

October 1, 2020 – Education Minnesota Share Lair – School Safety During COVID-19

We are living in unprecedented times. The challenges students, educators and public education overall will face in the coming months require collective action. Luckily, your union is a perfect vehicle through which we can make our goals reality.

Education Minnesota's Unity Campaign is a movement with an eye on the much-deserved prize: fully funded schools in Minnesota. **By getting 100 percent of educators to vote for public education in November, engaging parents and community voters in the election and beyond, and uniting our coworkers and communities in a statewide movement for full, equitable funding of public education this spring, we can begin to reverse decades of underfunding and inequality.**

So how do you fit into the Unity Campaign? Since many of us have adjusted to different ways of work—Zoom meetings, phone calls, using collaborative online tools—it makes sense that the ways in which we spread the message about the Unity Campaign for fully funded schools in Minnesota would be different from how it was done in previous campaigns.

Long story short: digital engagement—meaning utilizing your social media channels to share our message, build capacity and support to accomplish our goals—is more important than ever.

This week's newsletter covers an issue at the forefront of every educators' mind: staff and student safety during COVID-19.

Coronavirus Schools Briefing from the New York Times

As the pandemic continues to drive many changes in all aspects of life, there are some news outlets adapting to the times and covering pandemic-related news specific to education. One of them is the Coronavirus Schools Briefing from the New York Times. Readers can [sign up](#) to receive to the briefing in their inbox a few times a week depending on that week's education headlines. A [recent briefing](#) covered the inside scoop on pandemic-era testing as it relates to the SAT, working and parenting from home, and an explainer about why children can end up less sick from the coronavirus than adults. Subscribing to the briefing is an easy way to stay up to date on current pandemic-related news impacting education and educators.

Resource from www.edmnvotes.org: Staff and student safety during COVID-19 and beyond

If you are not sure how to summarize the dozens of issues related to safety in schools during COVID-19 to your friends, family or colleagues, there is a [document](#) available on our campaign website that succinctly explains different policies that could be implemented to make schools safer during the pandemic and beyond. The one-pager also includes some statistics from the Education Minnesota survey sent out in July and some ways to take charge by voting for pro-public education candidates. There are even more safety resources available on the [campaign website](#)!

Stories to share with your networks

Check out these news stories discussing COVID-19 and its impact on education, and consider sharing the links on your social media channels.

- The Sahan Journal writes about the ways in which four teachers from immigrant communities are tackling new challenges during distances learning in its article titled "[Longer hours and less face time: Overextended teachers try to preserve a human connection in an era of distance learning.](#)"
- Some school districts in Minnesota, like Brainerd, are being responsive to increasing cases of COVID-19 and transitioning their learning models to full-time distance, according to this MPR News article titled "[COVID-19 cases already closing some Minnesota school buildings.](#)"
- In "[Minnesota schools seize on momentum to tackle racism, achievement gaps in education](#)" from the Star Tribune, the 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Jessica Davis, comments on why this pandemic provides a moment that schools should seize if they hope to fix equity problems that have been talked about for years.

Facebook prewritten posts

Copy/paste the prewritten Facebook posts below to share your thoughts and concerns related to educating during the pandemic. Feel free to edit the text as it relates to you and your education role.

- No matter what we look like or where we come from, we all want our schools to be safe, especially during a pandemic. But some politicians and their corporate funders put profit before safety. Luckily, we know that together we can elect leaders who will prioritize our kids and educators, and the first step is to #BeAVoter. #WhoCaresForUs #edmnvotes
- As Minnesotans, we care about our neighbors, and no matter our race or place, we want our schools and communities to be safe during this pandemic. Some politicians try to fuel divisions by rushing to make decisions about reopening schools, then blame educators when issues arise in classrooms or during distance learning. But Minnesotans are smart enough to know that together we can elect leaders who will look out for our students, educators and communities. The first step is to #BeAVoter. #WhoCaresForUs #edmnvotes
- All of us in Minnesota want to send our kids and educators back to school safely. But a handful of politicians try to fuel divisions by making decisions about reopening schools without considering the adults in school buildings. Then those same politicians blame educators when problems inevitably arise in the classroom or during distance learning. Luckily, Minnesotans are smart enough to know that together we can elect leaders who will prioritize the needs of our educators and students, and the first step is to #BeAVoter. #WhoCaresForUs #edmnvotes

Twitter prewritten posts

Copy/paste the prewritten tweets below to share your thoughts and concerns related to educating during the pandemic. Feel free to edit the text as it relates to you and your education role.

- No matter what we look like or where we come from, we all want our schools to be safe, especially during a pandemic. But some politicians and their wealthy funders put profit over safety. We know that together we can elect leaders who prioritize our kids and educators. #edmnvotes
- Minnesotans want safe learning for all during the pandemic. Some politicians try to fuel divisions by rushing to reopen schools, then blame educators for problems in classrooms/distance learning. Together, we can elect leaders who put our schools first. #edmnvotes
- We all want to send our kids and educators back to school safely. Some politicians try to fuel divisions by rushing to reopen schools. Together, we can elect leaders who support schools through this crisis—and beyond—and the first step is to #BeAVoter. #edmnvotes

Shareables

View our school safety during COVID-19 shareables below. Find all of our shareables at:

<https://www.edmnvotes.org/digital-engagement-resources/>

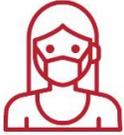
Click the image to download it full size.

Twitter shareables:

Take Charge

Minnesota schools could receive more than \$850 million if the U.S. Senate would pass the HEROES Act and the president signs it. Senator Tina Smith, who is running for reelection, is on the record as supporting the bill.

#edmnvotes



Take Charge

School administrators are following the guidance of the CDC, which news reports say has been pressured by the Trump administration to change reports and its guidance about COVID testing. Presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged to keep the CDC and other federal health agencies independent.

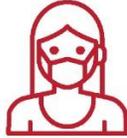
#edmnvotes



Take Charge

The Minnesota Legislature controls the state budget for hiring mental health professionals, reducing class sizes and paying for improvements to the physical security of schools. Ask your local candidates for the state House and Senate where they stand on funding school safety.

#edmnvotes



“All the problems go back to funding. Minnesota educators work in buildings without counselors, nurses or media specialists. In some places, the roof leaks. In others, it’s so overcrowded the students sit in hallways.”

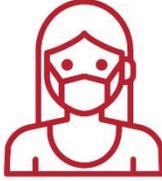
Education Minnesota President
Denise Specht



Facebook/Instagram shareables:

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The pandemic has revealed many inequities in support and respect given to ESPs.

- Many ESPs are educators of color who are the first to lose pay as well as face layoffs during crises.
- Some ESPs have to advocate for proper safety and distance requirements when in school buildings.
- ESPs are often the employees who deliver meals, technology and paper materials to students.



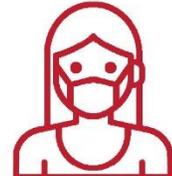
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Know someone who might want to receive this newsletter? Have them fill out this [quick form](#) to be added to the list!

