

NEWS ADVISORY

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Dear Editor or News Director:

Here's the "MEA Advocate" legislative session wrap-up edition. It was a frustrating session at times for those interested in public education in Minnesota.

But there were also some victories for students and educators. Feel free to use information from this special publication as you wish. We ask only that you credit the "MEA Advocate" if material is used in any extended form. Some of the stories of most interest to journalists include:

- 1) **Education funding** — Layoffs are likely this year, and most districts will have little money available for salary increases for their employees as a result of the level of funding provided by the Legislature,
- 2) **Elementary preparation time** — Elementary teachers are to be given preparation time that is "comparable" to that provided to secondary teachers,
- 3) **Teacher Fair Dismissal** — Minnesota school teachers have finally been given equal status with other public employees and will have the right to an arbitrator in dismissal-for-cause cases,
- 4) **Charter schools** — Passed into law this session, charter schools have been opposed by public education supporters as simply a step toward private school vouchers and public funding of private education.

Check out this issue. And give us a call at 612-227-9541 or 800-652-9073 if you need help with sources, background material or anything else for a story.

ADVOCATE

IN THIS ISSUE:

Cover Photo

The 1991 session of the Legislature adjourned May 29. Many had hoped that lawmakers would have shown more support for public education. This special edition of the "Advocate" reviews the pros and cons.

Funding results

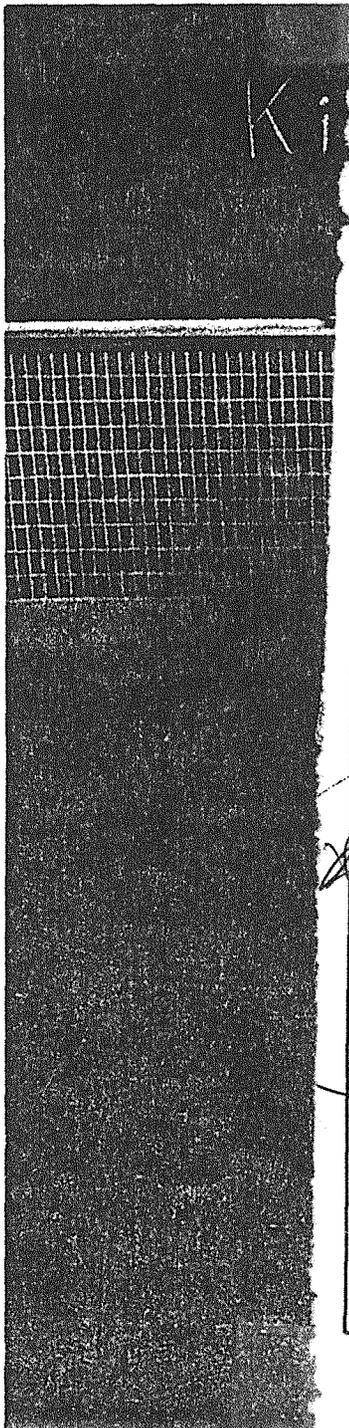
Smallest increase on record for education . . . 2

Prep time

Elementary teachers get "comparable" time to prepare . . . 3

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1991 session features both pros and cons

Every session of the Minnesota Legislature brings its own special challenges. The one just ended will not go down in history as one of the brighter moments for education in this state.

To be sure, there are victories for teachers. The association would specifically like to thank Sen. Jane Ranum and Rep. Linda Scheid for their work as sponsors of the teacher fair dismissal bill. The MEA spearheaded the effort on this bill, and it is a major step in providing justice for teachers facing dismissal for cause.

We are also pleased with improvements in the areas of elementary prep time, class size reduction revenue being extended to second and third grade and a change in the formula so that more districts are eligible for AFDC and Training and Experience funding.

But this session also brought us such lamentable legislation as that on chartered schools. And the funding situation for both K-12 and postsecondary education falls far short of what we hoped for, even given the state's \$1.2 billion shortfall.

The association and its supporters were also disappointed that the conference committee, in reconciling the House and Senate education bills, eliminated funding for teacher centers and deleted the levy authority for early retirement incentive pre-

paid health insurance.

With this special edition of the "Advocate" we cover all the major education developments of this past session. We hope you'll read it thoroughly -- not only to feel good about our victories but so that you'll be informed about those areas that will require our continued attention and ongoing legislative activity.

Robert E. Astrey

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