

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

**Page**

Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Southwest Metro office

**Candidate name**

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**Election district**

62A

**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?**

Education serves as the cornerstone of our democracy, yet for far too long, students in disadvantaged communities have been left behind through no fault of their own. Years of chronic underfunding and a lack of prioritization of essential resources have left our

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

educational system struggling to meet its obligations. In this challenging landscape, our teachers have unfairly shouldered a significant burden, including inadequate pension support.

As legislators, it is our duty to stand firmly behind our educators. I am committed to working alongside Education Minnesota to craft policies that not only recognize the invaluable contributions of teachers but also expand their retirement options. Teachers deserve the utmost respect and support, and enhancing their pension benefits is a critical step towards ensuring they have the resources and stability necessary to provide a world-class education to our future leaders.

**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.**

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

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

**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?**

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

Yes

**17. What would you do, as a state legislator, to help with the cost of higher education?**

As a state legislator, addressing the cost of higher education is paramount to ensuring every Minnesotan has the opportunity to improve their lives through education. Our current higher education system presents significant financial barriers that hinder this opportunity. To tackle this issue, I am committed to collaborating with my colleagues in Saint Paul to increase state investment in higher education. This includes advocating for and expanding programs like the North Star Promise, which provide crucial financial support to students. By prioritizing accessible and affordable education, we can empower more individuals to pursue their aspirations and contribute meaningfully to our community and economy.

**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?**

As a legislator, I recognize the transformative potential of the North Star Promise in increasing enrollment among first-generation students and those from historically underserved communities. Historically, our higher education system has primarily benefited white men and, more recently, white women, underscoring the urgent need for inclusive reforms. To ensure the success of these new cohorts of students, I advocate for continued investment in comprehensive support mechanisms.

We must implement proactive measures that go beyond financial assistance. This includes fostering a supportive environment through personalized mentoring and advising programs. By adopting a hands-on approach, where each student has dedicated advisors guiding them from enrollment to graduation, we can enhance the overall student experience and bolster success rates.

Moreover, it's crucial to allocate resources strategically to address systemic barriers these students face. This may involve expanding access to academic resources, mental health services, and career development opportunities tailored to their unique needs. By investing in these initiatives, we not only enrich the educational experience but also demonstrate our commitment to equitable access and opportunity for all Minnesotans pursuing higher education.

**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?**

To address the critical issue of recruiting and retaining high-quality educators in our classrooms, I propose a comprehensive approach centered on fully investing in our teachers. Minnesota has a proud tradition of producing exceptional educators, and it's crucial that we prioritize their well-being and professional growth.

First and foremost, we must ensure that all public school educators receive competitive salaries that reflect their invaluable contributions to our communities. Alongside fair compensation, comprehensive benefits packages and robust retirement plans are essential to provide stability and security for our teachers throughout their careers.

Moreover, fostering a supportive and enriching work environment is key to retaining our talented educators. This includes investing in professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, and resources that empower teachers to continually enhance their skills and stay engaged in their profession.

By prioritizing the well-being and professional fulfillment of our educators, we not only honor their dedication but also create a positive ripple effect across our educational system. When teachers are supported and respected, they can better nurture the potential of our students, laying the foundation for future generations of skilled and motivated educators.

In summary, my approach is centered on comprehensive support for educators, encompassing fair compensation, robust benefits,

## 2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry # 1580

and a supportive work environment. This holistic investment will not only attract and retain high-quality educators but also ensure that Minnesota continues to lead the way in fostering excellence in education.

### Standardized testing

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

In light of the ongoing challenges our students face in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, it's clear that we need to adopt a nuanced approach to assessing their progress and educational needs. While standardized tests have traditionally been a metric for evaluating student achievement, I believe we must reconsider their role, especially during this recovery period.

It's important to recognize that our students' current struggles are not a reflection of their abilities or the efforts of our dedicated teachers. Rather, it underscores the need for a more holistic assessment framework that goes beyond standardized testing. I support exploring alternative methods that provide a comprehensive view of student learning and growth.

One promising approach is to increase the frequency of lower-stakes assessments that focus on continuous improvement and mastery of foundational skills. These assessments can be integrated into daily classroom activities, offering timely feedback to both students and teachers on areas that need attention and reinforcement. By emphasizing ongoing assessment and feedback, we can create an educational environment that prioritizes genuine learning over simply meeting standardized test requirements. Additionally, investing in professional development for educators to effectively use these assessment tools and interpret data will be crucial. This will empower teachers to tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of their students and provide targeted support where it is most beneficial.

In summary, while acknowledging the value of standardized testing in certain contexts, I advocate for a shift towards a more diverse and frequent assessment approach that supports continuous student improvement and authentic learning experiences. By doing so, we can better serve our students' educational needs and ensure they have the tools and support to thrive in their academic journey.

### 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?

Access to a diverse array of age-appropriate books is crucial for fostering literacy and nurturing empathy among students. It's essential that our school libraries reflect the rich diversity of Minnesota families, including books that feature relatable characters and address real-life situations, including those concerning LGBTQ+ individuals and issues of racism.

Unfortunately, there are efforts by some politicians and influential groups to restrict access to books that explore these important topics. As a community, we must vigorously defend students' freedom to read and ensure that all voices and experiences are represented in our educational resources.

I firmly believe that every student should have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in literature. For LGBTQ+ students and those from marginalized communities, seeing characters who share their identities and experiences can be profoundly affirming and empowering. It not only enriches their reading experience but also contributes to a more inclusive and tolerant school environment.

To safeguard our students' freedom to read, I support legislation that protects access to diverse literature in our schools. Such measures should promote inclusivity and respect for all communities, ensuring that our educational institutions remain bastions of learning and understanding.

In summary, Minnesota should prioritize policies that uphold students' rights to access books that reflect their identities and experiences. By embracing diversity in literature, we not only promote literacy but also nurture a culture of acceptance and respect within our schools.

#### 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?

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

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**

**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?**

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

As a state legislator, supporting unions like Education Minnesota is crucial to advancing our shared goals of strengthening Minnesota's education system. I am committed to actively engaging with Education Minnesota to understand and advocate for their legislative priorities.

I believe in the importance of collaboration and dialogue with our educators and their representatives. By listening to Education Minnesota's concerns and priorities, I aim to work hand-in-hand with them to address challenges facing our schools and to champion policies that promote quality education for all Minnesota students.

Furthermore, I recognize that Education Minnesota plays a vital role in advocating for teachers' rights, fair wages, and improved working conditions. As a legislator, I will support efforts to ensure that educators are respected, supported, and equipped to provide the best possible education to our children.

**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, I have visited Central Park Elementary in the Minneapolis school district, where my son is a student. My visits have allowed me to witness firsthand the dedication and hard work of our educators. One observation that stood out to me is the importance of addressing the student-to-teacher ratio to ensure that each student receives the attention and support they deserve.

Being a single mother has deepened my understanding of the challenges within our public school system, and my experiences at Central Park Elementary have significantly influenced my values and priorities as a potential legislator. I am committed to advocating for policies that support our educators, improve educational outcomes, and ensure that every child in Minnesota has access to a quality 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?**

As a state legislator I prioritize staying well-informed on a variety of important issues, including those related to public education. My approach to understanding these issues is informed by my roles as both a mother and a passionate advocate for labor rights. I actively collaborate with organizations such as the Minneapolis Teacher Federation and maintain relationships with leaders on the Minneapolis School Board. These connections have provided me with valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities within our public education system.

In addition to these direct relationships, I also rely on a diverse range of sources for information, including educational research, community forums, and discussions with parents, educators, and experts in the field. These interactions help me stay current on developments, policies, and best practices in education.

By continuously seeking diverse perspectives and staying engaged with stakeholders, I am committed to making informed decisions and advocating effectively for policies that benefit our students, educators, and schools.

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #  
1580**

**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?**

I see collaboration with Education Minnesota as crucial to advancing our shared goals of strengthening Minnesota's education system. Communication and understanding each other's legislative priorities will be key to our partnership. I envision maintaining open lines of communication with Education Minnesota, discussing legislative priorities and initiatives that impact our educators and students. By staying connected, we can effectively advocate for policies that support our teachers, improve educational outcomes, and ensure equitable access to quality education for all Minnesota students. In cases where we may have differing perspectives on an issue, I am committed to fostering respectful dialogue. It's important to approach disagreements constructively, listening to concerns from all sides and seeking common ground wherever possible. Transparency and honesty will guide how I communicate any differences in opinion, always with the shared goal of advancing the best interests of our students and educators. Ultimately, my aim is to cultivate a productive and collaborative relationship with Education Minnesota, rooted in mutual respect and a commitment to enhancing our education system for the benefit of all Minnesotans

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

My primary responsibility is to represent the interests and priorities of the constituents in my district. While collaborating closely with Education Minnesota is important to me, I recognize that there may be competing priorities among various education groups. To effectively balance these priorities, I am committed to maintaining open lines of communication with all stakeholders, including Education Minnesota and other education groups. I will actively seek input and feedback from these organizations to understand their perspectives and concerns on legislative issues. Before making any key vote or decision related to education policy, I will prioritize thorough consultation with Education Minnesota and other relevant stakeholders. This ensures that I have a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts and considerations from all sides. Ultimately, my goal is to find common ground and make decisions that best serve the educational needs of our students and families in my district. By fostering transparent communication and collaborative relationships with Education Minnesota and other education groups, I am confident that we can work together to achieve positive outcomes for our community