

Power of We Drive Talking points and conversation guide

Talking points for leaders to use with members

Overarching frame—why belong to the union?

Working in a union gives educators the power to make meaningful improvements for students, our profession, public education and our communities. We can compel change when we have a collective voice.

Tell your union story! Why did you get involved? What made you realize that you had power as being a part of our union?

Then, from your conversation(s) with the member, determine which of the following values-based talking points speaks to that member:

- **Voices:** Our voices are elevated and heard when we join together as Education Minnesota. We should have a seat at the table when decisions are made about our classrooms, schools, campuses, profession and public education because the only people who know more about what students need are their own parents.
- **Champions:** Minnesota educators enjoy better pay, pensions and teaching conditions than educators in many other states because previous generations of educators collectively fought for them. We have a responsibility to work in union to defend past victories for students and educators and to win our own.
- **Unions:** Education Minnesota believes individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively. As part of the larger labor movement, we can fight for a strong economy and fair and equitable pay and benefits for all workers and future generations.
- **Professionalism:** As educators, we value and promote educator quality and professional development. It's up to us to help each other maintain our licenses, grow in our professions and prepare students for the future. Being a part of Education Minnesota means frequent, diverse and valuable training for educators, by educators.
- **Justice:** We value those who came before us who fought for the rights of all Minnesotans. Education Minnesota has worked for LGBT rights, civil rights, women's rights and free and fair elections. Educators have a responsibility to help alleviate the racism, discrimination and poverty that prevent many Minnesota students – no matter the ZIP code – from reaching their full potential.
- **Unity:** We are stronger together when advocating for students and the conditions in which they learn and we work, but when even one educator opts out of our union it weakens us all. That means less power, fewer training opportunities and lower wages.

Continued on back



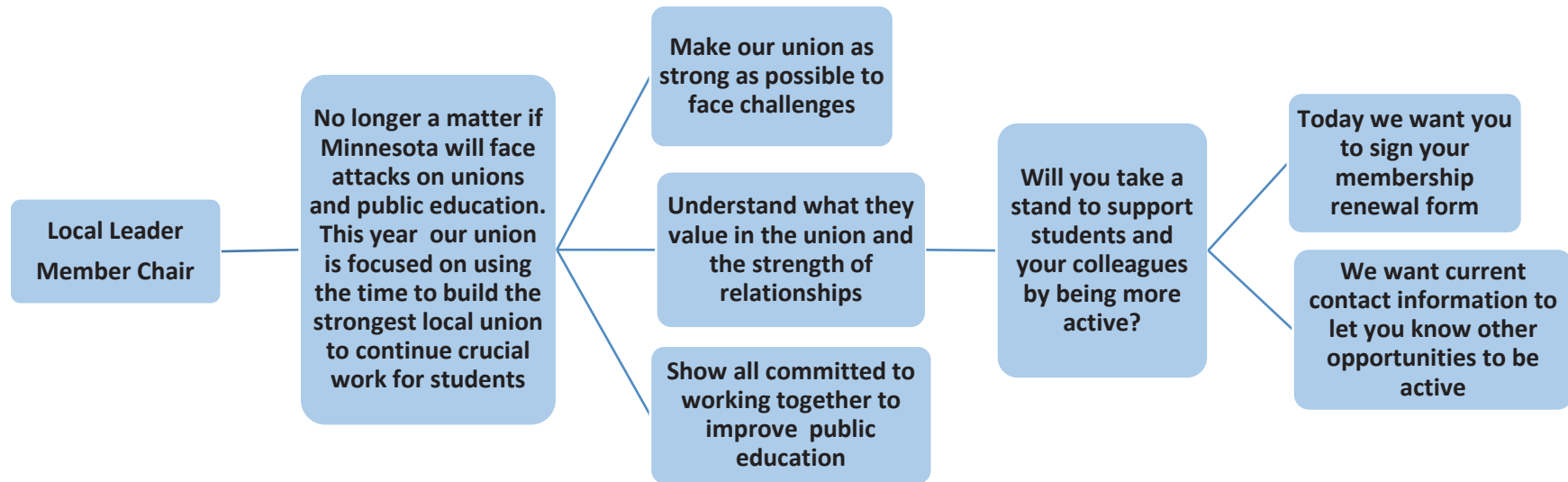
The ask—making the commitment:

As educators, we need to show the district (or administration if higher ed), our students, our communities and each other that we are committed to working together to improve public education.

- An easy way to show our commitment to each other and to our union is by signing a membership renewal form. This renewal form is different than the membership application you signed [x years ago]. All the services and benefits remain the same. By signing this membership renewal form, you are committing to being a member of [local] until at least [date].
- Our power is in our numbers—and when we say “we are xxx members strong” we want to be able to back that up. Will you sign this membership renewal form today to show your commitment?

**Please refer to the sample conversation graphic for more ideas on how to shape your one-on-one conversations.*

Sample Conversation



Member meeting agenda

Power of We information meeting

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

Our challenges: 3 minutes

- Show the Power of We short video or INSERT TALKING POINTS (3 minutes); OR
- Talk with your members using the points below:
 - It is no longer a matter of if Minnesota becomes a right to work state, but when. Our union is focused on how we can take advantage of the one thing we have that other states haven't—time to prepare. There are a few key things we need to do to make ourselves as strong as we can, so we are able to withstand the challenge on the horizon and continue to be the positive and crucial force for students in our district.
 - ♦ We need to get as much as we can out of bargaining this round.
 - ♦ We need to make sure that every single member values belonging to their union, and if they don't see that value, we need to understand why and do better.
 - ♦ We need to show the district, our students, our communities and each other that we are committed to working together to improve public education.

Questions: 3 minutes

Take a few questions and if there are more than the time allows, have members write them down or talk with you after the meeting. (Have half-page feedback forms available for questions or have them text them to their building reps)

The ask: 3 minutes

This is when we ask our members to do something specific. This is what (local name) would like to do.

- Example: “Our power is in our numbers—and when we say ‘we are xxx members strong’ we want to be able to back that up. We are going to reach out to every member in our local to show their commitment to each other and to our union by signing a membership renewal form. This form is different from the membership form you signed [x years ago]. All the services and benefits remain the same. By signing this membership renewal form you are committing to engaging in our local/union.”

Celebration: 1 minute

Share an example from your local of how coming together and supporting one another helped students and staff succeed.

“Thank you. Please leave your questions at the door.” (All questions should be answered promptly in person or at future 10-minute meetings)

Materials: Access to short video, membership renewal forms and some way to leave questions at the end of the meeting.



Value of Belonging Local Member Engagement Activity Grants

Grant description:

Member engagement is crucial to the work we do. Education Minnesota's goal is for all members to value their union and choose to belong. Local Member Engagement Activity Grants provide assistance to locals for a member engagement activity to help connect the values of our union to the values of our members.

Timeline: Application and activity grants will be awarded from September 2017 through June 2018.

Criteria for grant:

1. The grant will fund one local member engagement activity in a local.
2. Locals are encouraged to use the grant money to try a new activity within the local.
3. Locals are encouraged to focus on newer members in their locals.
4. Grant funds will be used for activities that are not covered by other Education Minnesota funding sources, such as the Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund.
5. Grant money cannot be used to pay stipends to members.
6. The dollar amounts for grants has ranged from approximately \$150 to approximately \$10,000 depending on the nature of the request.

Process:

1. Applications are completed by local leaders or a designated member. Applications can be found on the Education Minnesota website or from your field office.
2. The Governing Board Value of Belonging Committee will review and determine grant approval.
3. After approval of the grant, a check will be sent to the local president.
4. Periodically during the year, locals receiving grants will be surveyed on the results of their activity and how the grant assisted them in their efforts.



Value of Belonging Local Member Engagement Activity Grant Application

Local name: _____

Local president: _____

Goal of the activity:


Description of the activity:

What does your local hope to gain/learn from the activity?

What do you need in order to complete it, including dollar amount needed?

Return completed form to your assigned field staff or to:
Michelle Duke, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 or email to
michelle.duke@edmn.org

www.educationminnesota.org

Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers,
the National Education Association and AFL-CIO. 



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