

AHEM FRIDAY BLAST

Valerie Holthus, President

5/15/20

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AHEM Vice-President/Secretary Election Results

18.5%	43.7%	37.7%
Mark Duffy	Jon Kohnen	Kristi Weidlein
Math/Social Studies Regional High School	Grade 3 Sunrise Elementary	English Technical High School

Congratulations to all three candidates! Each candidate worked hard and earned many votes, which is a testament to their dedication to the union and their fellow teachers. I look forward to continuing to work with all three of these valuable union members in the future. The AHEM Constitution and Bylaws were changed 2 years ago, eliminating an officer from 4 to 3, because of the economic impact of Janus supreme court decision. Officer terms are 3 years in length, and each year there will be an open officer position. The following are the officers and their term lengths:

Scott Schaefer
Treasurer
Term Expires: June 30th, 2021

Jon Kohnen
Vice President/Secretary
Term Expires: June 30th, 2022

Valerie Holthus
President
Term Expires: June 30, 2023

Health Insurance Premium Increases

HEALTH INSURANCE RATE INCREASES APPROVED BY AH #11 SCHOOL BOARD MONDAY NIGHT

Each spring, the School District establishes the amount it will charge for health insurance premium rates for the following school year. Once the School Board approves these rate increases, then open enrollment starts, which is typically between Memorial Day and the end of the school year.

This past week, the School Board approved premium increases that range from about 15% to 23%. The average rate increase is 18% but varies by option, as the increases were \$128 per month for all single plans, and \$300 per month for all family plans.

The rate increases will take effect as of September 1, 2020, and the district is only offering \$13 more in contributions to singles, and \$42 more for families.

Possible Solution to the Problem of Rising Insurance Costs: AHEM is entering into discussions of joining PEIP, Public Employee Insurance Program, which has a very small increase in insurance premiums from year to year. You will hear much more about this in the coming weeks.

Considering Cashing In Your Sick Days? Think Again!

Sick days convert when you retire at your daily rate of pay the last year you work. If you take your annual salary and divide it by 187, you will see the value of a sick day. For those at the top of the pay schedule, it is almost \$500 a day. The amount the district is offering to pay you for cashing in your days is FAR LESS than that.

In these uncertain times you never know if you would become ill, or must care for a family member that could require you to miss work. In addition, if you were hired after July 1, 1994, you can use the value of your unused sick days (above 90) to be allocated to the Health Care Savings Plan. This could help you retire earlier knowing you would have health coverage carrying you over to the age of receiving Medicare. If you were hired before July 1, 1994 you receive a severance. Please review pages 37 and 38 in your green working agreement (contract) regarding severance pay.

SPRING ACTIVITIES EXTRA SERVICE AGREEMENTS/GRIEVANCE FILED

AHEM is filing a Grievance in response to a Memo Todd Mensink sent dated May 14, 2020, withholding, and/or cutting ESAs for Spring Activities due to the MSHSL cancellation of spring activities as a result of the Pandemic.

First, we are filing this grievance because many of those who were given ESA's for these activities performed work that the District is now refusing to compensate them for, which violates basic tenets of employment contracts when a teacher performs duties with an expectation of compensation and then is refused the set amount of compensation for that duty. The concept of being paid for work performed would be generally contained throughout the Master Agreement, and specifically covered by Article II.

In addition, our Master Agreement contains specific language in Appendix B, Section D, Subsection 5, which prohibits the District from unilaterally refusing to pay ESA's when activities are curtailed by the MSHSL.

The remedy we seek is full compensation for all those affected, and for the District to cease this practice. Given the nature of this grievance, this should not be dealt with as a building level grievance, but should start at the District level. We have requested a meeting with the district a.s.a.p. to discuss this grievance.

BE A NEGOTIATOR

Interested in the contract negotiations process, and working with a team to improve teacher's pay and benefits?

The AHEM Negotiations Team is beginning the planning process for the next round of bargaining. An initial step in that process is adding members to the team to replace members that are stepping down. Negotiations Team members play a vital role in defining the working conditions for the educators and the learning conditions for the students in our district. Being a team member is one of the most direct ways to have your voice represented in our union.

Being a member of the team is a two-year commitment that starts this summer. Typical time commitments are:

- Attend the Certified Negotiator Program
- Training at EdMN Summer Seminar (held virtually this year August 3-5).
- Participate in the Education Minnesota Collective Bargaining and Organizing Conference.
- One to two afternoon/evening meetings per month during the 2020-21 school year as the team prepares for bargaining.
- Time outside of team meetings to conduct research to develop proposals.
- Meetings in the summer of 2021, usually during the day, as the bargaining process begins.
- Meetings during the 2021-22 school year either to continue bargaining or to debrief and plan for the next round. If the meetings are during the day, a sub will be provided.
- Attend AHEM rep assembly and executive board meetings once per month.
- Communicate with the Contract Action Team organizing efforts supporting bargaining.
- First year of the 2-year negotiations round are paid \$3,500.00 and the pay for the second year of the 2 year negotiations round is \$3,750.00.

Questions can be directed to John Wolhaupter (jwolhaupter97@gmail.com) or Val Holthus (valerie.holthus@edmn.org).

If you are interested in applying to be a member of the team, send an email to the team at ahemnegotiations@gmail.com to get the application sent to you. **Applications are due by May 26th.**

20 FREE CEUs from Education Minnesota

20 CEU credits will be added to our CEU totals for renewal this May. This includes all ABE, School Readiness, and LSN teachers as well.

Education Minnesota is also supporting extending a license renewal date six months out from June 31, 2020, to potentially December 31, 2020. They are working hard at the legislature so the extension becomes law - please stay tuned and keep in mind teachers may renew at any time if their date for renewal is 6/31/2020.

Kristi Weidlein, AHEM Professional Development Chair

kristin.weidlein@ahschools.us

Your Vote Matters

Every national and state political office will be up for election this year except for the gubernatorial seat.

AHEM will be conducting screening town hall meetings for several of the legislative districts who serve our school district. These screenings are very important, as we will learn who is willing to commit to fully fund public education, and support us, as educators and union members.

The candidate who receives our endorsement will be decided on by those who participate in the screening process. All of the screening town hall meetings will be virtual Zoom meetings.

Screenings will take place on:

Wednesday, May 27 **District 35:** Ramsey, Anoka, Andover, Coon Rapids

Wednesday, June 3 **District 36:** Champlin, Coon Rapids

Thursday, June 4 **District 37:** Blaine, Coon Rapids

We are looking for members to volunteer to ask a question of the candidates during the virtual meeting. If you are willing to ask a question, either your own, or provided by AHEM, please email AnokaHennepinEM@gmail.com.

Please use the following links to register for the screenings:

Legislative District 35: <https://www.cvent.com/c/express/ff876ea3-9cc7-4c23-a658-c947cbb70ded>

Legislative District 36: <https://www.cvent.com/c/express/aee33822-f493-4873-8342-f457cb934fb5>

Legislative District 37: <https://www.cvent.com/c/express/63f5f0d9-a40c-4c32-8845-ddcc7b88d972>

Thank you,

Aaron Balzer, Government Relations Chairperson



*Congratulations to Anne Lindgren,
AHM Member!*

Governor Walz Appoints Three Members to PELSB

On May 12, 2020, Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan announced the appointment of three new members to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board:

- Julie Coffey will be serving as the School District Human Resources Director member.
- Dr. Heidi Hahn will be serving an additional term as the Administrator of a Cooperative Unit - who oversees a Special Education Program member.
- **Anne Lindgren** will be serving an additional term as the Teacher member from the seven-county Metro area.

Their terms will begin on May 17, 2020.



With school closures impacting millions coast to coast, the NEA Foundation (NEAF) has been inspired by the many ways that educators are going above and beyond to meet student needs. This pandemic also has exposed the pervasive inequity associated with public education in America.

In response to educators' immediate and emerging needs, the NEA Foundation is offering **three new grant opportunities to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning:**

1. [COVID-19 Rapid Response Grants](#) *(to be awarded during the Spring and Summer, 2020)*
 - The NEA Foundation's COVID-19 Rapid Response Grants will support educator-led initiatives to adapt to the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, these \$1,500 to \$5,000 six-month grant opportunities will help educators to address contributors to educational inequity and educational opportunity gaps. Applicants requesting this funding should be prepared to begin their projects during the Summer 2020.
2. [COVID-19 Response - Learning & Leadership Grants](#) *(to be awarded in September 2020)*

- NEAF COVID-19 Response - Learning & Leadership Grants will support educators' professional development focused on adapting to the unique challenges of the 2020-2021 school year. Applications submitted for one-year grants of either \$2,000 or \$5,000 should particularly address how the applicant(s) would use grant funds to prepare themselves, their colleagues, their students, or school community to respond to the increased educational equity and opportunity challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. [COVID-19 Response - Student Success Grants](#) (to be awarded in September 2020)

- COVID-19 Response - Student Success Grants will support educator-led initiatives that increase educational equity and opportunity, responding to student needs that emerged or intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grants in amounts of either \$2,000 or \$5,000 will be awarded for a one-year period, beginning in September-October 2020. Applicants requesting this funding should be prepared to implement their projects during the 2020-2021 school year.

A full description of these grant opportunities, including related criteria, guidelines, and timelines, can be found at www.neafoundation.org/for-educators/covid-rapid-response-grants/.

Announcements:

- AHEM Representative Assembly – Mon., May 18. 4:45 pm, Virtual Meeting
- Memorial Day Holiday – Mon., May 25
- School Board Mtg. -- Tues., May 26, 6:30 pm, SEC
Candidate Screening, Dist. 35 – Wed., May 27, 4:30 pm, Virtual Meeting
- AHEM Executive Board – Mon., June 1, 4:45 pm, Virtual Meeting

