

POLITICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

2010 MSEA Delegate Assembly

The Political Committee met on 8/21/09, 9/26/09, 12/4/09, and 1/16/10. We will also meet on 4/22/10. This year, we added three temporary members, Cindy Antonson, Bruce Campbell, and Angie Lien, to help us address certain activities and goals, such as the Day on the Hill and building coalitions with other unions to address political issues. This year, the Political Committee's work focused on four areas:

Coalition Building

MSEA is committed to building coalitions and partnering more with other unions. On the national front, MSEA President Evan Mapes and MSEA Executive Director Christina Clark attended two meetings of the NCCESU, which is the National Coalition of Classified Education Support Employee Unions. Delegates will find more information on our work with the NCCESU in the attached report, submitted by Executive Director Christina Clark.

On the local front, MSEA partnered with both SEIU Local 284 and AFSCME Co. 65. We contracted with Local 284 to monitor and track the Minnesota Legislature's 2010 session and provide us with weekly reports. Please see more detail on this in "The Information Collection and Analysis" of this report.

As we did last year, MSEA partnered with AFSCME Co. 65 for a combined Day on the Hill (DOTH). You can read details about the day itself in the next section of this report. As far as the partnering is concerned, we were more than pleased with the effort. We had much more involvement in the planning of the DOTH than we did last year, and we took the lead on school district/education issues. Next year we hope to continue to increase our role in planning the day.

Finally, MSEA joined the Voting Rights Coalition, a coalition of more than 20 unions and social justice and civic organizations that works to protect the right to vote by advocating at the legislature and offering voter education. Other members include the League of Women Voters, TakeAction Minnesota, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, and Common Cause, as well as SEIU and Education Minnesota.

Day on the Hill

MSEA's Day on the Hill (DOTH) is growing from a good event with a few members to a great event with many members. In conjunction with AFSCME Co. 65, MSEA held our DOTH on February 11, 2010. MSEA members from all corners of the state attended this successful event! With several members participating for the first time, we almost doubled our numbers from last year's DOTH. For the first time, we chartered a bus that started in Moorhead and picked up members all along the I-94 corridor. The bus option not only helped increase participation but also more than paid for itself in mileage reimbursement savings.

In the morning, members met as a group to hear from a variety of speakers, including our MSEA President Evan Mapes. We also reviewed "talking points" to share with the legislators.

Rep. Tom Rukavina kicked off the afternoon with his wit and humor. Members were treated to a great surprise visit from Speaker of the House Margaret Kelliher Anderson, who spoke about the near impossibility of balancing a \$1.2 billion deficit without increasing taxes or cutting

educational funding. Reps. Roger Reinert and Tom Huntley also spoke (about the budget – what else?!) and thanked members for participating in the legislative process. Rep. Mindy Greiling then led a special session on education issues, including a short review of the proposed "New Minnesota Miracle," which would overhaul school district funding. Rep. Tom Anzelc also spoke and answered questions from MSEA members regarding educational issues.

MSEA members then met with their own legislators to share their stories and remind legislators that funding education is more than just about teaching! Members also participated in 45-minute guided tours of the capital.

Day on the Hill was an awesome day for MSEA members! It was important for MSEA members to visit with legislators and share their concerns regarding education and health care. It was fantastic to see members wearing the maroon t-shirts with MSEA printed on the front, getting our name out on the political landscape as a very viable and important player in Minnesota politics. Please help build our presence by contacting your local legislators and telling them your concerns. Thank your legislator for the service they do for our state. **Finally, plan for doubling the number of members who attended DOTH this year for DOTH in 2011! Members, we need your voice now and in the future!**

Information Collection and Analysis

MSEA is working on improving not only the quantity and quality of the political information that we collect and analyze, but also our collection and analysis methods and process. As noted above, we contracted with SEIU Local 284 to monitor the 2010 legislative session and provide us with relevant reports and updates.

During the session, Christina Clark attends weekly meetings with the SEIU political/legislative staff. They compare notes on what happened the previous week, what to expect during the upcoming week, what bills are moving forward and what bills are not. The political director for SEIU's state council distributes a schedule of committee hearings for the week and the staff from the various locals as well as the state council divvy up the hearings to make sure someone attends each one that includes topics or bills of interest. Christina also meets separately with the Local 284 legislative staffer for more in-depth conversations about developing issues, such as the 4-day week and the proposals that would require districts to share services with each other.

Christina also monitors numerous legislative and political email listservs and webpages. This is a work-in-progress, as she learns which services are not only "user friendly" but also give her the best access to topics of interest and relevance to MSEA. Finally, we are engaged in federal political issues through our participation in the NCCESU. This is also a work-in-progress, as the NCCESU is a relatively new coalition and is still getting its work prioritized and organized.

Member Communications and Interactions

MSEA is working to improve and increase the ways we communicate and interact with MSEA members about political issues. For example, all of the legislative updates and Political Committee meeting notes, as well as links to other legislative information are posted on the MSEA webpage's legislative page. We are also forwarding most of the legislative information we receive to the members of the MSEA Board and Political Committee, members who participated in the DOTH, and other members who have expressed an interest in political and legislative issues. Send an email to Christina at: christina@msea-mn.com if you would like to receive these updates.

We are also researching other ways to inform and engage MSEA members in political issues. For example:

- We met with a representative from “Grasstops”, a nonprofit multi-service advocacy organization that provides lobbying, consulting, training and research services on public policy issues. Grasstops is developing options and strategies that will help us meet our communications and member participation goals.
- Because our current technological setup prevents us from sending group email “alerts” to all of our members at once, we are looking at some web-based email service providers, database managers, and other ways to eliminate this obstacle.
- Field staff and chief stewards are also putting significant effort into getting email addresses for more MSEA members so we can make effective use of the improvements in technology that we are pursuing. Currently, the MSEA database has email addresses for less than half of our members. We have a long way to go, so please respond when your unit leaders or field representative asks for your email address.

As delegates can see, the Political Committee has had a busy year. We look forward to progress on all of these issues and concerns in the upcoming year!

Respectfully Submitted,

MSEA Political Committee

Sue Ames, Chair, LaCrescent

Mary Schaufenbuel, Board, Windom

Jeff Erickson, Bemidji

Patricia Gangl, St. Cloud

Christina L. Clark, MSEA Executive Director

John Rostad, MSEA Field Representative

Evan Mapes, MSEA President, Thief River Falls, ex officio

Cindy Antonson, Special Projects, 2009-10, Moorhead

Bruce Campbell, Special Projects, 2009-10, Alexandria

Angie Lien, Special Projects, 2009-10, Willmar