

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1535**

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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Southwest Metro office

Candidate name

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Election district

29A

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?

I am willing to co-author legislation and vote for appropriate measures.

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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

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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?

I support making access to State Colleges and Universities more available to people who go into professions that serve the public need by providing grants and forgiveness of loans based upon years of service after graduation.

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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 attended Minneapolis Community College (before it became MCTC) and then got my bachelor's degree at Metro State. I was a non-traditional student raising a family, working full-time while attending school full-time. Students coming from families who have not experienced the challenges of juggling home, work and school or who don't have the financial resources to offer help might not be able to provide support for housing, meals, books, and other resources. Cooperative housing, meals, financial counseling, tutoring support, and other resources should be made available to ensure that the students have what they need to succeed. This is not to presume that all of these students need the additional support, but it should be available to those who do.

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?

Fund and support mentorship programs to help new teachers get the support they need to get through the challenges as they transition into teaching positions, pay them well (as outlined above), and provide better pensions and other incentives to encourage retention.

Standardized testing

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

As standardized tests do not do well in capturing the experiences of all children in our multicultural classrooms, there should be more input from experienced educators in the process of determining how to ensure that the children are learning, that the teachers have the classroom time and resources to help their students succeed and allow for early intervention for children who may require additional supports, resources, and methods to learn.

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?

Continue to support through legislation those school boards who are working to resist the ill-informed parents and community members. In our community in Delano, I am a leader of our Diversity Task Force who spoke up for age appropriate access to the books some parents were trying to ban. When the school board was able to advise the parents that they were not able to follow the parents recommendations because of laws already in place, it was a relief to be able to put the issue to rest, at least for now. Our current state house representative, Joe McDonald, came to the meeting and spoke on behalf of the parents who wanted the restrictions. I don't believe we can count on him at the legislature to keep the protections in place.

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

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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?

Yes

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

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I am a proud member of AFSCME, have been an officer in our local (in my last job) and will fight for your unions as I fight for my own.

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 have visited Delano High School. I have worked with students to organize DEI events. I support parent groups who are working to support teachers (and in opposition to the parents who want to restrict books, teaching about racism, etc.) I am hearing from teachers and support staff about the distractions of students bringing cell phones into the classrooms. Some say students are far more disruptive and disrespectful than in the past. Some students are being bullied and they and their parents are getting little or no support from the school administration. This could be, at least in part, a result of the controversies of the past few years that played out in school board meetings.

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 work with the supportive parent group who connects with teachers, I have friends who are teachers and school support professionals. Education Minnesota is always a great resource!

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 look forward to working with Education Minnesota and hearing from you on new and ongoing issues. I hope to have ongoing contact with teachers and support professionals.

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

By getting all the facts available from interested parties, and working in the best interests of our students and the teachers preparing them to run this country (and my assisted living center when the time comes). ;-)