



# Collective Bargaining Bulletin

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## Negotiations Update

First the good news: the negotiations team has reached a tentative agreement on all items for the main body of our contract. We have scheduled negotiations sessions on the 16<sup>th</sup> to finish the items for Creative Play and Early Childhood Family Education items. From there the plan is as follows:

### February 17<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m.

#### **Plymouth Media Center Back Up Committee**

Meeting to go over the package and, pending approval, we will pursue the following schedule for informational meetings for members. Some members of the negotiations team will make presentations of the package at the following times/places:

### February 22 2:15 p.m.

Armstrong High School Teachers Lounge

3:00 p.m.

Plymouth Middle School – Room 110

3:40 p.m.

Cooper High School Cafeteria

### February 23 8:00 a.m.

Meadow Lake Elementary Media Center

### February 24 8:00 a.m.

Neill Elementary Gym B

4:15 p.m.

Zachary Lane Elementary

### February 27

Robbinsdale Middle School Media Center

The **RATIFICATION VOTE** will take place in buildings on the morning of **February 29** (a ballot box will also be available at the RFT office from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.)

## Lobby Day for Public Education

We must act collectively during the coming months of the legislative session to influence our local lawmakers to make good decisions for teachers and students. A first step of action is to join the *Lobby Day at the State Capitol* on **Tuesday, March 6**. Participate with colleagues from all around the state to show our solidarity for the need for good policy decisions for education in Minnesota. The agenda will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a briefing, followed by meetings with legislators, and concluded with a debriefing session wrapping up by 4:30 p.m..

## Nominations for RFT Officers Open

On April 4, 4:15 p.m., at the combined Executive Council and General Membership meeting, an election will be held to fill the following RFT Officers positions:

President

Vice President

Secondary Vice President

**Filing is open until March 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Contact Val at the RFT office if you would like to be on the ballot (vpotter@rftonline.org). Elections will be held at the Plymouth Middle School Media Center. Ballots will also be available at the RFT office that day for members.

## Delegates to the Education Minnesota Representative Convention Elected

The following members will represent Robbinsdale at the convention on April 27 and 28 in Bloomington: Vicki Arabanos, Adolphus Bates, Nancy Cordes, Debbie Cranston, Denise Dooher, Tom Dooher, Peter Eckhoff, David Esposito, Jacob Givand, Karen Krussow, Nancy Lehn, Tracy Mena, Tony Nelson, Deb Oleson, Jan Sanden, Rita Schweitzer, Laura Steman and Jim Wangensteen.

## Legislative Session Underway

The legislative session has begun, and there are many items under consideration that could have great effect on teaching and unions.

There is a bill currently traveling through the house HF 1870 which would change our system honoring seniority for layoff. There is a companion bill in the Senate, and we are watching it closely to follow its movement through the legislative process. President Eckhoff testified in the house committee encouraging defeat of the bill in committee along with several other Union leaders.

There is a proposal for a constitutional amendment to place on the ballot. See below.

### What is the so-called "Right to Work" amendment?

This anti-middle class amendment makes it harder for workers to join together to work for better wages, benefits and working conditions. This is being pushed nationally, not by workers, but by big political donors that favor corporate interests over working people and the middle class.

This anti-worker amendment would prohibit making union membership and payment of dues a condition of employment. If this proposed constitutional amendment is passed in Minnesota, it would become illegal to collect fair share fees from people who refuse to join the union, but who benefit from contractual protections and representation that union members pay for with their dues.

### Why is this being introduced?

Corporate interests are taking advantage of the conservative swing in the 2010 elections to try to push anti-union laws in states like Wisconsin and Ohio. The real target of these laws is unions' political power. Unions are the one political force capable of fighting the anti-worker agendas of corporations and groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Coalition (ALEC), the Club for Growth and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

### What is at stake?

Political observers believe this so-called "Right to Work" would open the door for other legislation that limits Minnesota workers' rights to join unions, negotiate contracts and influence political outcomes. Minnesota could see Wisconsin-style laws limiting bargaining, forcing unions to sign up members annually and excluding important issues such as workload and sick time from collective bargaining.

"Right to Work" means lower pay and benefits, fewer sick and leave days, and more power for the superintendent. School boards and universities could impose contracts and pay, and the many benefits unions have previously bargained could be in jeopardy: duty-free lunch, prep time, the number of days of school, personal days, 403(b) contributions, fair discipline, staff development, teacher licensure and more.

### Summary

- "Right to Work" will weaken our union's ability to fight for us at the bargaining table and in the Legislature.
- "Right to Work" means lower school funding, more layoffs and larger class sizes.
- Scarcer resources will make it harder for unions to advocate for policies like smaller class size, appropriate credentials for teachers and college faculty, and equitable, sufficient funding for our students.
- "Right to Work" means your dues money will be used to represent non-members who no longer have to pay "fair share." Unions will still have to represent everyone in the bargaining unit regardless of membership status, but those who choose not to join the union will get its protections and benefits without paying a dime – a "free lunch." Union members will be left to pick up the tab.



The RFT leadership is asking you to stay tuned and at the ready. We will need our members to be engaged with legislators. We will be contacting you as our lobbyists contact us from Education Minnesota, and know Robbinsdale teachers will respond.