

Kari Dorry – Senate – District 12

Education Minnesota candidate questionnaire

Education funding

1. Education Minnesota believes the solution to closing the state's racial opportunity gaps must include fully and equitably funding public education, from preschool to postsecondary institutions. There's widespread agreement the full-funding agenda will require several billion dollars in new education investments. Please indicate your support or opposition to the following components of our full-funding agenda.

Inflation: Reverse Minnesota's perpetual underfunding of education by significantly increasing the per-pupil funding formula and tying it to inflation.

Yes No

SPED cross subsidy: The state must also fully fund its portion of special education costs instead of relying on school districts to pay for them.

Yes No

EL cross subsidy: Fully fund the costs districts pay to provide quality English learner programs and instruction.

Yes No

Lower class sizes: Lower class sizes so teachers can give students more of the individual attention they need and deserve.

Yes No

Full-service community schools: Expand access to full-service community schools across the state.

Yes No

Universal pre-K: Provide universal pre-K taught by licensed teachers, so all children are ready for kindergarten.

Yes No



Teachers of color: Fund programs to increase the number of teachers of color significantly so teachers providing instruction better reflect the students in our classrooms.

x Yes No

Student support: Provide additional resources for school districts to hire more student support staff, including counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other job classifications.

x Yes No

TDE/Q Comp: Fully fund the 2011 Teacher Development and Evaluation law, an unfunded state mandate, to ensure teacher quality and lift the cap on the Q Comp program.

x Yes No

Professional development: Provide professional development to all staff around cultural competency and trauma-responsive classrooms with aims of closing the discipline disparity gap.

x Yes No

ESP living wage: Ensure all education support professionals earn a living wage of at least \$25 an hour.

x Yes No

Teacher compensation and benefits: Increase teacher compensation to provide competitive salaries and benefits to recruit and retain teachers.

x Yes No

Health care for all school employees: Make health insurance more affordable, fair and predictable for educators and school employees so they stay in the profession.

x Yes No

Education debt relief: Provide debt relief to retain teachers so they can afford to stay in the classroom.

x Yes No

Higher education: Renew Minnesota's commitment to invest in the state's future by fully funding public higher education in Minnesota.

x Yes No

Education Support Professionals

2. Do you support ESPs being able to access unemployment insurance in the summers, when they are not guaranteed work?

Yes No

3. Will you support dedicated, paid training each year for education support professionals to get the training they need that is specific to their work and students' needs?

Yes No

Taxes/revenue

4. Would you commit to raising revenue to ensure the wealthiest corporations and richest households pay what they truly owe in taxes so every student, no matter what they look like or where they live, can attend a fully funded public school that prepares them to pursue their dreams?

Yes No

5. Education Minnesota believes in restoring fairness to the state tax code by raising revenue from the very wealthiest corporations and richest households and reducing the reliance on local levies to fund schools. Considering your own experience and expertise, are there other progressive, equitable ways to raise state revenue that you would recommend the union consider supporting?

I believe having the wealthiest pay their fair share is the best way to sufficiently and fairly fund schools. Local levies are part of an unfair system that enhances disparities between school systems. A child's zip code should not determine their opportunities. As a legislator, I will look forward to engaging with the experts at Education Minnesota to collaborate on bringing fairness and equity to public school funding systems.

Higher education

6. Do you support increasing the state's direct investment in public higher education to significantly reduce institutions' reliance on tuition?

Yes No

7. Will you support investments in capital bonding projects that preserve buildings, remodel classrooms and keep our technology assets current?

Yes No

8. What would you do, as a state legislator, to help with education debt?

We must address the out of control costs of higher education. Every student deserves the opportunity to continue their education after high school and enter their adult lives without being riddled with debt. I completed my masters degree in the spring of 2020 and am thankful for the loan forgiveness programs that were available to me. Expanding loan forgiveness programs is needed for students, in a broad range of programs, who have obtained degrees and are currently facing crushing debt.

9. Some college 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?

Yes No

High-quality professional educators

10. What will you do to help recruit and retain high-quality educators in our classrooms?

The entire profession of teaching has recently been under attack. We are in a dire situation at schools throughout our district, with many schools unable to fill teaching positions. In order to encourage and attract individuals to the teaching profession, as well as retain the teachers we have, it is imperative to increase compensation, improve the accessibility of teacher preparation programs, and remove any other obstacles teachers face. Improving teacher pay and benefits will help encourage students to seek a career in the field of education, as well as teacher prep programs that are much more accessible and affordable. Fewer and fewer colleges are offering the programs needed to prepare our teachers. We need to elect lawmakers that value teachers by fighting misinformation and advocating for our public schools.

11. Do you support changes to current law to include our fully-licensed Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers in the continuing contract law?

Yes No

Teacher licensure

12. Do you support changes to state law to allow Tier 1 teachers to join the teacher bargaining unit?

Yes No

13. Do you support deleting the option in Tier 3 that allows a person to receive a full professional license without completing a teacher preparation program?

Yes No

Standardized testing

14. What individual or system-level decisions in education do you believe are appropriate to make based on standardized test scores?

Zero. We should not be making any decisions solely based on standardized test scores.

Honesty in Education

15. What can you do to protect teachers in the classroom and ensure that they have the freedom to teach?

We need leaders at every level to fight the misinformation that is currently seeping into our communities. Strong leaders can protect teachers by trusting them, following their lead, and speaking up on their behalf. The teachers are the experts on their content, and this is something that needs to be respected. There are currently individuals running for public office at all levels of government that are trying to dismantle and defund the education system, as well as take away a teacher's ability to teach. Elections matter and we must do everything we can to elect leaders who will respect the profession. I will work tirelessly in my campaign for the MN Senate, as well as getting leaders elected up and down the ticket, who will advocate for public education.

16. 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?

Absolutely, I agree. We are all better when we have an accurate understanding of our foundation. It compounds harm for those individuals and communities who have experienced trauma, racism, and injustice to have our society whitewashing the past. Honesty in education needs to be a top priority not only for educators, but for lawmakers as well.

Time to Teach

17. The planning and differentiating that teachers do daily needs more time. Most after school “prep” is filled with meetings. The current statute falls short of the time needed for preparing lessons. Will you support adjusting this statute to increase prep time?

Yes No

18. Will you support legislation that protects an educator's prep time so it can't be used for meetings or having to sub for colleagues?

Yes No

19. Do you support paid, dedicated time outside of student contact time for special education teachers to complete their paperwork and required meetings?

Yes No

Union Rights

20. Do you support collective bargaining rights?

Yes No

21. Will you oppose any legislation or constitutional amendments that would weaken collective bargaining rights, the right to organize, the right to strike, automatic payment of union dues, union access and activities at worksites or other anti-union policies backed by anti-worker groups?

Yes No

22. 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?

Yes No

23. How will you support unions as a state legislator?

I have been a proud union member for 20 years. I will support unions by upholding collective bargaining rights, as it is something I deeply value in my own life. All workers deserve fair wages and healthy working environments. I will work hard to support unions in every way I can!

Working families

24. 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?

Yes No

25. Will you support continuing defined-benefits retirement systems for public employees?

Yes No

26. Will you support providing the necessary state funding to ensure financial sustainability of public pension funds?

Yes No

27. Will you support exploring new systems for providing educators with a secure retirement, including exploring early retirement options that might help recruit and retain educators?

Yes No

28. 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?

I believe in healthcare for all. A single payer healthcare plan in Minnesota would reduce costs to school districts and allow workers to access affordable care. Everyone deserves high-quality, accessible healthcare at an affordable rate. It is a top priority for me to make it happen in Minnesota!

Privatization

29. Do you oppose state tax credits for private K-12 education tuition and expenses?

Yes No

30. 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?

Yes No

31. Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools until such changes are made?

Yes No

32. Minnesota students, from different places and of different races, deserve well-resourced, welcoming schools. These needs are urgent and can't wait decades for lawyers and courts to force it to happen.

Do you oppose efforts that would delete constitutional mandates for using taxation to fund public education funding and for providing equal access to public schools to all students?

Yes No

Do you also oppose these same efforts that would enshrine standardized testing – with all its racial, cultural and economic biases – into the Minnesota Constitution?

Yes No

Your role as a legislator

33. Have you visited a public school in your district in the past year? If so, which one? What were your observations from your visit? How will that experience inform your work as a legislator? If not, when did you last visit a school? Would you like us to help arrange a visit?

I am well positioned to advocate for our schools as I have taught for 20 years in public education. As an early childhood special education teacher and school readiness coordinator, not only will I advocate for K-12 education, but I will also prioritize our youngest learners in early childhood programs.

The last three years have been hard on schools. Really hard. Teachers are leaving the field faster than we can replace them. We need to elect lawmakers that understand schools, respect teachers, and commit to supporting all learners.

34. What have you done to become informed on issues relating to public education? What organizations and individuals do you go to for your information?

I am informed on the issues in public education because I am doing this work everyday. Education MN is my go-to. The Ed MN field staffer from my region can attest to that by how many times I call her :)

35. How do you envision working with Education Minnesota if you are elected/re-elected? If you disagree with us on an issue, how will you communicate that?

I hope to work as closely with Education MN as a lawmaker, as I do as a teacher and union president. We are better together and I am thankful for the leadership of Education MN!

36. If elected/re-elected, how will you balance competing priorities that might exist between Education Minnesota and other education groups?

Education has always been and always will be my top priority. My values align very closely with the work of Education Minnesota, and I look forward to strengthening our partnership at the state level!