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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Anoka office

Candidate name

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Election district

32B

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 have been proud to co-author the Education Minnesota teacher pension bills, and they remain an incredibly high priority for me. I have also attended rallies and listening sessions to hear directly from educators about the importance of this issue. If I'm fortunate

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enough to return to the Capitol in 2025, I will work hard within the caucus to prioritize teacher pensions in budget discussions and use my position on the Taxes Committee to explore additional revenue sources if necessary.

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.

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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?

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First and foremost, we can work to restore state higher education funding to the level it used to be at before the cuts in recent decades. Second, we could look at expanding the North Star Promise and other state aids to help lower and middle class families. Third, we could attract more students to Minnesota colleges and universities to spread the fixed costs of operating higher education institutions among more students.

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?

We need to invest in wrap-around services, like counselors, tutors, academic advisors, and mentors, to support these students. Our job does not stop at matriculation. We are successful when these students actually graduate from their higher education institution. In addition, all the other pro-working family policies we've enacted will lessen the strain on these students and their families and allow the students to focus more on their studies.

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 was proud to author the bill that led to a pilot of student teacher stipends in Minnesota. I would like to see that program expanded to all student teachers in Minnesota in the next biennium. Recruiting and retaining high-quality educators also involves paying teachers a salary comparable to other professionals with similar credentials and having attractive pensions. It means making sure teachers don't have to leave the classroom because they can't afford their health insurance. It means making sure we have manageable class sizes, support professionals to address student mental health needs, and programs to support the mental health of teachers themselves. Lastly, it means respecting teachers for the work they do rather than vilifying them as part of political debates or constantly second guessing their professional judgment. We must also continue to fund our TOCAIT strategies is also important to developing a strong pipeline along with "grow your own" programs.

Standardized testing

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

Standardized tests can be one data point in a broader evaluation of a teacher, school, or district. They should be one piece in an assessment puzzle. However, there are other evaluation methods that should be incorporated as well like portfolios of student work, peer evaluation, and exit interviews with randomly selected students.

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?

The ban on book bans we passed in the 2024 legislative session is a good start. We should look at passing additional protections for teachers and librarians to exercise their professional judgment, and we must provide MDE and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights any tools they need to enforce existing law on this subject if school boards threaten not to follow them.

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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

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?

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Yes

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

I will support unions with both my words and actions. Whether encouraging organizing efforts on social media or joining pickets, union workers deserve to know that Minnesota's elected leaders have their backs. I will continue by strong track record of voting for legislation at the State Capitol that protects and even expands the rights of workers to organize. At a time when wages have largely stagnated for decades, we need to reverse the trend of decreasing union membership. That begins with enacting pro-union policies in our state. I also believe in engaging and involving affected stakeholders. They often have the best lived experience with an issue and can bring both important insights and powerful passion to the table, resulting in better outcomes.

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 Spring Lake Park High School with MDE Commissioner Jett to learn about the career and technical education offerings at the school, which were phenomenal. In fact, some of my legislation funded their student construction program. I also had a chance to visit the Early Childhood Learning Center in the Centennial District, where I learned about the excellent work those educators are doing to prepare our youngest learners to successfully enter kindergarten. While both schools are technically outside my district, they serve a large number of students from my district. I am always happy to make more visits to schools.

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 regularly meet with both Education Minnesota members, both in school and out of school and in formal settings and informal settings. I also talk frequently with Education Minnesota staff. Lastly, I talk to students about their experiences in school.

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 believe in engaging and involving effected stakeholders. They often have the best lived experience with an issue and can bring both important insights and powerful passion to the table, resulting in better outcomes. A perfect example of this was my work on the student teacher stipend bill. I worked with student teachers themselves and Education Minnesota leadership to help craft and refine the legislation. This type of collaboration made our work stronger and was one of the reasons we were successful in securing a pilot program in a tight budget yea That work offers a template for how I would work with Education Minnesota. On education issues, I would authentically engage educators in a true partnership fashion, ensuring their voices are at the table and

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actively participating in the process. This will allow us to engage in frequent dialogue and communicate and discuss any disagreements on issues.

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

My top priority is doing what is best for our students. That's why I've worked in youth development for most of my career. I know educators share this same priority. I believe one of the best things we can do for our students is ensuring a high-quality, public education system where all our students feel welcome. As a result, I envision our priorities will often be in alignment. However, should competing priorities arise, I will do what is best for the students in my district and across Minnesota.