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1573**

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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Southwest Metro office

Candidate name

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Election district

55A

Party endorsement

DFL

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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?

As always, I follow your lead on the best actions to take given the viable options on the table. I believe this is collaborative work that must be done in unity and a pragmatic approach. We need to ensure it is sustainably funded and protected from future

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gouges as well.

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.

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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?

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?

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As a two term member of the higher education committee and a new professor, my record proves that I have taken direct action including freezing tuition at every Minnesota State institution, fighting for Northstar Promise, and making campus safer and more accessible by passing the campus sexual assault prevention package and the RISE act. Acts of violence and ableism can cause students to have to repeat classes that they were not empowered to complete, and these costs are unmanageable for many students. I also expanded opportunities for prison education and carried and passed the Beyond the Box bill to prevent criminal backgrounds from holding people back from finishing their education. Higher enrollment helps us keep costs lower for everyone, so all of these measures will also directly increase enrollment. Lastly, I am working on student loan forgiveness bills for home health care workers, social workers, and therapists to both address the rising costs of education and the workforce shortages.

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 carried and passed the RISE Act, the Beyond the Box bill, and the campus sexual assault prevention and response package that will ensure campuses across the state are more disability friendly, inclusive, and safe. I also supported expanding campus access to head start programs for low income student parents, food security for students, and tuition freezes for students from families over the Northstar threshold. We can continue to expand resources for parents like childcare, food programs, and raising the income limit to include more families.

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?

Continue to keep the costs of higher ed low, require paid internships, and support the day to day life needs of educators including protecting pensions, increasing wages, and improving benefit options. I want to support getting better contracts, and would love more information about how legislators can support educators who are stuck in negotiations with boards.

Standardized testing

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

As a person with a disability and a rep from a district with high needs and lower incomes, I find standardized testing to be an outdated way to measure many things and that they often misrepresent true needs. However, I am open to following your lead on where it is and is not the best to use test scores as a metric.

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 ban on book bans is a start, but we cannot empower people who want to control literature like this to have election certificates. From school boards to the legislature, this kind of censorship is highly alarming and disturbing. I think librarians and teachers are the experts in providing students with literature that will empower them to grow into open-minded, critically thinking, and caring adults.

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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

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?

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Yes

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

Elect and support democrats in elections up and down the ballot first and foremost. Project 2025 is wrought with union busting measures that seek to weaken the power of union labor. I am educating people about the real threats this poses to our future. Of course I also vote for policies that support and protect unions and their members as well.

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?

Yes, my son goes to Nicollet Middle School, and I've also been to Eagle Ridge Middle School, Vista View Elementary School, and Burnsville and Prior Lake High School and others. Our facilities in Burnsville are far behind those of richer districts, and I frequently talk about our need for upgrades in the legislature. I am always open to visiting any school I am invited to as well.

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 follow your lead, local teachers, parents, and our board.

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?

My calendar and door is always open to Ed MN. Should there be a disagreement, I have a direct form of communication and will directly express a concern with curiosity and a goal to get to a resolution.

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

Education Minnesota tends to be the most trusted voice for me, but I also consider the feedback from local teacher groups, youth organizations, and local parents. I am most certainly not listening to Action for Liberty or any other entity that seeks to muddy the separation of church and state, indoctrinate kids with hate and exclusion, and harm our system, teachers, kids, and future with their terrible policy visions.