



The 1148er

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings 1148ers!

As a long time geography teacher, amateur sociologist, and current president of a local labor union it probably comes as no surprise that I've been giving a lot of thought to the recent federal, state, and local election results, the demographics of the supporters of the candidates that have both won and lost, and the issues that seemed to drive those voters. People who do this professionally are known as psephologists and while I'm not ready to call myself one of those quite yet, my interest in what these results will mean for our students and our union beginning in January are more than just academic. Much more.



Since the election I have been in a number of meetings with EdMn leaders across the state to understand what comes next. The discussions have ranged from what to do about possible Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, potential restrictions on collective bargaining, attempts to decertify unions, and banning books. These ideas may seem alarmist to some, but they are rooted in [Project 2025](#) as a part of a wider playbook for what a "conservative victory through policy" might look like, and so they are worth preparing for.

I myself am not alarmed. I am steeled, determined, and inspired! I know that in Minnesota we have some of the most pro-labor legislation on the books anywhere in this country. We have a very strong state [statute that protects against book bans](#), and is lauded by civil libertarians, conservatives, and progressives alike. I know that my union dues go partly to hire the best team of labor/education lawyers that are found anywhere, and who stand ready to fight for our members and our students should their services be required. And I know that my union siblings, sisters, and brothers in Local 1148 will always put the safety and wellbeing of our students above all. I was recently reminded of a quote by my favorite artist of all time, Bruce Springsteen. He said, "Unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country." Given that both Harris and Trump appealed directly to union members for their support, with union voter trends not firmly entrenched on either side of the political divide, it is a reminder that this quote rings truer today than ever, and that it also is understood by those that seek to lead this country. Better pay, better pensions, better health care, and safe working conditions are not partisan! They are what unites us in solidarity and in unionism with workers across this state and this country. It reminds me that we can do great things in both times of adversity, and in times of hope. And it reminds me once again, that we are simply stronger together!

In solidarity,

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INTRODUCING TOM RAYMOND

LOCAL ACTION LEADER



Tom Raymond (FH) has stepped into the role of Local Action Leader created/funded by Education Minnesota. Tom will be responsible for engaging and organizing WSPFT members to lobby legislators, share their stories, and speak with one voice on our statewide priorities on health care and pensions. Each local in the state was asked to have a member fill this role, and we are grateful that Tom has stepped up! We would not only appreciate your support of Tom, but your involvement with his efforts, so if you are passionate about these issues, and want to be a part of this important work, reach out to him at thomasraymo@outlook.com.

RALLY TO FUND OUR FUTURE: JANUARY 29TH AT THE CAPITOL

Education Minnesota members from around the state will be rallying at the state capitol on Wednesday January 29th beginning at 3:30 p.m. We hope to have a large contingent of WSPFT members standing with our union siblings, sisters, and brothers as we drive home the importance of better pay, pensions, and healthcare for all Minnesota educators! Given the **recent budget projection**, it is crucial that our legislators hear loud and clear of the need to fully fund our **legislative priorities**! Expect more information on this event in January. For now, **register here**.

WANT TO SAVE MONEY ON HEALTHCARE? OF COURSE YOU DO!

There are two services in our healthcare plan that can save you, and our self-insured plan, money! When you use Amplify, deductibles and copays are waived! Overall, when you use practitioners within their network costs decrease between 40-70%! Check out this [three-minute video](#) or call 1-800-890-4017 to speak to a patient advocate who can help you find an Amplify provider who will meet your needs.

In addition to Amplify, Teladoc can also save you and our plan money! Teladoc gives you round-the-clock access to U.S. board certified doctors, from home or on the go. Check [this link](#) out for more information. You can also call them at 1-800-Teladoc or visit Teladoc.com

UNION PLUS: EVEN MORE BENEFITS TO UNION MEMBERSHIP!

If you haven't already, check out [Union Plus](#) for myriad types of fringe benefits that come with our membership in the AFL-CIO. They offer scholarships, mortgage assistance, credit and medical bill assistance, shopping/travel discounts and more!

EDMN REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION: DELEGATE CALL

The 2025 Representative Convention will be held Friday, April 25 through Saturday, April 26 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington. The RC is Education Minnesota's highest governing body, with more than 600 elected delegates meeting annually to set policy for the union. WSPFT is allocated six delegates, and it is crucial that we make our voices heard at the convention to shape policy that is reflective of the values of our local. To be a delegate, you need not be an officer or a member of the Executive Board and we would love to have new faces in the mix! If you are interested in serving our union as a delegate please [email Brian](#). If we have more than six applicants, we will hold an election in accordance with [Article IV of our constitution](#), EdMn election rules, and federal law.

SCHOOL LAW CONFERENCE RUNDOWN

WSPFT leaders Lora Messer-Nilles (FH), Matthew Beniak (PK), Anne Bolsem (PK), Kristy Otte (H), and Brian McCarthy attended the 2024 School Law Conference on November 13th. Throughout the day, they learned about a variety of legal issues that face our students and educators as well as what is being done to combat the issues! Notable topics included new legislation related to Banning Book Bans, Paid Family Medical Leave, Earned Sick and Safe Time, and the READ Act. We are grateful for their hard work and passion in leading Local 1148!



KNOW YOUR CONTRACT!

You can find our contract on both [our website](#) and on the [197 website](#). Be sure to keep it readily accessible but above all, know your rights! If you ever need any help understanding them, your building reps stand ready to help!



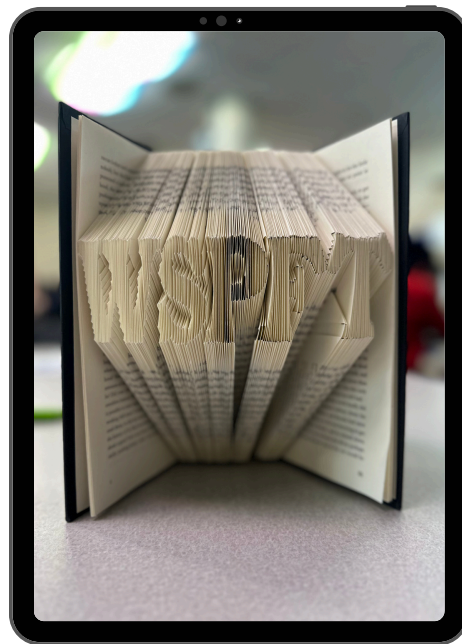
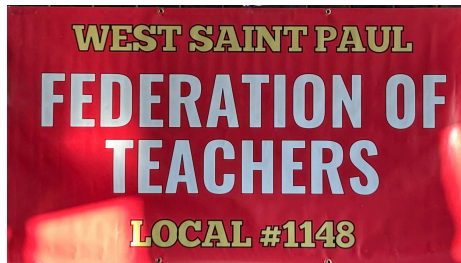
FUTURE 1148ER ISSUES

Have ideas for future issues or want to help in the production of the e1148er? We'd love to [hear](#) from you!



WINTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING RECAP

We had a great turnout at [BLVD Tavern](#) on Thursday Dec. 12 for our General Membership meeting. Brian spoke about the insurance challenges we are facing, as well as defenses that EdMn, the AFT, and the NEA are preparing for potential anti-union/anti-public education activities by the incoming Dept. of Labor and Dept. of Justice. Make no mistake, though, we also found time to have fun, with appetizers being provided by the union and pizza donated by our friends at BLVD! Be sure to save the date for our Spring meeting on 5/21/25 (hosted by [FoodSmith](#)) where we will also honor our retirees! A special shout out to Kristi Cooper (H) who made the incredible book art! If you want to see it in person, visit Brian at the Union office located at Heritage!



SOCIAL MEDIA



@wspft1148



@wspft1148



@wspft



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

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!

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](#).

UNION MEMBERSHIP AFTER RETIREMENT

Thinking of retiring in the next few years? Education Minnesota offers membership for retirees.

You may be eligible for a membership at no cost to you!

Have a [look here](#) to see if you are eligible and the benefits of staying an EdMn member.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

OFFICERS:

- *Brian McCarthy (TR), President*
- *Lora Messer-Nilles (FHMS), VP*
- *Laura Scott (TR), Treasurer*
- *Beth Rabe (MO), Secretary*
- *Phil Hayes (FHMS), Past President*
- *Kim Zellmer, ATPPS Coordinator*

BUILDING REPS:

- *Margaret Citta (TR)*
- *Matt Malmberg-Merthan (TR)*
- *Janelle Christensen (TR)*
- *Jodie Darwitz (FH)*
- *Patrick McCormick (FH)*
- *Angela Penttila (H)*
- *Kristi Cooper (H)*
- *Hayley DeMers (H)*
- *Lea Beniek (ELC)*
- *Michelle Smith (ELC)*
- *Lisa Jasper (GEMS)*
- *Julia Linehan (GEMS)*
- *Samantha Schiltz (ME)*
- *Anna Thul (ME)*
- *Anna Banti (MO)*
- *Shari Niemczyk (MO)*
- *Joann Cudo (PK)*
- *Julie Fitzgerald (PK)*
- *Mary Nelson (S)*
- *Lori Thomas (S)*

NEGOTIATORS:

- *Anne Bolsem (PK)*
- *Phil Hayes (FH)*
- *Kristy Otte (H)*
- *Matt Beniak (PK)*



EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

Just a reminder that Executive Board meetings are open to all Local 1148 members. For a complete list of meeting times/dates, you can always refer to our [website](#)! If you would like to attend you can reach out to any EB member who can provide more information. All are welcome!

CONTACT INFO UPDATES

Do you have a NEW address? Do you have a NEW last name? Do you have a NEW building assignment/FTE? Please contact Laura Scott, our Treasurer, at wspft1148treasurer@gmail.com with any and all changes to keep our records up to date, and our lines of communication with you uninterrupted.