

The 1148er

The official newsletter for the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers

GREETINGS 1148ERS!

As 2022 comes to a close, it almost goes without saying that we have a lot to be optimistic about in our profession! The November election results mean that for the first time in over ten years, we have pro-education legislators in control of both houses of the Minnesota Legislature, and a former teacher (and EdMN-endorsed candidate) has been re-elected to lead the state as its Governor. Now they have at their disposal an unprecedented \$17 billion surplus to use to better the lives of Minnesotans in a variety of ways. Pro-education candidates ran on platforms that included fully funding public education and we must hold those legislators accountable to that! In this first issue of the e-1148er, I have suggested some ways you can help! I'll be doing my part as President, you can be sure!

Despite my optimism, I am cognizant of the challenges that our profession faces, both chronic and acute. I continue to work to ensure our contract is being enforced to the letter for all of our members, look for ways to use our collective strength to mitigate our staffing shortages, and be creative about attracting and retaining quality people to our profession and notably our District, among other things. Whatever we do, the answer is clear: we can and must negotiate a great contract for our members this negotiating season! This is the most sustainable and immediate way for our Local to address these challenges head-on in the coming year!

I look forward to the work ahead and hope that I can count on every one of you to do your part, in union with one another, to find ways big and small to accomplish our goals. We are ALWAYS stronger together! For now, I wish you a well-deserved break and all the very best in 2023!

In solidarity,

Brian McCarthy

BUILDING VISITS

Interested in having Brian visit your site, or meeting with you and other members of our Local? You can reach out to one of your Building Reps, or contact him directly. He would love to come out to see all of the great work going on at your site, listen to ways the Union can better support our members, or just simply say hello! He's available before 8 a.m. and after 11:30 a.m. on most days. He looks forward to being in your building (in some cases, again) very soon!

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DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING RECAP

We had over fifty members at our December membership meeting on Dec. 8. A short agenda was shared with members (already shared via email) and people had a chance to not only collaborate on a variety of professional issues, but to come together in union to meet one another, smile, and laugh!

Union 32 was a great host and we certainly appreciate their hospitality. Every site with at least five union members was represented at the event, with the top count being Two Rivers High School, which means they are the winners of the January 3rd breakfast (sponsored by SAVVAS Learning)! Pilot Knob was second (but first by percent, which will require us to reconsider the rules for future contests)! Keep an eye out for more social events in 2023, notably our May Membership Meeting, where we will honor the coming year's retirees. Be sure to bring a friend, and/or a member who hasn't attended an event before! As we all know...there's strength in numbers!

HR CHANGES

If you weren't aware, Human Resources Director Brenda Albrecht has left the district and the search is underway to find her replacement. Currently, Superintendent Olson-Skog is serving as Interim HR Director, with some of the mundane work being taken over by an outsourcing firm known as CESO. If you see any discrepancies or issues with your paychecks or have questions about benefits, be sure to reach out to Belle Sarf as always, but please do be patient with her. Remember, the fault lies with the employee if mistakes are made (regardless of if they are in your favor or not) so remain vigilant all the same.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If you didn't know, WSPFT has a social media presence on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Be sure to follow your Local there as we share announcements and highlight the great work being done by our members! Not on social media? We do the same and more at our website! If you haven't read your Contract or our Constitution lately it might be a good time to have a visit.



2023 EDUCATION MINNESOTA REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION

Education Minnesota's annual representative convention will be held in the Spring of 2023. More specifics will follow. We can send up to five delegates to represent our Local in shaping the EdMn agenda for the coming year. If you are interested in representing our Local at this convention, you need not be an officer or an Executive Board Member to do so. Please email [Brian](#) if you are interested in serving as a delegate.



1148 HOODIE DISTRIBUTION

We've recently received our new hoodies, and they look great! Treasurer Hayley DeMers (F/H/TR) and a team of EB Members are making plans to distribute them to sites in January. Keep an eye and an ear out for when they touch down at your site!

EDUCATOR OF COLOR AFFINITY GROUPS

You may not be aware, but EdMn has established affinity groups for BIPOC educators. If you are interested in finding out more information on them, or how to get involved, click [here](#), and/or reach out to [Brian](#).

NEGOTIATIONS AND ORGANIZING FOR SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE

Your negotiators (Anne Bolsem [PK], Jodie Darwitz [FH], Kristy Otte [H], and Ryan Pagenkopf [TR]) met once again on December 12 to discuss language issues, continue to research contracts from around the Metro, and discuss strategy and tactics for our upcoming negotiating cycle. They remain available to discuss issues of importance with our members. Please email [Brian](#) if you have ideas/issues that you would like brought up with them.

Our Organizing for Settlement Committee leadership is nearly complete! Mathew Beniak (PK) was confirmed by the Executive Board last month as the newest member of Vice President Lora Messer-Nilles' (FH) team. Another very talented nominee will be announced, and hopefully confirmed at January's Executive Board meeting, so more on that soon. This team will be crucial in earning a great contract for our members in the upcoming negotiation cycle and needs great people to do the work. If you are interested in volunteering to work on the OFS Committee, please reach out to them [here](#).

RACE EXHIBIT AT THE SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA

"The idea that we can group people into "races" is only a few hundred years old. It was, and is, tied to power and hierarchy. Today, scientists have disproved the idea of race and its notions of biological superiority. But the idea of race continues to shape our lives. How did we get here? And how can we do better?"

In RACE: Are We So Different?, you can examine our shared history and current reality. Understanding the past, acknowledging harm, and joining the conversation are the first steps toward a fairer future."

[-new.smm.org](http://new.smm.org)

Now through January WSPFT members have the opportunity to attend the RACE exhibit at the Science Museum (at a time of your choosing) and attend a follow-up discussion with other educators on January 26th. This will allow you to be reimbursed for **all or part** of your admission to the museum. Reimbursement amounts will depend on how many teachers participate.

[EDMN](#) and WSPFT support the work of social justice and anti-racism work in our schools. This opportunity is one way in which we can learn and grow together as members of this professional organization. Any questions can be directed to [Kristy Otte](#) (Negotiator, H).

PENSION ADVOCACY

Pro-education legislators at the state level, coupled with an unprecedented surplus, means we have an opportunity to advocate for a more robust pension package for all of our members. Additionally, momentum is growing to bring back the [Rule of 90](#) for educators! Please consider lending your voice to the work that is being undertaken on our behalf. A more robust pension package not only does right by each and every one of our hard working educators, it also is a great tool to attract and retain quality people to our noble profession! Have a look [here](#) to see what Education Minnesota is initiating, and to find out ways that you can help!



FUTURE ISSUES

We're excited to bring to you our very first e-1148er, but even more excited about how to make it better! If you have ideas on how to improve on this, content recommendations for future issues, or want to help with the production of it, we want to hear from you!



PEOPLE TO KNOW

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

- Brian McCarthy (TR), President
- Lora Messer-Nilles (FHMS), VP
- Hayley DeMers (FH/H/TR), Treasurer
- Michelle Smith (ELC), Secretary
- Phil Hayes (FHMS), Past President
- Kim Zellmer, ATTPS

NEGOTIATORS:

- Anne Bolsem (PK)
- Jodie Darwitz (FH)
- Kristy Otte (H)
- Ryan Pagenkopf (TRHS)

BUILDING REPS:

- Anna Banti (MO)
- Matthew Beniak (PK)
- Katie Carter (TR)
- Margaret Citta (TR)
- Kristina Cooper (H)
- JoAnn Cudo (PK)
- Erik Kluznik (TR)
- Julia Linehan (GEMS)
- Patrick McCormick (FH)
- Mary Nelson (S)
- Shari Niemczyk (MO)
- Samantha Schiltz (ME)
- Anna Thul (ME)
- Lori Thomas (S)

