

Kate Luthner– 32

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

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes, but, other programs above would have more priority



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

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

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

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

Yes

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

Yes; however, funding needs to come first or we will bankrupt schools if this is an unfunded mandate

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

Yes

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

Education Support Professionals

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

Yes

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

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

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?

- Move some of the revenue from lotto or gabeling to support schools
- create a program that sports/entertainment figures and owners can contribute to a fund for tax credit that benefits schools as directly as possible. They get 'social credit' and kids get funding. Many already have foundations but they might have better luck with equity if it was run by a central organization that better knows the needs of the schools of the state.

Higher education

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

- review the forgivnetss programs to enhance if possible

- create summer education opportunities that would pay a wage but also reduce debt so teachers who already work in the summer could be helping close the gap for kids, and, eliminate debt of their own

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

High-quality professional educators

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

- Keep cheerleading, it is a hard job and sincere thankyou's go a long way. Focus on honoring and recognizing
- Have clear advancement paths - many teachers do not want to change roles but many also get bored in a static situation, show a valid path for each type of person and have a segment of PD reflect their choice.
- Give opportunities to kids to sample being an educator before they need to commit to a liscence program. Create program/roles in school or summer school etc as 'intern' and recruit from traditional under represented groups first.

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

Teacher licensure

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

Yes

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?

I don't know, I would need more input on this.

Standardized testing

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

- I think standardized test are a tool in evaluating gross trends and identifying gaps or great practice in order to adjust the system to accommodate but they are a trailing stat.
- I think they are a good data point for a child for placement in a program that will help them grow best. Should be one of many points of data.

Honesty in Education

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

- **Get out in front of those that make up divisive stories or programs about CRT, Parents Bill of Rights or whatever they create next to make a political splash. Talk openly about how politics should not be part of education**
- **Have high standards and clear guidelines. If there *is* a teacher that is causing major concern they should not be shielded by 'the system'. By showing the education system works on itself it takes away the weapons of the 'concerned' public.**

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, a million times yes. There isn't time to teach every detail of the past but we should do our best to own the facts of how we got to here and now and talk about the best ways forward so each class 'discovers' that the solution is working together for a better future. There should be balance in teaching and no one fact could be taken out of the context of the whole.

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

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

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

Yes (and work to eliminate some of the redundant items)

Union Rights

20. Do you support collective bargaining rights?

Yes

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

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

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

supporting the items above, being there when they need me

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

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 support health care for all, I would also support more work within the industry to create teacher group policy that can put a few schools together to have a better pool.

Privatization

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

Yes

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 **pet peeve actually would love to hear the thoughts from your perspective**

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

No ← My only no, I agree in general but there are also good and necessary charters too so I would not support a blanket moratorium.

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

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

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've been a sub at Forest Lake Area School; Lino Lakes elem, and, the Middle School. I also attend many many school functions as a parent and in my role as school board member. I feel like as a sub I got a backstage pass to how things really go so I have a more personal understanding of what is going on. I also noted in my subbing in 2020 a few things regarding specialist classes and talked to the

administration who looked into it and then a new direction was taken. I won't take more than a grain of credit but I think fresh eyes looking to help not find fault was a good thing. I plan on subbing in my off time of senate also to keep involved in the system.

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?

4 years on the school board, before that ran a vote yes campaign for school funding. I go to a set of sources; personal connecting in the teaching staff, administration, MSBA, and Your website.

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?

If I disagree, I would ask you what your reasons are because I don't know every nuance of the system. I hope you and I could talk over the details of outside factors that I also need to consider. I hope for frequent formal and informal communication as education is my #1 thing to work for and I can't do it alone and with only the information I've gathered myself.

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

Carefully? I like to ask Why a lot, I'll hope to discover the root of your reason and the root of any conflicting ones and see where the divide is and how best to manage it.