

Rep. Emma Greenman

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?

A budget is more than just a spending guide, it is an expression of our values, our shared priorities, and our vision for the future. Our budget -- both spending and revenue -- should reflect a deep commitment to a Minnesota where we invest in the health and success of our kids, residents, communities, and environment.

Minnesota's future success depends on passing more equitable, robust, and progressive taxation. Corporations and the wealthiest families continue to pay less than their fair share in taxes, while the state under-invests in its workers, public education, health care, affordable housing, and the environment by billions. And our school districts, cities, and counties are forced to over-rely on taxation sources like property taxes and fees just to provide basic services and support for students, families, and residents.

I will fight hard for a budget with the revenue we need to invest in progressive priorities by ensuring that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share. You can count on me to support making new and necessary investments in our future and to ensure that those corporations and individuals that have found the greatest success in our society pay their fair share to ensure others have the same opportunities. I will work with the experts, communities, and advocates like you to help shape and determine the right progressive and sustainable balance of corporate and progressive taxation on wealthy individuals. I am confident that we as Minnesotans can and will commit to investing in providing every Minnesota kid the best education in the world and we must find the revenue to do so.

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?

Public support for education -- from pre-K to higher education -- is critical to the future success of Minnesota's democracy and our economy. It is critical that we ensure that Minnesota students can go to college and technical programs without being saddled with debt. That's why I support policies that ensure access to higher education for students, starting by supporting two-year community and technical education free of cost for all Minnesotans and tuition support for four years of public college and university for families.

As someone who has been out of school for a while but still pays monthly on my tens of thousands of dollars of school debt, I know that debt-free policies for those currently in or heading to college will not help the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who already have existing school debt. If we can have a capital investment focus every year that borrows for capital upgrades, we can push for a human investment focus that helps to remove long-term financial burdens on young people. Minnesota already has a tax credit focused on providing relief for those with high student loan debt, separate from the student loan interest deduction. I would greatly expand our investment and better focus our efforts to directly reduce and eliminate existing student debt. And we need to work closely with Minnesota's federal delegation to get real and robust federal debt forgiveness. Minnesotans deserve better than the broken student loan financing racket that profits off us every day.

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?

To bring more high-quality educators into our system, we must ensure higher education is affordable and accessible - especially for all teachers and especially for teachers of color and teachers in high-need areas. We should start by making state-level investments in building the pipeline in higher education, in Grow Your Own pathway programs, and in investing in strengthening and expanding training and mentorship for new teachers in the classroom.

ESPs are essential and trusted educators in our schools and they know our students and our classrooms best. A critical and successful way to both invest in our schools and increase the number of teachers of color in our schools is to offer ESPs who want to become teachers the opportunities to earn a teaching license that is affordable and accessible through residency programs and additional investments.

Lastly, as a state, we need to work with local communities to do more to highlight and respect educators and their voices about what is best in their classrooms. We must treat them like the professionals they are -- which can help make the profession more fulfilling and increase retention.

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?

The overreliance on standardized testing over the last thirty years has been terrible for public education in the United States. Inherent cultural biases in testing perpetuate systemic racism and devalue schools and

students already historically marginalized by discrimination. At the moment, I need to listen and learn more about standardized tests from teachers, educators, experts, and communities and the impact they have to ensure those tests are not reinforcing educational discrimination before I am willing to say that there is any decision that should be based on them.

Honesty in Education

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

As a Minnesotan, I believe we need to stand up and support our educators and their freedom to do their jobs and teach our kids. As a state legislator, I have opposed attempts, including GOP legislation misleadingly characterized as “a parent’s bill of rights”, to interfere with efforts to build an inclusive and supportive curriculum that would control what teachers can teach and directly harm the well-being of students in our classrooms. As these efforts grow, I look forward to listening and learning from your members about how we can protect our teachers and their ability to teach.

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, our curriculum must include honest, accurate, and inclusive education about race and racism and how it shaped our country’s history and impacts our present. Education is the cornerstone of our democracy and it is imperative to the future of multi-racial democracy in America that we teach a full, honest, and inclusive history of our state and our country. We must foster an accurate understanding of our past in order to address and start to heal the wounds of the past and address the systemic racism that continues to hold us back.

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 deeply believe in the power of unions to create worker power and prosperity in the workplace, in our economy, and in our democracy. I'm a strong supporter of unions and have spent my whole career standing with and working to expand the power of working women and men in our democracy and economy. As a state legislator, I have marched with MFT 59 members on the picket line and worked with Education Minnesota members from around the state to advocate for increased education funding, frontline worker pay, and ending the unemployment insurance exclusion for hourly school workers.

Education Minnesota members are the educators that are educating, advocating, and supporting our public school students, families, and communities. I am proud of the work we did at the Capitol together to advance my bill to provide unemployment insurance for hourly school workers, and other critical issues impacting our educators. I am enthusiastic to continue to partner at the Capitol with you and your members to ensure every kid in Minnesota gets a great education. I will continue to support, organize and work alongside Ed MN and other unions to build power and public support for a bold and robust agenda that invests in our kids, our communities, our schools, and our environment.

I will continue to stand up with you when teachers and unions work to go on the offense to expand the power and the reach of unions and workers in Minnesota. I support card-check and employer neutrality for organizing campaigns and living wage jobs because these are the bedrock things that ensure that workers can join together to negotiate for union and family-supporting wages, affordable health care, retirement security, and safer workplaces without interference from employers. If whenever there is an opportunity to stand, march, picket, or support workers and lend my support to organizing and contract

campaigns, you can count on me to stand together with working people.

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?

Health care is a right, not a privilege only for those that can afford it and we must live up to that by fighting for affordable, accessible healthcare that people can afford to use.

We need to reduce the cost of health insurance for school districts and for individuals. I am open to supporting legislation that will reduce the costs for educators and especially for our lowest paid hourly school workers who make the least and often have worse insurance options. Ultimately to address the problem, we need to transition to a single payer health care system and cut out the profit-making intermediary. As we do that, we need to work to protect and strengthen government investments in MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance and ensure that dental, vision, and mental health services are available to all Minnesotans. And I look forward to listening and learning from you about immediate ways to address the cost of health insurance for your members as we take the biggest steps to transition to a single-payer system.

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?

With caution around the pandemic and Omicron, I haven't been in a classroom in the last year but I did spend some time on the picket line with teachers and students from Minneapolis public schools this winter. The conversations, insights, suggestions, and ideas that I get from educators and students help guide my policy priorities and the lens I look at our policy in the legislature.

As a new candidate in 2020, I was excited to do a few classroom visits but the pandemic hit before we got them scheduled. I look forward to spending more time in the classroom and would love help arranging to visit a few schools in my district!

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?

When I have questions and seek guidance on issues of public education, I talk to educators in my community, students, parents, and organizations including MFT 59, Education Minnesota, and SEIU Local 284 for information, guidance, and a trusted perspective.

Public education is incredibly important to me and I've been personally connected to public school teachers and educators, students, and parents my whole life. I owe where I am today because of my experience in Minneapolis Public Schools -- I went to Barton Open School and reading was hard for me, but access to committed public educators, supportive staff, and special education services helped me succeed at South High School and put me on a path to college and law school. In college, I worked with kindergarten and first-graders on literacy in the DC public schools and, when I moved back to Minnesota after law school, I got involved with the Minneapolis Alumni Collection as a way to provide Alumni support for referendums and other ways alumni can support Minneapolis Public Schools. I believe deeply in listening and learning from the educators and staff in our schools and the students and families themselves.

Throughout my career and advocacy work, I've also often consulted and been advised by leaders and organizers in the field I know and trust including Mary Cathryn Ricker, Rep. Mary Kunesh-Podein, Rep. Jim Davnie, Julie Blaha (now State Auditor!), Shaun Laden, Natasha Dockter, James Hagggar, Chris Stinson, and Paul Winklaar.

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 think the most important part of the job of an elected official is to develop genuine and trusting relationships with the workers, families, and residents who live in my district. Understanding the lives, struggles, and dreams of people in the district, and the state, and how we can, together, partner to make positive and lasting change is the center of my campaign and my governing approach.

In my first term in the legislature, I prioritized building trusting relationships with Education Minnesota members and leaders who work every day to educate and nurture our kids. In addition to the outreach to folks who are already politically active in my district, with your support, I'd love to continue meeting your members where they are; in the district, in the classroom, or at any of my meet-and-greet events. Hearing their stories, learning more about the work they do, and their values and vision for our district and our state will help me continue to learn and better serve both educators, our students, and the public.

I plan on continuing to build deep relationships with Education Minnesota members so that when I am re-elected, we can continue the work in partnership to make our shared vision a reality. I believe that a relationship means having two-way communication about policy and issues – especially if it's something that we may disagree or have differing views about. I am committed to listening and always having an open door and an open mind.

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

We need to start by asserting an aligned set of bold and progressive policy priorities and reject a scarcity mentality that often leads us to negotiate against ourselves or think too small. I believe deeply that we are stronger together and we can work together to set our priorities together -- electeds, MFT, other unions, and progressive advocacy organizations.

It must all start with the baseline that we will raise the progressive revenue we need to invest in fully funding our schools, advancing racial equity in our schools and communities, protecting the power of educators and support staff to do their jobs, and center the needs of students and communities. One example is when I worked with SEIU Local 284, organizing with Local 284 public school bus drivers, paraprofessionals, food service workers, and custodians and also working with Education Minnesota, community partners, and elected officials to demand that the state legislature raise revenue to “pay back our kids” from the gimmicks and cuts of the Pawlenty-era. We prioritized working together to make the case for raising revenue and investing in our kids – we won.

My background is in working with labor organizations, progressive organizations, and progressive candidates to build coalitions and aligned agendas. I think that orientation serves me well in this regard. I’m proud of the work we did to create a big and unified demand to end the exclusion of all hourly school workers from our unemployment system, not just one sector of those workers as we’ve seen in years past.

While I will always do my homework, I am very grounded in and will stay grounded in the people who do the work and the communities impacted by the policy decisions. I will seek out input and trust that they know what is best for their students.