

1148er

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

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

**Volume 10, March 2018
Election Edition**

From the President Diane Thompson

Members of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers are scheduled to vote for the following positions from **Monday, April 9, to Wednesday, April 11, 2018**. Each candidate was asked to submit a short biography with his/her name. Candidates have submitted their names for all available positions. The biographies for each of the candidates are listed below in alphabetical order, with current office holders listed as incumbent. The ballots will be counted in Shari Niemczyk's room (room 22) at Moreland Elementary on April 11th from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. All members are welcome to attend.

Please contact our Elections Committee (Kathy Cardinal, Liz Eul, Eileen Gilligan, or Shari Niemczyk) if you have questions about this process.

President (one candidate):

Diane Thompson - incumbent

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

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

I want to continue as President of the WSPFT because I believe in the mission of our union, an organization working for better salaries, benefits, working conditions, and support for

teachers. I have worked hard supporting teachers in our union for over 20 years. I have participated in many trainings provided by Education Minnesota; Member Rights Training, Certified Negotiators Training, Local President's Training, and Treasurer's Training. I have attended Education Minnesota's Summer Seminar, School Law Conference, Bargaining Conference, Political Conference, and Representative Convention. I also attended AFT TEACH in Washington D.C. where I met teachers from all over the United States. I also regularly attend Metro Council meetings to keep informed about other metro locals.

Union work is not for the faint of heart. It requires a deep commitment to stay resilient when issues get difficult, to devote the necessary time, to work on a multitude of problems, and to have the tenacity to continue fighting when you are tired. Teachers work in an environment that has become increasingly difficult, and I worry for the future of our profession. Newer teachers and veteran teachers need a strong union at all levels – local, state, and national – to keep teaching a professional career.

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

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

Vice President (two candidates):

1) Phil Hayes - incumbent

I am pleased to announce my candidacy for Vice President and Negotiator of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers 1148. I have spent the last two years as our Vice President, and the previous four years as a building representative for Friendly Hills. In addition, I have completed member rights training with Education Minnesota, participated on the district's Educational Policy Committee (EPC), the ATPPS oversight committee, and served as co-chair for the Organizing for Settlement Committee. During my tenure as a Vice President, I have represented our teachers and worked with our federation to build a stronger union. This is my 16th year in the district, and I believe now more than ever in our union.

My primary role as the Vice President is to advocate for all members of the union. As a negotiator, I know I can work for a fair and equitable contract that represents our members at every level. I am committed to serving our union in the years to come, and I hope I can count on your vote this spring.

2) Julie Schiltgen

My name is Julie Schiltgen, and I am running for Vice President of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. I have worked in ISD 197 since 2002 and currently teach math at Friendly Hills.

In past years I have served as both a Negotiator and a Building Rep, and I am running for Vice President because I would like to serve our union in a greater capacity. I am committed to our members and keeping our union strong. Two of the main duties of the Vice President are to serve as the chair of the Organizing for Settlement Committee when our contract is being negotiated and also to serve on the Educational Policies Committee. I have been active on both of these committees in the past and welcome the opportunity to lead these committees.

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

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

Throughout my teaching career in ISD 197, I have attended the following trainings and seminars:

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

I also served on the Education Minnesota Due Process Committee.

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

I look forward to serving our membership as Vice President. Thank you for your support.

Treasurer (one candidate):

Hope Alger - incumbent
7th Grade Math
Friendly Hills Middle School

I am pleased to announce my candidacy for Treasurer of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers 1148. I have spent the last ten years as our Treasurer. My duties as the Treasurer have included monthly billing, payroll, completing our yearly audit and taxes, and taking care of new and existing membership and dues. This is my 18th year in the district. If re-elected, I am committed to serving our union in the years to come.

Secretary (one candidate):

Dr. Kristy Otte – incumbent

My work in the union stems from my commitment to equity and social justice issues in our public schools. For students to be successful, we need to operate in environments that allow us to be successful. Workplace environment, respectful treatment of teachers, fair contracts and benefits, and the ability to have integrity in our work directly connects to the outcomes our students have in our schools. I believe in professionalism in teaching, advocacy for public education, and ongoing, high quality professional development for teachers. This is what unionism in education is all about. Equity, advocacy, and improving schools for students is integral to the work we do.

I am an ESL teacher and former instructional coach who has worked in both middle schools, three elementary schools, and the high school. My experience and training has benefited my work as Local 1148 secretary. I have served WSPFT teachers for 17 years in multiple roles including secretary, building representative, grassroots advocate, member of EPC, Constitution, and Audit committees, ATPPS Oversight, and website administrator. These roles have given me a window into issues faced by teachers across buildings, levels, and disciplines. My union training includes attending Education Minnesota's Summer Seminar six times where I was able to receive in depth training in negotiation, website design, secretary officer training, labor issues, member rights and advocacy, and mediation. Furthermore, I have received training through Education Minnesota in the areas of grassroots advocacy and organizing for settlement. As a representative to EM's representative convention five times, I voted for union resolutions for our 70,000 members across the state. As a delegate three times to the American Federation of Teachers convention, I see the importance of staying connected to the national dialogue around teacher's unions and public education.

As secretary, you can expect me to continue my professional development as a union leader through training and outreach. My work includes staying informed of union news, policy, and providing context for members through records, the WSPFT website and social media. I hope to continue building professional collegiality between teachers, serve as a resource and liaison for union members, and improve our local through teacher leadership.

Negotiator (five candidates):

1) Anne Bolsem - incumbent

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

I have served WSPFT teachers as a building representative for over twelve years and as a negotiator for the past ten years. During that time, I have participated five times in the biannual Education Minnesota Collective Bargaining Conference to become more

knowledgeable in the current issues locals are facing at the bargaining table and to develop my skills as a negotiator. The opportunity to attend the School Law and Liability Conference twice heightened my awareness of recent legal topics and laws relating to teacher rights.

Additionally, I have been a member of both the Educational Policies Committee and the Meet and Confer Committee, engaging in conversations with the school district representatives regarding specific topics relating to processes and procedures. I served on the Teacher Development and Evaluation Writing Committee to create a plan that met the MN State Statute requirements. I have also participated in the District Staff Development Advisory Committee and the Strategic Redesign Advisory Committee. I currently serve on the TDE/ATPPS Oversight Committee and the Garlough Focus Leadership Team, and I also work with new staff at GEMS as the Site Mentor.

My philosophy has always been to speak up, take action, and be a part of changes, rather than to sit back and watch change occur. I believe I can be a voice for my colleagues, be a representative for individuals as a part of a whole, and be an advocate for all teachers, regardless of site, level, position, or program. I desire the opportunity to continue serving our membership with integrity and authenticity in the role of negotiator in order to work toward an even stronger body of united educators.

2) Jodie Darwitz – incumbent

My name is Jodie Darwitz, and I would like to continue to be a member of the ISD 197 negotiating team.

In August 2000, I began my career in the district as a fourth grade teacher at Mendota Elementary. I moved to Moreland in 2001 where I taught third and fourth grade for nine years. After spending ten years at the elementary level, I was ready for a change, which brought me to Heritage where I taught fifth and sixth grade math for two years. From 2012-2016 I was a teacher on special assignment working as an Instructional Peer Coach at various sites at all levels. Currently, I am a 6th grade math teacher at Friendly Hills Middle School.

Through my teaching experience and role as an IPC, I have had the opportunity to form relationships with teachers who work with our youngest learners to those working at Branch Out and every level in between. This has provided me with a very diverse perspective of the unique needs of various programs, teachers, and systems across the district. I am committed to representing all of the exceptional educators in the district and will listen and speak out about what educators need to provide the best learning environment for their students.

The knowledge I gained from the last two rounds of negotiations was a valuable learning experience, and I would like to continue this work as a negotiator. I have the ability to consider multiple viewpoints and find value in differing opinions. I have a strong desire to ensure a positive work environment that supports each individual teacher and, ultimately, provides a dynamic educational experience for students. Finally, I understand the importance of balance between our work lives and personal lives.

3) Jeff Nisbet - incumbent

My name is Jeff Nisbet and the position that I am running for is a Union Negotiator. I have been a teacher for 29 years, 28 of those years have been spent teaching math at Sibley High School starting in 1990. I was first elected as a negotiator in 1998 and have been involved negotiating many of the contracts since that time. In addition to being a negotiator, I have been on the oversight committee involving the ATPPS and TDE plans for the last three years. Over

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

4) Dr. Kristy Otte

Becoming a negotiator is a progressive next step for my commitment to our union. I feel prepared to fill this officer role as I completed the Certified Negotiator Program offered by Education Minnesota during Summer Seminar 2017. This program taught me the skills, protocols, online tools, and inside information needed to be a well informed, educated negotiator. Furthermore, my interest in conflict, mediation, and negotiation has led me to pursue a Conflict Resolution Certificate with Hamline Mitchell Law School, where I completed two courses in Negotiation and Cross Cultural Conflict Resolution. My plans for upcoming sessions include courses in Mediation, Arbitration, and in-depth conflict studies. Learning alongside lawyers, mediators, and other professionals is incredibly beneficial to my skills in negotiation.

I believe that my experience as a conflict resolution facilitator with Education Minnesota will be an asset to my role as negotiator. Knowing mediative strategies to navigate and resolve disputes will hopefully bring a positive work flow to the table. That said, my convictions around our profession will move towards the improvement of our working conditions.

As a negotiator, you can expect me to attend regular training, including re-certification in negotiation at Summer Seminar and Organizing for Settlement conferences, that improves my skill set and updates me on current negotiator practices and issues. You can expect me to ask questions, bring your issues to the table, and do investigative work to ensure the best possible outcome in our teacher contract. You can also expect to see me advocate for our profession, our union rights, and the quality of education for all of our students.

5) Julie Schiltgen - incumbent

My name is Julie Schiltgen, and I am running for Negotiator of the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers. I have worked in ISD 197 since 2002 and currently teach math at Friendly Hills. I have been a member of our union's Executive Board since 2008 and currently serve as a Negotiator and a Building Rep. I have been a Negotiator for four terms (eight years) and am passionate about working for the best contract and benefits for all teachers in our district. I feel it is important to have as much training and experience as possible in order to have the skills to negotiate a competitive contract. We need to keep teaching a profession where teachers are respected. Because of this, I am committed to attending ongoing trainings and meetings at the local, state, and national level. By participating with other union leaders across the country, I can bring ideas back to our local union and help negotiate the best contract possible for our members. Being on the negotiating team takes a commitment of time and energy, and I will always work diligently for the teachers of ISD 197.

I am concerned that all states surrounding us (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin) have now lost their bargaining rights. I will work to ensure that Minnesota retains the right to bargain a fair contract by working during the 2018 campaign and beyond to elect pro-education candidates who support teachers and the hard work we do every day.

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

Building Representative
Negotiator
Grievance Committee
Educational Policies Committee (EPC)
Calendar Committee
Teacher Development and Evaluation
Writing Committee
Organizing for Settlement Committee

ATPPS Writing Committee
ATPPS/TDE Oversight Committee
IPC Interview Committee
Audit Committee
Constitution Committee
Sunshine Committee

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

Certified Negotiator Training
Member Rights Training
Ed. MN Summer Seminar
Ed. MN Political Conference

School Law Conference
Ed. MN Bargaining Conference
National AFT Conference

I also served on the Education Minnesota Due Process Committee.

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

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

Education Minnesota - *Degrees, Not Debt*

(This will be offered at Heritage Middle School on April 16th if you are interested.)

Minnesota alone has over \$26 billion in education debt, and we know this is a huge burden for many educators. Many teachers in our state and in our local have been counseled through Education Minnesota workshops ***Degrees, Not Debt*** on how to manage their student loan debt. There are three main pieces to the session:

- 1) Provide background about what types of loans you have and what they mean;
- 2) Explain each of the loan forgiveness options and determine the eligibility standards;
- 3) Identify how to enroll in each of the programs and learn about other opportunities to get involved.

These workshops are usually offered at an EM site, but I have arranged for them to come to our district to offer the workshop on Monday, April 16 from 4 pm-5:30 pm. The workshop will be held at Heritage in the lower yellow house Room 146. Pizza will be provided by your local **WSPFT**.

Sign up to attend by Fri., April 13 [HERE](#). If we have less than five members sign up, the workshop will be canceled. If you have any questions, contact Dr. Kristy Otte (Local 1148 Secretary) at kristy.otte@isd197.org.

2017-2018 Local 1148 Executive Board Members

President	Diane Thompson
Vice President	Phil Hayes
Secretary	Kristy Otte
Treasurer	Hope Alger
Negotiators	Anne Bolsem Jodie Darwitz Jeff Nisbet Julie Schiltgen Diane Thompson

Building Representatives

Sibley	Dave Faust, Eric Friberg, Glenn Skov
Friendly Hills	Don Nelson, Julie Schiltgen
Heritage	Eileen Gilligan, Stephen Meuer, Kristy Otte
Garlough	Anne Bolsem
Mendota	Kathy Cardinal, Julie Poppitz
Moreland	Shari Niemczyk
Pilot Knob	Ikhlas Abdelkhalig, James Autio
Somerset	Liz Eul
Early Learning	Michelle Smith
Sunshine	Julie Schiltgen
Government Relations	
Grievance Committee	Don Nelson, Julie Schiltgen

Announcements

Technology

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

Executive Board Meetings

Executive Board meetings are usually held the first Monday of each month. All members are welcome to attend. The schedule is also on the WSPFT website. All meetings are in Friendly Hills Room 122. Our last meeting of the year is on June 4, 2018.

April 2, 2018

May 7, 2018

June 4, 2018

Federation Emails

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

Paycheck

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

EM Web Site

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

WSPFT Web Site

<http://wspft.mn.aft.org>

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

Read Your Contract/Know Your Rights

Please take the time to read your contract and know your rights. If there are concerns about your teaching, supervision, prep time, schedule, or any other issues, contact Diane Thompson or your building rep. If you are doing curriculum work or supervision assignments, you should get paid according to the contract. Also, watch carefully for any changes in working conditions. It is easier to resolve these issues when they first occur.

Use Negotiated Benefits Wisely

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

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

Meeting with Administrators

Federation members always have the right to have union representation when meeting with administrators regarding discipline issues. Please call your building rep if you need assistance with any issue.

Resolving Issues

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

1148er Contributions

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

Sunshine

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

Preapproval of Credits

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

Volunteering

Be careful about volunteering for too many committees. Remember, what you agree to in September or October when you are fresh from the summer break may become a stressful

burden later in the year. Keep in mind you have no contractual obligation to serve on a committee.

Your Union Dues for 2017-2018

The money you pay in dues each month is divided among four organizations. Full time teachers pay \$910. The dues breakdown is:

Education Minnesota - \$480

AFT and NEA - \$250

WSPFT - \$168

Trades and Labor - \$12

As you can see, our local uses \$168 of your yearly dues. This money goes to pay for officer salaries, office supplies, food for meetings, etc.

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

WSP Insurance Rates for 2017-2018

Current Insurance: Self Insured (Preferred One)

Insurance type	Total Monthly Premium Cost	Total Yearly Cost	Current District contribution per month	Current Teacher contribution per month
Custom - Single	\$667.78	\$8013.36	\$667.78 (100%)	\$0 (0%)
Custom - Two Party	\$1381.20	\$16574.40	\$1174.02 (85%)	\$207.18 (15%)
Custom - Family	\$1846.93	\$22163.16	\$1569.89 (85%)	\$277.04 (15%)
Open Access - Single	\$742.15	\$8905.80	\$705.04 (95%)	\$37.11 (5%)
Open Access - Two Party	\$1534.87	\$18418.44	\$1227.90(80%)	\$306.97 (20%)
Open Access - Family	\$2052.34	\$24628.08	\$1641.87 (80%)	\$410.47 (20%)

To calculate the amount taken out of each paycheck (insurance is taken out of 20 paychecks), multiply the teacher contribution per month of your plan by 12, and then divide the result by 20. This should be the amount taken out of each paycheck for 20 paychecks.

West St. Paul Local 1148

BUDGET for 2018-2019

Adopted: March 12, 2018

INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL DUES		
A.	Local 1148 Members	
	380 Full-time	910.00
	(\$480-EM, \$250-National, \$12-Regional Labor, \$168-Local 1148) (Dues would be \$45.50/paycheck for 20 paychecks)	
	45 Part-time	560.00
B.	Fair Share Members	
	2 Full-time	540.00
	10 Part-time	324.00
INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIP DUES		
A.	Local 1148 Members	371,000.00
B.	Fair Share Members	4,320.00
C.	Draw from Reserve Funds	0
	TOTAL INCOME	375,320.00
DISBURSEMENT OF INCOME (EXPENSES)		
A.	Education Minnesota Dues	306,420.00
B.	St. Paul Trades and Labor	4,800.00
C.	West St. Paul Local 1148	64,100.00
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	375,320.00
ITEMIZED EXPENSES – LOCAL 1148		
A.	Office Supplies	1,500.00
B.	Delegates to Convention	2,500.00
C.	Scholarships	3,500.00
D.	Retirement Gifts	1,500.00
E.	Sunshine Fund	1,000.00
F.	Negotiator's Salary (4 @ 3000)	12,000.00
G.	President's Salary	8,500.00
H.	Vice-President's Salary	3,000.00
I.	Treasurer's Salary	3,000.00
J.	Secretary's Salary	3,000.00
K.	Building Reps, EPC Stipends, Government Relations, Sunshine, CERO, \$40/meeting	9,000.00
L.	FICA taxes, Federal taxes, MN taxes	5,300.00
M.	ADP Payroll	1,800.00
N.	Social/ Meeting Expenses	4,500.00
O.	Publications/Postage	1,000.00
P.	Technology updates	3,000.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES FOR LOCAL 1148	64,100.00

Thank You Notes

I just wanted to thank the teacher's union for the thoughtful gift (check) during my surgery/medical leave. It is very helpful, and I appreciate the well wishes. Thanks!

Karn Scherfenberg

Dear WSPFT,

Thank you for your generous gift to the Henry Sibley Dollars for Scholars scholarship program for the 2017-2018 school year! Your gift of \$500 will become part of the scholarships that will be awarded to the graduating seniors of Henry Sibley High School at the Senior Awards Ceremony in May 2018.

Your contribution and the generosity of other community members and businesses have provided over \$1,900,000 for scholarships since the program started in 1985. These scholarships serve as positive recognition of the graduating seniors and their four years of hard work and academic achievement while in high school.

With the rising cost of post-secondary education, the importance of your gift is even greater than in the past. As an affiliate member of Scholarship America, Henry Sibley Dollars for Scholars also provides scholarship recipients the opportunity to obtain additional scholarship funds from participating colleges and universities. Therefore, your gift has the potential to provide even more!

Again, thank you for supporting the students of Henry Sibley High School and their future post-secondary education.

Sincerely,

Henry Sibley Dollars for Scholars

Dear West St. Paul Federation of Teachers,

Thank you for the kindness and thoughtfulness you showed to our family during this difficult time. We have felt such an outpouring of love and comfort. Thank you for the gift in honor of Kate.

Deb Nass
Emily Natrop