

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1492**

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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Detroit Lakes office

Candidate name

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Election district

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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 am personally still shocked that a penalty for something earned, is a legislative topic in the first place. Educators are the foundation for our future and that career path is one of few civic duties that should be guarded. If elected, I will personally work to

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secure retirement, and provide a wage that is more than livable, which today is even more than the twenty mentioned above. We should also provide a higher subsidy for educators so that they do not have to personally pay for the learning materials used in their classrooms. I'd also work to secure the pensions and ensure that the current 1.9%, which should be increased, earned each year, is given to the educators regardless of when the person chooses to leave. As the educating environment has become more taxing, we need to create better incentives for those still willing to teach our children as well as make the decision to teach, event more appealing.

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.

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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

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?

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Yes

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

We can cut costs of higher learning by creating programs with local businesses to create more work transition opportunities with hands-on training alongside their studies. We could encourage more job fairs while asking the local companies to provide additional scholarships to help lower the cost of education, in turn providing them with a better educated workforce. As academic is a focus, I feel we should equally focus on providing trade introductions at our primary level. This could be in the form of assemblies, or even have a monthly 'trade' hour similar to art or music. This introduction to trade work will not only help in repairing our questionable infrastructure, but also provide a 'failsafe' skill for our children if field rated work is over saturated as we have today.

The end result of a good education is to have a good workforce who is willing to stick around their area to help provide to their community. I feel it is vital for the future of not only our society and country, but our version of this planet as well. If we truly want to prosper, then we can not financially gatekeep our young and inspiring minds. We finally are able to provide a meal for all, no matter the outcome of their home, now we need to provide the same opportunities for everyone else. If we provide an education without decades of debt, like I have myself, then we can have a reliable workforce to depend on.

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?

As the North Star covers everything after all other financial assistance is applied for, I personally do know how distracting the forms can be to a student looking for aide. If we can work to combine the amount of financial forms and reduce the process by providing classes and courses to help with filing the forms in a group setting, such as w-2s, we can even have qualifying students begin the filing process as assignments in their senior year. If we can provide simple financial education, such as budgeting an account, or filing annual taxes, we can give our children a better head start to do better in school and life. As a person who needed to find assistance while going to college, the students who currently qualify for the programs usually have complex lives where they are both a fulltime student and worker. The willingness to continue there education isn't something we should take lightly as sometimes the responsibilities of life outweigh the due date of an assignment. As we also have higher levels of students in need of some form of IEP structure, we can't expect them to handle everything magically on their own once there's a price tag attached as well. I feel if we provide generic 'study halls' provided in the night from willing instructors or paid student tutors, we can provide assistance and opportunity where and when it matters for the ones who need it.

As some of the First-Gen students are also New Americans, we have to ensure language barriers do not exist by providing opportunities for New Americans to have employment as translators to close the gaps of students to instructors/professors, as well as teachers to parents on a primary level as well.

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?

If we provide the encouragement to create inspiring teachers, we can then retain and encourage the quality we need. I'd help to provide subsidies to encourage more towards an educational path, as well as develop opportunity for other individuals who are experienced in fields, an opportunity that is realistic for them to transition, we can create a base to inspire more educators. The more educators you have, the more selection you have to gain the quality we seek. I propose that we create a more organized approach for job placement to better connect our students with needed districts. As each district has their own challenges, if we have an organized network, we can better place new teachers to districts that'll suit one another more. If we see success, we can

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organize further by having districts 'sponsor' students where they can have summer internships in the district to help assist with their experience, while providing some assistance to First-Gen students as mentioned above.

Standardized testing

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

I personally feel that standardize and assessment testing has degraded and desensitized our education system. It has become common practice for districts to compete with one another than to encourage. I feel that standardized testing has disconnected our teachers from students and helped push parents to blame their educators as well. I feel the tests hinders our students more than support as the results can remove them from their peers for additional assistance as they fall behind in other subjects, and create feelings of self doubt and lower self esteem. I feel we need to teach children how to learn rather than what to know and because of this, I feel a standardize and assessment testing are highly inappropriate to make any kind of judgement on the level of a child's comprehension or retainment or knowledge.

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?

We need to be open with our past so that we do not mimic our mistakes, often times the feels that come with learning harsh truths, will cause the denial and cover we see today. The fact we are now learning about the the destruction of Tulsa to the Dakota 38 in Mankato, and genocide of religious faith on Native children, only fuels the friction we still have today between culture and race, as most simply do not know the suffrage of our peers and their family members. Today, the political environment is truly alarming when you see steps taking place to our most regrettable outcomes in history. Minnesota be the first state to admit the existence of systematic racism and be willing to approach by creating a sanctuary for the uncomfortable truths that we all have to learn so we know them, to better prevent them again. As we still have a group of individuals who seek acceptance, we have to provide the materials and books that shows that we as a state do support and accept them, no matter what dated literature suggests. We do this by supporting the ERA efforts as well. To be truly accessible, we also that to be understand that time and little experience at a time, is often the only way to welcome change. By providing levels of education that match the comfort levels of those who question the books in the first place, will show tolerance that will soon turn to acceptance.

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

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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?

I will support unions by supporting their efforts to secure and support their growth but supporting legislation and creating additional ones to protect union workers in times of negotiation and that prevents the use of pressure tactics to sway the members from the picket lines.

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?

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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, I have visited Robert Asp Elementary and the New Moorhead Highschool both in Moorhead, MN. My observations are shadowed by the experiences of the students and some teachers that were questioned in the accessibility of the new high school to the special education students, as well as the limited access to stairwells as classes change over. Though aesthetically appealing for some, I feel that structure and accessibly should be in the forefront of all schools, especially ones that are newly built. As the student ratios are high, they are not as high as other parts of the State. Regardless, the demand for the teachers to students need to be addressed.

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 feel that to proper address the issues, you need to first listen to those who are personally confronting them. I have and will continue to create the conversations to find out what can be changed, as well as listen to their suggestions to change them. I have spoken with current and former educators, and even have relatives who educate, that I have heard the challenges some educators face, but that isn't enough. I have personally surrounded myself with committee members who are past educators and professors of economics and history, that help greatly when it comes to understanding the needs of the education community.

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?

A healthy form of politics is to work with those who you also disagree with. For the most part, I feel our views are in line with one another, however if there is an issue, it is the responsibility of the legislator to cast isms aside and develop a consensus that agrees with most of the constituents. That said, I also understand that many isms persuade voices as well and it is my duty to listen to those who are in the professions, rather than follow or entertain a path that counters progress. If I do have a disagreement, I feel we can have a conversation/s regarding the matter and have a consensus based on the betterment of all, than the opinions of my own.

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

I feel the public school system is the foundation of our communities as it teaches those who will inevitably replace us in the future. Personally, I feel philosophy of other education groups will only divide and categorize a community that in turn will dilute the equality and quality our students deserve. As a legislator, I'd be willing to meet with them and listen to their philosophy as well as ask the hard questions that do make some uncomfortable, like an innocent book does for some on a shelf. As many find comfort in seclusion with their status quos to falsely lift them above others, we as a community have to ensure the rights that everyone is given true equality and opportunity to learn without the fear of criticism for who they are in the classroom.