

# James Sceville

## 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?

**Using taxes collected from cannabis legalization to supplement, not replace, schools in need of funding support.**

## 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?

**Get expert opinions on what could be done to help and sponsor bills that directly lower cost. Support education reimbursement and repayment programs that are realistic and effective.**

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?

**Help sponsor bill that offer rural teacher incentives to move and stay in areas. Offer those same incentives to teachers that are already teaching as well to stay.**

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 – I honestly don't know enough about this to answer at this time. I am learning more on it.

## 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?

**Very generalized scores to ensure that the schools are making sure our children know how to read and write.**

## 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?

**We can support our teacher unions in contract negotiations. Ensure that materials have correct history and not revisionist history. Support laws that ensure teachers are not being fired because parents don't like something they are teaching and raise a big enough fuss.**

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?

**Minnesota has a proud history of fighting against treason and slavery. At the same time we have some very dark issues when it came in Indian law and reservations.**

**These issues must be taught accurately and fairly for our children to learn grow our society in a more equitable way.**

## **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?

**Standing by our school staff to make sure they are being treated fairly, from pay to basic decency, starts with making sure the unions are able to fairly negotiate on their behalf. I would not support any bills that weakens unions.**

## **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?

**Universal health insurance/Single payer/Medicare for all should be the basis standard for everyone. It not only gives unions the ability to negotiate better pay since they don't have to worry about keeping their insurance reasonable, it makes sure everyone can be seen as needed.**

**Healthcare for all should be the starting point for any healthcare.**

## **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 have two children in Challenger Elementary in Thief River Falls. I am there as much as I am able. They are a wonderful school that strives for excellence in rural education.**

**Every choice I make when it comes to education directly impacts my children.**

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 try and stay up to date by talking with some of the teachers that we are family friends with.**

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 no issues telling people when I have a problem with something. That said Education Minnesota has a better grasp on what is going on in education more than I would. I would hope their experts could help give good guidance on things that need to be looked into.**

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

**I think most of them would have very similar goals. Trying to get the most common ones done first to get everyone some of what they want is most important. Don't let perfect get in the way of progress and all.**

**After that figure out which ones are the most realistic to get done as quickly as possible and work up to ones that are more challenging.**

