

# Tim Walz

## Education Minnesota 2022 gubernatorial endorsement questionnaire

### Funding a high-quality public school system

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1. “We need more student support personnel in our schools. What will you do to make sure that every student has access to a total team of a school counselor, school nurse, school psychologist and school social worker?” – *Murray, Chokio-Alberta*

**My latest budget proposal includes \$77 million to hire more student support personnel, like counselors and social workers. It will also help increase access to similar resources for families outside of school. For example, it has a paid leave provision to allow Minnesotans to accrue up to 48 hours a year of paid leave for shorter-term needs, such as caring for a child during a school closure or taking them to a doctor's appointment. Parents should never have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their children and removing these obstacles can help alleviate the burden on schools so they can use their increased resources to better help the students with the greatest needs.**

2. “Would you give your support to a bill to provide equalization aid to low-property wealth school districts who have difficulty passing operation levies?” – *Bob, St. Michael-Albertville*

Yes    No

3. “When will special education be fully funded and provided with resources to reduce our workload which would lead to greater teacher retention?” – *Michelle, Osseo*

**Special education has been underfunded for years. Last year, along with the largest increase in per-pupil funding in 15-years, I signed into law an additional \$10.4 million to help school districts cover special education costs. Now with our historic surplus, I've proposed an additional 2 percent increase in per-pupil funding along with a 15 percent increase in special education funding. I'm hopeful that with a historic budget surplus we can come together to fully fund special education.**

4. “Intermediate School Districts do not have a specific funding stream and rely on member districts for funding. What are your plans to establish a funding stream specific to intermediates?” – *Susan, Intermediate District 287*

**Intermediate School Districts provide valuable programs, services, and educational opportunities to students with many needs. My latest budget proposal would provide specific funding for intermediate schools to establish and maintain a full-service community school model, support the**



**mental health of students, and provide professional development to teachers and staff. I'll continue to work with Education Minnesota, Intermediate School Districts, and the Legislature to make sure we provide ISDs and their students with the support and resources they need.**

5. "Districts are facing cuts everywhere and now unsustainable working conditions are pushing educators to their breaking point. Will you support fully funding public education to make sure we have smaller class sizes, more supports for students, full-service community schools, educator recruitment and retention and all the other things educators know are needed to provide a world class, equitable, public education to all Minnesota students?" – *Natalia, Rochester*

Yes    No

6. "Will you support funding for every district that wants to establish full-service community schools?" – *Deanna, Deer River*

Yes    No

7. "Will you oppose policies that permanently dedicate general fund dollars to government expenses not authorized under the current Minnesota Constitution?" – *Mark, St. Francis*

Yes    No

8. "Will you commit to increasing educational funding every year?" – *Justin, Dassel-Cokato*

Yes    No

## Higher education

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9. "Two decades ago, 14 percent of the state budget went to higher education. It's currently less than 6 percent. What will you do to ensure higher education is funded at the 67 percent level as is required in state statute?" – *Beth, Minnesota State College Faculty*

**We must get back to the state paying two-thirds of the cost of attendance at state college or university and the state should continue to invest in our institutions to ensure we live up to the promise of accessible, affordable and excellent higher education for all Minnesotans. I'm proud of the work we've made so far towards this goal, including establishing an automatic college acceptance program for state high school seniors and creating new grants for students who were raised in foster care. My latest budget proposal would build on this, expanding financial aid, increasing the number of semesters that students have access to aid, and would eliminate application fees at colleges in the state.**

10. “Some of our campuses have no counselors, while others have a ratio of 1:11,000 students. Will you support each Minnesota State campus having at least one counselor so students have access to mental health and academic support services?” – *Lisa, Minnesota State College Faculty*

Yes    No

11. “Will you support investments in higher education capital bonding projects that preserve buildings, remodel classrooms and keep our technology assets current?” – *Mark, Minnesota State College Faculty*

Yes    No

## Maintaining a high-quality educator workforce

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12. “Minnesota had an educator shortage before the pandemic and now we are at a staffing crisis in our schools. How can the state help districts recruit and retain educators, especially educators of color and young educators, that doesn’t include them taking on extensive education debt and other barriers? And maybe even more crucially, how can we help them feel supported, valued and respected?” – *Patricia, Minnetonka*

**Minnesota can build the best teaching workforce in the nation by ensuring the profession is valued. Last year I signed into law \$33.5 million to attract, train and retain teachers of color. My latest budget proposal would establish a Statewide Teacher Mentoring Program to support and improve experiences of professional educators, expand the Grow You Own Teacher Training Programs to train more people of color and Indigenous people for a career in teaching, cover the costs for the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam and teachers’ first Professional Teacher License, and provide a teacher retention bonuses for those new to the profession.**

13. “What policy changes or measures are you actively working on to address the teacher shortage in rural Minnesota? What have you specifically done to advance these policy changes or measures?” – *Diana, Red Rock Central*

**As someone who graduated from a class of 24 students in my high school (12 of whom were cousins) and as a teacher in Mankato I understand the unique challenges rural educators face. I campaigned on and am proud that we have been able to increase our funding formula to help ensure schools in greater Minnesota receive the kind of flexible funding they need to hire more educators without overburdening farms and other property owners with taxes. I also support expanding the state refinance program to include areas where there are shortages of educators.**

14. “Do you support deleting the option in teacher licensure tier three that allows a person to receive a full professional license without completing a teacher preparation program?” – *Mary, Dakota County United Educators*

Yes  No

15. “Will you support full funding for Q Comp and teacher development and evaluation programs?” – Sara, *Centennial*

Yes  No

## Racial justice in our schools

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16. “What will you do to decrease the achievement gap for students of color and English language learners?” – Christy, *St. Paul*

**Every student should be able to get a world class public education no matter their race or zip code. Last year I signed into law \$4 million for programs for students for whom English isn’t the primary language spoken at home and we have made gains in ensuring equitable funding for all districts and historic investments in ensuring that teachers reflect the students they teach.**

17. “How do you plan to address racial inequality in schools and how do you plan on addressing the school-to-prison pipeline?” – Abigail, *aspiring educator*

**One of the most important things that we can do is to recruit and retain more teachers of color in the classroom. Equity coaches are another part of the solution to this problem - we need to make sure that teachers have the baseline cultural competence that they’ll need to recognize and correct problems in their classroom related to equity issues.**

**We also have to recognize that, try as they might, teachers cannot be the solution to every part of the school-to-prison pipeline. If a student doesn’t have a stable place to call home, doesn’t have a reliable source of food, or has experience trauma (lived or historical), those are factors that require a more holistic approach, which is one of the reasons I am fighting to hire more support personnel for schools.**

18. “Will you support policy and funding changes to ensure that all educators are trained in restorative practices and trauma-informed instruction?” – David, *Mounds View*

Yes  No

## Safety/COVID

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19. “How will you make sure administrators and school boards prioritize the mental health of students and educators?” – Kathryn, *retired educator*

**There is immense value in integrating mental health services with schools. We also know that too many children in school have experienced trauma at home or in their neighborhoods and are suffering from these adverse childhood experiences. I've proposed hiring more school counselors and psychologists and funding to offer mental health screenings statewide. We should not be using education dollars to pay for health services that should be provided through our health care programs. I also support increasing the number of full-service community schools across the state because it is a model that works. Last year I channeled \$5 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds to help support full-service community schools.**

20. "Will you advocate to renew paid time when required to take time off, especially for COVID-related leave like quarantines for educators to take care of themselves and their families?" – *Leslie, Anoka Hennepin*

Yes    No

21. "What REAL solutions/plan of action do you have regarding gun safety and gun education for our students and staff?" – *Sara, Minneapolis*

**We have an opportunity to create safer communities for all Minnesotans by building a public safety system focused on transparency, accountability, and violence prevention. My plan includes investing \$300 million in local communities for public safety and to help combat gun violence. It also funds several community-based crime prevention grants that fund programs like youth services, truancy programs, resident engagement, and other community-driven intervention and prevention strategies.**

## **Standardized testing**

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22. "How are you going to reform our standardized testing to reflect how children show their learning best and keep their developmental needs at the forefront while also measuring school success?" – *Elisa, Burnsville*

**Anyone who has taught in a public school classroom knows that we're not going to test our way to better learning outcomes for our kids. Students need the time, tools and one-on-one attention necessary to succeed, and standardized tests take away from this. While data from tests can be useful, they are only one indicator of a school's success. Relying on and prioritizing testing at the cost of genuine learning doesn't serve our kids or our educators. A move to grade span testing would provide similar, if not better information, and allows for better quality and reduces the substantial negative impact on instruction time endemic to the current system. Teacher assessments should not rely on standardized test data alone.**

23. "What individual or systems-level decisions in education do you believe are appropriate decisions to make based on standardized test results?" – *Lori, Albert Lea*

**As a country, we over-depend on standardized testing to identify system-level trends and concerns while neglecting other, more comprehensive measures. Identifying districts and schools for attention and support System-level testing can help to shed light on the opportunity gaps that hurt Minnesota’s children of color, Minnesota’s children from low-income families and communities and rural areas cannot be overstated.**

**Standardized tests do not provide a full enough analysis of an individual teacher’s skills, and they shouldn’t be the dominant factor in the teacher evaluation process to the exclusion of other measures.**

## Union rights and freedoms

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24. “Will you unequivocally oppose and veto any legislation designed to weaken or eliminate the collective bargaining and negotiating rights of educators and public employees? Will you veto or oppose any legislation or constitutional amendments that would weaken the right to strike, eliminate automatic payment of union dues, restrict union access to workplaces, require annual union recertification or any other anti-union policies backed by anti-worker groups?” – *Monica, Richfield*

Yes    No

25. “Do you support expanding the mandatory subjects of bargaining to include things like class size, student support staff ratios and other student-focused needs?” – *Janey, St. Paul*

Yes    No

26. “Do you support collective bargaining rights?” – *Ron, Elk River*

Yes    No

27. “Do you support teacher tenure and due-process rights so the experts who work the most with students have the support to stand up for them?” – *Ron, Elk River*

Yes    No

28. “Do you support allowing tier one-licensed teachers to join the teacher bargaining unit?” – *Angie, Eden Prairie*

Yes    No

29. “Do you support changes to current law to include our fully licensed early childhood family education and adult basic education teachers into the continuing contract law?” – *Kimberly, Waubun-Ogema-White Earth*

Yes    No

## Economic and health security

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30. “What legislation could you introduce or support that would reduce the cost of health insurance to school districts? Where do you stand on health care for all?” – *Bob, Burnsville*

**I’m fighting to have MinnesotaCare opened to all Minnesotans. This will help significantly reduce the cost of health care for all Minnesotans and help cover everyone. Eventually I would like to see universal health care in Minnesota and across the country. I fought hard to preserve the Health Care Access Fund, despite Republican efforts to end the program that 1.2 million Minnesotans rely upon for health care access. I also signed a bill increasing protections for seniors in assisted living facilities, successfully championed legislation to increase transparency in prescription drug costs, and signed the historic Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act to provide relief to Minnesotans struggling to afford their insulin.**

31. “Do you support the current language that allows educator locals to unilaterally seek a bid and join the Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP) as the insurance provider for local bargaining units?” – *Janelle, Caledonia*

Yes    No

32. “Does the state of Minnesota have a responsibility to ensure that universal, affordable health care is available to all working Minnesotans, including education support professionals and other low-wage, hourly workers?” – *Linda, Triton*

Yes    No

If yes: “What policies do you support that would accomplish this and what is your plan to enact them?” – *Maria, Roseville*

**I’m fighting to have MinnesotaCare opened to all Minnesotans.**

## Education debt

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33. “What specifically have you done over the past term that has contributed to raising the wages of underpaid educators throughout the state of Minnesota who are struggling to repay student loans?” – *Tyler, Cambridge-Isanti*

**My latest budget proposal includes student loan debt relief, in the form of annual repayment awards for up to five years, to eligible teachers working in areas experiencing teacher shortages. I also am fighting for \$1 billion in hero pay to frontline workers like teachers and signed into law historic funding to alleviate budgetary burdens and prevent teacher layoffs in school districts across the state.**

34. “I understand there is the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, but we could use some of that extra relief now. Between distance learning and in-person learning, sometimes both at the same time, we could use a break across the board, especially in rural areas. Will you support more loan forgiveness opportunities for educators?” – *Kelly, Hibbing*

Yes  No

## Pensions

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35. “Pensions are a benefit that helps retain educators in difficult times such as now. How can you commit to retaining and expanding educator pension access?” – *Lisa, Elk River*

**A pension is a promise made that must be kept. Nearly 900,000 current workers in Minnesota are provided no opportunity by their employers to save for retirement, with nearly all having to rely almost entirely on poverty-level Social Security income in retirement, if they are able to retire at all. This is why I support a low-fee, state managed, retirement savings plan for all Minnesotans without employer-sponsored plans that maximizes participation through automatic enrollment and payroll deduction by employers and allows for easy opt-out by employees.**

36. “Do you support exploring new systems for providing educators with a secure retirement, including exploring early retirement options that might help recruit and retain educators?” – *Kim, Crookston*

Yes  No

37. “Will you support keeping a sustainable defined-benefit public pension system?” – *Joan, retired educator*

Yes  No

If yes: “Will you support providing the necessary state funding to ensure sustainability of public pension funds?” – *Joan, retired educator*

Yes  No

## Creating just and inclusive Minnesota communities

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38. “What are you going to do to actively disrupt injustice in local and national institutions, policies, laws and practices? What evidence/track record do you have for being a leader in racial equity and social justice issues?” – *Cameron, St. Louis Park*



**As a former teacher who campaigned for governor on a platform of promoting civil rights and funding schools, I've kept my promise to the Black community and made historic investments in K-12 education and instituted my Due North plan to help close the racial achievement gap in Minnesota. I've invested over \$33 million to attract, train, and retain teachers of color, worked to help BIPOC students access college readiness programs starting in sixth grade, and signed into law a program to directly admit qualified students into state colleges and boost access to students of color. And time and time again I've fought back against GOP attempts to gut and privatize our public schools through vouchers.**

**We've made efforts to decrease the disparity in maternity care by requiring training for obstetric care and birth centers on anti-racism and implicit bias and by expanding Medical Assistance coverage for pregnant women to 12 months postpartum.**

**To help combat the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on Black Minnesotans, we carved out millions of dollars in COVID-19 business relief for minority-owned businesses and ensured that there was an off-ramp for tenants as the COVID-19 eviction moratorium expired. I also secured increased funding for the Homeownership Assistance Fund to help put homeownership within reach for more Minnesota households and on a path to creating generational wealth.**

**Peggy and I also helped pass important public safety reforms to tackle crime and reduce gun violence while reforming policing to ensure the safety of all Minnesotans. Our last two budgets provided investments in new violence prevention programs, funding to ensure law enforcement wear body cameras and bans on chokeholds and "warrior-style" training.**

**When Republicans in the legislature refused to pass additional reforms, I signed an executive order to fund community violence prevention grants and increased transparency and accountability. We have an opportunity to create safer communities for all Minnesotans and with our historic surplus we're pursuing a comprehensive, holistic approach to public safety that invests \$300 million in local law enforcement and community-based initiatives so that everyone in Minnesota is safe, valued, and protected in their community.**

**But I know we need to do more. I am committed to pushing for more resources and for justice in our schools, but also in housing, health care, child care, and social services. To build stronger schools, we need to build a more equitable Minnesota.**

## **Privatization**

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39. "How do you feel about charter schools and voucher schools versus the public system?"

– *Pamela, Minnesota State College Faculty*

**Minnesota’s public schools have proven time and again to be exceptional and the backbone of this state. I will do everything in my power to protect them from voucher and charter schools.**

40. “Do you support a free public education system?” – *Linda, Intermediate District 917*

Yes    No

If yes: “How will you protect it from privatization?” – *Linda, Intermediate District 917*

**I will continue to fight against vouchers and public funds going to private schools. Minnesota has exceptional public schools that are the backbone of this state. As a former public school teacher, I will always do everything in my power to protect our public education system from privatization.**

If yes: “Will you support policy changes that will ensure a stronger accountability system with necessary oversight and reporting to ensure quality management and instructional practices in charter schools?” – *Alex, Minneapolis*

Yes    No

If yes or no: “Do you oppose state tax credits for private, K-12 education tuition?”  
– *Chris, Sartell*

Yes    No

## Governing

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41. “What are some non-negotiable areas of education that you are unwilling to relent on and how will you ensure that policies are passed that aren’t at the expense of students, families and educators?” –  
*Maria, Roseville*

**I will unequivocally oppose vouchers and any restrictions on educator’s rights to collectively bargain or advocate for their students. I will make sure good policies pass by talking with educators and making sure they are at the table when decisions are made that impact our schools.**

42. “How will you truly get the voice of educators involved in decision making?” – *Corey, Litchfield*

**I will make sure educators are brought to the table for all decisions that will affect them to ensure their voices are heard and needs are met. I will also work closely with Education Minnesota on policies and initiatives they want and help make those realities.**

## Honesty in education

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43. “I’m a first-year social studies teacher who is passionate about teaching my students to be effective and knowledgeable citizens in their communities. What is the best way to help foster that, in your opinion?” – *Charles, Intermediate District 287*

**One of the best way to keep students engaged and teaching them to be effective and knowledgeable citizens is by having teachers who are passionate and supported with the resources they need to teach their students.**

44. “What are you going to do to protect teachers in the classroom and ensure that we have the freedom to teach?” – *Paul, Fosston*

**As a teacher for 20 years, I’ll always have the backs of teachers and make sure they have the freedom and resources to do their job to the best of their ability.**

45. “Do you agree that Minnesotan students deserve an honest and accurate education about race that enables them to learn from the mistakes of our past so they can create a better future for all Minnesotans? Why or why not?” – *James, aspiring educator*

**I believe we all want to prepare our students to be critical thinkers, good citizens and future leaders by giving them a more honest look at where we’ve been as a state and nation and where we’re at. We believe our children should learn from our history and respect people regardless of what they look like, where they come from, or who they love. It’s what students need to live and lead in a multiracial state where one day everyone can thrive.**

## Time to teach

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46. “The planning and differentiating that teachers do daily needs more time. And, most after school ‘prep’ is filled with meetings. I believe the current statute falls short of the time needed for preparing lessons. Are you open to adjusting this statute to increase prep time?” – *Natasha, Minneapolis*

Yes    No

47. “Will you support legislation that protects an educator’s prep time so it can’t be used for meetings or them always subbing for colleagues?” – *Carl, Duluth*

Yes    No

48. “Do you support paid, dedicated time outside of their student contact time for special education teachers to complete their paperwork and required meetings?” – *Heather, Dakota County United Educators*

Yes    No

## Education support professionals

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49. “A school can't run without paraprofessionals and other support professionals, but we are paid the least. Will you support a \$25 minimum wage for all ESPs in Minnesota?” – *Ma-Riah, Minneapolis, and Ryan, Intermediate District 917*

Yes    No

50. “ESPs were, and continue to be, on the front lines of the pandemic response in schools. We were the ones working in person throughout all of COVID-19, putting our health and families at risk. We did all of this without the financial stability or leaves available to us as professional workers. What would you do to make ESPs a profession that is supported with the respect of professional wages and benefits?” – *Victoria, Robbinsdale*

**I support increasing wages for ESPs, including them in the frontline worker hero pay proposal, and ensuring that all hourly school staff are eligible for unemployment benefits**

51. “Do you support ESPs being able to access unemployment insurance in the summers, when they are not guaranteed work?” – *Karin, White Bear Lake*

Yes    No

52. “Many paraprofessionals do not receive any training even though their job is vital to student success. Do you agree that ESPs should have dedicated, paid training each year that is specific to their work and students’ needs?” – *Mary, Spring Lake Park*

Yes    No

53. “Do you believe ESPs who worked in-person throughout the pandemic should qualify for frontline essential worker pay? And will you increase the amount of money for that funding so all workers who deserve it can receive hero pay?” – *Ona, South Washington County*

Yes    No

## Revenue

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54. “Will you commit to raising new revenue by requiring the wealthiest corporations and richest households to pay what they truly owe in taxes so every student, no matter what they look like or where they live, can attend a world-class, fully funded public school that prepares each student to pursue their dreams?” – *Leah, Lakeville*

Yes    No

