

Greetings 1148rs!

I hope this email finds you well and that the beginning of the school year has been a positive experience for you and all of the young people you work with. No matter how tough our jobs can be at times, I always feel like I can look at myself in the mirror at the end of the day and know that the work I do is meaningful; I may not always get it right with every one of my learners on that day, but it is certainly my mission. I hope you feel similarly. Our students are lucky to have so many professional educators to nurture and support them on their educational journey!

**Below are some highlights of the work that has been happening in Local 1148 on your behalf, a few helpful reminders, and some things to look forward to:**

#### Communication Survey

Thanks to the 200 members (out of around 430) that participated in the communications survey I sent out on behalf of the Executive Board in early September. It was validating to see how many of us really appreciate and value the role the Union has for us, professionally, and personally. Further, we are using the results to guide us at the Executive Board level in finding better ways to not only communicate better, but to empower new members to participate in Local events, activities, organizing campaigns, and leadership roles. If you're interested in seeing the results of this survey, [here](#) they are.

#### Meet and Confer

Part of our negotiated master contract is the right to "Meet and Confer," as equals, with Administrative leaders on a variety of non-contractual topics and issues where we find common cause to improve our educational community. We meet a minimum of three times a year. Our team includes two elementary teachers (Michelle Link-Valenstein-PK and Ruth Underdahl-PK), two Middle School educators (Kristi Cooper-H, and Lora Messer-Nilles-FH), one high school teacher (Katie Carter-TR), and myself. We're currently working on ways to provide all district employees, both past and present, simple messaging about the benefits of shifting where they get their medical prescriptions filled. We want to compel people to move away from CVS and Walgreens and instead use Cub Foods, Costco, Walmart, Hyvee, and Fairview (our preferred pharmacy). This can

not only save YOUR family a significant amount of money, it also decreases costs to our SHARED insurance, which could help to keep our premiums down in the future. If you have ideas about non-contractual topics you'd like discussed (large class sizes and how they relate to delivering an equitable education for all of our students is on our next agenda) or are interested in becoming a member of this team in the future, please reach out to me.

### Election '22

Early voting is underway and if you're interested in heading to the polls in person prior to election day, here is the early voting information for [Dakota](#), [Hennepin](#), [Ramsey](#), and [Washington](#) counties. If you'd like to request a mail ballot, you can fill out [this form](#) on the Secretary of State's website. Needless to say, Education Minnesota endorses candidates that support our right to collectively bargain and to fully fund our schools! Members from our own Local have been a part of the screening process to inform that endorsement process. The candidates at the top of this year's ballot have made clear their priorities in regards to our profession. Take a look at what [Scott Jensen](#) and [Gov. Tim Walz](#) are sharing in terms of education policy, as well as checking out EdMn's entire list of [endorsed candidates](#). Note that candidates of both parties are asked to participate in this screening process, but not all candidates participate. Whatever you do, make a plan to vote, and implement that plan. We want our voices heard!

### Negotiator Team

Your elected Negotiators (Anne Bolsem-PK, Jodie Darwitz-FH, Kristy Otte-H, and Ryan Pagenkopf-TR) have begun meeting and strategizing in anticipation of negotiating our next contract beginning Summer 2023. They look forward to connecting with you and hearing your views on what is important to you when they sit down at the table with our partners at the District. Should you have issues/ideas/language that you would like to see included in negotiations, please email it to me and the entire negotiating team, and I will begin to consolidate those ideas for them.

### Organizing for Settlement Committee

In concert with the work the Negotiators are doing our Organizing for Settlement Committee will begin strategizing ways to rally member and community support around their efforts during the negotiating season. Led by our Vice President Lora Messer-Nilles, this team is charged with making sure our community stakeholders understand the importance of our

educators earning a fair and sustainable contract so that they can continue to provide the first class education the children in our community receive! They are also charged with the task of mobilizing and rallying members at events like School Board Meetings, community/school events, etc. We would like the team to be representative of all of our sites, and you need not be an Executive Board Member to be on it. If you are interested in joining this crucial team, please reach out to me.

### MEA

Education Minnesota will host its annual MEA conference on Thursday October 20. If you are interested in attending, here is the [link](#) to register (which is free for members). Can't attend but interested in some great online Professional Development provided by EdMn? Check out [MEA Online](#) (note you will need to set up an account as this benefit is only available to members).

### Degrees Not Debt Program

A lot of folks are still sorting through the complex financial landscape of paying back student loans. Education Minnesota offers a variety of virtual and in person seminars on how to navigate it. Have a look [here](#) if you could use some help. It has been highly recommended by many of our Local 1148 members!

### Be BRAVE!

Are you within the first five years of your education career? Are you interested in strengthening your own resilience and professional voice alongside other early career educator members in Minnesota? Consider signing up for the free Building Resilience And Voice with Early Career Educators ([BRAVE](#)) program!

### Fall Festival Recap

The Fall Festival was held on September 24th and was a great success! We were able to utilize Organizing for Settlement Funds provided by Education Minnesota, as well as to take advantage of the generosity provided by Tom Raymond Real Estate (Tom is an 1148er from FH), La Boca Chica, Union 32, Spiral Brewing, and others to put together a great day for members, potential members, retirees, and their families. It was a tremendous turnout and a great mix of new, veteran, and retired members (and their families) spending time together in union! Thanks to all of our volunteers that made the magic happen! We hope to do it again next year!

### General Membership Meeting: December 8

We are planning our General Membership Meeting for Thursday (late afternoon) December 8th. It will be a mix of business and pleasure as we look ahead to the 2023 contract negotiations, but with plenty of time to socialize and celebrate the end of 2022! More details to follow on venue and agenda. Save the date for now! A contest is in the making to award the site that brings the most members!

### Paycheck Verification

Check Skyward carefully to see that you are getting paid the correct amount. Contact [Belle Sarf](#) in HR should you identify a discrepancy. Each payday make sure you verify your sick leave and personal days and are getting all your negotiated benefits. Review your deductions and insurance benefits to make sure they are correct. Sadly mistakes are all too often made, and even if that mistake is made to your advantage, it is a mistake that will be remedied at some point and you will be obligated to pay back the District. Please stay on top of this.

### Non-isd197 email addresses

If you're a new member or think that you may not have provided the Union a private email address, please share one with us at [wspresident@gmail.com](mailto:wspresident@gmail.com). If it becomes necessary for us to communicate sensitive members-only information off of the isd197 email system (that the District can monitor) we want you to be informed!

### Site visits from the President

When asked to respond to the statement "I would like it if our Union President visited with my colleagues and me at our work site to better understand what we do, and what is important to us," 59.1% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed (37.4% were neutral). If this is something your building is interested in, I'd love to come out and see you! Please reach out by way of your Building Rep or reach out to me directly and we can figure out what works best for you and your colleagues. On that note, I'm looking forward to lunch at the Early Learning Center later this week!

### E-newsletter

When asked to respond to the statement "I prefer to receive important Union communication in the following way," 92.5% of responses indicated "email." Additionally, when asked "I would like to see the return of the monthly 1148 newsletter distributed to our mailboxes," 23.6% of responses indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed." In an attempt to find a

compromise, we hope to launch the 1148 E-newsletter soon. If you or someone you know has a background in this type of work and would be interested in a possible (stipended) position to design and launch the newsletter, please reach out to me.

If you've gotten this far I applaud you for taking the time to read through this clunky email! Hopefully we can build a more pleasant e-newsletter in the coming months to make reading about our work more pleasant. Regardless, you have my gratitude! Do reach out if there is any way I can support you or your colleagues, and I look forward to seeing you at our December 8th Membership meeting, if not sooner!

In solidarity,

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