

# Representative Kim Hicks

## Education Minnesota candidate questionnaire

### Education funding

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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 ensuring that it is tied to inflation.*

Yes    No

*SPED cross subsidy: The state must 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: Continue providing 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

## **Taxes/revenue**

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2. 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

3. 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?

**Ensuring that non profit corporations who benefit from public support are contributing in toher ways to the community to which they reside.**

## **Higher education**

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

**We need to continue with the North Star promise and expand it to more Minnesota students,**

7. 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**

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

**We must start by making teaching a profession that attracts people with fair wages and competitive pensions. We also need to support our current educators so they remain in the field. We do this through funding to support smaller class sizes and reasonable workloads including providing the additional supports needed.**

## **Teacher licensure**

9. 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**

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

**Standardized testing does not help educators make changes for learning, it is a metric that has no value to the student. My children do not participate because of my opposition but their lack of participation punishes the school which needs to be fixed.**

## **Honesty in Education**

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

**Ensure that we are funding special education, ELL, and ESP so teachers are not alone trying to handle situations while instruct 30 other students. Students who are struggling need more support to thrive. When they receive support and teachers receive support safety for all improves.**

12. 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 erasing history and hiding our mistakes ensures we will repeat them. We can only grow as a society and community when we admit to our mistakes, celebrate our successes and work together to advance our collective future.**

## Time to Teach

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13. 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

14. 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

15. 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

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16. Do you support collective bargaining rights?

Yes  No

17. 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

18. 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

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

**As a dues paying union member I will continue to fight for all my union siblings with every vote I take.**

## **Working families**

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20. 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

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

23. Will you support exploring new systems for providing educators with a secure retirement, including reducing early retirement penalties that will help recruit and retain educators?

Yes  No

24. 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?

**I support healthcare for all. I am concerned that the current public option leaves our educators whose districts offer coverage with higher costs than those who will be eligible for the public option even though many folks would meet the income guidelines. I think we must come together to solve the healthcare crisis in our state and country.**

## **Privatization**

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

Yes  No

26. 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

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

Yes  No

28. 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**

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29. 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 currently have 6 children in RPS, and two graduates from public high school in 2022 ad 2022.**

**I have spent time at Rochester ALC prior to 2020. Since 2022 I have spent time at Lincoln K-8, John Marshall, Kellog, Overland, and JM.**

**In every visit, meeting, event I see the passion our teachers and staff have  
I am committed to continuing to support our schools, educators, and communities.**

30. 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 talk to my children and their educators.**

31. 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 am hoping to continue the work to improve special education funding and reduce unneeded burden. I also want to ensure that MDE provides the guidance that teachers need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently without fear of “getting it wrong” and being punished.**

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

**Education requires many people to be successful, I know when we work together we can find solutions together.**