

Candidate for Minnesota Senate District 54

Jun 22, 2026

Yes/No questions

1. Have you visited a public school in your district in the past year?

Yes

Q2. ESP living wage: Will you support legislation to ensure that all education support professionals earn a living wage of at least \$25 an hour?

No

Q3. 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?

No

Q4. Will you support increasing state funding to ensure the financial sustainability of educator public pension funds, so the cost doesn't come out of workers' pockets?

No

Q5. Will you support improving teacher pensions, including an unreduced career rule, lowering penalties, and increasing cost of living adjustments for retirees?

No

Q6. Do you support the creation of and funding for the Educator Group Insurance Program (EGIP), which would give educators access to a mandatory statewide health insurance pool, just like other state workers?

Yes

Q7. Do you support dedicated funding for unemployment insurance for hourly school workers, and will you work against any efforts to repeal this benefit?

Yes

Do you support the following education funding priorities?

Q8a. Maintain the current automatic inflationary increase to the basic formula allowance, protecting funding increases from the erosion of inflation.

Yes

Q8b. SPED cross subsidy: Fully fund special education costs instead of relying on school districts to pay for them.

Yes

Q8c. EL cross subsidy: Fully fund the costs districts pay to provide quality English learner programs and instruction.

Yes

Q8d. Lower class sizes: Lower class sizes so teachers can give students more of the individual attention they need and deserve.

Yes

Q8e. Teachers of color: Fund programs to increase the number of teachers of color significantly so that teachers providing instruction better reflect the students in our classrooms.

Yes

Q8f. Student support: Defend Student Support Personnel Aid, which must be used for school nurses, social workers, counselors and psychologists.

Yes

Q8g. Defend against further cuts to school library aid, which is the only dedicated funding source for school libraries and media centers, including

No

Q8h. Early learning: Preserve and expand pre-Kindergarten options for all Minnesota families.

No

Q9. 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?

No

Q11. 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

Q12. Efforts to address college affordability in the last two decades have resulted in 120% growth in the State Grant Program. One consequence of this high tuition/high aid model has been the chronic underfunding of the public college systems. Do you support returning to statutory funding levels for our public higher education institutions?

No

Q13. Another consequence of this high tuition/high aid model has been a significant amount of public money going to private colleges and universities. Do you support public dollars going solely to public higher education institutions?

Yes

Q14. Given nationwide attacks on higher education, do you support academic freedom and faculty control of curriculum?

Yes

Q17. Education Minnesota believes all students should have the freedom to feel safe, respected and welcomed in their public schools, no matter what they look like, no matter their country of origin, whether transgender or not. Do you agree?

Yes

Q18. Teachers need more time daily for planning and differentiating. 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?

No

Q19. Do you support paid, dedicated time outside of student contact time for special education teachers to complete their paperwork and attend required meetings?

No

Q20. Do you support increased reporting and transparency in worksite safety when reporting physical injuries and emotional trauma in the workplace?

Yes

Q21. The ability of workers to come together in a 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

Q22. 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

Q23. Do you oppose state tax credits for private K-12 education tuition and expenses?

Yes

Q24. Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools until policy changes are made to ensure a stronger accountability system that will eliminate fraud and improve instructional and employment practices?

Yes

Q25. Will you reject all efforts to carve out, delay or rollback any aspects or benefits of the 2023 paid family medical leave law?

No

Q26. Do you support clarifying and strengthening workers' rights and protections in the paid family medical leave program?

Yes

Q1a. If yes: Which one? What were your observations from your visit? How will this experience inform your work as a legislator?

Shakopee liked the Academy Program, Participated in mock interviews, attended Chamber event there, girls' basketball game

Prior Lake-Savage: attended a MNCAPS program, school board meetings and referendum planning sessions, other multiple public events. I will publicly support an upcoming referendum on funding.

Jordan – Jordan Commercial Club meeting/tour of elementary school, Feed My Starving Children packing event, multiple other public events

All three districts have declining school enrollment which tightens budgets. I will use my 10+ years of K-12 public school business manager experience to assist in the legislature to secure adequate school funding, likely through a bill addressing the school funding formula.

Q10. 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. What progressive, equitable ways to raise state revenue do you support?

I don't have any fixed policy on what taxes should be levied, but movement away from relying on local levies is something i do support, as the funding and quality of education should not depend on their zipcode.

Q15. What individual or system-level decisions in education do you believe are appropriate to make based on standardized test scores?

Very few, if any, curriculum or other education decisions should be made at the state level. I believe in local control of education, relying on the experts in the classrooms and districts.

Q16. 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?

Don't ban books. Allow the educators to select age and subject matter appropriate materials.

Q27. How would you support schools, educators and students in recovering from the trauma and financial impacts that Operation Metro Surge inflicted upon our state, especially BIPOC communities?

I have no specific proposals, but I understand and am sympathetic about the strains and problems Operation Metro Surge caused.

I wanted to leave many of the questions unanswered, as I need further information on most, but when a response was required, I said "no", but actually the real answer would have been "probably" or "maybe, depending on more information". I do not take general or categorical policy positions as I know most of the issues are more nuanced than most think and there are many factors to be balanced. I believe FACTS matter and make decisions accordingly. And I know some decisions must depend on local conditions.

An example, regarding the PMFL act, based on the experience so far, there may need to be tweaks to make that work better. I have heard from many small businesses and non-profits that the act has caused some problems, and wonder whether the cut off regarding number of employees should be aligned with the Federal FMLA.

You have a question regarding honesty in education. With me, honesty with you starts here.

What you do need to know is that my passion is education, with my wife a retired school superintendent and my being having been a school business manager for over 10 years (also completing the Ph.D. coursework for a ABD in K-12 school administration), my heart is with the schools. Also, take heart in the fact that what I tell you, you can trust. I.e., I won't tell you things here simply because I know that is what you want to hear.

What is most important in this race is that my winning may be the difference in which party holds the majority in the MN State Senate. Most of your concerns are best met by the DFL Caucus, of which I will be a member of.