

Fall 2025



RETIRED



# Action Newsletter

## From the president by Wes Tessman

Where did summer go? It wasn't that long ago that we had the longest day of daylight and suddenly, we're celebrating Labor Day.

With Labor Day coming up, take some time to remember and celebrate those who came before us in the labor movement. It's because of them that we have an 8-hour workday, 40-hour work week, minimum wage, safer working conditions, benefits and so much more. It's laborer's hard work, persistence and dedication has made us who we are today. Let's celebrate and give thanks to them for making our communities and our world a much better place to live.

**1<sup>st</sup> in the nation! Yes, that would be our new website. Education Minnesota Retired launched a new website last year. At the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting last month, we were honored to receive 1<sup>st</sup> place in the website category for communication awards. Look at [www.educationminnesotaretired.org](http://www.educationminnesotaretired.org). There is a wealth of usable information there for you and our retired colleagues! It's a great resource for retirees.**



Please remember to contact your family, friends and neighbors who are educators that have recently retired or are approaching retirement. Tell them about the many benefits of continuous membership that they have as members of Education Minnesota.

Finally, now more than ever, education and our colleagues in the profession seem to be under a constant barrage of unwarranted attacks. Please use your voice to fight for justice and speak the truth. Remind others that educators are some of the most respected members of our communities. Educators are the guiding light for our future and our kids. The very best of wishes, my friends.

Yours In Solidarity,

Wes

## Leadership That Makes a Difference by Wes Tessman

Few of us pause to look back at the difficult times our union went through over the past twelve years. In addition to the day-to-day operations of running the largest union in Minnesota, there were many attacks and challenges to educators and to our union. There was a constitutional amendment that would have had Minnesota become a right-to-work state. We also had the Janus decision come down on unions from the Supreme Court. Voucher plans were constantly being proposed in the state legislature. Plus, everyone had to navigate through the Co-vid pandemic, not just families and communities but also our teachers, staff and union.

At the forefront of all that adversity stood two staunch union advocates, Denise Specht and Rodney Rowe. President Specht and Secretary-Treasurer Rowe's last day in office was June 30. It was a remarkable run for two leaders that few of us truly appreciate. They not only carried, but led, our union through many challenges over the past 12 years.

Certainly, one of the most influential decisions for Education Minnesota Retired was when Denise and Rodney worked with Retired leaders to start continuous membership in 2015.

Today, it seems like such a logical thing to do for active educators. It took an enormous amount of planning, calculations and persuasion to finally get it approved at the Representative Convention. Thank you, Denise and Rodney, for your time and service to our educators and our students, as well as their families and communities. Also, thank you for your continued support and advocacy for Education Minnesota Retired and our retirees. You have proven that leadership makes a difference in people's lives!



*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."*

*Nelson Mandela*

## 2025 Minnesota Fall Elections: An opportunity to make a difference by Joan Beaver

Off-year elections are ignored by many voters who perhaps don't realize the impact these elections can have on everyone. Among these are the elections of school board members who make local school policies, including book and curriculum selections. There may also be referendums for school bonding or operational levies on the ballot. Do you want to do more than vote? Organized activities can have an especially strong impact in these low turn-out elections. Any Education Minnesota member who has contributed to its Political Action Committee (PAC) can ask to serve on the local Education Minnesota screening committee which makes recommendations for endorsement to the PAC. To make your request to participate on the screening committee, get in touch with the leadership of the local union to make your request to participate.

Candidates may ask for an endorsement. They must submit a questionnaire prior to the screening meetings. The meetings allow candidates to learn what matters to us, as well as explain their positions if elected. The Education Minnesota PAC then makes the final decision on endorsements.

Local Education Minnesota unions can request grant funds from the PAC to support their campaigns for referendums and to promote endorsed candidates for school board.

# 2025 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting & Representative Assembly by Bobbie Margo

This year's 42<sup>nd</sup> NEA Retired Annual Meeting was held from June 29-30 at the Portland Marriott Downtown in Portland, OR. President Anita Gibson called the meeting to order. The Star Bangled Banner, dedication to veterans and credentials report were all presented. As of June 29, 320 delegates had registered with 306 delegates in actual attendance. "Welcome To Portland" was extended by Reed Scott-Schwalbach, president of the Oregon Education Association. Note Reed's last name as she is related to our own retiree Jayne Schwalbach.

Business over the next two days included: new business items, bylaws, PAC fund overview and Jack Kinnaman Scholarship Program.



Our own Education Minnesota Retired affiliate received a runner-up membership award for the largest percentage increase.

We also received three communications awards:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place for state website category
- Honorable mention in the state e-newsletter category
- Runner-up in the established state retired print newsletter category.

**Congratulations are in order!**

The meeting ended with a legislative update from Mary Kusler. She reminded us that we must defend, protect, and if necessary, rebuild public education. We all need to continue to stand up, speak up and speak out.

By the numbers:

- Jack Kinnaman \$13,904 at the meeting with a total of \$38,038 this year.
- On site live PAC auction \$6,950 (a delegate paid \$3,200 for a Dr. Seuss quilt)
- On-site silent auction \$12,615

The Education Minnesota Retired delegates packed up their stuff and moved to the Benson/Hilton downtown hotel for the NEA Representative Assembly. There is light rail transit in the downtown area, so all Education Minnesota delegates were given light rail passes as a means of transportation to the convention center. There were no shuttle buses for delegations staying in downtown hotels.

The 163<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting and the 104<sup>th</sup> Representative Assembly were called to order on July 3 at the Portland Convention Center by President Becky Pringle. The Color Guard, National Anthem, Invocation were all presented. The credentials committee reported that as of July 3 there were 5,606 delegates registered of which 2,038 delegates were registered as ethnic minorities.

During the following days speeches included:

- Teacher of the Year Ashlie Crosson PA-Teacher of the Year,
- Utah ESP of the Year Andy Markus
- Florida Higher Education of the Year Teresa Hodge
- NEA Friend of Education Dr. Josh Cowen

There were 8 standing rule amendments, 8 amendments to resolutions, 12 legislative amendments and 93 new business items (projected cost of new business items was \$1,601,079)

On July 6, there was a shift in the agenda, and the entire day was reserved for a Day of Teaching, Learning, and Bargaining For Power. Delegates signed up to attend sessions which focused on teaching and learning skills which we can use to fight for our democracy, our country and our public schools. The 104<sup>th</sup> Representative Assembly adjourned at 6:13 p.m. on July 6. The 2026 Representative Assembly is scheduled to be held in Denver, CO at the Colorado Convention Center on July 3-7.

On behalf of Jeannie Brown-Kruesel, Myrna Doran, Kathy Hegstrom, Julie Jagusch, Sharon Kjellberg, Dan Larson, Diane Larson, Judy Rohde, Jayne Schwalbach, Wes Tessman and myself, we sincerely thank you, the members of Education Minnesota Retired for giving us the opportunity to represent you at the national level. We represented you with pride and with professionalism.

Pictures on page 7



## Anatomy of a Retired Local by Wes Hanna and Paul Berge

We hope this will help other retired teachers to organize for all the rewards we have realized.

The Burnsville Education Association (BEA), an affiliate of Education Minnesota, initiated a retired position on its Executive Board in the late 1990's. In 2015, after serving many positions on the BEA and for Education Minnesota, as recently retirees, decided to ask the current president, Wendy Drugge, to be appointed to the executive board retired position. From there we decided to organize our retirees. The motivations were many including political activity, community outreach and senior issues outreach. Wendy took the time to meet with us, asked for our input in bargaining issues and offered to support our organizing activities.

At an early event, the BEA Retired spring social, we did a short survey and collected emails in a much more organized and assertive level. A steering committee formed to inaugurate the Burnsville Area Retired Teachers (BART).

The majority of respondents wanted the group to be social, but many were also interested in political activity and community service.

Along with a very entertaining and fulfilling joint social with our BEA active local, the most noted event we've had was on October 1, 2024. Shortly before the pivotal Presidential election, BART held its fall social and business meeting. We were privileged that the outgoing president of Education Minnesota, Denise Specht, accepted our invitation to attend and keynote our gathering and she brought along some notable guests. We had a very special evening with both our NEA president and our AFT president and secretary/treasurer. It was a singular, if unexpected, occasion.

It has been an exciting and sometimes problematic journey so far. We have reached an inflection point. We believe we need to make some inspired changes to continue to grow.

To read the entire article about BART, please go to our website, [educationminnesotaretired.org](http://educationminnesotaretired.org), and view it on the "About Us" page.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Month	Date	Event	Location
September	16	Fall Brunch	Jimmy's, Vadnais Heights
	24	AFL-CIO Retired Conference	Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall
October	16	MEA Conference	RiverCentre, St. Paul
November	10	Retired Governing Board meeting	EdMN Office St. Paul
	11	MN/WI Retired Conference	Holiday Inn, Lake Elmo

## Pension Reflection by Jody Anderson

When I attend Teacher Retirement Association (TRA) meetings and Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR), I realize the value of our defined benefit plan. The promise of a public pension is a commitment by the state for a consistent, monthly retirement payment. As a former teacher, I am grateful for this plan. I see how other pension groups work to develop and keep their plans. Consequently, there is much to be considered by the LCPR during each legislative session. Teachers can and should be a voice supporting our pension plan.

Education Minnesota Retired publications keep our members informed about the importance of being involved and advocating for cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for our pension plan. There has not been an increase that keeps pace with inflation for a long time.

Retired Board Members	Position	Term Expires
Wess Tessman	President	2026
Sharon Kjellberg	Vice President	2026
Dan Larson	Secretary	2027
Jayne Schwalbach	Treasurer	2027
Julie Jagusch	Past President	
Diane Larson	District 1 Director	2027
Cathy Stringfield	District 1 Director	2027
Wes Hanna	District 2 Director	2026
Jeannie Ness	District 2 Director	2026
Janet Kujat	District 3 Director	2027
Elaine Rothman	District 3 Director	2027
Joan Beaver	District 4 Director	2026
Judy Rohde	District 4 Director	2026
Myrna Doran	District 5 Director	2027
Robert Astrup	District 5 Director	2027
Bob Nystrom	District 6 Director	2026
Susan Witt	District 6 Director	2026
Roger Josephson	District 7 Director	2027
Lisa Schoeleman	District 7 Director	2027
Bobbie Margo	District 8 Director	2026
Kathy Hegstrom	District 8 Director	2026
Jeanne Brown-Kruesel	At Large Director	2027
Walt Munsterman	At Large Director	2026
John Lipke	At Large ESP Director	2028
Chuck Lyons	At Large MSCF Director	2028
Mary Broderick	Non-voting TRA Representative	
Susan Witt	PAC Representative	
Nancy Cordes	EMAC-Retired Representative	

Retired Standing Committees	Chair
Constitution and Bylaws	Walt Munsterman and Julie Jagusch
Communications	Myrna Doran and Jeanne Brown-Kruesel
Finance	Jayne Schwalbach
Legislative Action	Joan Beaver
Membership	Judy Rohde
Nominations and Elections	Jayne Schwalbach
Program	Jeannie Ness
Statements of Principles	Jeanne Brown-Kruesel Bob Nystrom
Executive Committee	Wes Tessman
Local Chapters	Wes Hanna
Social Justice	Chuck Lyons
Retired Special Committees	Chair
Grants	Sharon Kjellberg
Regional Meetings	Sharon Kjellberg

**If you are not receiving Education Minnesota Retired emails, please send us your up-to-date information by emailing [retired@edmn.org](mailto:retired@edmn.org) with your name, address, phone number and email. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Berg at [stephanie.berg@edmn.org](mailto:stephanie.berg@edmn.org)**

# Education Minnesota Retired Internal Elections by Jayne Schwalbach

Education Minnesota Retired nominations for Governing Board, Education MN Representative Convention in April and NEA-Retired/NEA Representative Assembly in Denver, Colorado, will start in November. The nomination form will be available at [www.educationminnesotaretired.org](http://www.educationminnesotaretired.org) and published in the December edition of the print Action newsletter.

Officer positions open on the Governing Board for 2026 are president and vice-president, district positions are for 2, 4, 6, 8 and one at-large. There are two representatives per district. Check the district map on the Education Minnesota Retired website.

If you are signing up for the Representative Convention or the Representative Assembly, there is funding available to cover your expenses to attend them. If you consider serving on the governing board, it meets four times a year plus the annual meeting in April.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jayne Schwalbach at [jschwalbach26@gmail.com](mailto:jschwalbach26@gmail.com)

## 2025 Education Minnesota Retired Annual Meeting and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Following the annual meeting, we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary! It was a special day celebrating our history and hearing from many who were original members.



## Upcoming Education Minnesota Retired and Wisconsin Education Association Council-Retired Border Conference

**Date:** November 11, 2025

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Location:** Holiday Inn, Lake Elmo, MN

**Cost:** \$30

Silent Auction

**[Register at www.cvent.me/eZvlAo](http://www.cvent.me/eZvlAo)**

### Topics include:

- Keynote speaker
- Kindergarten everywhere
- Missing indigenous women
- Retiree scams
- Travel opportunities
- Ballroom dance
- NEA Retired president roundtable
- Rescue and service dogs

# Bobbie Margo

## Thank you for your dedication and service!

Miss. Bobbie Margo is well known in Minnesota education. She has been very active in local, state, national, national retired and international education circles. She has been term limited out of her positions at NEA Retired. This means she will have more time to work with us at the state retired level. Bobbie began her work at the local level with her local union and labor council. She continued at the state level with the Instructional and Professional Development Council, MN Board of Teaching, Education Minnesota Retired Governing Board, State Communications Committee, delegate to Education Minnesota Representative Convention, NEA Representative Assembly and NEA Retired Conference. At the NEA level she served on the Board of Examiners, Resolutions Committee, National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education and Women's Leadership Training Program.



After retirement, she was elected to the NEA Retired Resolutions Committee and Executive Committee as well as chairing the Communications Committee and Virtual Committee. Bobbie has attended the Education International Conferences since it began.

Miss Bobbie always helps, always answers questions and is generous with her time. We appreciate all her work, and the NEA Retired loss will be a gain for Education Minnesota Retired!

## 2025 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting & Representative





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## Fall 2025

Education Minnesota Retired  
41 Sherburne Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55103

Phone: 651-292-4877

Email: [retired@edmn.org](mailto:retired@edmn.org)

Website: [www.educationminnesotaretired.org](http://www.educationminnesotaretired.org)

As an Education Minnesota Retired member, you have access to Education Minnesota ESI, NEA and AFT Member Benefit programs.

### ESI Member Benefits

- No-cost Identity Theft Recovery
- Medicare group plans
- Senior Care Navigation



### NEA Member Benefits

- Travel program
- Dental and vision insurance
- Auto buying program



### AFT Member Benefits

- Hearing services discount
- Travel program
- LifeStation medical alert system



Scan the QR codes for more information or visit [www.educationminnesota.org](http://www.educationminnesota.org)