2012 election. A key factor for both the candidates and Education Minnesota will be encouraging supporters to vote and working to make sure we do not see a repeat of the 2010 election.

**Campaign Plan:**

The Education Minnesota PAC Board has been discussing the 2014 election since December of 2012 when board members raised the idea of increasing the PAC dues as an investment in success in 2014. Those discussions continued through the 2013 RC, and into the fall of 2013 when the PAC’s Campaign Plan Subcommittee met to discuss the campaign plan and drafted recommendations to the full board.

The Education Minnesota PAC Board approved a campaign plan that prioritizes reelecting the Governor and House Majority and spends significant time on local elections and working for Senator Franken. The Secretary of State’s races will be a lesser, but important priority, and we will spend less time and resources on Congressional races than in the past.

The campaign will work to accomplish these priorities by running a strong member-to-member campaign that focuses on turnout, by working with coalition partners on independent expenditure efforts, by investing in relationships between members and candidates and by using human and financial resources wisely and avoiding the temptation to spread ourselves too thin.

Our efforts will once again include a “behind the wall” strategy where several members of the Public Affairs department will engage in direct candidate work and be isolated (for legal reasons) from the rest of the team. This will help our endorsed candidates and put a face to our organization’s name when it comes to campaign work.
**Message/Research:**

We are planning to do a post-legislative session poll of our members to inform both the organization in general and our 2014 campaign efforts. This poll will help to dictate the types and timing of messages to members and ensure that resources are not wasted.

Education Minnesota will continue our practice of working through the Alliance for a Better Minnesota (ABM) for much of our campaign-related research. The coalition will provide us with research on the key statewide and local races that will help to inform our independent expenditure efforts and our work beyond our membership.

One positive thing we’ve seen from polling so far is that voters still value education over any other issue. This, along with the fact that they recognize AND support the investments made in public schools in 2013, shows that our issues are still the ones that can and should drive the campaign.

**Internal/Member-to-Member Campaign:**

As noted above, one of the key pieces of this year’s election will be voter turnout. While our members generally vote in much higher numbers than the general public, we did see a drop in 2010 and we cannot afford to see the same in 2014. We’ve got to work hard to ensure that pro-public education members and their spouses/partners get to the polls. This will likely be the key focus of our internal work in 2014, and will consist of one-to-one conversations at the work place, phoning, mail and pledge cards encouraging members to vote.

In addition to that core focus, there will still be a fair amount of persuasion work to do, and members will be asked to engage in that to educate their colleagues and remind them of the success we’ve had with the current leadership at the Capitol.

**External and Coalition Campaign:**

Our coalition partners, namely the AFL-CIO, America Votes and the Alliance for a Better Minnesota, will be focused on the same priority races we will. This will facilitate cooperation and information sharing, and avoid overlap and wasted energy. The coalition campaigns will run separate coordinating tables for the Governor, Senate and House races, and Education Minnesota staff will serve in key roles that help to lead those tables. The coalitions will do paid media work, mail, field (door and phone) programs and pledge drives.

**Local Elections**

2013 was a very successful year for levies across the state. 77 school districts had a total of 97 questions on the ballot in November. Of these 97 questions, 86 passed. 67 of the questions were for operating revenue. Education Minnesota staff visited 24 locals to discuss their levies. 28 districts received targeted voter files. Eleven locals used cell phones from Education Minnesota. 18 locals used Education Minnesota design and printing capabilities. The Area Labor Councils and Regional Labor Federations were critically important in passing levies, especially in Duluth, Stillwater, White Bear Lake and Osseo.
Local Crisis/Bargaining Assistance

Working with field staff and local leaders, the Public Affairs Department has provided ongoing assistance to more than 100 locals during bargaining. With the Jan. 15 bargaining deadline repealed three years ago, more locals have needed extended help in bargaining fair and competitive settlements, and approximately one-third of locals have yet to come to an agreement with their districts. Public Affairs staff helped locals by crafting messages, helping to organize rallies and other events, writing press releases, preparing members for media interviews, and drafting fliers, ads and letters to the editor.

Congressional Action Teams

2013 was an active year for Education Minnesota Congressional Action Teams. Meetings were held with Representatives Walz, Kline, Paulsen, McCollum, Ellison, Peterson, Nolan and Senators Klobuchar and Franken’s office.

The major issues that were discussed for 2013 were school safety, sequestration and budget issues, and immigration. School safety bills were introduced but after a few hearings, the issue lost momentum and no action was taken. School districts suffered a slight decrease in federal funding due to sequestration cuts. Schools receiving IMPACT funding were hit the hardest. Comprehensive immigration reform was passed in the Senate but the House refused to take the issue up.

Federal PAC Fundraising

The Education Minnesota federal PAC fundraising program, Turn Up the Heat, continued to grow in 2013.

For the AFT COPE PAC, the following locals were responsible for raising $102,500 in 2013:

Dakota County United Educators, Duluth Federation of Teachers, Education Minnesota-Grand Rapids, Education Minnesota Lakeville, Education Minnesota-Osseo, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers, South St. Paul Teachers’ Association and St. Paul Federation of Teachers.

For the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, we raised $47,800 with the following locals raising $33,200 via payroll deduction in 2013:


Turn Up the Heat is growing. While the number of locals participating represents only a small percentage of Education Minnesota’s total membership, there has been a considerable increase over the past eight years. Locals interested in starting a federal PAC fundraising program are asked to contact Jim Meyer, political organizing specialist in the Education Minnesota Public Affairs Department, at 800-652-9073 ext. 4813 or jim.meyer@edmn.org.
**Member Mobilization**

Over 400 teachers from 97 locals participated in Lobby Days in 2013. Members sharing their experiences with all-day, every-day kindergarten, high class sizes and tuition costs helped push the legislature to invest in public schools in 2013. Education Minnesota relied on best practices and local presidents to increase e-mails to elected leaders. Education Minnesota has found to increase e-mail open rates, the e-mails should come from the local president. Education Minnesota members also led the charge on an online petition for all-day, every-day kindergarten. Over 12,000 people across the state signed the petition. Education Minnesota is also using surveys to drive our legislative agenda. In late December, over 1,000 special education teachers from across the state completed a survey on paperwork reduction. The results of the survey were shared with legislators and drove our efforts to create a state online special education paperwork system.

**2013-14 Communications audit**

The Public Affairs Department directed a professional audit of Education Minnesota’s print and electronic communications products. This is the first audit done on our communications since the proliferation of electronic media. The audit reviewed the full range of traditional print, electronic and social media. Research included an online survey offered to all members for whom we have email addresses, yielding more than 1,700 responses. Twenty members, selected for diversity of job category, geographic distribution and membership category, took part in extensive personal interviews. Education Minnesota staff has begun implementing key recommendations from the audit. These include how to reach members most effectively to educate them about opportunities for professional development, financial and legal benefits, and political action to advance public education through their local and state unions.

**Electronic communications**

As a result of a website usability study in fall 2012, we began an extensive effort to evaluate and redesign our website starting in July 2013. Our goal was not only to make the site easier to navigate, but also to create a site that will display appropriately on mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers, through a process called “responsive design.” Responsive design makes it unnecessary to support a second mobile site or create an app for the site, saving time and money.

To determine user wants and needs, we conducted in-person conversations with eight education support professional members, eight teacher and faculty members, and eight staff in July and August 2013. To capture newer members’ opinions, we surveyed more than 70 members with three years or less of experience.

The project continued in August with 24 additional members sorting existing website content into overall categories and subgroups within those categories. To ensure geographic diversity, half of the sorts were done in a usability lab and half were done online. Based on the results, our website consultant, High Monkey Consulting (HMC) in Roseville, created a framework for the site architecture, which we tested with another eight members in September and October.
Graphic designers with HMC then created initial layouts for the home page, section landing pages (home pages for each section) and content pages. The designs were refined after initial feedback from website team members to ensure the look met our branding standards, and then tested with eight more members in November and December. Members of the Governing Board subcommittee, “Communicating Our Ideas,” were also given opportunities for input at fall and winter meetings.

In January 2014, we solicited feedback on two designs for the home page from two dozen members who had participated in previous studies, chosen at random, and settled on the current look, which we plan to launch April 28. Members and the public will see a significantly streamlined home page, with more user-friendly navigation. We have also reconfigured the negotiations data tools, which should make it much easier for local bargaining teams to access crucial data.

To enable a responsively designed website as mentioned earlier, we moved to a new content management system, which meant discontinuing use of the Foundry software for local sites. Instead, we are supporting locals that utilize free software from the American Federation of Teachers, called StateWeb. We have assisted 36 locals to date, and they report that the software is easy to use. Our new content management system will allow us to create sites for intermediate organizations, however.

In addition to the website, Public Affairs staff are in charge of e-newsletters and blasts, sending more than 130 in the past year, including a new monthly e-newsletter for all members, “PD News,” with professional development resources. Staff also oversee the social media sites: Pinterest, with more than 1,700 followers; Facebook, with more than 2,800 followers; Twitter, with more than 10,000 followers; and a new Flickr account, with more than 20 sets of photos; as well as accounts on YouTube and LinkedIn.

**News media relations (2013)**

Education Minnesota actively works to promote the reputation, image and policy recommendations of educators through outreach in the news media. The views of the union president on state education policy are widely sought by media throughout the state. These views have been expressed through interviews on television, radio and newspapers. The president has also published well-read commentaries on StudentsFirst founder Michelle Rhee, the need for increased education funding by the Legislature and an explanation of the issues facing the Teacher Development and Evaluation law. Education Minnesota also provides local leaders and governing board members with media training and regular “talking points” on education issues and offers public relations counsel for members in crisis and locals in contract disputes.

**Marketing communications/publications**

Education Minnesota staff wrote, designed and produced a variety of printed materials to support the union’s activities, including the annual membership campaign in early fall, the 2014 lobby kit and other campaign/lobbying materials, materials to support Summer Seminar, Local Presidents Appreciation Weekend and the Representative Convention. During the past year, the Education Minnesota Graphics Department produced more than 10 million printed impressions.
Paid advertising campaign

In 2013, Education Minnesota continued our paid media efforts, transitioning from the “I Raise My Hand” theme to the “ED Moments” campaign.

During the 2013 legislative session, the message of our ads was a continuation of the “investment” message we began in 2012. Both the radio and TV ads emphasized real Minnesotans – educators, parents, middle class workers such as firefighters and nurses, and senior citizens – talking about important issues that research had shown were resonant with Minnesotans: investing in education, small class sizes, creating a strong future workforce and making higher education affordable.

There are several ways to measure the effectiveness of the media campaign. The most obvious are that the 2013 legislative session produced major victories for students and public schools, including:

- The state’s first substantial investment in early childhood through higher education in many years. Our K-12 schools will receive increases of $78 per student next year and $80 the year after, as well as $40 million in increased special education funding to relieve some of the pressure on our classrooms.
- A $103 million increase for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including $78 million to offset tuition; tuition at MnSCU institutions will be frozen for two years.
- Full funding for voluntary all-day, every-day kindergarten for all students in Minnesota. All-day K was one of Education Minnesota’s top priorities, and this is the most significant investment in years in a proven strategy for raising the academic achievement of all Minnesota students.

The end of the 2013 legislative session was a milestone in our paid media campaign. Through the last several years, we have worked to become a powerful, positive voice on behalf of students, schools and educators. We have been able to influence public opinion, elections and legislation that benefit public education.

In transitioning to a new phase for the campaign, Public Affairs worked with its advertising agency, Westmoreland Flint, Education Minnesota leadership members to research and develop a new theme. After months of research, polling and testing, we developed the “ED Moments” campaign, in which we highlight the moments when educators help students become inspire-ED, engag-ED, and excit-ED about learning. The first ad under the new theme is called “Welcom-ED” and tells the story of Winona teacher Lora Hill, who has developed a strong anti-bullying program in her school. More ads are planned for the spring and into the new school year.

Also in 2013, Public Affairs continued a “subsidy” program whereby Education Minnesota pays $200 toward the cost of a newspaper or radio ad for each of our locals for “welcome back” and “thank you” messages. To date, more than 230 locals have taken advantage of the subsidy program.

Continued in 2013-14 were sponsorships of Twin Cities Public Television’s “Almanac” program and the Minnesota State High School League, resulting in additional exposure of the Education Minnesota “brand” to key audiences.
News publications

Education Minnesota staff produced more than 120 editions of print and electronic news publications, including 12 issues of the Minnesota Educator (distributed to all members); four issues of TEAM (for ESP members); 34 issues of the now-weekly Local Presidents Insider (for local presidents); and 12 issues of the Local Newsletter Helper Kit (for local newsletter editors). In 2013, Education Minnesota continued its legislative e-newsletter: “Capitol Connection,” which is sent weekly during the session to all members with email addresses on file.

2013 Education Minnesota Professional Conference

The highlight of the 2013 professional conference on Oct. 17-18 was keynote speaker and best-selling author Paul Tough, who argued that the best predictors of student success are qualities of character rather than scores on standardized tests during his keynote speech.

The theme was “Excellence and Equity,” and attendees found that focus woven throughout the lineup of more than 90 workshops and speakers. Presentation topics include student mental health issues, technology, reading instruction and teacher evaluations.

Other featured speakers Thursday were Minnesota Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius; author and former special education teacher Jonathan Friesen; Dr. Rosalind LaRocque, an American Federation of Teachers expert on professional development; and Dr. Kent Pekel, president and chief executive officer of the Search Institute in Minneapolis.

On Friday, Dr. Anton Treuer, executive director of the American Indian Resource Center at Bemidji State University and an expert in Native American education, spoke and signed books. The second-day lineup included seven two-hour workshops, all aimed at fulfilling relicensure requirements.

Community engagement assistance for local unions

Assistance was provided to local unions seeking to develop or continue their own local community engagement programs. Locals have developed community engagement leadership teams, conducted trainings, and launched strategies to build long-term, powerful relationships with specific local community organizations and leaders. Four new community engagement classes were available at Summer Seminar in 2013. Ongoing training and support has been provided to unsettled locals and is available by request from the Public Affairs department on an ongoing basis.

Community Engagement

2013-2014 was the second year of implementation of Education Minnesota’s new community engagement plan.

Highlights of program implementation include:

Statewide community conversations on teacher quality and diversity

Education Minnesota hosted six community conversations throughout the state focused on improving teacher quality and diversity. 184 community members, parents, educators and youth attended conversations in Rochester, Brooklyn Park, St Paul, Red Lake, Willmar and Duluth. Representatives from community-based organizations offered remarks, assisted with turnout and shared stories and policy recommendations during the conversations with local union leaders, Education Minnesota officers, and staff.
State Fair booth (2013)

Getting a free photo calendar at the Education Minnesota booth at the State Fair has become an annual tradition for tens of thousands of Minnesotans. That popularity was on display again in 2013 as lines regularly stretched around the booth, at least until a record-setting heat wave hit. Volunteers took more than 12,200 photos during the fair, a significant decrease from the previous year that was attributable to the heat.

Education Minnesota intends to improve performance in 2014 with a new computer and software that will reduce wait times for new calendars. The outreach opportunities at the fair included our popular subject area groups, which introduced their areas of expertise through musical instruments, trivia games, tests of math skills and other interactive activities.

The State Fair booth is a major undertaking and would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of more than 200 member volunteers, who dispense literature, take photos and serve as Education Minnesota ambassadors to fairgoers.

Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Education Minnesota hosted the 49th annual Teacher of the Year program in May 2013, resulting in the selection of Megan Olivia Hall of Open World Learning Community in St. Paul. The call for nominations for the 2014 program produced 435 nominations and resulted in 133 candidate applications.

Supporting the Safe Schools for All Coalition

Education Minnesota has been a longtime member of the Safe Schools for All Coalition, a group of more than 120 organizations representing a broad cross-section of Minnesotans who support antibullying legislation. Passage of the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act is an Education Minnesota legislative priority, and collaborative efforts with community partners to pass the bill have been a focus of the community engagement program. Beginning with a rally on December 9, 2013 in conjunction with AFT’s “Reclaim the Promise” day of action, Education Minnesota has led and supported collaborative statewide community organizing, communications, and lobbying to pass the bill this session.

Building new community partnerships and adding capacity at the grassroots level

Education Minnesota continues to nurture and grow relationships with more than 30 statewide community partners in support of educators, students and strong public schools. Partnerships include efforts to organize youth, promote racial equity in education, increase the economic security of families, and develop community driven solutions to reduce disparities in school discipline. A new strategic partnership with Minnesota 2020, a progressive Minnesota-based think tank, has increased visibility of community and union driven solutions, and has added research, communications and organizing capacity to grassroots organizations.
Launch of Full-Service Community Schools campaign

Education Minnesota received an $80,000 “Leveraging Leadership in Education Reform Grant” from the NEA to support local leaders’ abilities to organize for full-service community school initiatives. The full-service community school model is a school improvement model with an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement. The grant funds allowed for a full-time member on leave to work with community partners and local unions to learn about what is required to develop successful full-service community schools, and begin scaling up resources and leadership to lead union and community campaigns to replicate the model in the coming years. A statewide convening was held in February, and local organizing meetings have continued through spring.

Member and community trainings on market-based education reforms

Education Minnesota continues to research and monitor attempts to weaken public education at the state and local level. In recent years large corporations and foundations have backed lobbying, public relations and community engagement strategies in support of market-based education reforms. In 2013, Education Minnesota began training members, local unions and community organizations to be better equipped to recognize and respond to the threats posed by groups pushing market-based education reforms.
Field Services Department Report

Gary Westorff, Director

The Field Services Department of Education Minnesota works directly with local leaders and members to empower them through advocacy, organizing, and service. We deliver training to leaders and members on a wide variety of topics, with a focus on building local union strength. Our department offers guidance on issues ranging from health insurance to alternative compensation (Q-Comp) to teacher development and evaluation to licensure. We help locals defend their collective bargaining agreements and members from unfair treatment. We work with negotiation teams and local settlement teams to help negotiate the best collective bargaining agreements possible. We advise local leaders on education issues and help with professional development. We assist Intermediate Organizations with planning and carrying out all their training needs and meetings.

The department is committed to the principle that we are here to assist leaders and members with their union. Our goal is to nurture a culture of organizing and empowerment within Education Minnesota locals and affiliates. While our staff deals with many issues every day, we never lose sight of the fact that Education Minnesota’s strength lies in its members, and it is our job to help members, locals and affiliates find that strength and put it to use for our members. This past year the department has coordinated multiple local settlement assessments, where groups of local leaders meet together to create organizing plans. These multi-local settlement assessments bring together field staff as well as staff from the negotiations, organizing and public affairs departments to assist the locals with their organizing process.

Education Minnesota is a growing and ever-changing organization. We represent almost 350 locals of licensed preK-12 teachers in public schools and education districts, more than ninety locals of Education Support Professionals, thirty-nine local chapters in our Minnesota State College Faculty state affiliate, state residential schools, five private schools, the faculty union at UM-Duluth and UM-Crookston, and one charter school. To serve these varied constituencies, Field Services has over eighty staff located in fifteen offices across Minnesota – from Dilworth to Rochester, Bemidji to Mankato.

In addition to Field Staff, Part-time Field Staff and Office Professional Support Staff, we have four specialized departments: Negotiations, Education Issues, Organizing and Membership. The management team of the Field Services Department is Gary Westorff, Director; Sandy Miller, Manager; and Dawn Cole, Manager.

With so many staff in our department, change is inevitable. This past year, we had departures of six of our staff: Rita Privratsky, Associate Executive Staff (Transferred to become the assistant to the president.), Bella Walstrom, Office Professional Staff (MSCF); Julie Pruett, Office Professional Staff (Coon Rapids); Bart Appleton, Professional Staff (Bemidji); Courtney Derwinski, Negotiations Specialist (St. Paul), and Gary Christofferson, Professional Staff (Coon Rapids) who passed away in a tragic car accident.
We also hired employees who bring new energy and experience to the organization. Since the last RC, we have hired: Kim Johnson, Office Professional Staff (St. Paul); Susan Lynskey, Office Professional Staff (Membership); Peggy Nosko, Office Professional Staff (Maple Grove); Angela Ekvall, Office Professional Staff (Coon Rapids); Kevin Young, Professional Staff (Bemidji); Duane Anderson, Professional Staff (Coon Rapids) and Dennis Eisenberg, Negotiations Specialist (St. Paul). Other changes in Field include; Cindy Arntzen-Haffely, Associate Executive Staff (Assistant to the Director); Anne Krisnik, Professional Staff (Southwest Metro), Jennie Howard-Smith, Associate Executive Staff (MSCF); Amy Derwinski, Professional Staff (Organizing special project).

**Summer Seminar**

Summer Seminar 2013 hosted over 600 members for three days of training and networking with colleagues from around the state. Members enjoyed beautiful weather and a hilarious sketch comedy team called Improv Sportz.

Some of the classes offered for the first time included: Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies, First Book: Give the Gift of Reading, Grievance Processing and Practicing and Introduction to Community Outreach and Organizing.

The 2014 Summer Seminar will be held August 4-6, 2014 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Registration materials were recently sent to all local presidents, Governing Board and IO chairs.

**Online Rapid Response Team**

The Online Rapid Response Team is made up of Education Minnesota staff. The charge is to provide guidance and assistance, in a timely manner, to local leaders and their locals when issues surrounding online learning arise. The team offers support to locals that are implementing or are considering implementation of online learning classes. The team is instrumental in the creating contractual language, trouble-shooting issues and encouraging districts to have open discussions with locals.

This year the team updated the online tool kit and networked with representatives from TIES and the Minnesota Department of Education. It was shortly after the team’s visit to the TIES building that staff have been encouraged to attend workshops at TIES. The representatives from MDE provided insight as to the state’s role in online learning.

Finally, the team has also been working jointly with the Professional Advocacy Sub-Committee on the topic of online learning. Specifically, the subcommittee explored issues and concerns relating to online learning at the local, state and legislative levels. The final report went to the Education Minnesota governing board in April.
Core Training

Core training programs were offered by IOs and locals throughout the year and at the 2013 Summer Seminar. The numbers of members completing Core training programs are shown below:

MRA I..................................................149 participants
MRA II ..................................................108
MRA III ..............................................27
LCAT ....................................................52

Each year, the Core Training Calendar can be found on the Education Minnesota website. Trainings are open to all members.

Part-Time Field Staff Program

Five individuals were hired in the summer of 2013 to participate in Education Minnesota’s Part-Time Field Staff Program. They joined five other part-time staffers hired in the summer of 2012. This program provides training and real field staff work experience under the guidance of current field staff mentors. Part-time field staff employees continue to work full time as teachers or ESPs while working up to 300 hours per year for Education Minnesota.

Each part-time field staff commits to a two-year appointment. Currently, part-time staff work through Education Minnesota offices in Dilworth, Mankato, Bemidji, Southwest Metro and St Paul (Sherburne).

Roadmap to Resolution (R2R)

Roadmap to Resolution (R2R) assists locals with member-to-member conflicts. When a member cannot manage a conflict with another member in the workplace, the conflict can damage relationships in the school or the union. These conflicts may also result in discipline against one or more of the members, putting the union in the awkward position of representing both parties.

R2R staff give assistance to locals and members by providing a three-step process to help individual members manage their conflicts, provide additional training to Conflict Management Facilitators to support their work with members, and update the Education Minnesota website with R2R information and update the R2R program materials.

Crisis Response Team (CRT)

The Crisis Response Team (CRT) is made up of Education Minnesota staff who offer assistance to locals involved in crisis—severe natural disasters, student or educator deaths, school violence. Often, school administrations dealing with crisis overlook the physical and emotional needs of teachers and other educators when seeking assistance for students in response to these events.

The CRT meets with affected members and may assist in finding local community services to help Education Minnesota members cope. In times of crisis, it is important to assure members that their union supports them.
Higher Ed: Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF)

NegOTIATIONS
The collective bargaining agreement expired on June 30, 2013. MSCF has been involved in contract negotiations for the 2013-2015 collective bargaining agreement over the past eight months.

Political Action
MSCF members have been busy volunteering their time to visit with legislators to tell their stories and advocating for additional resources for MnSCU. As part of these discussions, MSCF has been focusing specifically on Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR), which is meant to preserve higher education assets and improve classrooms within the two-year colleges. MSCF, along with MnSCU, have been advocating for a supplemental budget for the 2013-15 biennium.

Publicity
MSCF continues in its fourth year of a faculty profile postcard campaign. Every week, Minnesota legislators, members of the Minnesota State Chamber of Commerce, MnSCU Board of Trustees, high school principals and others across the state get a new postcard showcasing one our faculty members and unique programs and underscoring how relevant we are to Minnesota’s economy.

Leadership Training
In addition to ongoing member advocacy, contract enforcement and education, the state officers and staff of MSCF provide leadership training during the Education Minnesota days in October. This annual event provides our chapter presidents, grievance representatives and emerging leaders training relevant to their perspective roles. The topics covered include: faculty rights, academic affairs and standards, capacity building, member benefits, and contract compliance.
Higher Ed: University of Education Association (UEA)

Member Rights
UEA continues to advocate for members on a wide range of issues. The union has successfully resolved several issues on behalf of members before filing formal grievances. UEA is preparing for arbitration on a grievance that was not resolved at the campus level. UEA has resolved several issues/problems at Meet and Confer.

Bargaining
UEA is preparing for the next round of bargaining. The contract expires June 30, 2014. The union is exploring the possibility of bargaining this next round by using the Interest Based Bargaining model of negotiations.

Legislative
UEA and MSCF continue to work collaboratively to further the higher education legislative agenda. The UEA Legislative Liaison has made visits to the 2014 Legislature and continues to develop relationships with key legislators on behalf of UEA members.

Membership
UEA hosted Professor Benjamin Ginsberg author of “The Fall of the Faculty and the Rise of the All Administrative University” in September. There was a community lecture in the evening and conference breakout sessions the following day. The events were well-attended by faculty, students, and community members. This was a springboard to launch a membership campaign to move fair share fee payers to full membership. New members have continued to join UEA throughout the academic year. They have maintained focus on moving fair share fee payers to full membership. The University is reprioritizing and these efforts have a direct impact on faculty. UEA is seen as the entity to challenge any misguided prioritizing plans. This has increased UEA’s visibility on campus. In turn membership is increasing. UEA has four seats on the Duluth Central Labor Body/ALC and participates regularly.

Conference Attendance
- Members have attended:
  - Education Minnesota Political Conference
  - Education Minnesota Representative Convention
  - National Collective Bargaining Conference for Higher Ed
Negotiations

New Staff
The Negotiations Department welcomed new staff member Dennis Eisenberg in November, 2013. Dennis comes to Education Minnesota from the Wisconsin Education Association Council with extensive experience as a negotiator and as a negotiations specialist focusing on health insurance and pensions.

Bargaining
Preparation for 2013-15 teacher contract negotiations was underway early in 2013; negotiations department staff were active in providing training, both core training programs (Certified Negotiator Program for Teachers and ESP, and Local Contract Action Team trainings) as well as offerings through the Professional Training for Educators curriculum which includes costing, analyzing insurance, financial analysis, and negotiations research among others. Training at Summer Seminar focused heavily on health insurance, including Affordable Care Act (ACA) issues that will come up in negotiations. Significant changes and investments in school funding during the 2013 legislative session created a much better financial environment for negotiation. Department staff worked alongside Public Affairs staff to provide legislative updates in June of 2013 covering the impact of marriage equality for same-sex married partners on insurance and other benefits, information on staff development funds, details on the expansion of sick leave for family members, and other bargaining-related items as well as a funding update.

Teacher bargaining for 2013-15 contracts has been on pace with previous rounds of negotiation without a January 15 deadline.

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<th>Oct. 1</th>
<th>Nov. 1</th>
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As of this writing, fewer than 100 teacher locals remain unsettled. Salary schedule improvement for teachers has continuously held at just under 2% for the first year of the contract and just over 2% for the second year of the contract.

Negotiations for ESP contracts are ongoing. As usual, some ESP locals or districts choose to wait until the conclusion of teacher negotiations to begin bargaining their contract. As of this writing, 22 ESP locals are in negotiations. Settlement reports from ESPs are difficult to summarize due to the differences in employee groups. ESP locals report higher than normal compensation increases, tracking around 2 to 5% across the state. An increase in paid holidays, sick time, and other paid time off has been noted. Some ESP negotiations have been particularly affected by concerns over the impact of the ACA. Field Staff continues to work with the negotiations department on individual cases where districts attempt to cut hours or benefits under threat of ACA-related consequences.
The Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP) Project
In preparation for a round of bids for 2015-17, we will hold member education meetings about the PEIP plan for locals that are considering whether to seek or accept PEIP bids. The number of PEIP bids will increase if the Health Insurance Transparency and Accountability (HITA) bill passes the Legislature this spring, and we will have to gear up for the bidding change.

The current PEIP pool insures over 8,000 school employee lives and includes locals in 64 school districts. Since its inception, only two locals have left the PEIP pool. The PEIP pool has performed very well over time. On average, the pools of Education Minnesota locals entering PEIP have experienced rate increase of less than 2% per year. These rate renewals occurred with minor reductions in plan design benefit levels through increased deductibles, copays or other out-of-pocket costs. PEIP’s HSA-compatible plan improved its benefit level by approximately 20% through the decrease of the out-of-pocket maximum.

While this voluntary PEIP pool is not a permanent solution to the health insurance crisis, PEIP has shown promise in providing some rate stability, as well as bringing meaningful competition in the health insurance market. This offers some relief to members whose rates have continued to climb in a relatively closed market, dominated by a few providers.

Statewide Health Insurance
A statewide health insurance (SWHI) bill was introduced in the 2013 legislative session. Support for this initiative was reaffirmed without dissent at an Education Minnesota Governing Board meeting. While this statewide group would be a preferred way to secure cost effective insurance, the primary focus has been on getting HITA passed in 2014.

This SWHI legislation seeks to create a mandatory statewide pool for school employees to purchase health insurance. The vehicle for this insurance will be the Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP). PEIP is particularly suited to act in this role because of the level of choice PEIP provides, including three levels of benefits and three large insurance networks that cover virtually all providers in the state (Blue Cross Blue Shield, HealthPartners, Preferred One). PEIP mirrors the State Employee Group Insurance Plan (SEGIP) that covers all state employees.

If passed, this initiative will provide long-term stability in health care costs for school employees and their families. Combining school districts into a large health insurance pool will spread the cost of catastrophic claims and risk more broadly, reducing premium volatility and increasing predictability. Large pools also offer greater purchasing power in negotiating with insurers and provide economies of scale related to network size, administrative fees and provider fees. PEIP combined with SEGIP would have the bargaining power of over 300,000 insured lives once the bill is passed into law.

Affordable Care Act
A work team continues to analyze and provide guidance to locals about the implications of various provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This act will have important implications for some Education Minnesota locals. Our member education efforts on this issue started at the Collective Bargaining Conference in January 2013. We will engage in additional education efforts on this issue at the Summer Seminar this year. A number of the key employer penalty provisions have been postponed into 2015 and 2016. We anticipate the new standards will be a bargaining table topic in 2015-17, especially for ESP members. High-cost health plans may also become a bargaining table issue.
MNsure

After a bad start, MNsure is up and running more smoothly. The open enrollment period ended in March. MNsure now provides coverage for some of our members, including ESP, retirees, and contingent faculty. We now have about 20 staff that are designated as Certified Application Counselors who can assist with MNsure enrollment.

Insurance Coverage and Premium Payment Data Collection

The Negotiations Department collected and analyzed 2013 health insurance data including health insurance coverage, premium cost and payment splits between employers and employees from most of the school districts in the state. These data were compared with data that was collected from prior years and allows the Negotiations Department to evaluate changes in plan designs, as well as identify trends in premium payment provisions and coverage levels over the last year. The average insurance rate increased 6%.

With these data local negotiators and members are able to more accurately compare insurance offerings and costs with comparable districts. The information has been very useful in the Legislature because it helps legislators understand what is actually happening in locals with regard to health insurance, rather than relying on anecdotal health information that leads to misunderstandings regarding health plans and their costs.

Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRAs) and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) have steadily increased in Minnesota schools. Ten years ago there were fewer than 20 of these HRA and HSA plans; today there are over 225 schools district that offer these alternatives to traditional insurance.

Training, Technology, and other Negotiations Resources

Training content provided by the department is under continual review. The Local Contract Action Team training (LCAT) was significantly revised this year, and is now called Local & Community Action Team training. Locals needing basic organizing and member engagement skills can take the training, which can be tailored to locals in preparation for contract, political, or community campaigns or can be used as a planning tool for locals in the middle of difficult negotiations. LCAT continues to be provided through the core training program. Other negotiations training programs, including CNP for teachers and ESP and the overall bargaining team curriculum is scheduled for revision in the summer of 2014.

Significant technology updates for negotiations research were made this year. Internally, a new information management system for salary and insurance data was instituted for staff use in preparing reports and analyzing data for the table. The CompTracker system will allow analysis of the insurance data collected for several years for the first time. A new version of the contract search engine was implemented, making searches easier and adding copy-and-paste functionality. Finally, as of this writing, a cleaner and easier reporting function for the negotiations section of the Education Minnesota website was in testing phases and will be available when the redesigned site launches.

Teacher Development & Evaluation and ATPPS

In partnership with education issues staff, the negotiations department has worked extensively on the new teacher development and evaluation requirements this year, particularly in assisting locals with ATPPS plans. At the direction of the Education Minnesota Governing Board, staff are moving ahead with a legislative proposal to align requirements within the teacher development and evaluation statutes and the ATPPS (Q-Comp) statutes. The goal of the bill is to streamline and align similar requirements, preserve the professional development focus of both programs, protect existing ATPPS programs and funding, and provide resources for all districts. As of this writing, the bill is making progress through legislative committees.
Organizing

Organizing - External
Since last year's Representative Convention, Education Minnesota has added four ESP units.

Education Minnesota Watertown- Mayer ESP: a unit of 56 paraprofessionals, kids company assistants, health associates and media specialists.

Education Minnesota SPARK: A unit of 135 paraprofessionals from St. Louis Park. They were an independent unit who voted in June of 2013 to affiliate with Education Minnesota.

Education Minnesota St. Francis added two additional units. In May the administrative assistants, an independent unit of 35 votes to affiliated with the local. In October the preschool teachers voted to be represented by the local as well.

Education Minnesota is currently organizing the Community School of Excellence Charter School, a unit of 120 ESP and teachers; the Stonebridge Charter School a unit of 52 teachers and ESPs, and the East Grand Forks Bus Drivers, a unit of 23 ESP.

Charter School Organizing
In June of 2013, the Organizing Department was contacted by a charter school in St. Paul that was interested in organizing—the Twin Cities German Immersion School. After a few meetings, it was clear that this group of teachers was ready to organize a union at their school.

In December of 2012, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Washington, D.C., made a ruling that all charter school employees, for the purposes of organizing and negotiations, would be considered private employees under the law. With that decision in hand, the Field Services Department decided to file the authorization cards with the NLRB Region 18 in Minneapolis. After a lengthy back and forth with the regional office over jurisdiction, it was decided on December 4 that the charter school teachers would vote on January 14, 2014. The vote was 20-5 in favor of the union.

The Twin Cities German Immersion School became the first chapter of the Education Minnesota: Federation of Charter School Employees. The Federation was created to allow charter schools to be under one local, with separate contracts and leadership in each chapter.
Organizing – Internal
The organizing department has assisted with several Settlement Assessment meetings throughout the state for locals seeking Crisis Fund dollars.

We are also working with locals that are or have experienced difficult negotiations, including St. Paul and Anoka Hennepin. We are also working with units that are experiencing fair-share fee payer percentages above 15% of total membership. The NEA Early Enrollment Program information has been given to field staff.

Additionally, we worked with the staff committee responsible for recruiting, training, and mobilizing Health Care Advocates on our two health care bills (SWHI and HITA) at the Capitol.

Also, starting in January, 2014, we began working with three locals participating in the AFT Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) program. This program assists locals in creating an organizing plan through June, 2015. The organizing plans focus on solving problems creatively, activating union members, engaging the community, connecting internally and externally through improved communications and gaining a voice in policy and politics. These locals met again in March, 2014 and will continue to meet and work on their plans for the next 15 months.

Coalition Building
Starting in July, 2013 we started working on building collaborative relationships with several Minnesota School Employees Association locals and teacher locals. Throughout the year, these efforts have included several joint professional development trainings, development of anti-bullying projects, joint negotiations strategy and creation of community engagement projects.

Education Minnesota ESP of the Year Program
Ingrid Miera, an English language support professional in the Osseo school district, was the Education Support Professional of the Year. As the award recipient, she represented Minnesota at the NEA ESP Conference in San Francisco as a candidate for the national NEA ESP of the year.

ESP Regional Meetings
This year we had 216 members attend 11 regional meetings. 6 of our scheduled meetings were canceled due to poor weather conditions or low attendance. The topic of this year’s meeting was “The Affordable Care Act and How to Tackle Difficult Issues as a Union.” Both trainings were well-received by members.

Amy Derwinski, Bridget Foster and Alyssa Mueller make up the Organizing Department.

Certified Application Counselors of MNSure
In the late summer of 2013, Education Minnesota became aware of an opportunity through Minnesota’s Health Exchange or MNSure, for labor unions to train Certified Application Counselors who could provide navigation services to their members. We applied for the certification and became a partner with MNSure.

Twenty-three Education Minnesota professional staff became Certified Application Counselors in the fall/winter of 2013. In January of 2014, Education Minnesota sent out an email to our members who would most benefit from pricing out health care through MNSure—pre-Medicare eligible retirees, ESPs, adjunct faculty and newer teachers. We have received dozens of calls from members seeking our help and have provided dozens of members with in-person assistance.
**Education Issues**

The Education Issues Specialists support Field Services, Legal, Public Affairs and Education Minnesota leadership to help achieve organizational goals, promote effective teaching, and improve student learning. The department monitors policy development and implementation related to the professional practice of members and provides training to members through a variety of avenues. Education Issues (EI) staff organizes workshops for the Fall Professional Conference and provides training at Summer Seminar, Drive-Ins, and other events sponsored by locals and intermediate organizations. The department’s purpose is to increase Education Minnesota’s presence and credibility through collaboration with other organizations and agencies and to provide new professional learning opportunities to our members. Further, the department is responsible for tracking and responding to state and federal policy initiatives that address matters of professional practice.

EI staff represent Education Minnesota on a variety of statewide policy groups, including the Teacher Support Partnership, MACTE—a state affiliate of the national organization of colleges of teacher education, MN ASCD—a group of state leaders in curriculum development, the MN P-20 State Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) Data and Research Committee, Learning Forward MN, and various organizations devoted to addressing the achievement gap, including the Urban Leadership Academy and the Minnesota Humanities Council. In addition, EI staff facilitate certain member groups, including the Professional Advocacy Committee, the Special Education Committee, the National Board Certified Teachers Network, and the AFT Professional Development (ER&D) Steering Committee.

EI staff works with Education Minnesota lobbyists to influence the development of research-based policies supported by the organization that enrich teaching and learning in the public schools. Education Issues staff also serves as liaisons to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Board of Teaching (BOT), the Q-Comp network, and BOT Standards & Rules Committee. The department monitors MDE and BOT task forces and working groups, and members of the department are often asked to represent Education Minnesota on such groups and consult on a wide array of emerging issues.

Highlights of the work of the Education Issues department over the last year include:

- **Presentations to members at Summer Seminar, Drive-Ins, AFT Professional Development (ER&D)offerings, and other events in locals and I.O.s**
  EI staff trainers provided workshop sessions on these teacher development and evaluation topics: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), peer review, use of student data for purposes of evaluation, teacher improvement plans, and coming to agreement on TDE. EI staff also presented on: teacher licensing, the role of culture in student performance, reflective practice, and technology. The staff coordinated relicensure courses in accommodations and modifications for instruction, student mental health, positive behavior interventions, reading comprehension, and strategies for digital learning.

- **Special education committee efforts**
  Members of the special education committee met with MDE staff to discuss workload issues and on recruitment and retention of special educators. Committee members also served on the statewide work groups and task forces on caseload, teacher development and evaluation, and restrictive procedures. The committee is preparing sessions on Universal Design for Learning and on issues for special educators for the 2014 Summer Seminar.
• AFT Professional Development (ER&D)
EI staff continues to support Education Minnesota’s extensive network of trainers in the AFT Professional Development (ER&D) program. EI staff members monitor changes in the AFT offerings and support locals as they deliver union-developed professional learning to teachers and ESPs. The committee sponsored scholarships for five teachers to attend the AFT TEACH conference in July, 2013. AFT PD trainers met during the summer to design updated versions of relicensure sessions in positive behavior, student mental health, accommodations and modifications, and reading comprehension to align with the Common Core standards, and to provide new strategies for helping all students learn. New courses are planned in strategic use of data and working with English learners. The steering committee is reaching out to early childhood and parent educators this year with a presentation at the annual trainers’ conference on “Mind in the Making,” which addresses the importance of helping students of all ages develop habits of mind that foster learning.

• TALL/Ed Issues contacts
TALL/Ed Issues contacts and the Kramer-Brown/Northland United intermediate organizations co-sponsored teacher development and evaluation training at the IOs negotiations overnighter April. The focus for TALL trainings this year is information on changes in the staff development law, teacher growth and development plans, and parent engagement.

• Minnesota’s National Board Certified Teacher Network
Enhanced efforts to support new and renewing NBCT candidates with backing from two critical sources this year: the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards selected Minnesota’s network for a NBCT System Leadership grant, and Education Minnesota’s Governing Board also funded network development and expansion. In addition to continuing our popular monthly candidate support meetings, the network reinstated a mid-year candidate retreat held at the Minnesota Humanities Center. More than 20 attendees came together for three days to draft and revise extensive application materials, assisted by current NBCT readers and coaches. The network also provided an information session at Summer Seminar, a candidate support provider training for NBCTs across the state, and had a lobby day scheduled for mid-April. This year, we also celebrate 16 newly certified NBCTs from Minnesota, and an additional 12 renewing NBCTs. Leadership goals for this year center on mobilizing NBCTs to advocate for and increase the number of board certified teachers in our state.

• Teacher Development and Evaluation
Throughout the past year the Education Issues department has worked to support our members and school districts as they developed their local TDE plan. Education Minnesota and the Minnesota School Board Association provided joint training for school districts across the state. The EdMN/MSBA Joint Training reached over 600 educators. The EI staff has also provided specific component training for locals at IO meetings and Drive-Ins. Education Minnesota continues to work closely with MDE regarding the TDE State Pilot and planning for training to support TDE implementation. We have partnered with MDE and other stakeholders to develop and distribute a survey looking for feedback regarding specific needs for resources. These data are being analyzed and will be shared with members in the near future. A preliminary report on the pilot from the University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement was shared with the Pilot Leadership groups; the results of this report can be used to support the request for funding through the Aligning Teacher Evaluation Programs bill. Education Minnesota has been working with key stakeholders on ATEP which aligns requirements of TDE and ATEPs, capitalizing on the best elements of both existing laws and providing much needed funding to districts and charter schools.
• Fall Professional Conference
The Fall Professional Conference was held Thursday and Friday, October 17 and 18, 2013. Education Issues staff worked to secure workshop sessions that met the needs of all educators, whether they work at the early childhood, elementary, or secondary level. Staff reviewed a record 155 applications from individuals and groups hoping to present at the conference, and a total of 90 workshop sessions and 4 mini-keynotes were offered. A broad range of content areas area were addressed, and general interest sessions on topics such as culturally responsive teaching, attention and motivation in the classroom, health and wellness, arts integration, and safety and school climate were on the program. Nearly all of the sessions offered over the course of the two-day conference meet general requirements for continuing licensure credit, while about one-third also meet requirements in the specific areas of technology, reading instruction, mental illness in students, positive behavioral interventions, and accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of all learners. Sixteen sessions addressed the conference theme of equity, while a dozen sessions dealt with aspects of Minnesota’s teacher development and evaluation law; there were sessions on sessions on student engagement, professional learning communities, and cognitive coaching. Also, a panel of policymakers and teacher members who served on the state teacher evaluation working group answered participants’ questions about the statutory requirements and the state pilot model. Conference facilitators were surveyed about the conference, and over 98% of rated sessions were judged to be relevant to participants, 96% of rated sessions were deemed good or excellent in terms of quality, and 97% of rated presenters were recommended to be invited back next year. Many sessions were full, but the 2012 decision to increase both the number of sessions and the time between sessions once again proved fruitful; participants were able to find alternative choices when their first choice session was closed. Member feedback about the conference has been positive. Also, last year’s conference saw an increase in the number of member volunteers who facilitated sessions and helped introduce presenters. Education Issues staff are working closely with Public Affairs on plans for the 2014 conference, which will include an increase in the number of sessions offered on Friday.

• Support and influence the Minnesota Board of Teaching
Members and staff continue to advocate for Board of Teaching action to support high standards for our profession while adjusting to policy changes. Newly appointed members of the BOT bring with them an energized professionalism to the consideration of their many current issues. One such issue is the new teacher licensing tests, the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exams or MTLE. The relatively new tests have caused a number of problems for newly prepared and licensed teachers as well as those moving to Minnesota from other states and licensed teachers seeking to add a license. The 2013 Legislature created a Teacher Licensing Task Force to make recommendations to the board and others to alleviate these barriers while maintaining standards. (See report section below.) Teach for America (TFA) required much of the board’s attention early this year. Thoughtfully, board discussion continues to seek long term solutions to this and broader concerns about preparation and continuing education of Minnesota E-12 educators. The edTPA (Teacher Performance Assessment) is now embedded in all approved Minnesota teacher preparation programs and culminating activities are taking place during student teaching experiences.
• **State Teacher Licensure Task Force**

Beginning September 1, 2010, only “Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations” (MTLE) are accepted as the required teacher licensure tests in Minnesota. Prior to the development of these tests, the state used the Education Testing Service (ETS) Praxis exams. The tests are required by law, selected by the Minnesota Board of Teaching and are charged to measure general skills in reading, writing and mathematics. (Still other tests are required to measure professional skills and knowledge (pedagogy) and content (to be taught) mastery.) The MTLE general skills exams were the focus of this task force.

Education Minnesota members Joyce Baumann, Cold Spring elementary teacher, and Scott Hovan, Mahtomedi physics teacher; were named to the task force by President Specht. John Bellingham, Faribault, and Jim Barnhill, Minneapolis, represented the Board of Teaching. The task force submitted its report to the Legislature on February 1, 2014. In brief, the task force recommended repeal of the mandate that teacher licensure candidates pass a skills examination in reading, writing, and mathematics but continue to require licensure exams in pedagogy and content areas as approved by the BOT; BOT require “assurances” from approved teacher preparation programs that licensure candidates are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics at a college entrance level; charge BOT to develop requirements for teacher licensure candidates from outside MN BOT approved programs to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics at a college entrance level. The Education Minnesota Governing Board unanimously voted to support the task force recommendations at its March 2014 meeting.

Here is a link to the full task force report. [http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=054071&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=054071&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)

• **Professional Advocacy Committee (ProAC)**

The 2013-14 ProAC is focused on two charges, 1) Online Learning, and 2) Community Conversations as they were defined in the July 2013 Governing Board resolution. ProAC subcommittees have researched their topics, taken part in facilitator training, sought to identify those issues that directly impact our students, members and communities and to identify barriers and solutions. Final reports were to be presented to the Education Minnesota Governing Board at its April meeting and will be posted on the Education Minnesota website as approved and adopted by the board.
Education Minnesota Student Program

Student members are located in colleges and universities across the state. Currently, there are ten active chapters. Over 95% of the students use the online application process to join Education Minnesota. By March 15, 2014, there were 6,235 student members, which is 94% of what membership was in 2013.

Student leaders were invited to attend two Education Minnesota leadership conferences. In the fall, student members elected representatives to attend the NEA Connection Conference where student members from around the country network, share ideas and attend sessions presented by NEA.

In the spring, student members elect delegates to the NEA Student Leadership Conference and the NEA RA. This year, we hope to elect 12 student delegates to attend the NEA RA.

In addition, the Education Minnesota Student Program is being represented by Chelsey Herrig, a student who is attending Southwest Minnesota State University. Chelsey is an NEA Student Representative at Large on the NEA governing board.

Another opportunity that is available for student members is to attend sessions at the Education Minnesota Fall Professional Conference. In 2013, sessions were offered in the areas of legal issues, getting and keeping a job, and how to have a successful first year of teaching. Staff, members, and administrators from around the state served on the panels to address the students’ questions.

Education Minnesota staff members were invited to many campuses to give presentations to students on topics such as Code of Ethics, Data Privacy, licensure, boundary issues, technology, legal issues along with contracts.

This year, the following two campuses were also awarded NEA grants: University of Minnesota, Duluth, and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

The Education Minnesota Student Program is led by Field Staff Tammy Barnes, Jan Anderson, and Steven Winge. Michelle Goos and Greg Miller asked to step down to devote time to additional assignments they have on other committees. We thank them for their years of service and wish them the best.
Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Report

Dayonna Knutson, Director

Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Board of Trustees:

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<td>Dayonna Knutson</td>
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Beliefs:

- We advocate continuous improvement in education and the practice of teaching.
- We believe quality educators are the key ingredient in quality public education.
- We believe in access to quality educational opportunity for all Minnesotans.
- We believe research-based applications provide the basis for improved teaching and learning.
- We believe Education Minnesota members committing their own financial resources to the Foundation promote and provide for creative innovations in teaching and learning.

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Foundation) continues to provide opportunities for our members to be creative and to enhance and implement new ideas in the classroom and the school environment. Twenty five (25) Classroom grants were awarded in 2013. These teacher-driven projects work directly to improve teaching and learning. Education Support Professionals (ESPs) were awarded twelve (12) Professional Development grants and Higher Education Faculty were awarded seventeen (17) Higher Education Faculty Professional Development grants in two rounds of applications in 2013. Funds provided to ESPs help them to acquire and share professional development activities that are job-related. Funds provided to college and university staff is for professional development opportunities. The Classroom Technology grant had a good year with seventeen (17) grants awarded. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Scholarship was renamed National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) Scholarship, and awarded two (2) scholarships.

Education Minnesota has many partners in the nonprofit sector who provide services and materials for educators. To those organizations, we offer Affinity grants. In 2013, six (6) partners received funds to assist our members. They included The Works, Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures (MCTLC), Minnesota Mathematics Association of Two Year Colleges, and Minnesota Association for Developmental Education.

For more information about the grants and scholarships offered by the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, please visit www.educationminnesota.org/events/foundation.aspx. You may also contact Dayonna Knutson, Foundation Director, at dayonna.knutson@edmn.org or 651-292-4834.
ESI Leadership Report

Doug Ryant, ESI Chair
Alve Jemtrud, ESI President
September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013

ESI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Education Minnesota Properties, Inc. This for-profit corporation is designed to provide quality, comprehensive programs that are competitively priced and feature consumer-oriented service for Education Minnesota members. An extensive due diligence process is followed prior to submitting a product or service to the ESI Advisory Committee for sponsorship consideration. The ESI Advisory Committee meets annually to review each product and/or service prior to recommending continued sponsorship, monitoring status, or discontinuation of the sponsorship. Only those products that offer exceptional value and outstanding service for members and their families earn ESI and Education Minnesota’s approval.

ESI sponsored programs include: financial/retirement planning services, mortgages and loans, auto and home insurance, long-term care/Medicare supplement insurance, individual and family insurance plans, credit card, identity theft protection, PerksConnect, auto buying and leasing and BOSE music products. Additionally, ESI actively promotes member benefit programs sponsored by the AFT and NEA.

For the 2012-2013 fiscal year, ESI earned $1,013,670 in revenue. This income was generated from commissions as well as advertising, marketing, and promotional fees paid by sponsored product/program providers. As per Education Minnesota’s mandate, ESI revenues inure to the benefit of the membership and organization in the form of enhancements, discounts, service, and consumer education. ESI employs four full-time staff, and also retains four consultants. Chuck Elliott, ESI Retirement Consultant, plays a significant role in the success of the ESI Financial/Retirement planning workshops. Lyle Nelson, Retirement Consultant, also provides assistance with pension education. Dick Miller, Property and Casualty Consultant, works with the ESI Auto and Home insurance program and assists Education Minnesota with group insurance as well. Bill Newton, former MSCF staff, provides pension education and financial/retirement planning for MSCF members.

Additionally, ESI continues to make significant contributions to the organization in the form of rent, service fees, and advertising ($162,916). ESI pays 50% of the cost of both the Professional Conference Program and Insert, the Education Minnesota Datebook and 100% of the cost of the Education Minnesota wall calendar as well ($36,247). ESI is responsible for marketing and coordinating Professional Conference exhibits on behalf of Education Minnesota; 272 booths generated $134,075 in revenue for Education Minnesota. ESI staff continues to provide service and support for Education Minnesota Retired as well (6,749 members). ESI, as Agent of Record, was also able to provide support and achieve savings for essential benefit programs for Education Minnesota.

ESI and its business partners provided premium items and financial support for members attending the Education Minnesota Professional Conference, Representative Convention and Summer Seminar. Prizes included digital cameras, iPods, Barnes & Noble gift certificates and additional premium items. For Presidents’ Appreciation weekend, ESI and its business partners sponsor the hors d’oeuvre and dessert reception and provide numerous prizes for adults and children. Additionally, ESI presented an iPad to the Minnesota Teacher of the Year and ESP of the Year. In addition to its popular pen/highlighters, ESI and its business partners provide numerous premium items for drawings and gifts at various meetings and workshops for locals and intermediate organizations, including new
member orientation & fall drive-in events ($107,735).

In October 2012, ESI sponsored the PerksConnect discount program, replacing Access to Savings. In 2012-13, 6,639 members registered for PerksConnect. An additional offer through PayCheck Direct allows members to purchase top-quality, brand name products interest-free, through electronic deduction. 186 orders were placed totaling $159,000. PerksConnect and PayCheck Direct contributed $21,500 toward the cost of new Education Minnesota membership cards in 2012.

Education Minnesota field staff continue to be supportive in arranging and promoting educational workshops and presentations with ESI and its business partners. Active, ESP and Retired members receive pertinent information regarding their pensions, Social Security & Medicare, financial planning, asset management, and long-term care protection. In addition, tax-deferred program administration and compliance informational sessions were held for local presidents, negotiators, field staff, superintendents, human resources directors, business managers, and payroll clerks. Overall, 3,077 participants attended 111 workshops in 2012-2013. Since 2002, 56,422 participants have attended 1,588 workshops. These numbers do not reflect all exhibit events or local and area workshops conducted by ESI and financial services advisors. Additionally, working with Bill Newton, former MSCF staff, over the past six years, ESI has offered pension education and financial/retirement planning workshops for MSCF members—1,777 attended 100 workshops.

On August 12, 2013, ESI held its 20th annual charitable golf tournament on behalf of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. ESI funds all expenses for the tournament so that all monies contributed by business partners, sponsoring companies, and participating golfers go directly to the Foundation. $38,555 was raised this year; since its inception, the event has raised more than $552,214 for the Foundation. Next year’s 21st annual event will be held on Monday, August 11, 2014 at Prestwick Golf Club in Woodbury.

ESI continually strives to deliver quality member benefit programs and services in a cost-effective manner. While an associate executive staff position, vacated by retirement in 2010, has been left open, ESI continues to monitor staffing needs for the future. Expenses in 2012-2013 were $879,453. Revenue exceeded expenditures by $134,217. $57,284 in interest was paid to Education Minnesota Properties on a $1.2 million loan. $134,217 was applied to the loan principal, leaving a balance of $782,013. It is projected that the loan will be retired in less than 4 years with approximately $500,000 in interest payments over a nine-year period.

ESI continues to receive guaranteed revenue from ELS for the transition of the LTCI program in 2010. The terms included an initial payment of $250,000 plus $500,000 in guaranteed revenue over a five-year period. ESI continues its more appropriate role of monitoring the sponsorship of the long-term care insurance program for members and their families. ELS has expanded marketing to include life insurance programs, including a combination life/long-term care product, to better meet the needs of members and their families. There are 6 life and long-term care specialists who assist members and their families with life and long-term care insurance needs.

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Health Insurance Network (MNHi.net), members have access to viable, affordable individual health insurance coverage. MNHi.net provides options for members and their families when group coverage is no longer available, when the employment or dependent status of individuals changes, when individuals are transitioning into retirement, or when they become eligible for Medicare.

In summary, ESI delivered a quality member benefits program to Education Minnesota while sustaining a profit of $134,217. Concurrently, ESI and its business partners
contributed over $418,551 in program support that inured to the benefit of Education Minnesota and its members.

Educators Financial Services, Inc. (EFS), the exclusive marketing agency for the financial services program, with approximately 40 investment advisors serving members throughout the state, continues to be a major business partner relative to revenue and marketing support. 25,116 accounts have been opened by active and retired members as well as their families; there are approximately $1.2 billion in assets under management. ESI monitors $3.1 million per month/ $37.3 million per year in deposits and transfers via the ESI Billing Trust. Additionally, Educators Benefit Consultants (EBC) provides 403(b) third party administrative services for 248 school districts and Flex plan administration for 118 school districts.

Financial support as well as incentive contributions based on participation in AFT’s “No-Cost Life Program” ($96,485) has influenced ESI to more actively recruit and enroll new members in programs and workshops. AFT + member benefit programs are an important component of ESI’s marketing activities.

Participation-based revenue from NEA Member Benefits continues to be beneficial to ESI’s mission as well ($170,869). Increased member registration in NEA’s Complimentary Life Insurance (formerly known as NEA DUES-TAB) continues to be a priority for ESI; registrants are more likely to become active, involved participants in sponsored products and programs.

**2013-2014 Focus Areas:**

1. Develop a workshop for members 55 and up to address managing and distribution of assets, wills, trust and estate tax concerns, and long-term care needs.

2. Enhance the number of ESP-specific (PERA) workshops.

3. Continue to work with MSCF to bring financial/retirement planning workshops to its members.

4. Assess ESI Staff Needs/Transition Planning: ESI President Alve Jemtrud will retire in 2014, but has committed to working with the leadership and management of Education Minnesota to assure the continued success of the organization. He has recommended that Education Minnesota perform a formal assessment of the staffing needs of ESI, which will allow the organization to sustain its current base of services while addressing the future needs of its members.
ESI Mission Statement

ESI will provide quality, comprehensive programs that are competitively priced and feature consumer-oriented service for Education Minnesota members.

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Dick Miller, Insurance Consultant
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Education Minnesota Retired Report

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(Effective April 25, 2014)

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Joan Clark and Betty Toy
Program – Joan Clark and Lois Wendt
Resolutions – Ed Rapp

Education Minnesota Retired Staff:

Alve Jemtrud
Shelley MacDonald
Matthew Blewett
Education Minnesota Retired Mission

- Provide an easy transition between retired educators and their new professional organization and colleagues;
- Assist in the transition from active/paid work to a meaningful retirement;
- Prepare members and provide support and assistance through group programs and individual assistance regarding normal and predictable changes in their lives pertaining to health, social status, spouses, other social relations, and retirement issues;
- Promote and join with other groups and coalitions that can provide assistance, counseling, and benefits for retired members on an individual or group basis;
- Provide opportunities for fellowship, travel, lifetime learning and mutual support;
- Inform retired members about member benefit programs sponsored by ESI, AFT and NEA;
- Work for legislation that provides economic security for retired educators, such as pensions, annuities, social security, health benefits, and fair taxation;
- Enlist the support of retired members and other citizens to strengthen the commitment to excellence in public education at all levels;
- Support legislation that promotes and assists public education;
- Develop and continue to record the history of public education via the Minnesota History Center and the AFL-CIO Labor Interpretive Center; and
- Support the aims, goals, and objectives of Education Minnesota, NEA, AFT, and the AFL-CIO.
- Be an advocate for human, civil, and economic rights for all.
President’s Report – Walt Munsterman

As of January 31, 2014, Education Minnesota Retired had 6,784 members, including 247 preretired members.

Through the Education Minnesota Retired website, Facebook, and quarterly newsletter, ACTION, we are able to effectively communicate with our members. Our website is updated frequently with an event calendar, newsletter postings, conference and meeting registration forms and more. In an effort to communicate more efficiently, Education Minnesota Retired is working to enhance its database of email addresses.

There has been much activity since the last Retired Annual Meeting. The Retired Fall Conference was held at Mystic Lake Casino in September. The conference provides an opportunity for attendees to socialize and hear from presenters on important issues that affect our lives. The Retired Program Committee chooses the presentations and sets the agenda for this popular event. Sessions usually include a legislative update, TRA update, financial planning and health and wellness for seniors. The 2014 conference will be held at Ruttger’s Bay Lake Lodge in Deerwood, MN on September 8-10.

The Education Minnesota Retired Legislative/Political Conference took place in January. The conference included sessions on legislative updates, pension activity (presented by TRA Executive Director, Laurie Hacking), and a session on how retirees can stay involved in the political process. Dan Pedrotty, from AFT Research and Initiatives, made an excellent presentation on National Pension Climate and Social Security.

Retired members continue to be active in the political arena and contribute to the Education Minnesota and NEA PAC. A number of our members attended the Education Minnesota Political Conference in November. The coming year will again be filled with political work as all state officials and the House of Representatives are up for election in November. Many of our members are actively involved in the campaigns that will be voted on in the fall. It is important that we elect individuals who are supportive of our issues, such as a stable pension fund, health care and public education.

We are actively recruiting new Retired and Preretired members by promoting membership through newsletters and publications, at Education Minnesota and ESI retirement and financial planning workshops and through various exhibit opportunities. We will continue our work to engage more active members to join as preretired members, while they are still actively at work. In 2013 we reduced dues for ESP members. We are currently exploring a continuous membership model.

I want to thank the leadership of Education Minnesota, President Denise Specht, Vice President Paul Mueller and Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe for their support of our organization. Vice President Rodney Rowe attends most of our functions and is the liaison to the active organization.

The work of all of our members who have volunteered their time, including Retired Board Members, Committee Chairs and Committee Members, is very much appreciated. Additional thanks to all of our members who attend our functions. Without you, the members, there would be no organization.

The assistance from Education Minnesota staff, Alve Jemtrud, Shelley MacDonald and Matt Blewett is very valuable to the operation of Education Minnesota Retired. Their support helps our organization move forward.