

2024 Education Minnesota Screening Questionnaire

Our top priorities are supporting educators with professional pay, pensions and health care.

Students learn best when they can develop a trusting relationship with their educators, but what happens when there aren't enough educators?

From the statewide shortage of teachers, licensed school staff, substitutes and education support professionals to burnout among state college faculty, it's clear Minnesota must improve the financial well-being of its educators to address the labor crunch in public education. Nine out of 10 schools in Minnesota are significantly affected by the educator shortage, which harms students of color, students with disabilities and students from rural areas the most.

Understaffing accelerates burnout, low pay forces educators to work multiple jobs, and spiraling health insurance costs encourage educators to work sick. Add in broken pension plans, and it's no wonder educators are reluctantly leaving their students for higher wages outside public education.

Educators are worth more—and they know it. That's why Education Minnesota, a union of more than 84,000 educators in E-12 and higher education, supports a package of bills designed to recruit the next generation of passionate and knowledgeable educators, and retain the best group of education professionals in America.

To offer our students the highest-quality education, employers must pay their educators fairly from day one through retirement, show them the respect they deserve and reduce burnout. Together, these proposals are a responsible reaction to the staffing crisis. Our students, and educators, have waited long enough.

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 No

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 or no

Pensions

3. Will you support increasing state funding to ensure the financial sustainability of public pension funds? Yes or No

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 or No

5. How will you support efforts to lower inequitable penalties in the Teachers Retirement Association in order to expand retirement options? *First, I will educate myself on the specific inequitable penalties. I will seek the advice of Education Minnesota on this matter and background information. Then move legislatively to eliminate these penalties.*
Health care

6. Do you support educators having access to a mandatory statewide health insurance pool, just like other state workers? Yes or no

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 No

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 or no

Education funding

9. Please indicate your support or opposition to the following components of our full-funding agenda.

a. Reverse Minnesota's perpetual underfunding of education by significantly increasing the per-pupil funding formula

Yes No

b. SPED cross subsidy: The state must fully fund special education costs instead of relying on school districts to pay for them.

Yes No

c. EL cross subsidy: Fully fund the costs districts pay to provide quality English learner programs and instruction.

Yes No

d. Lower class sizes: Lower class sizes so teachers can give students more of the individual attention they need and deserve.

Yes No

e. Full-service community schools: Expand access to full-service community schools across the state.

Yes No

f. 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 No

g. 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 No

h. 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 No

i. Professional development: Provide professional development to all staff around cultural competency and trauma-responsive classrooms with aims of closing the discipline disparity gap.

Yes No

j. Education debt relief: Provide debt relief to retain teachers so they can afford to stay in the classroom.

Yes No

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 No

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

4. Front line AFSCME workers want to work with legislators to make public services work better for our communities. Will you establish a genuine relationship with workers and union members in your district? Would you seek advice from workers in areas they have direct knowledge? **Yes**
5. AFSCME members believe that health care is a fundamental human right. Will you support state efforts to enact Single Payer or Public Option? **Yes**
6. Will you work collaboratively with counties and municipalities to strengthen programs like Local Government Aid (LGA) and County Program Aid (CPA) to ensure stable funding and predictable revenue sharing for local governments? Will you stand up against corporate interference intended to take away control from local governments? **Yes**
7. We are looking for leaders who will do what's right – like assuring that incarceration won't make anybody rich. Will you join our fight to continue to ban private prisons in Minnesota? **Yes**
8. Will you stand up to anti-worker forces that want to dismantle the defined benefit pension system that AFSCME members contribute to throughout their careers and depend on for a dignified retirement for the rest of their lives? **Yes**
9. Minnesota needs long-term, dedicated, sustainable funding for roads, bridges and transit. What approach would you take to secure this additional funding that does not pit education and other general fund priorities against our transportation needs? **We need to reform our appropriations process to insure there are dedicated funds for infrastructure so they do not compete with other critical general fund priorities**
10. We believe all workers who want to form a union should have one without employer interference. Do you support card-check and employer neutrality in union organizing, living wage jobs, prevailing wages in construction, and project labor agreements? Will you publicly support workers in organizing campaigns? **Yes**
11. Will you support the full funding of the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB)? **Yes**
12. This question will not affect our endorsement, but for our planning process we need to know. Are you accepting PAC contributions for your campaign? **If yes, it is required that you please include your campaign's Tax ID number. Yes**

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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? *As as the Vice Chair of the Education Finance Committee I would advocate to increase the amount allocated to education from the General Fund.*

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 or no

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 or no

Higher education

14. Do you support increasing the state's direct investment in public higher education to significantly reduce institutions' reliance on tuition? Yes or no

15. Will you support investments in capital bonding projects that preserve buildings, remodel classrooms and keep our technology assets current? Yes or no

16. Do you support DEI efforts on our college campuses and universities? Yes or no

17. What would you do, as a state legislator, to help with the cost of higher education? *Explore having an increase in capital gains tax dedicated to reduce the cost of higher education.*

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 seek to increase funding to add counselors and remedial education 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? Yes or no

High-quality professional educators

20. What will you do to help recruit and retain high-quality educators in our classrooms? *I will support initiatives for paying student teachers; creating apprenticeship programs for teachers; and to increase teacher pay to increase retention.*

Standardized testing

21. What individual or system-level decisions in education do you believe are appropriate to make based on standardized test scores? *Standardized test scores because of their implicit bias should not be the sole assessment tool utilized to make individual or system-level decisions. Instead, normative and summative assessments should also be integrated in forming a more complete picture.*

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? *I support the enactment of the provisions of the newly adopted Ban the Book Ban Act.*

23. Education Minnesota believes all students should have the freedom to feel safe and welcome in their public school, not matter what they look like, where they're from, how they pray, transgender or not. Do you agree? Yes or no.

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 or no

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 No

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 No

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 No

School safety

Parents and educators are growing more concerned about the safety and well-being of students and educators in Minnesota's schools. As the educators of Education Minnesota develop proposals to ensure a peaceful and productive learning environment in schools, would you support:

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 or no
29. Increase reporting and transparency in worksite safety when reporting physical injuries and emotional trauma in the workplace? Yes or no

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? Y/N

Yes No

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 No

32. How will you support unions as a state legislator? *I will oppose any legislation that seek to weaken unions or diminish workers rights. Including supporting any provision prohibiting wage theft.*

Privatization

33. Do you oppose state tax credits for private K-12 education tuition and expenses?

Yes No

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 No

35. Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools until such changes are made?

Yes No

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 - Pine Bend Elementary School and Garbrough Environmental Magnet School. My visit at Pine Bend revealed that there was a lot of small group instruction taking place. The principal was actively moving around the school in his office. At Garbrough each class began inside where a teacher gave direct instruction, then the classes were conducted outdoors. The impact of these visits help highlight the need to control class sizes.*

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 have been an educator for 28 years and keep informed on a day to day basis through observations and issues that arise from mentoring the teachers and interacting with principals. I also meet frequently with a wide array of education groups and as Vice Chair of the Education Finance Committee.

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 will meet with Education Minnesota prior to the beginning of session to discuss its legislative priorities and remain engaged throughout the session. I will be transparent with the organization and be willing to listen if we disagree and remain engaged in the conversation.

If elected/re-elected, how will you balance competing priorities that might exist between Education Minnesota and other education groups? Given my long term relationship with Education I will always seek its advice. Should their priorities differ from other education groups I will invite them in to discuss why they differ and seek to find a resolution.

Obtain briefing from staff.

I obtain information from the following:

- Education Minnesota
- Minnesota Department of Education
- Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board
- Association of Metropolitan School Districts
- Minnesota School Board Association
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators
- Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education