

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

Page

Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Southwest Metro office

Candidate name

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Election district

60A

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?

Tax the corporations. Tax the rich. Raise revenue to support retiring educators (and those at the beginning and middle of their careers, too!)

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

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?

Stand up to greedy administrators who wish to grow the size of administration by hiring more HR Directors and union-busting lawyers instead of reducing costs for students and supporting their workers- something the University of Minnesota attempted to

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

do. I also believe the state should pay for their share- we do not currently meet our promised ratio for funding high education for students and we need to grow that and ensure it is spent of students and workers.

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?

Make sure students have the best possible education system from birth to college and career by working to ensure they have access to strong public schools, healthcare, and government services. We also need to make sure their families have jobs that pay a livable wage and access to childcare.

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 strongly support giving educators control of their classrooms

Standardized testing

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

I do not believe the state should be mandating high stakes standardized testing and do not think test scores should be the determination of how to fund and manage public education.

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?

We passed Rep Frazier's book ban and this should remain in law.

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

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?

As the Chief Author of the Union Freedoms Bill, no legislator has done more to strengthen PELRA for workers than me. I hope to continue my work which has been to grow the power of public sector workers as a member of the Labor and Industry Committee and the Education Finance Committee by prioritizing workers above all.

Privatization

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

Yes

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

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?

This past year, I have spent time in many schools (including at Webster Elementary for the signing of my bill to provide UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS!!!!!!!) but I'd like to focus on my work this past year with the Edison HS debate team. I went to their classroom and listened to them talk about their school and debate team. They talked about mental health needs, funding gaps, and their plans after graduation. We talked about the cross-subsidies and everything that goes into why some schools have more resources than they see at EHS. Then, they came to the Capitol, observed the education finance committee, and talked with me about what other issues they care about at the legislature. I bring this up because these are my most important constituents. Since then, these students know they have someone whose job it is to not only listen to what they want the world to look like (one notable policy they were all strongly in favor of was Paid Family Leave- I'm saying this because I know many MFT members fought for this and your students are grateful) but also go out and implement it. I also want these students to feel at home in the Capitol and come back to advocate for their futures.

This is so notable because these students don't have a lobbyist. They aren't in the room when legislators and "stakeholders" are arguing about "mandates" such as whether or not they should get to wear tribal regalia at graduation (they should) or whether schools should ban The Color Purple because it celebrates Black, Queer, and Fem identities (they shouldn't). These students should have access to a classroom where they not only can learn but also feel safe, celebrated, and affirmed and spending time in our wonderful MPS schools makes me feel committed to that vision of public education.

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 grew up with a mother who was a classroom EL teacher and president of her NEA local. I started my career working for MFT 59 and have worked for Ed MN and the NEA. I will continue to learn from those who are actually in classrooms.

I talk extensively to my constituents about their children's schools. I also have the honor to represent many educators in Northeast and Como and ask them about what's happening in their classrooms.

In addition to meeting more than weekly with Education MN during session, I listen heavily to families in my district and to SEIU, the Teamsters, and AFSCME. For questions regarding management decisions at MPS, I contact Josh Downham. For questions regarding prone restraints and SROs, I talk to Solutions Not Suspensions. For questions regarding students with disabilities and their rights, I often contact the Disability Law Center. I also get quite a bit of information from MDE.

In working on School Meals and Comprehensive Sex Education bills, I have worked with organizations focusing on hunger and student health that are too numerous to list. Feel free to help me brainstorm other orga

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?

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1534**

I plan to continue operating as I have for the past 5 sessions where I meet with Ed Mn more than once per week during session and meet regularly even when not in session. I'm upfront from the beginning when I disagree with an issue and work with Ed MN to overcome these differences.

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

I plan to continue prioritizing the needs of students, families, and educators over management.