



## ANOKA HENNEPIN LOCAL 7007

# Friday Blast

Valerie Holthus, President

January 28, 2022 Vol 4 No. 17

## AHEM Continuing to Advocate For You with District Administration

We have heard that our educators have reached their breaking points, and the stress of this year is now too much. In our conversations with members, and through AHEM committee work, we were able to identify several poignant stressors our member educators in Anoka Hennepin are facing, and we brainstormed several potential solutions to those key challenges.

This past Monday, January 24 we met with the district leadership team, including David Law, to share our concerns and implored them to adopt our solutions. Below is a summary of what was presented in that meeting:

- We expressed that we are appreciative of the district's step to further compensate some staff for covering classes during this unprecedented substitute shortage. However, there are more staff whose workload has also increased due to the staff shortage who are not being compensated. **Our ask:** to compensate all staff for their extra work.
- PPE concerns were raised to the district including only providing two (2) KN95 masks to staff, with no communication of when additional supplies can be expected, as well as, sharing our desire for staff to have access to rapid testing. **Our ask:** provide staff with additional KN95 masks, and rapid testing kits.
- We shared our educator's concern over upcoming in-person conferences, where families will not be required to wear masks when entering the building since conferences are considered an after school function. **Our ask:** Move conferences to a virtual platform, and allow our educators to work from home during this time.
- Discussion occurred regarding upcoming professional development days and we expressed that educators were wary of attending together in large groups across the district. **Our ask:** To move upcoming PD days to a virtual platform and allow our educators to work from home on those days.

- Our last topic was over sick leave our educators are being forced to take due to COVID. We shared both that our educators are being asked to work when out on sick leave due to COVID, and also that the additional sick days our educators are taking are putting a financial hardship on many of our members. **Our ask:** First, those educators are not to be asked to work while taking sick leave. Second, five (5) days of sick leave due to a member having COVID not be deducted from their sick leave bank.

The district has stated they will be in communication with us over the next week to address these items, and we will follow up on our progress in next week's Blast issue. While we remain optimistic the district will work with us in implementing these solutions, we know there may be more we need to do as a union to make these asks a reality.

We ask that you stay connected to these issues through the Blast or your union building leaders, and be ready to participate in action should it be needed.

## SPEAK UP- MAKE A DIFFERENCE, ATTEND YOUR PRECINCT CAUCUS

At your precinct caucus meet your neighbors and let your advocacy of public education be known.

### WHERE ARE CAUCUSES HELD?

The 2022 precinct caucuses will be held on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Find the location for your precinct using the **Caucus Finder**.

### WHAT IS A PRECINCT CAUCUS?

They are the first in a series of meetings where candidates will be endorsed, delegates are selected, and party resolutions are submitted.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN A CAUCUS?

To participate, you must be eligible to vote in the next general election and live in the precinct.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CAUCUS?

Generally, there are three main activities at a caucus:

1. Choose volunteers who will organize political activities in the precinct. This could include maintaining contact lists, holding political meetings, and helping with campaign efforts.
2. Discuss issues and ideas for the party to support. You can present an issue or idea for the party to support, called a resolution. If you convince other attendees to support your resolution, it will be taken to the next political convention. Eventually, your resolution could become part of the official party platform.
3. Choose delegates who will endorse candidates at future conventions. At future conventions, party delegates will endorse state and federal candidates, including for Governor. Political parties have different ways of choosing delegates at the precinct level caucus—contact your party for more information.

(see full details at <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/election>)

## Trivia Question

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

*When a grievance is filed, it is commonly resolved in a couple of steps, but if a grievance is not settled, what is the maximum number of steps that a grievance could take before it is resolved?*

**In the working agreement,  
ARTICLE XIX, Section 2.  
Procedure, there are 4 steps,  
with the 4<sup>th</sup> step, "Arbitration".**

Congratulations to *Kristin  
Zelazney, Crooked Lake Elem.  
Jeff Batts, Jackson Middle School  
Stephanie Young, Roosevelt  
Middle School.*

**This week's Question:**

First three correct answers will win a coffee gift card.

**Every Contract, or Working Agreement,  
is printed with a colored cover. This past  
contract (2019-2021) was Bright Green,  
the last contract (2017-2019) was  
Goldenrod. What was the color of the  
contract before that (2015-2017)?**

- a. Coral Orange
- b. Kelly Green
- c. Royal Blue
- d. Bright Pink

Please email your answer to  
[valerie.holthus@edmn.org](mailto:valerie.holthus@edmn.org)

## Accommodations and Modifications Re-licensure Class Available Through AHEM

**Please follow the link(s) provided and supply all necessary information to  
register for the class(es) you prefer.**

**[February 10, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and  
Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)**

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**[February 24, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and  
Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)**

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**[March 10, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and Adaptation  
of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)**

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**[March 31, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and Adaptation  
of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)**

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**[April 14, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and Adaptation  
of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)**

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[April 18, 2022 ~ Monday ~ Accommodation, Modification and Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)

[April 21, 2022 ~ Thursday ~ Accommodation, Modification and Adaptation of Curriculum, Materials and Instruction](#)

If you have any questions regarding these classes, please contact [Kristin.Weidlein@ahschools.us](mailto:Kristin.Weidlein@ahschools.us)

## Could We Lose Our Pension?

There is a petition circulating regarding reinstating the Rule of 90 (number of years worked +age=90 for a retirement benefit guideline). It is called "Governor Walz, the Minnesota Legislature, EDMN leadership, and the MN TRA Board: Extend the Rule of 90 for All Minnesota TRA Members". <https://chng.it/826dmzZrdp>

It is quite certain that the Governor, Education Minnesota Leadership, and the TRA Board would very much like to reinstate the Rule of 90. The petition would be preaching to the choir there. However, it is the Republican-led Senate that remains the sticking point.

The Senate Policy and Budget Committee Chairperson, is in control of what bills are heard in his committee. According to Education Minnesota Lobbyists, the Republican-led Senate has not only been unwilling to entertain a reinstatement of the Rule of 90, they will never pass a Rule of 90 bill. **In fact, Education Minnesota lobbyists have spent a significant amount of time beating back their proposals to reduce or eliminate our members pensions altogether.**

We must not let our retirement benefits go away!!

1. PLEASE contact your state Senator and tell them to STOP manipulating our retirement benefits!
2. Listen for a rallying call from AHEM if we need to take action.
3. Vote for TRA endorsed candidates.

## SEED Speaker Kao Kalia Yang



SEED participants, all of whom read *Somewhere in the Unknown World* by Kao Kalia Yang, were honored to have her join our January session as our guest speaker. She shared her book *A Map into the World* before discussing her process of interviewing and then writing the stories of fifteen immigrants. She then took questions from the group. The evening was impactful in helping us to better understand our immigrant and first-generation students and how to better

meet their needs. It was a wonderful event and we are thankful to Ms. Yang for sharing her time with us.

Kao Kalia Yang is a Hmong-American writer. She is the author of the memoirs *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*, *The Song*

*Poet, and Somewhere in the Unknown World.* Yang is also the author of the children's books *A Map Into the World, The Shared Room, The Most Beautiful Thing, Yang Warriors,* and *From the Tops of the Trees.* She co-edited the groundbreaking collection *What God is Honored Here?: Writings on Miscarriage and Infant Loss By and For Native Women and Women of Color.* Yang's work has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Chautauqua Prize, the PEN USA literary awards, the Dayton's Literary Peace Prize, as Notable Books by the American Library Association, Kirkus Best Books of the Year, the Heartland Bookseller's Award, and garnered four Minnesota Book Awards. Kao Kalia Yang lives in Minnesota.

## 2022 Presidential Innovation Awards for Environmental Educators

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications for the **2022 Presidential Innovation Awards for Environmental Educators (PIAEE)**. PIAEE recognizes outstanding K-12 grade educators who integrate environmental, place-based experiential learning into school curricula and school facility management across the country. In 2021, 15 educators from across the country were recognized for their leadership and commitment to environmental education and environmental stewardship.

If you are interested in applying, applications for this cycle are due by **February 18, 2022**, and you can find more information at <https://www.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators>.

For 2022 award recipients, EPA is seeking applications for projects on a variety of environmental topics, including (but not limited to):

- Climate change
- Water infrastructure
- Lead in drinking water
- Projects that reduce food waste in school cafeterias
- Environmentally-friendly agriculture practices
- Reducing and preventing human contributions to ocean litter
- School gardens
- Recycling

## New Communication Method

AHEM will begin using *Constant Contact* to send communications with our members instead of relying on the District e-mail system. Communicating through this platform should improve confidentiality of our messaging and allow us to communicate more effectively with you, our membership.

## Coming Up

- Pay Day – Jan. 28
- Education Minnesota Virtual Political Conference **Register Here** – Jan. 29
- Black History Month begins – Feb. 1
- Groundhog Day – Feb. 2
- School Board WS, ESC, 5:30pm – Feb. 7
- Pay Day – Feb. 11
- Valentines Day – Feb. 14
- Presidents Day, District closed – Feb. 21
- School Board Meeting, 6:30pm, ESC – Feb. 28
- Executive Board, 4:45pm, AHEM – Feb. 28



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