

Jim Carlson

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

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?

High income individuals and highly profitable corporations rely on a highly educated workforce and consumers who are trained and able to have incomes that enable them to buy their products and services. Employers want the well-educated and trained employees provided by our schools systems. Referendums rely on property taxes, regardless of ability to pay. Income tax is a good way to insure "fair share" revenue collecting and investment from those reaping the highest benefits.

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?

Immediately take action to eliminate interest paid on education debt. Enact longer-term debt forgiveness systems in exchange for continued service in targeted careers.

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?

I strongly support the “Grow our Own” initiative to the extent that promising future teachers are assisted by grants, scholarships, and low or no interest loans. I want to see efforts to raise the visibility and respect for the profession in the eyes of the public.

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 **I need more information 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 testing is fine for assessing standing among peers or peer organizations to analyze changes that may need tweaking. However great caution should be employed when developing individualized lesson plans for an individual student in order to base any individualized needs.

Honesty in Education

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

No outside influence on curriculum. No state bookbans. Stronger firearm, firearm safety and Red Flag laws. More manageable class sizes.

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?

Agree strongly to this need for everyone to know our true history whether critical or complementary. There are some influential people and biased groups who are demanding biased legislative micro-managing of curriculum, books, social justice and other restrictions on student experiences. I and many adults my age are learning facts about our history that have negatively affected our view of history and have allowed prejudices to continue.

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?

I have and always will support the right to collectively bargain. I have always supported the mandated date for signing teacher contracts. I think the legislature MUST listen to union groups and individuals who know their jobs best and cooperatively enhance their workplace safety, the security of their jobs and the respect teachers have earned in their job of developing responsible adults.

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 am and always have been a supporter of universal single payer health coverage of the system proposed by the Minnesota Health Plan. The overall savings in administrative cost would be massive and the coverage would be improved. I have been a sponsor or cosponsor for more than a decade.

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?

Rosemount Middle, Eagan High, Dakota Hills Middle, Woodlands Elementary, Burnsville High, Blackhawk Middle, Apple Valley High – My wife taught at Eagan High for 25 years.

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?

My very best resource has been Senator Greg Clausen who sits next to me on the Senate Floor. I have also been in meetings with the Superintendents and board members of 191, 196 and 197 as well as having a board friend in Prior Lake and senators who have been board members.

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 must use my teacher resources as I did with the recent "data opt out" bill that was mistakenly supported by EdMN but opposed by district Tech professionals, superintendents principals and teachers. The bill was revised to resolve the issues not compatible with the functions of data in districts. I reported my disagreement to the 196 union team as well as the three teachers who sit around me on the Senate Floor. They confirmed my concerns and the lobby group was able to negotiate corrective language.

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

At this time I have only had disagreements with minor groups or on relatively minor issues (including the ("Page Amendment" which I oppose). My 14-year history has made me an iron-clad and predictable opponent of anything that smacks of vouchers, trigger laws, and privatizing education.