Unite, Inspire, Lead
Our Students, Our Union, Our Future

Educator of color engagement and organizing

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NEA Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational session addresses:

• **NEA Strategic Goal**
  – Strategic Goal 1: Strong Affiliates for Educator Voice and Empowerment
    • Through an intentional focus on our educators of color Education Minnesota and our locals are addressing the issues that affect not only our members but our students, families and our state at large.

• **NEA Organizational Priority**
  – Institutional Racism/Racial Justice in Education
    • By empowering and elevating the voice, expertise and experience of our member educators from historically marginalized communities Education Minnesota is directly disrupting systemic racism and closing the equity and opportunity gaps. By sharing our stories, successes, failures, learnings and best practices we seek to broaden the network of social and racial justice activist within our union across the nation.
NEA Leadership Competencies

• Advocacy
• Organizing

• NEA Leadership Competency progression levels
  – Level 1: Foundational
  – Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building

• NEA Leadership Competency themes
  – Interprets and acts on social justice initiatives
  – Leads public education policy reform
  – Acts as political advocate
  – Utilizes organizing best practices
  – Engages in collective action to identify and address pivotal issues
  – Creates conditions for continuous association growth and strength
  – Fosters the development of leaders at all levels of the organization
The Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) spent the past year updating and monitoring Education Minnesota’s implementation of the Affirmative Involvement Plan. Minnesota has one of the most aggressive and actionable plans in the country. The goal of the Affirmative Involvement Plan is to transform Education Minnesota into a recognized advocate for education equity and social justice through member engagement, leadership development, internal education, external partnerships, and by actively supporting programs/efforts to fight poverty and racial disparities. EMAC members have worked closely with the newly hired racial equity organizer to determine the direction of the work.
Educator of Color Celebrations

Starting in the Spring of 2015, Education Minnesota members had the opportunity to network, build relationships with each other and connect with their union through the first ever statewide educator of color celebrations.
Education Minnesota organizers supported and assisted in the creation of four forums to intentionally engage and connect our members of color. The African American Educators Forum, American Indian Education Professionals, League of Latino Educators and Pan Asian Educators Forum have worked to determine their mission statements and group logo. Members for each forum have participated in social gatherings and happy hours, trainings and conferences. In addition, each group has identified an issue to work on, tactics to use and defined what a “win” on the issue is. The forum issue organizing will actively engage members of color in the work.
And of course, we celebrated the newly created Educator of Color Forums at our Back to School Kick Off where we unveiled the logos and shared their missions statements.
We got right back to work building issue based campaigns using the organizers toolkit: issue cuts, power maps, community assessments and member mobilization.
Educators of Color at the Capitol

Member lobbying, testifying at all-time high

By the end of April, a record number of about 450 members came to St. Paul to talk with lawmakers, telling their stories about how decisions made in the Legislature affect their students and the profession. This increased turnout is due in large part to a dramatic jump in participation by our members of color, many of whom have testified on bills in committee.
EMAC and the forums of color successfully organized and held the first ever Equity in Education Lobby Day in partnership with the Minnesota Coalition for Education Equity and the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota. Over 70 current and future educators, along with college faculty and community members, joined in advocating for the use of surplus dollars spent toward investments for our students and education.
Organizers and education issues specialists worked closely to develop a process by which members applied to become part of the anti-racism curriculum development team. The 16 members chosen gathered over a weekend retreat in February to determine the overarching learning targets and outcomes for this one-of-a-kind curriculum by educators for educators. The team is currently working on an initial draft of the curriculum using ConnectED.
The policy, outreach and research and public affairs departments worked closely to conduct a comprehensive survey of our members of color. The findings have already guided our legislative work for this session and provided context to our upcoming recruitment and retention white paper by the Educator Policy Innovation Center. The survey received more than 430 responses, or more than 15 percent of all educators of color in the state. Organizers are now working to share the findings of the survey with locals to continue planning engagement and mobilization strategies.
In partnership with local leaders and field staff, organizers have held social gatherings with locals for members of color. Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Education Minnesota -Osseo, Dakota County United Educators, the Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers and Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota have led the way in providing networking and leadership opportunities for members of color through these social gatherings. By the end of the year we also hosted gatherings with our members from St. Paul, Richfield, Roseville, Bemidji and Rochester. These informal networks help break down racial isolation that many people of color feel in education, helping to improve educator retention.
Educator of color local chapters

From local gatherings, our members of color began organizing educator of color local chapters like the Anoka Hennepin Teachers of Color Coalition (AHTOCC) and Educators of Color MFT 59.

Educators of Color

Minneapolis, MN
Organizers have collaborated with several community partners including Minnesota Education Equity Partnership, Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Coalition of Asian American Leaders, Metro State University, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota to bring attention to the need for a more diverse educator workforce. Together we held a successful event on Feb. 6, led by many of our EMAC members, which garnered broad media coverage. The coalition’s work generated the five platforms for transformation including recruitment and retention strategies. The initial goal is to double the number of educators of color by 2020. To learn more visit http://www.tocaimn.com/
Summer 2016 conference for current and aspiring Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers
August 10-12, 2016
Metropolitan State University
St. Paul, MN

Education Minnesota is a proud partner of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota (TOCAIMN), and to kick off the school year we invite you to join us for this first of its kind conference with keynote speakers, 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year Abdul Wright and 2016 National Teacher of Year Jahaana Hayes. The event is free, but space is limited to the first 300 people who register.

Funding is available to support lodging and mileage expenses for members traveling from greater Minnesota. Please contact Braulio Carrasco at braulio.carrasco@edmn.org for more information.
Email other questions to tocimn@gmail.com.

Keynote speakers:
2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year
Abdul Wright
2016 National Teacher of the Year
Jahaana Hayes
Coalition Building
MN Education Equity Coalition

After years of organizing by our Community Engagement Coordinator, the Minnesota Education Equity Coalition was founded and led by Education Minnesota and Education Minnesota's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee, the Quality Public Schools, ISAIAH, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change, Navigate MN and Service Employees International Union Local 284.

MN teachers union wants surplus money to boost racial equity in schools

Solveig Wastvedt · Apr 5, 2016

Members of the statewide teachers' union, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change, ISAIAH and other advocacy groups gathered at the State Office Building on Monday to push for legislation to improve racial equity in education. Solveig Wastvedt | MPR News
Amplifying member of color voice

In collaboration with the Public Affairs Department and our Office Professional Staff we have worked to elevate the voice of our educators of color at every step of the way. . .

Once a struggling English learner, Worthington graduate returns to teach

If only I'd known earlier: State should help promote awareness of student-loan-forgiveness programs

By Staretta Ann Taylor-Cooper | 04/11/16

Seven years is a long amount of time. Babies grow into children in seven years. That length of time would cover nearly two full presidential terms. Seven years is also a long time to be an African-American woman with more than $80,000 in student loan debt with no end in sight.

That's how long it took me to discover the resources available to me as a public school teacher to lessen my student loan debt, and more importantly, to forgive portions of my student loan debt.

I heard about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program during an African American Educators Forum (AAEF) meeting. AAEF is a subcommittee within Education Minnesota's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), which advises my union's governing body on...
Amplifying member of color voice
Noticeable change in the air

And the conversation has began to change. 5 out of 11 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists this year are educators of color.

Abdul Wright: ‘I want to pay it forward’

Minneapolis charter school teacher named state’s Teacher of the Year

MEGAN CAVANAUGH
MAY 24, 2016
UPDATED: JUNE 1, 2016 - 10:26 AM

Minneapolis charter school teacher Abdul Wright, the state’s new Teacher of the Year. Photo by Janet Hostetter/Education Minnesota
Moving forward

Stories, Systems, Tools and Data:
We will continue to tell our stories
We will continue to build structures and systems to support our members in building partnerships and coalitions for sustainable solutions to challenges
We will empower our members with tools for advocacy
We will improve our data collection, analysis and strategies
Thank you
Session Outcomes

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  – Apply the informal to formal model of organizing in local context
  – Identify areas of potential growth and pitfalls in the model
  – Develop actions plans
  – Examine and analyze relationships of power and ways to change and disrupt them
• Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!

• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at
  www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment