

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Detroit Lakes office

Candidate name

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Election district

1B

Party endorsement

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Educator Pay

1. ESP living wage: Will you support legislation to ensure that all education support professionals earn a living wage of at least \$25 an hour?

Yes

2. Due to significantly below-market compensation for teachers, most school districts in Minnesota are having difficulty filling teaching jobs, and state colleges report a continued decline in the number of graduates from teacher preparation programs. Would you support creating a minimum salary for all licensed Minnesota teachers of \$60,000 a year and an \$80,000 minimum salary for licensed teachers with 10 years of experience and a master's degree?

Yes

Pensions

3. Will you support increasing state funding to ensure the financial sustainability of public pension funds?

Yes

4. Will you support exploring the necessary benefit improvements in order to provide educators with a secure retirement, including reducing early retirement penalties, lowering the normal age of retirement and a career threshold that will help recruit and retain educators?

Yes

5. How will you support efforts to lower inequitable penalties in the Teachers Retirement Association in order to expand retirement options?

I will talk with and work with people who are better informed on TRA than I am and make the best decision that positively impacts the most people.

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Health care

6. Do you support educators having access to a mandatory statewide health insurance pool, just like other state workers?

Yes

7. 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

8. All Minnesotans deserve access to affordable health care and publicly managed plans like MN Care and Medicare are some of the most efficient plans out there. The legislature is currently seeking a federal waiver to expand MN Care to more residents. Do you support expanding all public health care programs to include more working people?

Yes

Education funding

9a. Reverse Minnesota's perpetual underfunding of education by significantly increasing the per-pupil funding formula.

Yes

9b. SPED cross subsidy: The state must fully fund special education costs instead of relying on school districts to pay for them.

Yes

9c. EL cross subsidy: Fully fund the costs districts pay to provide quality English learner programs and instruction.

Yes

9d. Lower class sizes: Lower class sizes so teachers can give students more of the individual attention they need and deserve.

Yes

9e. Full-service community schools: Expand access to full-service community schools across the state.

Yes

9f. 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

9g. Student support: Continue providing additional resources for school districts to hire more student support staff, including counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other job classifications.

Yes

9h. 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

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9i. Professional development: Provide professional development to all staff around cultural competency and trauma-responsive classrooms with aims of closing the discipline disparity gap.

Yes

9j. Education debt relief: Provide debt relief to retain teachers so they can afford to stay in the classroom.

Yes

Taxes/revenue

10. 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

11. 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?

Yes

12. Fully funded schools require adequate and stable revenues. Will you oppose tax cuts and carve outs that lower tax collections or narrow the tax base?

Yes

13. A balanced tax code draws revenue from a mix of income, sales, and property taxes. Will you support policies that maintain both adequate funding and a sustainable balance between revenue sources?

Yes

Higher education

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

Yes

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

Yes

16. Do you support DEI efforts on our college campuses and universities?

Yes

17. What would you do, as a state legislator, to help with the cost of higher education?

I would want to see how much revenue is supporting higher ed administration, instead of faculty and other things that more directly impact student learning. I would want to boost higher education offerings for students who want to pursue a more streamlined and efficient and quicker career path, i.e. earning a two-year degree or a certificate so they can start on their career path sooner. Not

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everyone is cut out for a 120-credit bachelors degree path, especially when they're expected to pay \$500+ per credit for 60 liberal arts credits that aren't directly related to their chosen major/career path.

18. The North Star Promise is expected to result in an increase in enrollment on our campuses. Many of these students are projected to be disproportionately first-generation students and students from historically underserved communities. As a legislator, what would you do to ensure these students had the support they needed to be successful?

I'd make sure they as well as their families have ample resources to ensure that they not only stay in school, but thrive. I maybe wouldn't call it an actual safety net, but recruiting students is only half of the equation. If you don't retain them, what have you got? Chances are, a first-gen student or student from an underserved community, if that student has a negative initial experience in college and withdraws, the damage inflicted will have long-term implications.

19. There are efforts to expand the North Star Promise to Minnesota's private colleges and universities. This would dramatically increase the amount of public money going to private institutions. Do you support the expansion of the North Star Promise to include private colleges and universities?

No

High-quality professional educators

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

They need better starting pay, of course. But efforts need to be made to get more people to major in education in the first place. Years ago, in my town, if there was an elementary teaching opening, dozens and dozens of applicants sought the job. Now, the district is lucky if they get five. Smaller districts struggle to attract quality applicant pools even more. Teachers also need more support in the classroom; the job shouldn't be this stressful. Too many kids bring too many challenges and struggles into the classroom for the teacher to try and cope with all of that, while teaching the class as a whole.

Standardized testing

21. What individual or system-level decisions in education do you believe are appropriate to make based on standardized test scores?

I've seen NWEA tests and, in my district, Fastbridge testing now. We end up with all of this data, but what do we really do with it that benefits student learning? I'm not a big believer in the MCAs. I've seen firsthand students who basically blow them off. The MCAs when they were first implemented were presented as the ultimate in high-stakes testing; if your kid wasn't proficient in reading, math or science, your kid might not graduate. It ended up being a lot of talk and nothing else. More students should be able to show in a hands-on, experiential fashion, that they are learning what they need to learn. Not every student is cut out for cookie-cutter instruction, or reading something and doing worksheets. Technology helps to a point, obviously, but it can also do harm.

Honesty in Education

22. Most educators believe students should have access to a wide range of age-appropriate books that include relatable characters and situations that reflect the diversity of Minnesota families. However, certain politicians and big money groups are trying to remove books from school libraries across America, particularly books with LGBTQ+ characters or those that deal with racism in America. How should Minnesota protect its students' freedom to read?

Don't ban books. You can have books available with LGBTQ+ characters, plots, etc. without being in-your-face about it. Just make the book available like any other book. I'd say more than half of the books on the shelves in my English room last year are banned elsewhere. It's sickening.

23. Education Minnesota believes all students should have the freedom to feel safe and welcome in their public school, no matter what they look like, where they're from, how they pray, transgender or not. Do you agree?

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Yes

24. Students bring many needs into their public schools, but our union believes they all deserve the freedom to grow with the help of support for their mental health and with lessons in how to recognize and control their emotions, which is sometimes called social-emotional learning. Do you support increasing support for students' mental and emotional health in public schools?

Yes

Time to Teach

MoveDuplicate Settings Delete 25. 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

26. 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

27. Do you support paid, dedicated time outside of student contact time for special education teachers to complete their paperwork and attend required meetings?

Yes

School safety

28. Creating incentives for school administrators to enforce districts' codes of conduct without bias and/or creating accountability measures for those who don't?

Yes

29. Increase reporting and transparency in worksite safety when reporting physical injuries and emotional trauma in the workplace?

Yes

Union Rights

30. The ability of workers to come together in union and bargain collectively has been vital for reducing wage gaps by gender, building the middle class, and limiting wealth inequality in Minnesota. Do you support expanding and strengthening workers' rights to join a union and bargain collectively?

Yes

31. 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

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

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I would be against any efforts to backslide unions, and I'd support efforts to expand union representation. It all goes back to strength in numbers.

Privatization

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

Yes

34. 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

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

Yes

Your role as a legislator

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 teach, so I'm in Fisher Public School, ISD 600 every day. Prior to being hired full-time in Fisher, I substitute taught in a handful of districts in the area, including Crookston, Climax and Warren-Alvarado-Oslo. I see cell phones in the classroom being an issue that must be addressed, I see misbehaving/disrespectful students not suffering consequences to the point that they alter their behavior. I see poverty. I see vaping. I see old, tired curricula that must be changed and updated in order to reach students who don't respond well to reading/worksheets/tests scenarios, over and over. But I also see good things every single day. I see students respond to the smallest, positive interaction. I see good things, too.

What have you done to become informed on issues relating to public education? What organizations and individuals do you go to for your information?

Again, I'm in the field, so I'm fairly well-informed. I've learned more since becoming a member of the Fisher Education Association, and one of my campaign committee members is a longtime Crookston teacher and union leader.

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 would guess ED MN would want to hold me to my answers on this questionnaire. I wish this questionnaire had a third "Other" option, so maybe if I don't entirely agree with an ED MN position, I could click "Other" and then be given an opportunity to explain myself. There is always middle ground on every issue, even if it's often especially elusive. If I don't see eye-to-eye with ED MN on an issue, I will not remain silent, but I will communicate in a responsible, respectful manner.

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

I'm a massive proponent of a strong public education system in Minnesota, and everywhere. If any other education group's proposed initiatives harm public education, I will voice my concerns, and vote in favor of public education. Families are welcome to as many education options as are available; I have no issue with that. But public dollars normally earmarked for public education should not be tapped to fund those education options.