

# Jess Hanson

## 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.*

X 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.*

X 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.*

X 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.*

X Yes  No

*ESP living wage: Ensure all education support professionals earn a living wage of at least \$25 an hour.*

X Yes  No

*Teacher compensation and benefits: Increase teacher compensation to provide competitive salaries and benefits to recruit and retain teachers.*

X 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.*

X Yes  No

*Education debt relief: Provide debt relief to retain teachers so they can afford to stay in the classroom.*

X Yes  No

*Higher education: Renew Minnesota's commitment to invest in the state's future by fully funding public higher education in Minnesota.*

X 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?

X 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?

X 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?

X 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?

**Cannabis legalization is a new source of revenue. Youth access is restricted in a regulated market, and the money is already flowing through our economy untaxed. This will also increase our hemp market, and this renewable eco friendly plant can replace papers, plastics, cotton, concrete, wood, and more. It restores soil and reduces dangerous carbons in the air. Investing in these industries in addition to closing tax loopholes utilized by the wealthiest MNans will increase revenue.**

## Higher education

---

6. Do you support increasing the state's direct investment in public higher education to significantly reduce institutions' reliance on tuition?

X Yes  No

7. Will you support investments in capital bonding projects that preserve buildings, remodel classrooms and keep our technology assets current?

X Yes  No

8. What would you do, as a state legislator, to help with education debt?

**We must raise the minimum wage so students can better afford college with fewer loans. We must lower the cost of college overall and continue to increase funding for grants and loan forgiveness programs. Ultimately, we need free college for everyone (especially teachers and school administrators), so I'll continue to do my part to advocate for this as the best solution though this will require a lot more social change.**

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?

X Yes    No

## High-quality professional educators

---

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

**Increase pay, stabilize benefits, increase loan forgiveness, and fully fund our entire education system so new teachers are not laid off like they are today. We need to also address racism in the workplace as a workplace safety issue to better support teachers of color.**

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?

**None. It's an irrelevant way to collect the data that these tests claim to collect. There are better ways to collect data about a student's progress and growth and better ways to identify the efficacy of schools. Creating a society that supports this will continue to be a challenge, but the data has told us over and over that these are largely a waste of time and resources.**

## Honesty in Education

---

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

**Not require them to carry weapons. Pass red flag laws, background checks, and safe storage laws. Close straw purchase loopholes. Trust teachers to teach and stop this poorly named "parents**

**rights" movement the GOP is trying to promote. Pay them better. Respect them more. Fully fund public education. Stop making them have to strike for basic worker's rights.**

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! Because that's what responsible societies do. They deserve to have an the information so they can do better than their predecessors.**

## 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?

X 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?

X 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?

X Yes  No

## Union Rights

---

20. Do you support collective bargaining rights?

X 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?

X 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?

X Yes  No

23. How will you support unions as a state legislator?

**Protect defined benefit pension plans, stop right to work legislation, protect the right to collectively bargain, and be available to meet as wanted/needed.**

## 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?

X Yes  No

25. Will you support continuing defined-benefits retirement systems for public employees?

X Yes  No

26. Will you support providing the necessary state funding to ensure financial sustainability of public pension funds?

X 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?

X 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?

**We need healthcare for all through expanding mncare and creating an economy where insurance isn't attached to employment. Expanding collective bargaining and increasing the number of eligible workers creates larger pools that, in our current system, can bring costs down.**

## Privatization

---

29. Do you oppose state tax credits for private K-12 education tuition and expenses?

X 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?

X Yes  No

31. Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools until such changes are made?

X 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?*

X 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?*

X 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?

**Yes, my kids are in public schools at Vista View Elementary and Burnsville High School. Our classrooms are full. Our students are trying their best. Our teachers smile even though the last two years were torture. I carry my experiences as a product of public education and as the parent of kids who are the products of public education into my work everyday and it keeps the fire in my belt lit. I've attempted to visit a school in the other school district in my district (PLSAS 719), but it was not welcomed by the superintendent who has since resigned following significant community outrage about racism and homophobia and discrimination in the district. But, the parents of the kids at these schools are in frequent contact about the state of their culture in 719.**

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?

**Education MN, MSBA, AMSD, MN Teen Activists, and directly to students.**

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 will always be team EdMN! I wouldn't be on and other side of issues impacting our educators and education system. If there's issues, call, text, or message me however it is convenient for you! I'll always talk through anything with EdMN.**

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

**EdMN represents the most critical part of our education system, so it will be important to bring us together in conversation to hear the opposing views much like we did with the Beyond Bullying work that I was so honored to collaborate on.**