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# Rep. Leon Lillie HD43B

## 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

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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?

**Have voted to increase taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans and corporations. Certainly, would support that our tax codes are fair to all. Would support greater investments in education in Minnesota with the surplus from early k to higher ed.**

## 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?

**Support doing what we can as a state and have in the past. Certainly, would expect President Biden to do this or take a big bite at dept of students.**

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?

**Pass robust bills that will support educational professionals. Making sure that money isn't a reason to have to leave the profession. Plus our words as policy makers and stress the value of the work is important to.**

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?

**Think it's important to have baselines. So support testing. But, over testing that I've heard of seem of no value. And most likely worse.**

## 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?

**Think teachers are professionals and think there should be guidelines but in the end given some latitude to teach in various styles that works for them.**

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?

**Think it is important to learn the truths of our past.**

## 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 support organized worker through my words as a legislator and through my actions. I have supported bills that require hiring union members such as bonding. And, have carried the state contract bills of which there are Education Minnesota members helped by this.**

## 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?

**I support single payer and will sign on to those bills.**

## 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 visited local schools through the years and recently. Covid has made this a bit trickier. Main observation is that education workers are angels doing amazing work.**

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?

**Know personally many of your members and teaching professionals. My local union leaders help to shape my opinion on education issues.**

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?

**Think my track record of words, votes and actions should be quite clear to you by now. I have been a solid member for education and organized labor. Certainly, open to impute from your group and would never surprise you without communication beforehand.**

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

**Think education is clearly what has made Minnesota such an amazing place to live, raise a family and start a business. Our schools have created a world class workforce creative class and we need or educational professionals to ensure we are doing this to meet the times and needs of the future. Education has to be one of our highest priorities.**