

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1383**

Page

Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Windom office

Candidate name

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15A

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?

I will continue learning about the inequitable penalties and the possible solutions to them. I support increased state funding for pensions which will reduce the need for penalties. I support increased pay for educators and support staff which will make pension

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1383**

funds more robust and flexible. Perhaps that is another way to reduce penalties. I believe that all teachers and support staff deserve a secure retirement, and reducing penalties is part of a secure retirement.

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.

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1383**

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?

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1383**

While Minnesota has done a lot to reduce the cost for higher education, more can be done. Expanding loan forgiveness programs, decreasing and eventually eliminating interest paid on student loans, and expanding low to no interest loans to as many students as possible are a few of the things I would do as a legislator. There are many ways to reduce the cost of higher education, and I will learn about all of them in order to advance the best ideas. Like many things, there are many nuances to the high cost of higher education. So, continually learning about ways to reduce the cost is the best thing I could do as a legislator besides voting for the best ideas.

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 will support funding mentor programs for these (and all) students so that they feel well supported as they make the transition from high school to campus life. I will support funding for more staff so that campuses are equipped to handle more students. I will support funding for the tools and resources some of these students will need, like an internet connection if they need it or help with buying school supplies. Making sure that both students and campuses are equipped for success are things I strongly support.

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 will support legislation which offers to pay student-teachers. I will support higher starting salaries. I will support higher ending salaries. I will support legislation aimed at reducing class-sizes which will reduce the burden on educators. I will support legislation that helps with the cost of higher education for educators (and all people). I will support increased funding from the state to the pension program to reduce penalties and ensure educators are secure in their retirement. I will support making sure educators have affordable access to the care they need, while they're teaching and during retirement. I will defend against efforts to get rid of or weaken the tenure program.

Standardized testing

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

If some educators and schools are seeing improvement on standardized scores year-over-year, then we should be looking to see what these schools and educators are doing right. If some educators and schools are not seeing improvements year-over-year, then some course correction may be necessary like making sure the educators, students and schools have the resources necessary for success. If a school being underfunded is the cause of not improving, then we should fund that school adequately. Alternatively, if the school is well-funded but still not seeing improvements in student testing, then we should look at other factors like student home life, class size and if the educator is the best fit for whatever class they're teaching.

I do believe that educators who put their all towards teaching their students as effectively as possible should receive compensation for all of that hard work, especially so if it's reflected in their students test scores.

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

2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry # 1383

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 need to continue telling the truth. We need to continue to be open and honest with parents about what the curriculum is, and what books are being used to supplement that curriculum. We need to build understanding and awareness and not silo ourselves off from other people and ideas. On a state legislative stand-point, we may have to look at limiting challenges on books. That's not to say books shouldn't be vetted to make sure they are age-appropriate, but I've read articles about one person challenging hundreds of books in multiple school districts. We can't let good faith challenges be clouded by those who would challenge books based on bigotry or an attempt to erase history.

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

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1383**

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?

I will support unions by protecting the hard-fought rights already won and expanding those rights.

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?

I worked as a custodian and part-time security person and groundskeeper for Marshall Public Schools until 2019. I also graduated from MPS in 2007. From my time as a custodian, I can tell you that educators were always busy. Some got to work at 6am, left at 5pm and came back at 7pm to prepare for the next day. Some were there until 11pm making sure the next day was prepared and ready. I also saw school counselors and other support staff working very hard on behalf of all the students. I know these people sacrifice so much for these kids. So, I want to be part of making all of their lives better.

I would very much like to make a visit to all of my district's schools, and if you could help arrange that, that would be fantastic.

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 speak with a close friend who works in the school district. I also have friends who are professors at public colleges and universities. To be honest, I need to learn more about issues relating to public education, along with many other issues. But I love to learn. I love education. And I really love learning about things I love.

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 #
1383**

I envision working fairly closely with Education Minnesota to pass legislation that is supportive of public education in many ways. I'm sure we'll find something we disagree about, but that's not the end of the world. Honesty is something I take very seriously both in my personal life and professional life. So, I would be open and honest about it while not denigrating a particular position on a particular issue.

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

I would work to find common ground between the groups, and see if we could find a way to work together to make sure Minnesota's students have the best education possible. I'm not entirely sure of all of the competing factors, but again, I would be more than happy to learn about them.