

DAN WILSON

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.

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.

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?

Overreliance on local taxes is a key driver both of educational underfunding and of school disparities. When we fund our schools based on local property wealth, we inherently underfund the schools in the communities with the greatest needs while making sure wealthy areas have ample resources for their students. We need to shift school funding away from locals and to the state budget, and raise revenues from the very highest earners in the state to accommodate a fair, equitable, and evidence-based funding formula for Minnesota's public schools.

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?

In 2014 our state passed a novel program to refinance high-interest private student loans. To date, that program has only served a relatively small number of students, but it's an exciting model and will be all the more necessary as interest rates on the private market start climbing. Ultimately, we need to make sure that public education doesn't leave students saddled with debt. I believe in tuition-free public higher education for every learner as a goal for our state. It's exciting that New Mexico has undertaken this project, and I believe that given our state's fiscal position, we can follow their lead.

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?

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

Standardized testing

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

Standardized tests are often used for purposes for which they're not designed and to which they're ill-suited. High-stakes, end-of-year summative assessments simply don't do a good job of evaluating student or teacher performance. Study after study finds them to contain deep-seated racial and socioeconomic biases. They distort education to focus on teaching to the test. They don't and can't assess vital higher-order thinking and learning skills like research, analysis, and creative problem-solving that ought to be central to a quality education. And because they happen at the end of the year, and there are often months of lag time before finding results, they can't meaningfully be used to guide instruction or help students who are struggling. If these limited tools are the primary factor in teacher or school accountability, our schools will be incentivized to turn into test prep programs that lose sight of what quality education is really about.

Honesty in Education

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

Teachers are well-trained, highly skilled professionals who deserve our respect and our trust. While the state may set standards of what skills students ought to learn at different grade levels, we must give teachers the freedom to shape their curricula in the ways that best prepare their students to be active and thoughtful participants in a democratic society. We cannot let the fear

of persecution for teaching our history or our present honestly drive good people out of the teaching profession. Ultimately, our state laws must honor and protect the thoughtful curriculum decisions being made by our teachers at the classroom level.

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, absolutely. Now more than ever, an honest rendering of our state's and our nation's history of racism is vital to our students' understanding of the world around them.

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?

Any way I can. I'll show up to the picket lines. I'll oppose any legislation undermining collective bargaining rights in our state. And I'll work closely with leaders in the labor movement to draft and advance legislation that strengthens the rights of workers across Minnesota. A strong labor movement is a precursor for a fair and just economy. I have already been endorsed by AFSCME and am working on several other union endorsements. Unions are the basis of a fair and just economy and should not be undermined.

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 strongly believe in healthcare for all. I believe that a buy-in option to MinnesotaCare would be a very meaningful step toward ensuring that every Minnesotan has access to healthcare they can afford. We also need to continue taking steps toward lowering the high costs of prescription drugs — our nation-leading legislation on insulin prices was a vital first step, but there are countless other very-high-cost prescriptions that continue to drive up healthcare costs to school districts and to all patients and systems in the state.

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 would love for your help to arrange a visit to a public school in my district. My wife and I are starting to think about school options for our 18-month-old daughter, so these issues are going to become front and center for us personally as well as for me in my role as a legislator and advocate. In the past I have talked with classrooms across the district about my experience providing humanitarian aid with refugees on the U.S/Mexico border and have hosted school groups at the Catholic Worker house in Winona.

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?

As a first-time candidate, I'm still very much learning about education issues. I've done my best to learn from folks with firsthand experience and expertise - educators and school leaders who are dealing with these issues every day. And I've found Education Minnesota's website to be a very useful resource for understanding the statewide advocacy initiatives around public schools. Frankly, as I have read through and answered your questionnaire I have been shocked and saddened to learn that our education budget doesn't account for inflation and that ESPs do not qualify for unemployment insurance during the summer. I have been having listening sessions

with different stakeholders in the district (the Sheriff, small business advocates, County Commissioners etc.) and would love to set one up with you all.

35. How do you envision working with Education Minnesota if you are elected/reelected? If you disagree with us on an issue, how will you communicate that?

I intend to work closely with you all to understand your legislative priorities and help champion them in St Paul. I think the key to a good working relationship is open and regular communication. I'll want to meet with your legislative affairs team regularly to hear what you're working on, and if there are issues where we do disagree, I'd want to voice those concerns, hear your responses, and see how we can work toward consensus. As a Friend (Quaker) listening and consensus building is core to our religious background and is one of the main reasons why I am running. I have years of experience doing that work and feel confident in my ability to work with you on priorities moving forward.

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

It'll be important for me to hear from a wide range of constituencies from across my district as I build out my policy priorities. But I'll always prioritize the voices of people with expertise and people with lived experience. In education, that means listening first and foremost to teachers who are on the ground with our students every day. So I'll be relying heavily on Education Minnesota to help guide my thinking on these issues. I strongly believe that the future of our schools is the future of our communities. Sen. Miller has made clear that he does not want to invest in the future of the communities in his district by his refusal to pass the 1 billion of the surplus for special education. Minnesota needs Senators that want to see our schools succeed and understand their importance in the building of safe and resilient communities. It's easy for candidates to promise everything before they get to office, but my experience growing up in a strong public school in Worthington MN, my concerns as a parent, and my experience living in rural MN would make it very, very difficult for me to support any legislation that does not strengthen our schools.