

# AHEM Friday Blast

Valerie Holthus, President

10/8/21

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## 40-Year Anniversary of Anoka-Hennepin Strike

40 years ago the Anoka-Hennepin District was growing by leaps and bounds, and teachers earned low wages, had few rights and the District was losing talented young teachers. So on October 13, 1981 Anoka-Hennepin teachers voted to walk the line.

*"I knew something had to change or I could not afford to stay in the profession. My salary barely covered the rent of my one-bedroom apartment and the payments of my small used car", wrote Sandy Skaar.*

*Frank Meuers commented, "As a building strike leader, I had to coordinate picket schedules, arrange for a small mobile home for breaks, find homes for making coffee, bathroom facilities and provide for mutual babysitting. The word was the board didn't think we would ever walk out, because it had never been done, and we had always been intimidated. We DID go out, and made great strides for our teachers, not only in salary, but in grievance arbitration, leave policy, and many more issues. My first contract was one page long, and had no sick-day or leave provisions, no salary schedule, not much of anything except the total salary and contract year. Without our union and countless hours of work by so many, we would not be in the position we are today."*

*Negotiator Paul Rogne said, "We added many important provisions to the teachers' contract that are still there today...but what occurs to me now is how easily those provisions could be lost if taken for granted...only through continued resolve and unity of the entire teaching staff will the gains of the past be maintained and built upon."*

## ...Fast Forward, October, 2021

No matter how things change, some things remain the same.

Anoka-Hennepin continues to grow in leaps and bounds, and teachers continue to make lower wages than in other occupations that require a college education. The District is still losing talented young teachers, and we must still fight for better wages and benefits. However, what has changed is our right to organize, to communicate to our school board and bring up issues to our supervisors without fear of losing our jobs. We find ourselves in contract mediation, and when we stand together, and show unity, we know we have the power to improve our salary, benefits and working environment.

**Congratulations to the winners of last week's trivia question!**

Rebecca Stolee, Evergreen Elem.  
Leila Youakim, QComp  
Laurie Grandrud, ECSE,  
Sandburg

**What school is the smallest in the district in terms of square footage? Answer:**

**Crooked Lake Elem.**

**This week's question:  
Fill in the Blank**

In the early 1900's poor farms were places where homeless people could live and be cared for. The farms were sometimes managed by caring farm managers, but sometimes the farms were disease ridden and residents were auctioned off as workers. What school was built on the site of a poor farm?

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First three correct answers will win a coffee gift card.



**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

# Minnesota Educator Academy MEA Conference, 2021

Education Minnesota's 2021 MEA conference will be hybrid this year!

Attend in-person Oct. 21 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre or log on to watch select sessions virtually.

New relicensure courses will also be available on Education Minnesota's [MEA Online](#) for members to complete at their own pace. Courses at [MEA Online](#) are always free to active Education Minnesota members.

**When:** 7:30 a.m.-4:45 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 21

**Where:** Saint Paul RiverCentre; some live sessions will be available via webinar.

**Admission:** Free and open to Education Minnesota members and students only.

**General session:** 9-10:30 a.m.

**Workshops:** 10:45 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

**Exhibits:** 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

**Flu shots:** 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Copy and paste this link in your browser to register:

<https://www.educationminnesota.org/resources/minnesota-educator-academy/LearnUpon>

# More Staff Development Options to Meet Relicensure Requirements

The Modifications of Curriculum course has not yet been approved so we are not offering it at this time.

The links to register are sent to building reps from Kristi Weidlein, AHEM Staff Development Chair, two months at a time. The links to register have been forwarded to you from your building rep. If you have not received the links, please contact either [Jennifer.Adriaens@edmn.org](mailto:Jennifer.Adriaens@edmn.org) or your building rep.

All of October and November classes are virtual.

| DATE            | CLASS                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 10/5/2021 ~ T   | English Learners            |
| 10/7/2021 ~ R   | Suicide Prevention          |
| 10/12/2021 ~ T  | Mental Health               |
| 10/14/2021 ~ R  | Positive Intervention       |
| 10/28/2021 ~ R  | Modifications of Curriculum |
| 11/1/2021 ~ M   | English Learners            |
| 11/4/2021 ~ R   | Suicide Prevention          |
| 11/9/2021 ~ T   | Mental Health               |
| 11/11/2021 ~ R  | Reading                     |
| November 16 ~ T | Modifications of Curriculum |
| December 7 ~ T  | English Learners            |
| December 9 ~ R  | Suicide Prevention          |
| December 14 ~ t | Positive Intervention       |
| December 16 ~ R | Modifications of Curriculum |
| December 21 ~ T | Mental Health               |
| January 11 ~ T  | Suicide Prevention          |
| January 13 ~ R  | Reading                     |
| January 18 ~ T  | Mental Health               |
| January 25 ~ T  | Modifications of Curriculum |
| January 27 ~ R  | English Learners            |
| February 3 ~ R  | Positive Intervention       |
| February 8 ~ T  | English Learners            |
| February 15 ~ T | Mental Health               |

## Pfizer Vaccine Boosters Now Available for Many Educators

Federal and state public health officials are now recommending that **all educators and school employees** get a COVID-19 vaccine booster due to the occupational risks of exposure to the virus. This is in addition to members of the general population who are 65 and older, live in a long-term care facility or are 50-64 and have underlying conditions.

Currently, the booster is only available for those who received the Pfizer vaccine more than six months ago. Officials are still reviewing data from Moderna and Johnson & Johnson and will decide when recipients will be eligible for a booster. If you are eligible, we encourage you to get a booster shot as soon as possible.

## Guidance on New SPED Law

We know there have been a lot of questions from SPED teachers that requires districts to collaborate with families of all students with disabilities, from birth to graduation year, to address the impact of disruptions to in-person instruction on students' access to a free and appropriate public education in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minnesota Department of Education updated its guidance this summer to address the impact of COVID-19 on students with disabilities. For a summary of the new law, please copy and paste this link into your browser.

<http://image.email.nea.org/lib/fe8d157072630c7477/m/2/6372346c-e33a-4826-9d6d-13b68cbcb2e3.pdf>

If you encounter any issues with the school district in addressing these issues, contact your field staff, David Kundin (david.kundin@edmn.org) or Anna Dougherty (anna.dougherty@edmn.org).

# Vote for change!



## Kacy Deschene

### District 3

**Vision:** As a candidate for school board, my vision is focused on the school community. Our schools need to do more than impart knowledge. They need to facilitate the whole-person growth of tomorrow's leaders. They need to be safe and welcoming. They must encourage a culture of listening and learning. Our schools should ensure that all student perspectives, including those traditionally marginalized, are given a chance to speak and thrive. Our school communities should be places of open communication and inclusion

from early childhood through adulthood.

- Listens and considers the perspectives of all stakeholders.
- Views school board role as one of advocacy and service to all students, families and teachers, making sure they have what they need to succeed.
- Seeks to increase the physical safety and mental health of our students.
- Strives to represent District 3 Anoka-Hennepin at the legislature regarding vital issues including funding and safety.



## Dave Dirkswager

### District 4: Andover, Ham Lake, Nowthen, Oak Grove, Ramsey

**Vision:** Our kids and our schools need positive leaders who seek to bring people together and are willing to listen to all points of view and go forward. Communities are built by uniting us and building upon our strengths rather than dividing us. Using his experience as the Regional Manager for Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, Dave excels at listening to people's needs and balancing that with budgetary resources. He takes great pride in helping the citizens of Anoka County. Dave is a good

problem solver, caring, organized and understands that our kid's education is the backbone of society.

- Supports whole child learning, including emotional well-being.
- Understands that student success is dependent on support of teachers
- Promotes community, administration and staff cooperation to make the best outcomes for kids.
- Focuses on fiscally sound decisions that benefit the most people



## Jeff Simon

### District 6


**Vision:** Our schools are a vital part of the community, not only for our students, but families, and the community in general. Public schools are a place where everyone should have an equal and equitable opportunity to be able to learn, achieve, and follow their dreams. Anoka-Hennepin's mission is to effectively educate all students for success, and I reflect upon that often during my service. I believe strongly in seeking out stakeholder voices, such as teachers, staff, and community. Teacher voice should always be priority when making decisions that impact the classroom,

and I have been that voice on the board.

- Supports whole child learning, including emotional well-being
- Works to close the achievement gap, with a goal of having all kids reading by 3rd grade to educate all kids for success
- Strives to represent the range of voices of the community, valuing stakeholder voices to be used as a part of decision making
- Seeks to build Anoka-Hennepin into the best place to work for all

## Vote on Tuesday, Nov. 2!

- ▶ Polls are open 7 a.m.–8 p.m.
- ▶ Find your polling place at [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org).

This material is prepared and paid for by Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota, 3200 Main Street, Suite 360, Coon Rapids, MN 55448 in support of the above-named candidates. This material is not approved by the above-named candidates nor are the above-named candidates responsible for it.  2341

If you would like to support one of our endorsed candidates by placing a lawn sign in your yard, please contact the union office at (763)421-9110 or text (763)442-7667. Please leave your address, and a volunteer will place a sign in your yard.

We need to support leaders who know that student success is dependent on the support of teachers and who believes in cooperation between teachers, administration and community.

# 105 Days Without a Contract

## Negotiations Notebook

The Negotiations team has filed for mediation with the Bureau of Mediation services as the District has not provided an acceptable proposal to AHEM's negotiations team. The mediator granted the district's team's request to meet remotely.

The team held their first meeting on October 6, which included familiarizing the mediator with the negotiation efforts of each side. The session began at 9:00 a.m., and concluded at 3:30 in the afternoon. As part of the negotiations process, we cannot share specifics about what was discussed, but there were many topics that were reviewed, and many more topics will be on the agenda for the next meeting on October 12.

After reviewing settlements of other districts in the state of Minnesota, as of October 1, 86 of 356 locals, or 24.2% have settled their contracts. The 2021-22 average salary schedule increase is 2.14%, and the 2022-23 average salary schedule increase is 2.11%. Of course there are several other monetary components that are included in bargaining. Some districts offer a lower percentage increase because they offer a one-time stipend, or a one-time increase in the health insurance contribution.

Considering only salary increases does not show the whole picture of an agreement. Some districts offer a certain dollar amount increase in certain cells, or certain employee groups, such as Early Childhood. Other districts freeze certain cells on the salary schedule, and some offer a "staying" bonus, to keep teachers in their districts. Other districts offer language items rather than increases in the salary schedule such as 403b contributions or an increase in personal leave day payout.

The AHEM team believes the District has the funds to provide a reasonable wage increase as well as improvements in the health insurance contribution, and remains committed to achieving a fair settlement for all.

### **Schools are Exempt from Required Vaccinations for Worksites of 100+ Employees**

The Federal Plan to combat Covid and the Delta variant requires all employers with more than 100 workers to get shots or test for the virus weekly. A separate provision requires vaccines for workers in Head Start programs and at schools operated by the federal government. With those measures in place, it is believed schools should present little risk for transmission of the coronavirus.

The plan does not explicitly require vaccines for teachers in locally governed school districts such as Anoka-Hennepin. Education groups that support the plan include the National School Boards Association, which said it comes at an "extremely critical time." The group said it welcomes the plan, even as education leaders face "threats, abuse and harassment" over their public health measures. (AP, Collin Binkley, 9/10/21)

# Meet Your Executive Board Members

The AHEM Executive Board is the leadership group that makes recommendations to the Representative Assembly, and has responsibility for fiduciary accountability, policy implementation and management of the activities of Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota.

Representation on the Executive Board includes the officers, eight members from elementary, four middle school, four high school, one pre-kindergarten, two at-large and one Education Minnesota Governing Board member.

## Peder Engebretson



Hello Members!

I'm Peder Engebretson, and teach at Compass Programs.

As AHEM members, We are stronger together, in voice and action. When we have each other's backs 100%, students can believe we have theirs. When we know our contract, administrators have to know it, too. And when we nurture each other, we show parents that we can walk the walk of nurturing their kids every minute of every school day. That's what we do together, in our union.

I have been an AFT/NEA member since 1992, a building rep and contract action team member since 2019.

I chair the Member Rights committee, and I'm a SEED facilitator.

*-Peder*

# 403(b) & Pizza Party!



**Please join us for an open house style meeting the 403(b) plan and enjoy dinner on us!**

As one of the 403(b) vendors in the district, we are here to help you navigate saving for retirement. To get information on the 403(b) program and/or enroll in the plan, stop by the 403(b) Pizza Party at your convenience. We can also review any other investments you may have, or provide a review of your current 403(b).

**When:** Tuesday, October 12th, 2021

**Time:** 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

**Where:** Davanni's Pizza—Coon Rapids

3430 129th Ave NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55448

If you are unable to attend, please feel free to contact us to schedule an individual appointment.

**Samantha Simons**

**763-552-6044**

**sams@efsadvisors.com**

**David Wolfe**

**763-789-4010**

**davidw@efsadvisors.com**



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# SEED is Back!

## Earn Low-Cost College Credit toward a Lane Change Sign up in LMS

AHEM has committed itself to educational equity and justice. Part of that commitment is our sponsorship of SEED. SEED is a great opportunity to build professional networks around a priority we all share: making Anoka Hennepin the best it can be for all students. SEED's processes nurture critical personal and interpersonal reflection and growth. As we come out of the pandemic SEED groups create safe spaces for teachers to build trust and a shared vision for how to make equity and justice real for students and families. It's also a chance for experienced staff to mentor new teachers, and graduate credit is available. There are still open slots but time is short. Please take advantage of this opportunity by checking in LMS for opportunities to register.

Earn CEUs (27) for no charge.

Earn college credits through St. Catherine University

Please register online through LMS (under Lock and Key) , go to course catalog and type SEED in the search box.

There are **6 seminar cohorts** to choose from for **20-21: Four in person and two online**

- Champlin Park HS - Facilitators: Colleen Godfrey & Meghan Witchger
- Oak View MS - Facilitators: Beth Heimerl & Emily King
- Union Office - Facilitators: Jan Flavion & Mary Jo Merrick-Lockett
- University Avenue - Facilitators: Peder Engebretson & Kate Watson
- ONLINE - Facilitators: Colleen Godfrey
- ONLINE - Facilitators: Kari Xiong-Carlson & Beth Popalisky

If you have general questions, please contact Beth Popalisky. If you have questions about a specific cohort, you may contact the facilitator of your group directly.

**Beth Popalisky**

***French/Intro to World Languages Teacher***

***pronouns: she/her/hers***

***chulapop@hotmail.com***