

Members,

Recently, it was brought to my attention that certain groups are feeling a greater division within our ranks. Not only that, but it also feels as if people are placing blame when difficult situations come up. As I listened, the division seems to be based on the perception that one group of staff have better work conditions than other groups. When it comes to negative perceptions, it is very difficult to dispel them once they take hold within an organization. We have so many facets of education within our own buildings that our jobs are never going to be equal. What I would like staff to believe is that we are professionals and on any given day what you do, compared to your colleagues, will look different and require a different approach. Next, when you see something that you think looks good ask yourself how would that work in your setting and who would you approach to get it? Finally, how can you support the good work that you see at different levels? We have to strive for equity at all levels and see our colleagues as the professionals that they are. I will work harder at focusing our energy on the positives that are happening within our ranks and see what we can do to make things more attainable.

Hybrid

We continue to have meetings regarding what schedules might look like at the middle school level. There are 4 different schedules that are being discussed currently. Rest assured, none of them are perfect, but the staff that have been on these meetings have been putting in a lot of work to come out with something that will work for staff and students alike. As things progress, I will continue to update the information. If you work in the middle school, you should be hearing about these meetings either from your administration or your colleagues. I believe we are a long way out to having the secondary in school. Remember the numbers have to be below 30 per 10,000 for a 2 to 3-week period before secondary can move to hybrid. With vaccinations on the horizon, who knows how things will move along. Thank you to all the staff that are working on the schedules at the secondary level.

SPED

Our colleagues are being asked to start coming back to do evaluations and meet face to face with students for some services. This was out one of the Governor's executive orders and the district is complying. We have some programs that have continued to have students even though the district is DL. With the clarification that services are 1:1, students will have to do the health evaluation before coming into school and all the PPE provided by the district, it is set to begin. If any staff doesn't have the proper PPE, they are to contact their supervisor to make sure that it gets delivered to them. We have had several discussions with EdMN and local health officials and the district is following all the guidelines. This is a time where our members need to be cognizant of what their colleagues are doing. The students that are coming in are considered our most vulnerable students and DL isn't working for them. If a member reaches out to you, see how you can be supportive. Just like across the state, people that are coming in feel like they are valued less because of coming to the building to work. I would argue that these staff members are some of the most valuable in that no one else can do what you do. Our students couldn't move forward without you being there for them!

Issues

I am hearing a lot about conferences at the secondary and about the Asynchronous Wednesdays at the high schools. This is a situation where we need to look at what the needs of the students are currently. Maybe this will change how conferences look in the spring or how your work schedule will look in the future. How are your site leadership teams making decisions? Are your faculty representatives and leadership people talking about the issues at your site? Communication within your building has to be the starting point and many of you are really developing that system. Keep up the good work on behalf of your students and know that you might be the brightest point in their day!

I would like you to look at this link <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-bloomington-paraprofessionals>. The paraprofessionals in Bloomington have been 527 days without a contract. If you go to this site, you can sign on to a petition asking that they get to bargain for a new contract. These paraprofessionals have been there for their students and haven't walked away, so they deserve the respect of negotiating a new contract. Please take the time to read it over and support their cause.

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