

LOCAL 284



We provide a clean, safe, nurturing place for children to learn and grow.

We support teachers, faculty, and families.

We work hard to provide for our families and we give back to our communities.

WE ARE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND WE ARE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO!

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And Much More...

www.seiu284.org

The Communicator

The Legislative Action Addition

STRONGER TOGETHER

SPRING 2013

Lobby Day Success!

Record numbers attended Local 284's Lobby Day on February 20, which was the first joint lobbying effort with our sister local MSEA. This was the largest Lobby Day SEIU has had to-date, with 218 attendees, 78 of which were from Local 284, giving us the highest member count for the day. Members brought a loud and clear message to our legislators—balance the budget with fair revenue that invests in our students and schools, and make school funding work for every student in the state.

Members met with legislators in small groups and shared their stories about how the lack of adequate school funding is impacting their students and families. Members also heard from key state leaders, including Governor Dayton, Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk and House Majority Leader Paul Thissen in a lively rotunda event.

Our legislators need to understand that the decisions they make this year will have a lasting impact on our schools and that now is the time to invest fair revenue along with making real, permanent change to the education funding structure. As workers invested in the health of our districts, we need to continue working until the job is done.



A group of lobbyists, including our first ever student lobbyist who attended with a member from the same district.

Coalition Addresses Funding Disparities

On March 25, more than 50 people attended a ground breaking event in Cambridge, MN. For the first time ever, parents and school leaders from Cambridge-Isanti, North Branch, Milaca and Sauk Rapids Schools came together to host a community forum on education.

Milaca Superintendent Jerry Hansen kicked off the meeting by starkly presenting the inequities in our public school funding system. The result of our inequitable system is keenly felt in the East Central region, and parents, board members and district leaders all spoke compellingly on the impact and effects of disparate funding. Many compelling stories were told and it was widely recognized that the impact of funding inequities falls on the students of these districts, who's educational experiences are steps behind their luckier counterparts in districts that do not experience the same disparities.

Senator Sean Neinow, Representative Bob Barrett, Representative Joe Radinovich

and Representative Tim Faust also attended and fielded questions. Each proved themselves to be invested in this process and dedicated to turning out kids that can compete in a global economy.

Fixing the inequities clearly is a priority of all partners in this informal coalition, and we find, as workers, that the need to seek out those who share our values and beliefs around education gives us additional strength. This event sets the stage for future work between stake holders that all have the same goals—a stable and fair education system for every child in Minnesota.



Left to Right: Rep. Barrett, Rep. Radinovich, Sen. Neinow, Rep. Faust.



Members make a difference at the Capitol

← Member Barb Jensen testified in support of the anti-bullying bill. (H.F. 826) with heart felt examples from her perspective as a bus driver and personal experience.

→ Staff Member William Dial brought his whole family to hear wife Robyn and daughter Siglind testify on the effects of inadequate funding in their home district of North Branch.



Education Reform Pushing Through The Legislature

At the beginning of the year, Local 284 made a commitment to changing the way Minnesota funds schools. For the past decade, decreased state funding and the repeal of the general education levy has impacted the quality of education for Minnesota students has been based on two things:(1) the political tide of the moment and (2) the property wealth of the local school district. This has caused vast inequities and shortages in education funding across the state, leading some schools to go to 4-day weeks and to cut critical programs. SEIU members and our allies have been storming the Capitol to tell legislators that our children’s future is not a political gimmick, and they are beginning to listen.

Education needs more funding. It also needs that funding to be stable, equitable and dedicated to schools every single year. To accomplish these goals, SEIU is supporting the Governor’s budget which raises revenue fairly through increasing taxes on the wealthiest 2% of Minnesotans- who currently pay a smaller percentage of income tax than their middle and lower income neighbors- and closing corporate tax loopholes. The Governor’s plan dedicates \$344 million of new revenue to K-12 education. SEIU is also working with the House and Senate to pass structural reform bills that would provide much needed money to the lowest funded schools in our state, and ensure that every Minnesota student has access to a quality education.

Education Advancement Revenue (Senate File 177/House File 1406): This bill gives school districts a way to fund the minimum educational opportunities that all of Minnesota’s children deserve. This legislation would make it easier for the small number of districts, about 15 percent, that do not have a dedicated funding source to institute levies up to \$300 per pupil. The change would allow those schools and kids to get caught up to their neighbors, improving education across Minnesota.

General Education Levy (Senate File 1142/House File 1600): This bill creates a unified, equalized, statewide property tax that would provide a stable, dedicated source of funding for education. This is essential for providing a stable foundation for education across the state. Education is a Minnesota value, yet our schools have been hit strongest during difficult budget years. This would put an end to that and give Minnesota kids a funding source they can count on.

The Education Advancement Revenue bill has been heard in both the House and Senate Education Finance Committees and has been laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bills. It’s looking like there is a good chance that the Senate will support this bill—but nothing is a sure thing. Your legislators need to hear from you! Call them—tell them to support Education Advancement Revenue and the General Education Levy. Your legislators were elected by you and they are at the Capitol to represent your opinions—let them know that stable, dedicated funding for schools is important to you!



Member Anna Angeles-Farris testifying on behalf of a bill that would make certain tax havens illegal for corporate investors.

SEIU Local 284 Leadership Assembly:

Saturday, April 27, 2013, 9:00-3:00 (8:30 Registration)
Fridley Community Center, 6085 Seventh St. NE,
Fridley, MN 55432

“Brighter Futures Begin When We All work Together!”

The power of the few has set the course for the many.

We have an opportunity to change that.

Will we? Will you?

Attend & learn more!

Register online at www.seiu284.org

Join us for the SEIU Day at the Saints!

Tuesday, June 11, 2013 @ 7:05 PM

\$10 Package includes (\$23 Value):

- General Admission Ticket
- Hot Dog and Soda Voucher & Saints Hat



ORDER AND PRINT TICKETS ONLINE AT:

SAINTSGROUPS.com (password: seiu284)

Or call 651-644-6659, or FAX 651-644-1627

Real Investment in Education—No Gimmicks

School Districts in Minnesota are looking at real and meaningful investments in education. They need money with no gimmicks and they need it at an increased level, not a continuation of the underfunding of the past decade. This is happening at a time the state is also paying back the money owed to school districts after the past decade of borrowing from school districts to fill the hole in the state's budget. However, this is not the end to the budget shortfalls many school districts face.

The real crack to the solid foundation of school funding came under Gov. Ventura, when he repealed the Minnesota Miracle. This legislation ensured for decades that a child's educational experience was not determined by where they lived, and instead was essentially the same statewide. This legislative change, coupled in the past decade with inadequate funding, has created a crumbling foundation for education in many school districts in Minnesota. Fixing this will take significant structural changes in current education finance laws, essentially recreating the Minnesota Miracle which Gov. Wendell Anderson signed into law in 1971.

Our work at the legislature this session has been focused on increasing education funding with fair revenue and structural fixes to education finance. We have forced the discussion to go beyond just increased funding, to include legislation that

starts to close the gap in education funding based on geography. We need a new Minnesota Miracle that ensures a solid foundation for education in Minnesota for our children. For this to happen, there must be changes to the current revenue structure. Currently, school districts are forced to rely too heavily on property taxes to fund the day-to-day operations of education. And the property tax levy system fails many districts as local voters deny request after request for additional funding in poverty stricken areas of the state. It is this system itself that is broken and it must change because it is failing our kids.

Our members have taken crucial roles in this fight, they have stepped up to testify as to their experiences as workers and parents and we recognize the important role they have played in moving toward significant change. In the last three months members from all over the state have been at the Capitol sharing their experiences with legislative committees, others have held public meetings locally or participated in town hall forums. These members are examples of how impactful we can be when we act collectively on our beliefs. We are leading the way in creating the change we wish to see in this world. — Carol Nieters, Executive Director



Milaca Members Kathleen Engblom, Peggy Timmer, Jane Miller, Sandy Lanz



Lobby Day 2013

SEIU Local 284 Fridley Groups Endure Long, Tough Bargaining

The Fridley Paraprofessional Bargaining Unit, Clerical Bargaining Unit and Nutritional Bargaining Unit each had eight or more bargaining sessions. In addition to this exhaustive process, the groups, working together, attended three Fridley School Board meetings. Members shared their stories with the School Board about the important work that school support staff do to educate our children. After these school board actions, the district's bargaining position moved *a little*. However, the district continued to refuse to grant movement, so the Fridley groups voted unanimously to file for mediation. In early March, at the first mediation session, both the Clerical and Nutritional Bargaining Units reached tentative agreements with the district that resulted in wage increases. The bargaining teams were satisfied that they had achieved the best settlement that they could get and will recommend that their membership ratify the tentative agreements.

The new contract settlements will be voted on in early April. Unfortunately, the Paraprofessional Bargaining Unit continues

to fight for a fair contract and will meet with the district again in Mediation on April 10.

This story of long tough bargaining is one that members share over and over again across the State of Minnesota. School districts lack the funding to bargain fair wages and benefits, and this is directly related to the decisions that are made at the legislature and by the governor. Tough bargaining is one consequence of the inadequate funding the state has provided to school districts over the past decade. Moreover, we all know that the needs and services our children depend on in schools has not declined over the years—they have increased.

Now that we have a Governor who will listen, and a worker friendly Legislature, we must raise our voices and demand that they provide stable, equal and fair funding for education. I urge all members to communicate with your legislators about the need to fund education and the need to do it fairly. — Keith Niemi, President SEIU Local 284



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If you have an article or suggestion for
the newsletter, please contact Nicholas
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Trustees:	Anna Angeles- Farris Desiree Hemstock Steve Miltich
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Sergeant at Arms:	Terri Buttlemann
Senior Member:	Ginia Klamecki

The Officers of Local 284 make up the Executive Board. Executive Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. Please contact Union headquarters if you would like to attend.

Local 284 Meetings

April 17	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
*April 27	Leadership Assembly: 9am (Fridley Community Center) <i>6085 Seventh St NE, Fridley, MN 55432</i>
May 16	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
June 20	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)
June 20	Finance Comm. Mtg: 6pm (Local 284 Office)
July 18	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Office)

Change of Address or Phone Number?

Please let us know by contacting our office at (651) 256-9100
Or by emailing Terri at terrib@local284.com