

Sydney Jordan 60A

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?

The only way to adequately and fairly build a Minnesota for everyone is by taxing corporations, wealthy people and closing tax loopholes. I would also like to see a gas tax to offset funding for other projects so that there is more revenue for education and social services.

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?

I support free college and continuing education for all. While we work for this, it is unacceptable that the state does not hold up its end of the funding for students. We as a state should pay for half of the costs of a public college education (I use the word "cost" and not "tuition" very deliberately). We should also be funding research and academics not bloated administrations.

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?

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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?

No decisions in our public schools should be made on the basis of test scores alone.

Honesty in Education

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

I serve on both the Education Policy and Finance Committees. In caucus and committee, I stand up and raise my voice for educators. I can go on about how I will kick and scream and shake my fist at Republicans who try to ban curriculum and attack educators but more than that I will continue to advocate proactively for educators. I think on offense, Ed MN and allies of education need to push for freedom to educate by FULLY FUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION in Minnesota so students have the resources they need to learn in a safe and engaging environment. We must also address the abhorrent gap in mental health services in Minnesota. Students can't learn when their mental health needs are not met. We need more full service community schools to serve families so educators can teach and students can learn.

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. Not only is this actually the point of education- to learn and create a better future but furthermore our students are BEGGING to be taught ethnic studies (along with Comprehensive Sexual Education and Climate Justice) for their own knowledge and mental health. It is an injustice to our students that we do not have more funding in place to give them the tools to be adults and prepare them with the knowledge they seek.

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'm the chief author of the Union Freedoms Bill. I already have this bill being drafted to be introduced on the first day of session in 2023. It's at the revisor's office. Just tell me who to send the Senate jackets to.

Furthermore, I show up for my labor siblings. I am already endorsed by the AFL-CIO and other public sector unions in Minnesota. I met with MFT every single day during their strike. I held the MFT banner walking across the Lake St Bridge. I've walked on picketlines as both an MFT and Ed MN organizer and as a state legislator.

Finally, there is not a more vocal member of the House Education Policy for educators' rights to collectively bargain and teach their students without outside harm than me.

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?

We need healthcare for all. I have been a co-author of this legislation in the past and will continue to support.

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?

Yes. I have been to every single MPS school in my district many times and almost every single MPS in the entire system. I've observed classrooms in 60a and seen the differences in those classrooms versus those in much wealthier parts of Minneapolis. I've also observed class at Harrison and seen what happens in a school serving students with the highest needs. As a legislature, these experiences are what motivate me to fight on Education Committees for full funding. I know how small a classroom is with 30 children in it. I know how hard it is to learn if students don't have a meal and a place to sleep at night. These are not problems that are impossible to solve- the legislature just needs to do it.

When I want to tour a school in my district, I usually just reach out to those schools directly, but if there is ever anything MFT wants me to attend just let me know.

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 grew up the daughter of a public EL teacher and NEA union president. I worked as an organizer for MFT, Ed MN and the NEA and continue to learn from members of those organizations. I learn about education from students, families, and educators I also go out of my way to talk to ESPs and

other support staff, not just teachers and administrators. I also am in very close contact with SEIU local 284 and the Teamsters on issues related to e12 education. My goal on serving on Education Policy and Finance is to represent Minneapolis Public Schools and the people it serves.

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'll continue to work with Ed MN and MFT as I have done- I am in constant communication and work with Ed MN on every single education bill I carry. We speak multiple times a week during session. I am very direct and tell KL directly if I have concerns with a tactic or issue.

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

Students, families and educators are my priority. I'd tell astroturf "education" advocates to kick rocks but they probably had some tax dodging hedge fund manager pay to manicure their lawns. As an example, I talk to Ed MN and MFT multiple times a week during session; I meet with Ed Allies once a biennium to tell them my commitment to truly public education has not and will never change.