

AHEM Friday Blast

Valerie Holthus, President

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What is GRACE?

We are frequently hearing references and requests of showing grace to our peers. But what really is grace?

Grace is love shown to the unlovely; the peace given to the restless; and unmerited favor of a higher power. Grace is assuming good intentions. Grace is forgiveness. Grace is understanding and acceptance without questioning or judgement.

“Grace is free favor to the ill-deserving.”(B.B. Warfield)
“Grace is love that cares and stoops and rescues.”(John Stott)
“Grace is unconditional love toward a person who does not deserve it.”
(Paul Zahl)

Grace is most needed and best understood in the midst of suffering, and brokenness. We live in a world of earning, deserving, and merit, and these result in judgment. That is why everyone wants and needs grace. Judgment kills; grace makes life. A shorthand for what grace is – “mercy, not merit.” Grace is the opposite of karma, which is all about getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and not getting what you do deserve.¹

In these uncertain times our members are experiencing worry, loss, and fear resulting in short tempers. We live in a society that has become divisive, disrespectful and even hateful. We need to protect each other, support each other, and build each other up.

All our members are important. Nurses, TaLS, Social Workers, Department Leaders, TOSAs, Literacy and Math Specialists, Pathologists, Counselors, and Psychologists are our brothers and sisters in our Union family, and should be treated respectfully. Part of their jobs include training, which may give the impression they are associated with authority, but they are doing their jobs as directed, and completing their duties like all teachers do.

Thank you for all of the wonderful work ALL of you do!

In solidarity,

Val Holthus, President, AHEM Local 7007

¹ [Aside](#) | [March 12, 2016](#) by [AYODELE ODUNAYO PETER \(AyPeters\)](#)



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

S.E.E.D. Seeking Education and Diversity is again available through AHEM this school year.

Registration is available on Learning Management Systems (LMS under lock and key), and registration is open now.

Cohorts are starting soon, see specific dates in LMS. We read books, listen to speakers, interact with our peers to deepen our understanding of equity issues allowing us to better serve our students. This year groups will be meeting on line. Spaces fill up quickly, so register early. College credits are available through St. Catherine's University.

Look for information in the "In The Know" Newsletter and talk to your colleagues about this popular professional development opportunity. If you have questions, please contact Beth.Popalisky@ahschools.us or Jan.Flavion@ahschools.us with questions.

SEED cohorts meet monthly for three hours each session. SEED classes create safe, conversational communities that drive change around equity allowing us to better serve our students and build community.

AHTOCC *Anoka-Hennepin Teachers of Color Coalition*

The Anoka-Hennepin Teachers of Color Coalition is a self-organized group of teachers of color under AHEM. We are committed to supporting our own personal and collective voices as members of color to raise concerns for equity in schools and our profession. We meet three times a year to connect and provide opportunities for professional development. We have strong relationships with educators in various affinity groups and organizations in the metro area, especially with the support of the Education Minnesota and [Ethnic Minorities Affairs Committee \(EMAC\)](#). The heart of AHTOCC is in the members, who self-organize systems of support and mentorship to strengthen their capacity as teachers in a challenging profession. AHTOCC members are represented in union leadership and the Labor Management Committee as they work with the district around a plan for retaining teachers of color. To learn more about AHTOCC, contact Natasha Brown-Guhin and/or Verna Wong.

Meetings Between The District and AHEM Continue

Many members have continued questions about air purification, ventilation, filtration, and air quality systems. Several AHEM members attend the building safety committee along with several District department heads, and the following is a Q & A presented by the District at that meeting yesterday.

Q: What has Anoka-Hennepin done to their ventilation systems to ensure student and staff safety during COVID-19?

A: Anoka-Hennepin has been investing in updated ventilation systems for more than 20 years, specifically to increase the amount of outside air circulated through school sites.

The district's ventilation systems are designed to provide **at least 20% outside air** in schools/sites at any given time. Filtration systems clean both outside and inside air continuously. This system does not allow any air to bypass the filter, and our filters are changed three times per year.

These systems serve every classroom and common area at each school/site and they are designed to perform a minimum **full volume air exchange at least seven times per hour**.

To ensure students and employees enter the school buildings with fresh air in place, **all air systems are now being purged daily beginning two hours before occupancy** as one more step in ensuring clean, exchanged air for all schools/sites.

Q: I'm not sure I believe that the air in my space is exchanged and/or filtered. How can I get proof of this?

A: All of our building supervisors (lead custodians) can access information on each air handler to determine the cubic feet per minute (CFM) exchange per hour, per room. The report of the performance of all of the district air handling units was performed by a third party.

Air filtration at all sites ensures best in class systems are in place. Currently, air at all schools is cleaned by MERV 8 filters at a minimum. These will all be upgraded to MERV 11 filters on older air handling units. All newer systems have a minimum of MERV 13 filtration, and many exchange air through two or three filters per unit.

If someone wishes to see the filters, they can be made available for viewing by building supervisors.

Q: The air in my room is hot and stuffy. I'm worried that there is no air flow and the ventilation is poor. Is this true?

A: It is important to remember that the air handling system is bringing in outside air. If it is hot and humid outside, it will be bringing in hot and humid air unless the system is designed to dehumidify the air. If you have any concerns about the type or operation that serves the room you occupy, please notify the building supervisor (lead custodian).

Q: I don't feel like I have the right air circulation in my room and my room/area is too hot because my school/site doesn't have a dehumidification system yet. Can I bring in a fan or request one? Can I open my windows?

A: As far as a fan goes, talk to your building supervisor (lead custodian) to determine the benefits or drawbacks of having a fan in your specific space. While our district doesn't have fans for every space, they can be made available in many cases. The same answer applies to opening windows during the day. In some cases it can help airflow, depending on your air handling system. However, in some buildings, particularly those with dehumidification

systems, an open window actually works against the system by making it work harder to extract the moisture from the air.

Q: Can I bring in my own air purification system?

A: Yes, as long as it is only equipped with HEPA filtration and is “UL” listed. Please work with your building supervisor (lead custodian) to ensure these two criteria are met. The purifier will be considered a personal device and you will be responsible for its maintenance. Anoka-Hennepin doesn’t allow ozone generators or ionization units because most generate an irritant as a byproduct.

Q: The univent in my classroom kicks out hot air and it’s noisy. Can I shut it off when I’m teaching?

A: Univents bring in outside air, filter it, heat it when necessary, and deliver that air to the classroom. These units are to be operational, at the high speed setting, at all times when our schools/sites are occupied. No one, except custodial staff, should be adjusting the speed or turning off these units. If you have a concern about the univent, please contact the building supervisor (lead custodian).

Q: I’ve heard HEPA filters are the best out there. Does Anoka-Hennepin use HEPA filters?

A: All Anoka-Hennepin facilities have filtration, which is very good filtration for their intended purpose. However, school ventilation systems are not typically designed to use HEPA filtration because it may reduce air flow and the number of air exchanges.

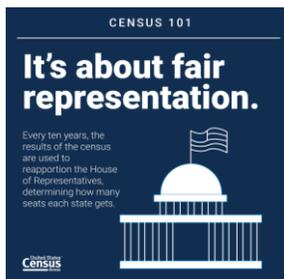
The district will have a minimum of MERV 11 filtration at every site when the 2020-21 school year begins. Many of our unit ventilators have MERV 13 filters and an additional two MERV 8 filters, thus forcing exchanged air through three filters. The district is exploring additional options to enhance our schools/sites’ capacity to inactivate viruses and allergens.

Your building rep will be receiving a checklist for each member to help you address problems or concerns in your building. When you receive the checklist, please bring any concerns you have checked to both your building rep and your principal/supervisor.



The 2020 Census: Why is that important to me?

Minnesota could lose one U.S. Representative and educational funding if not enough people complete the census, please participate! Please visit www.nea.org/Census for more information.



Professional Development ~ Relicensure News

As you know, 20 CEU credits have been added to our CEU totals for renewal this May. This includes all ABE, School Readiness, and LSN teachers as well. THIS YEAR's renewing licenses has been extended to January 1st. (This also applies to Tier 2 moving to Tier 3 licenses - new deadline is January 1st, 2021.) This is just for this year. Building Reps will receive an email with registration information on Tuesday with registration opening at 7 am on 9/11. If you have any questions, please contact ~ Kristi Weidlein, kristin.weidlein@ahschools.us

Tentative Schedule of Professional Development classes

October

6th - Tuesday - EL
8th - Thursday - Suicide Prevention
13th - Tuesday - Mental Health
15th - Thursday - Positive Intervention
20th - Tuesday - Reading
22nd - Thursday - Cultural Competency

November

10th - Tuesday - EL
12th - Thursday - Mental Health
17th - Tuesday - Suicide Prevention

December

1st - Tuesday - EL
3rd - Thursday - Cultural Competency
8th - Tuesday - Positive Intervention
10th - Thursday - Reading
15th - Tuesday - Mental Health
17th - Thursday - Suicide Prevention

UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

- ❖ Sep 14 5:30 School Board Work Session, ESC
- ❖ Sep 14 First Day of Hybrid for Elementary
- ❖ Sep 21 4:45 AHEM Executive Board/RA Meeting via Zoom
- ❖ Sep 28 6:30 School Board Mtg., SEC
- ❖ Sep 28 First Day of Hybrid for Secondary
- ❖ Oct 5 No Elementary Students, PLC, Conferences
- ❖ Oct 12 4:45 AHEM Executive Board Meeting
- ❖ Oct 15 – 16 Minnesota Educator Academy (MEA)
- ❖ Oct 19 4:45 AHEM Representative Assembly Meeting
- ❖ Oct 21 5:30 Meet and Confer
- ❖ Nov 2 Student Contact Day
- ❖ Nov 3 Election Day, Non-Student Contact Day

Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota Local 7007
3200 Main St. Suite 360
Coon Rapids, MN 55448
(763)421-9110