

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Southwest Metro office

Candidate name

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Election district

54B

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?

Create or support policies to reduce or eliminate penalties. Create or support policies and appropriations that expand retirement options.

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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?

Students need various methods to lower the cost of education and debt that they carry forward in their working career. Educators and administrators need competitive salaries and benefits to remain in this line of work. There may be other areas associated with the "costs of education" that can be adjusted toward lowering costs while increasing salaries and benefits. This could include costs

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of infrastructure, materials, property, equipment, and other lesser known “costs associated with education.”

There are also new sources of revenues that can be generated by those in higher education. The University of Minnesota has tapped into the potential of these new sources, in a partnership that benefits students, educators and the university. This can be replicated in other institutions.

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?

Student support includes more than educational content and language accommodations. Some campuses create opportunities and connections whereby they are an extension of the student’s “family” and “family life”. This would be important for students housed on campus.

Some of these students may also have jobs or families of their own. The extent to which their situations are supported or accommodated will be important too. For example, one institution provides child care while the parent is in class. There have also been some legislators and legislative staff who have been students while working at the legislature.

Students having full access to all the benefits, resources, tools, educational content, and opportunities at an institution – is an expectation to help students succeed.

A legislator’s role is to help facilitate these efforts through good policies and appropriations as needed

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?

Yes

High-quality professional educators

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

High-quality educators will need an attractive salary and benefits; opportunities for professional networking, growth, and continuing education; and opportunities and benefits from their families.

Legislators’ role would be providing appropriations that support this. Policy wise – legislators can ensure that the education system provide for high quality educators. I previously tried to introduce legislation calling for “world class” education. It would have addressed recruiting high-quality educators and increasing students’ ability to compete globally.

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 may have changed from how they used to be used. They may not apply to an individual’s true capability or situation. Other factors should be considered along with the scores.

They had been used to determine a student’s success in school, to set a level of acceptance into a school, or even determine if scholarships should be granted. But the tests based on memory, math ability, or language skills – were not true methods to evaluate a person’s success, capability of learning, or how they would do in school.

I would need to look into this more.

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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?

The Internet has given students the most "freedom to read". There is limited space and funds for physical books, audios, videos and other materials in libraries. Catalogs and listings of what may be available by arrangement – if not physically in the library a person visits, is an alternative. There are also Internet options that can be used.

"Free libraries" and pop-up libraries in the communities have also been used. Some community organizations work specifically with specialized books. There are many options for students to access books others are trying to ban.

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?

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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?

Policies & appropriations, events, activities.

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?

Have not visited a public school in my district in the past year. Would work with Education Minnesota in doing so.
Have visited schools outside my district for events. Not the same as visiting a classroom during class.

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

Sat in on legislative education committees. Network with educational organizations and organizations where education has been a focus. They include the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, Rep. Carlos Mariani's organization, staff from St. Paul Public Schools, staff from some St. Paul high schools. I hear from staff and educators at University of Minnesota, St. Thomas University, Metro State University. I hear from students, family members, friends, and relatives.

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?

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I have attended Education Minnesota's educational session, events and activities in the past and will continue to do so as possible. As a legislator, the work will be more on policies and appropriations.

There may be differences in opinions on an issue, or something that needs clarity and understanding. I even had some questions about some statements made that I may have understood differently. That's where further discussions are needed.

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

It depends on what the priorities and issues are, if there can be compromise, or a different time table. Are you talking about salaries versus buildings, student education versus clubs? Some things can't be compromised like there is simply not enough money and only the federal government can create more money.