

# Rick Hansen Mn House 53B

## Education Minnesota candidate questionnaire

### Education funding

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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.*

X  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.*

X  Yes    No

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

X  Yes    No

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

X  Yes    No

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

X  Yes    No

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

X  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 I authored HF 3624

*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**

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

X  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?

X  Yes    No

## **Taxes/revenue**

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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?

X  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 in a progressive tax system based on the ability to pay. With our surplus we need to make sure that we have levy equalization to make sure property poor districts like South St Paul have the ability to succeed**

## **Higher education**

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

X  Yes    No

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

X  Yes    No I have served on the Capital Investment Committee throughout my time in the legislature

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

**I authored HF 3624 and will again**

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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?

X  Yes     No

## High-quality professional educators

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

Support college students entering teaching with scholarships/grants. Reduce/eliminate college debt for teachers. Providing for continuing education and professional development for current teachers. Work with retired teachers for mentorship opportunities.

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?

X  Yes    No

## Teacher licensure

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

X  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?

X  Yes    No

## Standardized testing

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

Individual test scores may be used as a component in making decisions for the student. I am less supportive of using test scores for system level decisions. Scores should not be the determining factor in decision making

## Honesty in Education

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

School boards are coming under increasing pressure from organized efforts to insert various agendas into the classroom. COVID-19 accelerated this engagement regarding not only masks, but curricula

and methodology. Teachers are exhausted by these efforts and may leave the profession. We need to be supportive of teachers.

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?

Yes. “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. - George Santayana

## Time to Teach

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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?

X  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?

X  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?

X  Yes    No

## Union Rights

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20. Do you support collective bargaining rights?

X  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?

X  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 a strong record of supporting unions since being elected to the Legislature in 2004. Unions build the middle class and provide members protection**

## **Working families**

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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?

**Allowing school districts to join larger insurance pools(PEIP) helps reduce the cost Yes**

## **Privatization**

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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?

X  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?*

X  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?*

X  Yes    No

## **Your role as a legislator**

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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?

**Yes, I have spent a lot of time at South St Paul High School this year as my son Evan just graduated. I also spoke in a classroom in District 197. Our experience in SSP shows the benefit of special education. Our son had an IEP after second grade and was able to thrive with assistance and effort.**

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?

**Education Minnesota, School Boards, teachers, parents, students**

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 have a good working relationship with EdMN. If we disagree, I will be clear and forthright**

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

**I will listen to all, but rely on the best...Ed MN**