

# Nancy McLean SD33

## 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.*

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

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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

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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?

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 agree that new revenue is needed to provide a long-term stable solution to fully funding schools. I would be open to considering a variety of solutions. One option might be to add a surcharge on investment earnings (net) over \$250,000. This was proposed at the legislature but not passed. I believe that it could raise much needed revenue while only affecting the most wealthy.**

## 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?

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?

**Encourage and support more students in taking advantage of the PSEO program during high school. Improve state funding of higher education institutions to help keep tuition lower. Increase the student loan tax credit which would allow more graduates the tax advantages that would help offset student loan payments. Allow employer paid student loan payments to be excluded from income taxes (similar to federal tax law). Provide state funded student loan debt relief to teachers.**

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

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

**In order to recruit and retain high quality educators, we must demonstrate that we value our educators. We must decrease barriers for teachers by helping them with student loan debt, increasing teacher pay so that it is competitive in today's job market, providing adequate special education services so that teachers have classroom assistance for students who need it, and providing adequate counseling staff so that students behavioral health needs don't fall to teachers in the classroom.**

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

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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

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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?

**Standardized test scores are just one tool for measuring student achievement, teacher performance metrics and school success. There are many variables that need to be considered in making decisions about any student or about teaching and school success. Especially since covid, just looking at standardized test scores does not adequately provide the information to make either individual or system level decisions in education.**

## 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?

**Push back against the Parents Bill of Rights legislation or any similar attempts to unnecessarily regulate and undermine teachers. Use my platform as a legislator to publicly speak out against those that attempt to undermine and diminish this profession.**

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, I believe that students need and deserve to have an accurate, honest and unbiased education that is free of attempts to alter history. We cannot learn from our history if we don't know it. Our country has a complicated history full of flaws. Fully knowing our history allows students to learn from our flaws and mistakes and, hopefully, apply critical thinking skills that allow us to move forward in ways that create a more just society.**

## 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?

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

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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 look forward to partnering with and learning from unions as we work together for a better Minnesota. I will always support workers rights and will be a strong and vocal advocate for unions. I believe that we are in a time when many forces seek to erode workers rights and we need to protect unions and workers more than ever.**

## **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?

**As a healthcare provider, I believe that healthcare is a human right. I am a long time proponent of health care for all. I have worked with HCAMN (Healthcare For All Minnesota) to support and advocate for Senator John Marty's Minnesota Health Plan which would substantially reduce the cost of healthcare for all Minnesotans. I look forward to joining the Minnesota Health Plan Caucus and working aggressively toward this legislation once I am elected.**

## 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?  
 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

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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?

**I last visited a school (SAHS) in my district just before Covid, but I do work with students and parents and talk with many teachers and former teachers from within the district. I also have children that attended schools in my district. My observations have been that while they had excellent teachers, those teachers seemed overworked. I noted many times that teachers were providing materials at their own expense. I've talked with teachers who shared their concerns about lack of paraprofessionals, counselors, etc and how that affects their ability to teach in the classroom. In my profession, I do Employee Assistance work and have seen more teachers in the last two years than at any time in my career. Teachers are stressed and overwhelmed. This concerns me greatly. As a legislator I will aggressively work towards fully funding our schools so that our teachers feel valued and students have everything they need to succeed.**

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 follow my local school board and talk with teachers and former teachers from within my district. When I have had questions, I have talked to school board members and sometimes in the past, have even talked with the school district Superintendent and other school officials. I also follow what is going on at the state level and follow the legislature's actions related to education.**

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 envision working with Education Minnesota in a collaborative way. Our goals are education are very much aligned and I would see EdMN as an advocate that I could call on when trying to advance legislation. If we were to disagree on an issue, I would want to talk with EdMN about my concerns or our different perspectives. I believe in open dialogue and would seek to have an open door with EdMN.**

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

**I always seek to understand all perspectives and work to find solutions that work for all constituencies while adhering to my core values.**