

# The 1148er

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I hope as you open our first e-1148er of the 23-24 school year that you have settled into a good routine with the young people that you serve and are enjoying the change from Summer to Fall. It is my absolute favorite time of year and I have to remind myself that no matter how busy I get, it is okay to take some time to feel the crunch of the leaves under my feet, and feel that crisp autumn air blow through my hair (humor intended as I have very little of it)!



Make no mistake, our union has been very busy these past few months! With negotiations in full swing, a referendum and open School Board seats on the ballot in November, and a special House election in District 52B, it would be an understatement to say that our plate is full! I appreciate those of you that have stepped up to volunteer to phone bank or have joined us at one of our Fall events. It has been great to see new faces working in union with our veterans, to increase our capacity as a local and to build *a stronger together*! If you have been thinking about wanting to get more involved, please reach out to me, or click [here](#)! I sincerely mean it when I say that we want you involved! Members working alongside of one another is the backbone of any good union, and it is no different for the West St. Paul Federation of Teachers!

In Solidarity,

*Brian McCarthy*

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## DECEMBER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Executive Board will be asked to finalize a date and location for our December General Membership meeting. It will likely be one of the first two Thursdays of the month, and in the Mendota Heights/Eagan side of our community. Stay tuned for more information on this from your building reps!



# 2023 ELECTION GUIDE

For an odd year, there is a lot of election activity going on for the voters that live in the boundaries of District 197.

Take a look what is on the ballot, and when!

## VOTE YES!

On November 7th, voters will have the opportunity to Vote Yes to an operational levy and a tech renewal levy. Our members have been working the phones and getting the word out to support them both. We would like to thank Kristi Cooper (H) and Lora Messer-Nilles (FH) for their work in coordinating our part of this community-wide campaign!

For more information on the referendums, as well as how/where to vote, click [here](#).



## SCHOOL BOARD

You may recall that in late August WSPFT community residents held a screening at [Food Smith](#) with School Board Candidates [Tim Aune](#), [Rowen Elsmore](#), Byron Schwab (incumbent, no campaign site), [Morgan Steele](#), and [Randi Walz](#). The screening, led by Vice President Lora Messer-Nilles (FH), found that all five candidates would be great assets to our School Board. Ultimately the feedback of the screening team was shared with the Executive Board at its September meeting who unanimously adopted the following resolution: *The West St. Paul Federation of Teachers is encouraged by all of this year's school board candidates but is particularly excited about the prospects of having Bloomington teacher Rowen Elsmore, Richfield teacher Morgan Steele, and community organizer (and former teacher) Randi Walz on the board! We wish all of the candidates the very best.*

A big thanks goes out to Abigail Hendricks (G) who has led our efforts coordinating the phone banks for our endorsed candidates. If you would like to join this team, you can reach out to her [here](#).

For a more in-depth look at the candidates, check out the [West St. Paul Reader](#), and for more information on how/where to vote, click [here](#).

Note: Barbara Kessler remains on the ballot but is NOT running/eligible to be on the Board as she has moved out of the District.



# 2023 ELECTION GUIDE

## •CONTINUED•

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### VACANT MN HOUSE DISTRICT 52B SEAT

If you were not aware, Rep. Ruth Richardson (DFL) resigned her seat in the Minnesota House in early September. She represented House District 52B which includes most of Eagan as well as a large part of Mendota Heights. A special election has been set for Dec. 5th, and a primary election is set for Nov. 16th. There are four DFL candidates, including our very own Jay Miller (TR), one Libertarian, and one Republican on the ballot. For more information on where, when, and how to vote, click here.



### EDUCATION MINNESOTA ENDORSEMENTS

Living outside of District 197 boundaries and curious if EdMN is endorsing any candidates or referendums in your community? You can click here to find out!

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### PENSION ADVOCACY

Interested in building on the momentum from last year's statewide push for better pensions? Check out ways to get involved and stay informed here.

### EDUCATION MINNESOTA 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 racial justice resources, or how to get involved, click here, and/or reach out to Brian.

Additionally, All Jewish Education Minnesota members are encouraged to sign up for the email list as this group grows into a more formal affinity group.

### SOCIAL MEDIA



@wspft1148



@wspft1148



@wspft



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

# NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Regular negotiation meetings began in mid-September and are scheduled out until Thanksgiving Break at this point. This bargaining session is unique given the volume of education and collective bargaining related legislation that was passed into law during the Spring. Compounding this is the fact that until voters weigh in on the referendum on Nov. 7th, the financial position of our district is not as clear as our negotiators would like it to be. All of this means that while progress is being made, the process will be a lengthy one.



As Brian pointed out during our site-based strategies sessions in the Spring, we will settle when we get the best possible contract for our members. There is simply too much at stake to do anything hasty. He remains in regular contract with EdMn, as well as other metro area presidents, to monitor the state-wide push for fair and sustainable contracts for our members. To date, only fifty locals have settled, and only a few of those are in the metro area. If you would like to monitor statewide progress, you can do so by clicking [here](#), and using your MEA Online Account. If you don't have an account, you will need to register for one.

Our elected negotiators Anne Bolsem (PK), Jodie Darwitz (FH), Ryan Pagenkopf (TR), and Kristy Otte (H) are working diligently on our behalf and are grateful for your support! Check out the "organizing for settlement update" (below) for tangible ways to connect with, and support them.

## ORGANIZATION FOR SETTLEMENT

Our Organizing for Settlement Committee leaders (Lora Messer-Nilles (FH), Matthew Beniak (PK), and Anna Thul (Me) have been monitoring negotiations and are considering a variety of awareness events and activities to support our negotiators as they work to get us a great contract. Remember, if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for our negotiators, or want to be apart of the work that OFS is doing, reach out to them [here](#) and our OFS team will get that information to them.



## ROAR DURING NEGOTIATIONS FOR OUR KIDS!

You should have received a red button from your building rep with our ROAR negotiation themes on it.

Designed and distributed by our OFS team, it is a reminder that our negotiators are looking to build a contract that **restores** cuts to education, **attracts** the very best educators to our district, and **retains** the great educators we do have! Please start wearing your button as we ramp up our collective voice to

ROAR for the contract we deserve!



# ALMAS RECEIVES LA FAMILIA LATINO HERITAGE AWARD

Recently, Two Rivers ALMAS student group was awarded the 20th annual La Familia Latino Heritage Award 2023 and was honored at a community celebration at the Landmark Center in St. Paul.

This award is presented to leaders in the community who support and contribute to the success and growth of the Minnesota Latino community. ALMAS (Anglos Latinos Motivados a Superarse) student group, led by Two Rivers teacher Rob Hanson, has been engaging the community for over 20 years with successful anti-tobacco actions at the legislative level, cultural preservation through their popular folkloric dance group and cultural events plus countless student-led community service initiatives. Congratulations to our amazing students who continue to do great things!



## MEMBER RECOGNITION

Know of a member who is doing extraordinary things that deserves a shout out? **Email Brian** and we will look to get them into the next e1148er and on our social media feeds!



## FALL EVENTS

The last two Saturdays of September were very busy for us. Over seventy people either participated in our WSPFT float during the Homecoming Parade, or attended the Fall Festival, respectively!

It was great to see new members and old veterans in the mix at both, and if you weren't able to attend, no worries! We recognize there were a lot of community events going on and one can't be at everything! Looking forward to next fall, we will do a better job of spacing things out. Regardless, we would like to thank everyone that turned up, and to Lora Messer-Nilles (FH), Matthew Beniak (PK), Anna Thul (Me), and Sarah Lund (TR) for their efforts in organizing these great events!



**A STRONGER  
TOGETHER**  
*Since 1951*