

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

Page

Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Mankato office

Candidate name

Joe Staloch

Election district

23A

Party endorsement

DFL

Email

josephstaloch@joe23a.com

Phone

651-373-5785

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?

This is something I don't feel I have enough information on to say how specifically I would support such efforts. I would like to discuss this more with someone who could walk me through the TRA and explain what Education Minnesota would seek to

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

change to make the retirement options more equitable.

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.

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

Yes

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?

No

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?

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

I'm not sure what has been the biggest contributing factors to the increase in cost of higher education. I believe the state can and should be offering more funding for our higher education system to keep tuition and fees down for students but I also think that those funds need to be spent wisely. Specifically, I have heard that there has been a significant rise in administrative costs over the past couple of decades along with large sums going to "modernize" the look, feel, and experience of university life. I think that the focus should be on the core purpose of higher education which is to educate. I am supportive of modernizing and maintaining our facilities and I certainly want to make sure students and educators have the support staff they need to be successful but I sometimes feel like every college and university is trying to compete with the elite institutions in the country and in most cases they don't have to.

I would support expanding need-based financial aid programs and explore means of limiting how much textbooks cost.

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?

Students should have the support they need to be successful. We should be providing this support in the form of academic advisors and counselors. We should make sure that for non traditional students that services are available nearby that provide childcare if needed and we should make sure that those services are affordable or free while attending classes. We should also make efforts to include relevant cultural programs to broaden horizons and provide training to staff and faculty to be sensitive to differences in meanings or behaviors.

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?

I believe that a good start toward recruitment and retention is to do what every other organization would do to achieve these goals, increase compensation and benefits. Fixing early retirement and years of service penalties in the current retirement programs could also be a boon to recruitment of mid-career individuals who otherwise would be willing to take a job in education but are unable to make it make financial sense.

Standardized testing

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

Standardized test scores can provide valuable insights, but they should not be the sole basis for educational decisions. I believe standardized test scores should likely be used for placement and identify students who may need additional support in subject matter but I feel their use in admissions has likely been overvalued in the past. Where test scores pertain to schools I would argue that they have value for curriculum development and allocation of resources but I do not believe they should be used as a basis for punitive action.

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?

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

In today's world I think there are many other avenues that children can take if they're dead set on accessing restricted materials. I believe that educators and experts in education and child development have a good understanding of what is age appropriate and if these materials are available to students of appropriate age in schools they have resources that can help put anything that they don't fully understand in context. Therefore, I believe we should ban book bans in Minnesota.

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?

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

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

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?

I am a firm believer that unions improve the lives of all workers and will fight to preserve and expand them and the benefits they bring.

Strengthen labor laws to protect workers' rights, including fair wages, safe working conditions, and the right to organize.

Support legislation that prevents union-busting tactics and allow workers to organize, form and join unions if they so choose.

Push for improved workplace safety and work with unions to shape those policies that relate to the well-being of workers.

Support union let education and training.

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?

It has been a few years since I've visited any school. As a 40yo man with no children of my own or business at or with the school it would be somewhat strange I think if I had. My long term partner has a son graduated high school a couple of years ago and I attended a couple of concerts and sports events for him but nothing where I interacted with educators or staff. I would certainly be open to making a visit if one could be arranged. I have not had the opportunity to tour the new school for USC the district I graduated from.

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 try to keep up with as many issues as I can by reading newspapers and researching issues as I become aware of them. I do have a couple of educators and retired educators that are helping me with my campaign and are part of my local party group that are very active and willing to share their perspective on issues.

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?

If elected working with groups such as Education Minnesota will be new to me. I am not sure if these interactions will be formal sit downs, conversations in passing, or via written correspondence. However, I believe in open communication, I believe in admitting

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1608**

when I don't know enough about an issue to form an opinion on the spot and I believe in listening and learning about perspectives other than my own. I will endeavor to become knowledgeable on the issues that are pertinent to pending legislation and where I may disagree on any issue I will communicate as clearly and completely as I can my reasons for doing so.

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

In so far as priorities are concerned between competing groups I will need to make what decision I feel is best for students, educators and communities. I'm not sure where or on what issues different education groups will differ on their priorities but that will be my standard.