

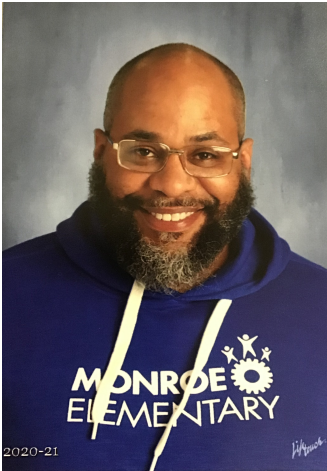
AHEM Friday Blast

Valerie Holthus, President

5/7/2021

Vol.3 No. 30

CONGRATULATIONS!



Monroe Elementary teacher, Thetis White, receives a well-deserved award of \$50,000 from Black Men Teach!

AHEM member and 5th grade teacher at Monroe Elementary, Thetis White, is the recipient of a dream come true: \$50,000 to pay off his student loans. Thanks to the “Black Men Teach” organization in partnership with General Mills Box Tops for Education program.

One of the key strategies for Black Men Teach is making teaching a more accessible profession to Black men by alleviating some of their financial burdens. The Black Men Teach program is tackling this challenge by providing scholarships and debt relief for men in the fellowship program.

Resources: blackmenteachtc.org

Thetis had coached football for several years, primarily at St. Paul Highland, and saw a gap that needed to be filled for the young men he had been coaching. “There is so much more these young men could do with their lives, and I felt a need to step up and get my teaching license,” he said in an interview with Val Holthus.

He also mentioned that he joined AHEM because it was a “good idea to belong to a professional organization and be represented by a strong union”.



Teachers May Work Remotely on June 11

Teachers will be able to work remotely on the last day of school, per the MOU that was signed between AHEM and the District.

Teachers have the discretion to work remotely on the June 11th grading day with the exception of being present to follow any required checkout procedures with their supervisor.



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Theory of Action

Building and Engaging a Fellowship of Black Male Teachers



Box Tops for Education is donating \$500,000 to Black Men Teach Twin Cities to help increase the number of Black men teaching.

Box Tops is also partnering with the Minneapolis Foundation as part of its Reimagine Education initiative, donating \$250,000 to local nonprofit and education organizations as it works to improve equity in Twin Cities schools. These funds will focus on programs that better equip and train teachers, and support school culture initiatives aimed at reducing the negative consequences of racism and unconscious bias from classrooms.

AHEM EARLY ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota is now offering an Early Enrollment program. If you are **not** currently an AHEM member, the Early Enrollment program is a great opportunity to pledge your membership for the 2021-2022 school year and gain access to many member benefits immediately (with full access starting Sept. 1) without paying dues until October 2021. To enroll in the program use the link below to complete the application:

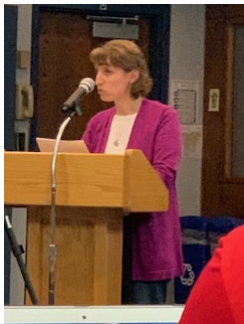
<https://join.nea.org/minnesota/>

Final Meet and Confer of the Year



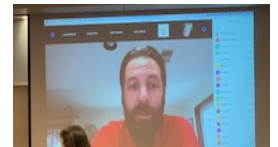
The final Meet and Confer of the year was held last night, May 5, at 5:30 at the ESC. 147 members joined the zoom meeting room, and 20 joined in person. There was a very full agenda, and much thanks to Jon Kohlen, AHM Vice President/Secretary, for planning and emceeding the event. Val Holthus, President, started off the evening with a discussion of the lack of appropriate funding from the legislature, and asked the Board to work together with teachers to persuade lawmakers to fund schools adequately. State aid to public schools is about 12% less than it was in 2003, which means we are just keeping pace with where we were 20 years ago.

Andrea Whitcomb, Lincoln Elementary, gave an introduction to the workload issues that are experienced by elementary specialists. She and Paul Weller had spoke to the school board at a prior meeting about specialists' issues, to give the board a preview of further information to be shared with them at meet and confer. Elementary specialists went on to reveal how the problems they are experiencing are easily solved, and cost nothing.



Next, Candace Cooper, Music, Rum River Elementary, gave a thorough explanation of the complicated, inefficient, and convoluted schedule the elementary specialists must operate within. The scheduling process had previously been formulated with the experts: the teachers themselves, along with the Elementary Assoc. Superintendent. Unfortunately, this successful scheduling process was eventually taken over by individual principals, thus creating a disjointed and inequitable plan. Some principals were able to create a sensible schedule, but others took the "just good enough" approach.

Dan Arntson, Physical Education teacher, Crooked Lake Elementary, spoke of the workload issues related to having no time to prepare for each of his sections, as one class comes in while another class leaves. This scheduling is not good for students, or teachers.



Continuing the topic of workload issues for elementary specialists, Stefan Wolf, Music teacher, Brookside Elementary, agreed there is no time to prepare for well planned, quality lessons, and added that it is impossible to build relationships with students, as there are so many students, so little time, and such great academic expectations.

Lindsay King, Music, Sunrise Elementary, showed examples of the inequities in the specialists' schedules. For example, there are some full-time teachers who have up to 10 more sections than other full-time specialists. The schedule also includes situations where a part-time teacher will have the same number of sections than a full-time teacher. Another inequity is having to abandon the lessons for the day because of being pulled to sub in another teacher's room. This is not fair to students or teachers.



Paul Weller finished the conversation with some solutions to the workload and scheduling issues, including having specialists work with administration to formulate a workable schedule that includes a cap on the number of sections allowed.



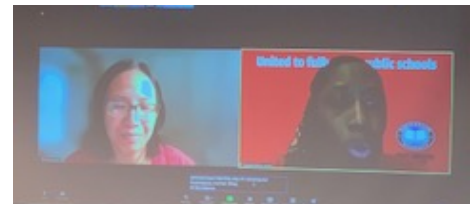
Laura Kaiser, Social Studies, Roosevelt Middle School, spoke about the declining enrollment and involuntary transfer process that teachers at RMS have been experiencing this year. She mentioned there are empty classrooms at RMS, while there is over-crowding at other middle schools. She appealed to the School Board and Superintendent to equalize attendance at middle schools by changing boundaries.

John Wolhaupter spoke about the bad feelings teachers have had toward the District this year for a variety of reasons, and suggested that union leadership and the school board join together and conduct a book study. John suggested reading the New York Times Bestseller, “Leaders Eat Last, Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t”, by Simon Sinek, 2014.



Aaron Balzer spoke about the need for a mentorship program, particularly for teachers who teach our most vulnerable students: special education. He expressed concern for teachers who are overwhelmed with special education paperwork, and the particular pressures that new special education teachers experience. The expectations for these beginning teachers are too great, and they would benefit from a mentorship program.

Verna Wong and Natasha Brown-Guhin gave an update of the pilot mentorship program and also the experience of teaching in Anoka-Hennepin during times of racial unrest. Natasha informed the Board that there was very little acknowledgement of the tensions that the Brooklyn Center community was experiencing. When incidents of great magnitude happen in one community, it is felt in all of our district’s communities. It would have been valuable to address and acknowledge to the entire district the incidents of the Brooklyn Center shooting and the demonstrations that followed.



Carissa Simonet, 6th Grade, Anoka Middle School, Washington, gave a summary presentation celebrating the MTSS Math Intervention Program, and Peder Engebretson discussed the value of the equity plan.

The School Board and the Superintendent responded to several of the topics discussed with thanks and a willingness to consider changes and continued communication.



Unemployment Seminar

At its March 29, 2021, School Board meeting, the Anoka-Hennepin School Board approved non-renewing over 260 probationary teachers. Teachers, under contract with the District, should continue to receive benefits and compensation through the end of the 2020-21 school year, which includes full pay, plus health and dental insurance benefits, until August 30, 2021.

Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota is offering a virtual seminar presented by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development designed to assist non-renewed AHEM colleagues with information on economic benefits available as well as information on Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) available during this difficult period.

If you are in need of additional information, please reach out to your Education Minnesota Field Staff David Kundin at David.Kundin@edmn.org or Laura Bratland at Laura.Bratland@edmn.org.

If you would like to attend the virtual seminar **May 12th at 4:30pm** please register with this link: <https://forms.gle/TEH9YP8vC95zPaos6>

Please Sign the Petition!

You have likely received this postcard in the mail describing an action we can take against the decades of underfunding that have led to cuts and layoffs in our schools. **About 75 percent of district funding comes from the legislature.** That money funds programs for our students and funds our contracts – it's now 11.8 percent less than it was in 2003 in real dollars. Our petition shows we will not accept cuts to education. Our goal is 50,000 educators and 90% of your worksite signing the petition statewide. Funding effects our entire community - ask parents, friends, family and other members of your community to sign too.

Our state's past budgeting decisions has made that more difficult and exacerbated inequities in our schools. Right now the proposed per-pupil increase for the AH 2023-24 school year in the House is \$384 while the Senate is proposing \$92 - a significant dollar difference for our students. Sign our petition to call on Gov. Tim Walz and state legislators stave off cuts to school funding, address the disruptions to education caused by COVID-19 and start making strategic investments to fully funding schools that work for everyone! <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protect-our-public-schools/>

Join together with educators and sign our petition!

We all want similar things, including welcoming public schools that allow all children to thrive and pursue their dreams. But decades of chronic underfunding has school districts across Minnesota preparing for harmful budget cuts next school year. Educators can prevent that if we act NOW and make sure the Legislature does its job and protects our public schools. State budget decisions this May will affect your class sizes, mental health supports in your schools and your paycheck.

#mnleg #edmnvotes



#EDMNVOTES

Government Relations Update

Who funds our future?



Proposed K-12 spending increase for FY 2022-23
Sources: Minnesota Senate Counsel, Research and Fiscal Analysis; Governor's Office; Legislative Services



Lobby Days: Our last Lobby Day is next week, May 11th, at 4:30 a reschedule for District 37, with Sen. Jerry Newton, Reps Nolan West and Erin Kaegel.

Legislative Action: The end to the MN legislative session is already next week! Governor Walz has urged the MN Senate to approve \$150 million, (already passed in the MN House) for summer school programming, including holding

instructional periods during the summer months, providing field trip activities, mental health supports and to offering free preschool and pre-K programs.

The MN education omnibus bills (HF1065/SF960) remain in conference committee this week, with the struggle of reconciling vastly different views on funding education. The House proposes \$772.6 million in new spending, while the Senate proposes \$152.1 million in one-time allocations, none additional to the general formula, with approximately \$300 million in existing funding leaving public schools to go to 'education savings accounts', which are commonly known as school vouchers.

There is a family-friendly rally for education at the Capitol on Saturday, May 15th at 11AM. **Sign up now!** <https://web.cvent.com/event/cd6c5e54-c5a4-4908-a619-1536eb8f1339/summary>

The Senate proposal is unacceptable and reinforces that the Senate has no interest in fixing the 12% reduction in state funding facing MN public schools since 2003. Write to your Senator today!



MN Department of Education’s Safe Learning Plan will expire the first week of June. There will be a different plan starting for 2021 Summer Programming.

Below is the current recommended Policy Option Range (14-day case rate per 10,000 people). Daily covid case rates have shown a significant decrease in the last week in case rates in both Anoka and Hennepin Counties. How decisions are made about instructional models has changed, and will now be made at the building level, rather than at the District level.

In-person learning for all students	0 to less than 10
Elementary in-person, Middle/high school hybrid	10 to less than 20
Both hybrid	20 to less than 30
Elementary hybrid, Middle/high school distance	30 to less than 50
Both distance	50 or more

MN Dept. of Health: Case Rates per 10,000, Based on 14-day Case Rate, Updated 5/6/21

4/11 – 4/24/21: Anoka County, 60.39 Hennepin County, 38.94

Data for K-12 Schools: 14-day COVID-19 14-day Case Rate by County Updated 5/5/2021

Anoka: 50.7 Hennepin County 32.5

Retirement Congratulations

Retirees: If you would like to have your retirement party announced, please email valerie.holthus@edmn.org.



Sooner or later, we will have to recognize that the Earth has rights, too, to live without pollution.

What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans.

*-Juan Evo Morales
President of Bolivia, 2006-2019*

Register today!

**We Make MN: Fund
Our Futures Rally**

**Saturday, May 15,
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**



*Scan the QR code to register or visit:
www.edmn.me/fofrally*

#edmnvotes



UPCOMINGEVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

❖ Announcements:

- May 10: Executive Board Meeting, 4:45
- May 10: School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., SEC
- May 11: AHEM Virtual Lobby Event
- May 12: Unemployment Seminar, with Liz McLoone, MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), 4:30 p.m., Zoom
- May 15: Rally at the Capitol for Full-funding Public Education
- May 17: Legislative Session Ends
- May 17: AHEM Representative Assembly, 4:45
- May 19: Metro Area Council for Negotiators, 5:30 – 7:00
- May 24: School Board Meeting, SEC, 6:30

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