

STRONGER TOGETHER



ANOKA HENNEPIN

Valerie Holthus

President

September 22, 2023

Vol 6, No. 4

Friday Blast



Collective Bargaining Q & A

We are in the thick of contract negotiations, which in a union is called *collective bargaining*.

What, exactly, is collective bargaining? Collective Bargaining is a process through which the union, as a collective of their membership, and the employer exchange proposals and reach a written agreement.

When does bargaining start? Usually bargaining occurs when your contract is about to expire. Ours expired on June 30th, 2023.

Who is on the bargaining team? Our negotiators are selected by an

interview process with members and union officers serving on the interview team. The District chooses who will represent the management side. All bargaining sessions are open for our members to attend. The next bargaining session is on Wednesday, October 4th at the union office starting at 8:30 a.m.

How does the negotiations team know what to bargain for? This year the AHEM team took input from hundreds of its members from a variety of instructional areas through surveys, meetings and other gatherings. They also held community meetings to learn what the community finds most important in order to formulate proposals. This year the state legislature also had several bills that affected contract negotiations, and these needed to be examined, which takes time.

How are negotiations conducted? Negotiations is a long process, which can be extended by the number of proposals brought to the table by both sides. At this moment, the AHEM team has brought 34 language proposals, which four have been agreed upon. Language items are negotiated before the costs of pay and benefits are examined.

Does the District bring language items too? Yes, this week the District brought forward several language items. One we accepted willingly, several required some research, and one would require more work from our members with no additional pay, so the negotiations team not only has to present items to make your work environment better, they must also stave off items brought by the District that would ultimately make your job more difficult.

What if an agreement cannot be reached? The parties can use mediation, arbitration, and/or AHEM can withhold their work (strike) until an agreement can be made. Striking is a rare, last resort.

What happens when both sides finally agree? When the teams reach a tentative agreement, both sides take the agreement to their groups for review. AHEM members will vote on whether they accept or reject the agreement. Only members can vote. Non-members do not have a voice. If the agreement receives a majority of the vote, a new working agreement has been produced. If the vote fails, the teams continue to meet.

What will happen if a part of the contract needs revision later? A labor management team made up of union and district representatives will meet, and possibly write and agree on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which should resolve the issue.

VOTE NOW!

VOTE NOW!

The election this November 7 is crucial. There are no big-name state or national races up for grabs. Only our School Board. "Only." Think of the importance of public education in your own life. There are mounting threats

to Minnesota's high-quality and information-based education. Please learn more about the candidates and be sure to vote.

*Early voting starts on **Friday, Sept 22.** Get out and vote as early as you can.*

Here is the information for all **Early Voting in Anoka County:**

Email: Elections@co.anoka.mn.us

Website: <https://www.anokacounty.us>

Election official: Tom Hunt

General phone: 763-324-1300

Fax: 763-324-1160

Physical Address

Anoka County Elections & Voter Registration

2100 3rd Avenue

Suite 160

Anoka, MN 55303

Hours

Monday - Friday

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Meet the Staff of AHEM

Emily Mateo, Organizer

Hello! I'm Emily Mateo, an Organizer with Education Minnesota.

Before coming to EdMN, I taught High School English in ISD 917. I live in the cities with my husband, three dogs, and one cat. I'm a big animal lover. My other favorite things are tacos, any kind of dessert, and spring.

As an Organizer, I work with locals to build power around issues that are important to members. My work is hard to describe as it varies so much depending on where and who I am working with, but there's always an opportunity to bring member voice and action to the forefront of working conditions, student and staff safety, workloads, and so many other topics. As a union, we are a powerful force and can organize together to



accomplish great things.

Emily Mateo
She/her/hers
Organizing Specialist
Emily.Mateo@edmn.org

Meet the AHEM Endorsed Candidates



Erin Heers-McArdle
District 1: Anoka, Ramsey, Andover, Coon Rapids

Vision: "I will continue to promote EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION by PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST and ensuring that our schools are SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE for all."

- Experience as a current board treasurer, meets with district staff and parents weekly to hear about and discuss successes and concerns
- Excellence in curriculum and conditions to continue to improve



Dr. Michelle Langenfeld
District 5: Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Coon Rapids, Fridley

Vision: "I believe that every single child being served in our schools is most deserving of equitable access to high- quality learning experiences; provided by exceptional educators in safe, caring, and supportive leaning environments to prepare them well to succeed and thrive in the postsecondary pathway of their choice and beyond."

- 30 years in education, including classroom



Sue Witt
District 2: Blaine, Coon Rapids

Vision: "Our schools need to be kid focused, building on the perspective of all stakeholders, including staff, parents, and community members. Sue wants kids in Anoka-Hennepin to feel welcomed, respected, and belong, no matter their background, to be challenged academically, and to think critically. The language and priorities in the community about schools needs to be about kids."

- 27 years of

- student outcomes.
- Focus on special education and disability advocacy due to personal experience
- Meet students where they are by responding to each student's unique needs
- Support mental health through adequately funded, safe, and welcoming schools
- Fiscal responsibility
- teaching, principal, associate superintendent, and superintendent, including 15 years in Anoka Hennepin
- Dedicated to excellence in outcomes for all children through improving access and opportunities to learn
- Everyone deserves to feel safe and welcome in a school
- Focus on engagement, collaboration, and respect between parents, community, students, and educators
- Ethical, responsible, and shared decision making, including transparency with communication
- teaching experience in Spring Lake Park
- Many years of union membership, including 8 years as local vice president
- Publicly opposes any policies that erodes collective bargaining rights
- Opposes political agendas in school decision-making
- Focus on inclusion of all students- seeing belonging as a prerequisite for learning
- Wants school conversations to be based on the needs of students
- Priority of addressing staffing shortages

Member Rights Committee Seeks Members

The purpose of the member rights committee is to review member grievances and recommend the next course of action; we plan to schedule monthly in-person meetings. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please complete [this form](#) by October 6.

Cultural Competency Training

Description of Complete 1 - 4 Series

This series is designed to deepen educators' understanding of their own frames of reference, the potential bias in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with students, students' families, and the school communities. Participants will engage in self-reflection and discussion around the following topics: racial, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; American Indian and Alaskan native students; religion; systemic racism; gender identity, including transgender students; sexual orientation; language diversity; and individuals with disabilities and mental health concerns.

Module #1: Expanding Your Equity Lens (2 1/2 hours)

Equity work is a journey, and in this session, we will lay the foundation for centering equity work in your community. Participants will ground themselves with norms and vocabulary and develop and understanding of the importance of intercultural competency.

AHEM is offering Series 1 on October 17th and October 24th. Please only choose one, due to class size limitations. To move on to the next module and to satisfy re-licensing requirements, you must complete the previous module.

Event Timing: October 17th, 4:30 - 7 p.m.

Event Address: AHEM Union Office, 3200 Main Street Suite 360, Coon Rapids (Wells Fargo Building)

Contact us at: 763-421-9110 / anokahennepinem@gmail.com

**AHEM will be providing supper during each class. Please refer to question below with any dietary restrictions.*

Sign Up for October
17th

Sign Up for October
24th

Attention AHEM!!!

Show your support for the Anoka Hennepin Kitchen Supervisors!

The Anoka Hennepin kitchen site supervisors are in our schools from early in the morning until late in the afternoon, doing many things behind the scenes and in front of students to make sure they are fed and are ready to learn.

For you as parents, we hope that gives you piece of mind that your kids are receiving breakfast and lunch – hot, well-prepared, healthy meals, so their stomachs aren't growling and they can focus on what they need to focus on in class.

You might not even have to think about the behind-the-scenes work that your school's kitchen site supervisors does to make that process run smoothly.

Site supervisors place food orders, email with parents, work with the district, support their staff, in addition to helping prepare and distribute the meals. This is all done in the course of just one day.

Our site supervisors already go above and beyond every day. They spend countless hours – much of it outside of their contracted time – to make sure our schools are well run and everything has what they need. Our schools could not function without them.

The Anoka Hennepin kitchen site supervisors are asking the district for a fair contract that values and honors their work.

Please help support them by using this QR code to sign a petition to ask the school district to give them the pay, benefits and support they deserve.



The site supervisors do this work because it is a work of heart. But compassion and empathy don't pay the bills.

Let's show up for these essential school staff in the same way they show up for us every day.

08/23/2022 08:38

(Click picture for larger view)

MEA Update



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Register now for our 2023 MEA conference!

Get ready for the biggest educator professional development event in the state --

our 2023 MEA conference on Thursday, Oct. 19! This annual event is open to Education Minnesota members and aspiring educators only, so you can get the classes you need!

[Register Now!](#)

Registration is open until Oct. 13. Relicensure classes fill up especially fast, so sign up today!

This year's MEA conference returns to our traditional, in-person format only, at the Saint Paul RiverCentre. While no virtual conference will be offered on that day, online courses are available year-round on [Education Minnesota's MEA Online](#) for members to complete at their own pace.

MEA conference attendees can earn general continuing education credits. In addition, some sessions might help you fulfill state relicensure requirements in reading instruction, identifying early-onset mental illness in students, positive behavioral interventions, English language learners and suicide prevention. Check with your district's continuing education committee on whether you will receive credit. Other sessions being planned for this year include such topics as supporting students with disabilities, equity and social justice, and both educator and student wellness.

Free onsite childcare will also be available to attendees. You must register for childcare in advance while registering for the conference.

Note: When you register, you will receive your confirmation from our event registration system, which may be flagged by spam filters. Please check your spam and junk folders if you do not receive confirmation!

Questions? Email us at meaconference@edmn.org.



The answer to last week's question was:

What was the forerunner of PBS?

B. National Educational Television

Congratulations to last week's winners:

Kimberly Jacobs, Madison Elem
Sheena Pease, Ramsey Elem
Shannon Vetsch, Sunrise Elem

3 winners will be selected at random to win a coffee gift card. Submit your answer by 11:59 p.m. Friday (day of Blast) to be entered to win!

As the baseball season comes to an end, match the quote to the baseball movie.

Your answer will look like this: 1.a, 2.b, etc.

Quote

1. "Listen, you didn't come into this life just to sit in the dugout, did ya?"
2. "If you build it, he will come."
3. "There's no crying in baseball."
4. "Wild thing, you make my heart sing. You walk everything."

Baseball Movie

- a. A League of Thier Own
- b. The Bad News Bears
- c. Major League
- d. Field of Dreams

Please reply to this email to submit your answer:
anokahennepinem@gmail.com

Government Relations Report

Aaron Balzer
Government Relations Chair

Who Represents Me?

Government Relations Committee: We need someone in each legislative district this year to help us organize 1-2 events for your district in the spring including Coffee and Politics or a Zoom Lobby Day. Anyone interested in joining the committee in a short or long-term capacity, please let me know.

School Board Campaign: We have a month and a half left and we have important work to do to elect our endorsed candidates. Please vote, encourage others to vote, sign up to help, or grab a lawn sign!

Interested in getting a catered lunch at school?

Phone bank dates are 9/28, 10/3, 10/12, 10/24, 11/6. [Please sign up here](#) to support our campaign. The school building with the most phone bank shifts worked will have lunch catered in at your school building- it's Sunrise so far.... Details: 1) Plan on working at least 1 hour. 2) Dinner/training will be provided 4:45-5:30 3) calling between 5:30-7. 4) **Please bring a laptop.**

Lawn Signs: To my knowledge, there are school board campaign lawn signs available at the union office for District 1 and District 5. If you live in those areas or have the opportunity to place a sign in a prominent spot in those areas, please reach out to Val Holthus or Jennifer Adriaens to arrange to get one or more signs.

Potential MN Special Session: Governor Walz sat down with several police organizations Wednesday night to discuss the School Resource Officer (SRO) issue. It has been reported that the meeting was productive. The Attorney General's office and Governor Walz have both said that SRO's can continue to use force in schools during life-threatening situations, and that nothing has really changed. However, many police organizations have not seen it the same way.

There is potential to make progress on this issue now since the sides are speaking directly.

Pension Updates



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Update No. 46

Thank you for your continued attention and energy towards educator pension reform.

During the last legislative session, over 1000 members took part in an Education Minnesota pension advocacy session to learn about how pensions work, what needs improving, and how we can fight for action.

To be able to achieve the pension improvements we need from the state, we need to stand strong and stand together. It's extremely important that we engage new educators, and educators who may not have heard of this movement yet. We are asking local leaders and pension advocates to share [this flyer](#), which can serve as an easy way to engage your colleagues.

[***Read Full Article Here***](#)

Join the fight for fair educator pensions

Education Minnesota is committed to ensuring a stable and fair retirement for every educator in our state. Pension reform cannot be achieved without legislative action. Help us fight for improvements by:

Showing up

Education Minnesota will host events during legislative session focused on improving educator pensions. Show up and bring your colleagues!

Speaking out

Contact your legislators. Ask for a meeting, or give a quick call or email. Your legislators are there to represent you, and they'll appreciate hearing your thoughts on educator pensions.

Leaning in

Activate your colleagues and engage with your local and state union. We're stronger together, and we can't achieve reform without everyone's voice.

Resources

Learn more on Education Minnesota's pension web page!



Join the Education Minnesota Pension Advocacy Network on Facebook!



Sign up for pension email updates!



Questions?

Email: pensions@edmn.org

www.educationminnesota.org

Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO. 3875



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

SEED Seminars Open for Registration on LMS

SEED seminars are filling fast!
Don't miss your chance for online or in person opportunities...classes start soon!

- Earn 27 CEUs (Teacher & Admin)
- Earn 7 Flex PD hours (Elem & Sec)

- Earn Low-cost College Credit through St. Kate's Univ.
- Deepen understanding of Equity
- Discover how to Create Inclusive Communities
- Scholarships available to AHTOCC members
- GET FREE EQUITY BOOKS!!!

If you've taken SEED before, please tell your colleagues about your experience, including what you've gained both personally and professionally.

If you're a new teacher, know that this safe space can become a wonderful community of support as you start in A-H.

As a part of our commitment to educational equity, AHEM is again sponsoring SEED (Seeking Education Equity and Diversity) to ALL Anoka Hennepin Educators. SEED cohorts meet monthly to take a deeper dive into equity and diversity issues through book studies, articles and films, guest speaker presentations, guided reflections, and intentional discussions. Check out the links for more info.

[St. Kate's Credit Guidelines](#), [SEED Hype Video](#)

"I love SEED, first of all because of the books! It's impacted my teaching by helping me look at different perspectives. It's helped me think about other students... our cultural students, our students with disabilities, our LGBTQIA+ students... ALL OF OUR STUDENTS! SEED helps me be a better teacher for everyone."

~Lucy Williquet, SEED Participant

To register please visit the learning management system (LMS) in A-H
Connect on the district's website.

Questions?

Contact SEED Coordinators Beth Heimerl (beth.heimerl@ahschools.us)
and Beth Popalisky (beth.popalisky@ahschools.us).

Committee Members Wanted

Education Minnesota is looking for members to fill committee openings.

Climate Justice Forum: (8 openings on a 10-member committee)

- This task force will discuss climate justice for our school, unions, and communities, and will meet until April 2024 and may continue based on interest.

Professional Advocacy (ProAC): (1 opening for our part of the metro)

- The long-standing committee will consider and recommend policies and programs related to professional growth opportunities for members. In 2023-24 the committee will discuss and make recommendations around a teacher apprenticeship program.

Legislative Action: (1 opening for our part of the metro)

- This committee will consider and recommend legislative positions, changes, or additions to Education Minnesota's legislative platform, and may recommend task forces and ad hoc committees for additional study as needed.

AHEM compensates their members \$1,000.00 per year to serve on a State-wide committee. The committees typically meet once per quarter.

Coming Up

Sept. 23 - First Day of Autumn

Sept. 24 - Yom Kippur begins

Sept. 25 - School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., SEC

Sept. 28 - Phone Banking for School Board, 4:45-7 pm, AHEM Office

Oct. 3 - Phone Banking for School Board, 4:45-7 pm, AHEM Office

Oct. 4 - Member Rights Committee Meeting, 4:45-6:45 pm, AHEM Office

Oct. 5 - SEED, 4:30-7:30 pm, AHEM Office

Oct. 9 - Executive Board Mtg, 4:45 p.m., AHEM Office

Oct. 9 - School Board WS, 5:30 p.m., ESC

Oct. 9 - Indigenous Peoples Day

Oct 11 - CAT Mtg, 4:45 p.m., AHEM Office

Oct 12 - Phone Banking for School Board, 4:45-7 pm, AHEM Office

**Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota
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Coon Rapids, MN 55448**

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