

Education Minnesota Public Meeting GENERAL TEMPLATE

[HOST] Welcome, Purpose of the Meeting and Agenda

[MC] Welcome, Purpose and Grounding of the Meeting: (15 minutes)

[SAMPLE] My name is _____ and I'm a _____. I want to say thank you to the candidates for taking their time during a busy legislative session to be here with us. And thank you to all the educators, administrators, school board members, parents and community members who are with us today.

I've been teaching _____ for _____. I'm a teacher because _____. While I could retire next year under the rule of 90, I keep teaching because _____. I'm proud to be a teacher in this district and proud to be a member of my union.

We are gathered here today to share our vision for the schools our students deserve, where young people have the support they need to learn and the adults who teach them every day are equipped with the resources they need to be effective. Educators will share the successes we've had despite the hardships we and our students face, and what our schools need for students to succeed. We'll then ask you, as candidates for public office, to make specific investments and changes to improve learning and working conditions in our schools.

This public meeting is one of many that Education Minnesota is hosting across the state this year. We hope that these meetings will be a place where our hopes and dreams, frustrations and aspirations, can all be on the table, and where we can talk about the things that matter most to us as educators. We know that our duty as your constituents is to lead alongside you, to bring to you not only our problems but also our solutions, and to partner with you in raising expectations for what's possible in our public schools.

Next we'll hear five stories from educators that highlight some of the issues that stand in the way of the public education our students deserve. Each educator will have about five minutes to lay out the issue and pose a specific question, at which point we'll ask each legislator to respond for no more than 90 seconds each. We'll be timing to keep you honest! Following these five issues we'll allow the legislators to field some of the other questions that attendees wrote down as they signed in.

[MC] Turn and Talk With Your Neighbor (5 minutes)

Before we move into the stories, I'd like for us to take a few minutes to do what we call a "Turn and Talk" in the classroom. At each table you should have a paper with two short questions, which I'd like you each to take a moment to consider. The goal is to engage our imagination and vision a bit before jumping straight into the issues. The first question: What will be possible for the students in your life if our elected leaders make the historic investments necessary to fully fund our public schools? And the second question: What is at stake if they don't? Please take five minutes now to discuss with a partner or in small groups. We'll keep time and let you know when to wrap up.

[Share out after for a couple minutes if time allows]



Issue Summary, Personal Story, Question #1: Teacher Licensure (5 minutes)

[MC] I'd like to now invite up _____, who's going to speak to us about teacher licensure.

[SPEAKER ONE] Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a _____ at _____.

As you all know, teacher preparation, not just on-the-job training, is critically important to student achievement and success. But in 2017, state lawmakers drastically reduced the requirements to teach in Minnesota classrooms. This has dramatic implications for all of our students, but it will most profoundly affect those with the highest needs. Instead of making it easier to become a teacher, let's make it better to be one.

Story/life experience:

Why you do your job?

What do you like about it?

How does the above issue affect your students' ability to learn?

Question:

The teacher licensure bill currently moving through the legislature restores Minnesota's high standards for a teaching license, keeps teachers in the classroom and honors teacher preparation while recognizing different pathways into teaching. Will you support this bill as it advances?

Candidates respond with 90 seconds each

Issue Summary, Personal Story, Question #2: Respect for Education Support Professionals (5 minutes)

[MC] I'd like to now invite up _____, who's going to speak to us about respect for education support professionals.

[SPEAKER TWO] Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a _____ at _____.

We as education support professionals do some of the most challenging work with students, day in and day out. We are often the first ones called in hard situations and many times we have the closest relationships with the students with the highest needs. However, our contributions to student success aren't reflected in our wages, let alone our safety at work. We believe that all educators deserve decent wages, affordable health care and working conditions that allow us to stay in this profession.

Story/life experience:

Why you do your job?

What do you like about it?

How does the above issue affect your students' ability to learn?

Question:

We know that for students to be successful, ESPs need to be respected as the educators they are. Will you support an ESP Bill of Rights, that would help education support professionals earn respect with changes in wages, working conditions and a voice on the job?

Candidates respond with 90 seconds each

Issue Summary, Personal Story, Question #3: Union Freedoms (5 minutes)

[MC] I'd like to now invite up _____, who's going to speak to us about important union freedoms.

[SPEAKER THREE] Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a _____ at _____.

If it's not already obvious, as educators we care about much more than just our compensation. Most fundamentally, we care about the health and well-being of our students and the conditions that make that possible. However, many of these things are not mandatory subjects of bargaining and we're currently unable to move proposals on them through negotiations. Some of these things include class sizes, staffing ratios for counselors, nurses and mental health professionals, and teacher tenure for certain members. We think it's time for state law to allow us to have a voice on the conditions that most affect our students.

Story/life experience:

Why you do your job?

What do you like about it?

How does the above issue affect your students' ability to learn?

Question:

So, now to the question. As the professionals most qualified to give input into the learning conditions of our students, we feel justified in asking to be able to bargain over these conditions. Will you support an expansion of our voice at the bargaining table so that we can more fully advocate for our students?

Candidates respond with 90 seconds each

Issue Summary, Personal Story, Question #4: Fully Funding Schools (5 minutes)

[MC] I'd like to now invite up _____, who's going to speak to us about fully funding our public schools.

[SPEAKER FOUR] Hi, my name is _____ and I'm a _____ at _____.

Every one of us here has a story about how under-resourced our schools are and what we've been able to do with our students despite that. And while we've seen increases in education spending over the last few years, it hasn't nearly kept pace with the needs of our students. Minnesota's share of school funding hasn't kept pace with inflation, and it's now 12.7 percent less than 2003 in real dollars. We think it's time for our elected officials to fully fund public education to give students the schools they deserve.

Story/life experience:

Why you do your job?

What do you like about it?

How does the above issue affect your students' ability to learn?

Question:

Our statewide union has estimated that it would take an investment of at least an additional \$4.3 billion over the next two years to be able to say that we're fully funding education. That's about a 20 percent increase, and while that may produce sticker shock for some, it's a figure that is based on the strategies proven to help our students succeed, rather than what some elected leaders have decided is politically possible. My question for you is: are you willing to raise expectations in the legislature for the possibility and reasonableness of fully funding our public schools?

Candidates respond with 90 seconds each

Issue Summary, Personal Story, Question #5: Revenue (5 minutes)

[REPEAT SPEAKER FOUR] I have a follow-up question:

As you've heard, we as educators struggle to give our students the attention and resources they deserve, and doing so will require bold leadership and a shared vision about what we want for our next generation.

On Feb., 15, we as Education Minnesota called on Gov. Tim Walz and the members of the legislature to fully fund public education, even if it requires raising taxes on large corporations and the wealthiest Minnesotans. As we mentioned before, it would take at least an extra \$4.3 billion to fully fund our students with the minimum level of resources they deserve.

Story/life experience:

Why you do your job?

What do you like about it?

How does the above issue affect your students' ability to learn?

Question:

It's easy to say that we want to fully fund public education. It's like kindness, puppies or rainbows – who's against it? But doing so would likely require new taxes, and it would be only be fair for those to come from corporations and the wealthiest Minnesotans, who currently don't pay their fair share. Would you support the move to a more fair tax structure in Minnesota in order to fully fund public education?

Candidates respond with 90 seconds each

[LEAD MEMBER] Call to Action

Can we hear it one more time for our educators and our elected officials, all stepping into their own leadership and owning the need to fully fund our public schools? No matter how many of our members' stories I hear, I'm always inspired by their dedication, perseverance and commitment to their students.

[MC] Q&A (10 minutes)

We're nearing the end of our program, but we want to make sure to provide some time for the legislators to field a few other questions from the audience. We'll start with _____, who has a question about _____.

[MC] Closing/Candidate Reflections (5 minutes)

We'd love to give the legislators an opportunity to give an overall reflection on the stories and questions they've heard today. We don't have much time, but maybe a minute each would be great.

[MC] Closing

I want to thank the candidates for public office for being with us today. You are noticed and valued, and will be even more necessary as we continue to raise our expectations for what's possible for our students. We vow to continue to be leaders both in the classroom and at the Capitol as we advocate for the schools our students deserve.

All Education Minnesota members, please head to this side of the room for a 10-minute debrief. Thanks again to everyone for being here.

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