

Josiah Hill – House Seat 33B Candidate

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.

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.

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.

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.

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

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.

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

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?

Having been a part of the leadership of two levy campaigns over the past 10 years in Stillwater Public Schools, I clearly understand the immense amount effort and time it requires to be successful in this endeavor. It is profoundly frustrating to me and others who I have served along with in these campaigns that this time and energy is spent convincing community members to vote "Yes" rather than focusing that attention on our young people and their growth and development. I believe the first step is to ensure that MN has a tax code that forces the corporations and households with a great deal of wealth to pay their fair share. This change coupled with a long-term commitment via policy resembling "The Minnesota Miracle" to invest in all children who find themselves in Minnesota. I have served this end for 12 years as a proud local president of the St. Croix Education Association, an Ed MN Governing Board member for 3 years, and an EdMN PAC Board member for 7 years. We must find an avenue to fund our schools that doesn't require committed supporters of strong public schools to plead/beg for support every 7-10 years in their community. We don't have a resource issue here in MN, we have an issue of will and priorities and today with a record budget surplus we have an authentic opportunity to invest in the generations of children to come.

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?

I will support/author/sponsor any policy changes that allow for future and current education professionals to have a pathway to student debt forgiveness for making the decision to serve the students and families of Minnesota in our public school systems.

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?

Raise pay for all educators to ensure that we attract bright talent to this important work. Also, I would like to pass legislation to invest in reaching out to communities and groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in our school systems' ESP, teacher, and administrative ranks. Funding "Grow Your Own" programs in districts to recruit and mentor young people interested in a career path in education.

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 I do support this, but want to dialogue about how to balance this issue with continuing the important work of expanding our pool of teachers of currently underrepresented communities in MN.

Standardized testing

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

Data is important, but our public school system has become subservient to the assessment industry and those who believe it is easy to rank and sort children. I believe this trend started with the 1983 "A Nation at Risk" report that was opening of a 40-year effort by conservatives to privatize and monetize our public school system. Testing was a tool that was designed to falsely paint our schools as failing. Tests should be fewer and weighted in a much reduced way for students and educational systems.

Honesty in Education

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

As a 20+ year teacher I know the importance of this issue and the renewed coordinated attacks that are currently being utilized by opponents of our public schools. Teachers need to be empowered and supported in teaching the curriculum in the best and most relevant way to meet their students needs and to meet students where they are.

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?

I do. Students need to understand the past to learn from the successes and failures of the past. Any attempt to do otherwise is an attempt to scrub the past and revise history to serve an evil end.

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 will continue my efforts and advocacy mentioned above as a proud union member of the St. Croix Education Association and continue the fight for the Labor movement that I learned about at my grandparents' table as a child. I will author, sponsor, and support all policy that is crafted to support unions and working Minnesotans and their ability to enter and stay as a viable member of the middle-class (the true driving engine of a healthy and thriving economy). As I have done in the past, I will show up to support workers who are being mistreated and support them as they strive for fairness in our state and region.

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 will partner with Ed MN to learn about preferred and evolving pathways to ensure that all Minnesotans have access to affordable, high-quality health insurance.

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 work in public schools and have served as a union president for the past 12 years. I have been in every classroom of ISD #834 to absorb the magic taking place between teachers/ESP's and students. My career and union work informs every decision I will make as a lawmaker.

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've lived in the public education world for the past 22 years (38 years if you count my own schooling).

I have a strong network of colleagues and those who served in Ed MN/Local union leadership that I call upon.

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 pledge to always be in touch and would find our disagreements to be very few if any actually arise.

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

My loyalty stands with teachers and with Ed MN. I hope my career has displayed this. I can't foresee that changing.
