

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

Page

Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Brooklyn Park office

Candidate name

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Election district

38A

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?

Retiring with dignity is a fundamental goal that I prioritize in my advocacy and policy proposals. I am committed to supporting efforts to address inequitable penalties within the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) to expand retirement options for

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

educators. Ensuring that all individuals, including educators and public servants, have access to fair and secure retirement options is crucial. I am dedicated to supporting initiatives that enhance retirement benefits, address inequities in pension systems, and promote financial stability for retirees. By advocating for policies that prioritize dignity in retirement, we can honor the contributions of our workforce and provide them with the peace of mind they deserve after years of service to our communities.

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

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?

Yes

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

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

As someone who has mounting student loans that have had a lifelong impact on my quality of life, I am committed to addressing the cost of higher education by advocating for policies that make college more affordable and accessible for all Minnesotans. This includes increasing state investment in public higher education to reduce reliance on tuition, thereby lowering costs for students and families. I support expanding need-based financial aid programs and scholarships to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent qualified students from pursuing higher education. Additionally, I will work to promote transparency in college pricing and student loan practices, as well as exploring innovative approaches to reduce student debt burden. By prioritizing these initiatives, I aim to support students in achieving their educational goals without the burden of overwhelming financial hardship not only to the students but to their families.

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 would prioritize ensuring that first-generation students and those from historically underserved communities have the support they need to succeed under the North Star Promise. This includes advocating for increased funding for student support services such as academic advising, mentoring programs, and tutoring services tailored to their needs. I would work to expand access to need-based financial aid and scholarships, as well as ensure robust outreach and recruitment efforts to attract a diverse student body. Additionally, I would support initiatives to promote inclusive campus environments, address barriers to retention and graduation, and provide culturally competent support services. By investing in these areas, we can empower all students to thrive academically, graduate successfully, and contribute meaningfully to our communities and economy.

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?

Yes

High-quality professional educators

20. What will you do to help recruit and retain high-quality educators in our classrooms?

My district is the most diverse district in the state of Minnesota. I am dedicated to supporting efforts to recruit and retain high-quality educators in our classrooms especially those from BIPOC communities. This includes advocating for competitive salaries and benefits that reflect the value of their work, ensuring fair working conditions, and providing professional development opportunities to continuously enhance their skills. I will work to reduce administrative burdens on educators, promote collaborative teaching environments, and advocate for policies that prioritize educator well-being and job satisfaction. By investing in our educators and valuing their expertise, we can strengthen our education system and ensure that every student has access to a quality education.

Standardized testing

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

I believe standardized test scores should be used judiciously to inform educational decisions rather than as the sole determinant. These scores can provide valuable insights into student learning and school performance, but they should be considered alongside other factors such as classroom assessments, teacher evaluations, and student engagement metrics. System-level decisions, such as school funding allocations or resource distribution, should take into account a holistic view of student achievement and school effectiveness rather than relying solely on standardized test scores. Individual decisions, such as student promotion or graduation requirements, should be made with consideration for the diverse learning needs and experiences of students, ensuring equity and fairness in educational outcomes.

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

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?

Minnesota should protect its students' freedom to read by upholding principles of academic freedom and diversity in literature. As a Democrat, I believe in supporting policies that ensure students have access to a wide range of age-appropriate books that reflect the diversity of Minnesota families, including LGBTQ+ characters and themes addressing racism. It is essential to resist efforts by certain politicians and special interest groups to censor or restrict access to these books in school libraries. Instead, Minnesota should promote inclusive and culturally relevant reading materials that foster empathy, understanding, and critical thinking among students. This includes advocating for robust library policies that uphold the rights of educators, librarians, and students to explore diverse perspectives and engage in open dialogue about important social issues through literature. By protecting students' freedom to read, we can empower them to become informed and compassionate members of our community.

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

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

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?

I will support unions as a state legislator by advocating for policies that protect workers' rights, strengthen collective bargaining, and ensure fair wages and working conditions. With the support and guidance of labor unions who have already endorsed my campaign, I will work to uphold and expand labor protections, including advocating for legislation that prohibits anti-union practices and promotes unionization efforts. Additionally, I will support funding for workforce development programs and initiatives that provide training and skills enhancement for union members. By collaborating closely with unions, I will seek to advance policies that prioritize workers' voices, economic equity, and social justice in our state. Supporting unions is essential to building a more inclusive and equitable economy that benefits all Minnesotans.

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! Woodland Elementary, Crestview Elementary and Osseo High School. My daughter goes to Woodland Elementary. Over the last year, I have been very intentional about my involvement at her school. Particularly connecting with her teacher directly and more frequently. I've gained valuable insights into our public schools through the staff at Woodland. The Teachers truly understand the importance of putting students first and celebrating diversity within our classrooms. These conversations underscored the

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

dedication of educators to providing inclusive learning environments that support the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students and that's WHY WE MUST SUPPORT OUR EDUCATORS!

My experience at Woodland Elementary, where my daughter attends, has been incredibly insightful. By actively engaging with her teacher and the school community, I've gained firsthand appreciation for how dedicated educators prioritize students and celebrate diversity in our classrooms. These interactions have reinforced my belief in the crucial role of supporting our educators and ensuring they have the resources they need to provide inclusive learning environments. As a legislator, I will draw on these experiences to advocate passionately for policies that prioritize students, promote equity in education funding, and support the diverse needs of all learners.

What have you done to become informed on issues relating to public education? What organizations and individuals do you go to for your information?

Besides my involvement at my daughter's school, I have also been very intentional about connecting with diverse groups of educators one in particular my dearest friend and Teacher at Osseo High school Katie Zieba who is a fierce advocate for racial and social equity. She fought for gender inclusion policy in the Osseo district and many other progressive issues. Also, I am very involved in advocating and recruiting residents/parents to run for school board. I have been very intentional about going and supporting progressive school board candidates who truly value diversity and inclusion in all of its forms.

When it comes to education, I rely on information and insights from a variety of organizations and individuals who are experts in the field. This includes educational advocacy groups such as Education Minnesota and local parent-teacher associations. I also value input from educators, school administrators, academic researchers, and policymakers who are directly involved in shaping education policy and practices. Their perspectives help me stay informed about current issues, best practices in education, and effective strategies for improving our education system.

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 envision a strong and collaborative partnership with Education Minnesota. Recognizing the vital role that educators play in shaping the future of our state, I will prioritize open and consistent communication with teachers and Education Minnesota leaders because YOU ARE THE EXPERTS. My goal is to actively engage in dialogue to understand the challenges and opportunities within our education system from your perspective which will allow me to be the best advocate I can be at the capital. I will work closely with Education Minnesota to advocate for policies that ensure fair wages, comprehensive benefits, and safe working conditions for teachers. Additionally, I will support initiatives aimed at reducing class sizes, increasing funding for public schools, and enhancing professional development opportunities for educators. By collaborating with Education Minnesota, I aim to develop and implement policies that promote equity and excellence in education, ensuring that every student in Minnesota has access to a high-quality education no matter the background. Together, we can create a supportive and thriving environment for both educators and students/families, ultimately strengthening our entire community.

I don't foresee any disagreements as you are the expert and I am a fierce advocate for our educators and believe we as a state need to do better by them. But, if I disagree on an issue, I believe in fostering open communication and collaboration. I would approach it by first seeking to understand your perspective thoroughly and this, I trust would address my concerns. If not, then, I would respectfully present my views and reasoning, to facilitate a constructive dialogue and together work towards a solution that we both can stand on. By emphasizing transparency and mutual respect, my goal would be to find common ground or explore alternative solutions that align with our shared goals

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

If elected, I will prioritize open dialogue and collaboration among all education stakeholders, including Education Minnesota and other education groups. I believe in seeking common ground while respecting diverse perspectives to address competing priorities. But, I will weigh heavily on the credibility and legitimacy of organizations such as Education Minnesota, recognizing their

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1581**

role as a prominent advocate for education policy. My approach will involve engaging in thoughtful discussions, listening actively to concerns, and working together to find solutions that prioritize the best interests of students, educators, and our education system as a whole. Transparency, fairness, and a commitment to advancing equitable education policies will guide my efforts to balance these priorities effectively.