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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Apple Valley office

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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 would work to eliminate the tier system and greatly reduce penalties for any teacher with 30 or more years of experience who retires before age 65.

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I would also support greater investment by the state in our retirement funds.

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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We need to pass bonding bills that include investments in our college campuses. Our higher institutions are needed for their work in research and development, and for training our workforce and the leaders of tomorrow. I would also advocate for an increase in grants and very low interest student loans so our graduates are not burdened with huge debt.

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?

At Rosemount High School we have an AVID program that targets first generation students to help them be ready for college. We also have Career, CIS and AP courses in many subject areas. But our smaller rural schools often do not have the funding necessary to offer these programs. Our inner city schools faced with declining enrollment may also lack adequate funding for these programs. We need to increase funding for K-12 education,.

We must also provide funds to help our college freshman with the tools they need to succeed. Some universities do this by having required classes that focus on organization and study skills as well as life management skills. This is money well spent to increase the graduation rate and success for all students. Counselors, tutors, and mentors should also be readily available.

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?

The number one thing we need to do to recruit high-quality educators is to improve their pay and benefits.

I will sponsor or support bills that do so.

We also need to make sure our teacher training programs are top-notch and that our new teachers are supported in the classroom. Paying peer mentors would help with this.

I will also advocate for treating teachers as professionals. They should not need to deal with outside lobby groups like Moms 4 Liberty, or the MN Parents Alliance that are trying to dictate what they can and cannot say or do in the classroom. Educators have been traumatized by this with parents demanding book bans and objecting to DEI practices or social emotional learning in our classrooms.

Standardized testing

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

Students and teachers do not need state generated tests to see if they are learning our curriculum.

I think they can be used to show personal growth for a student. This can be useful information to a teacher or parent, but the tests are not a true measure of a student's academic success. We have much better, more authentic assessment measure embedded in our classes already.

Students who are new to this country and beginning English language learners were forced to take our 10th grade MCA -III Science test. This makes no sense but this data will be lumped in with our school's scores, and used to rate us. We are also in the middle of a curriculum changes in science to use NGSS 3D science standards but the test they took is based on the old standards, and we were forced to test in April, before we had covered all the required content.

So overall, I think these tests should be limited in number, and only used to show personal growth.

Honesty in Education

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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 ban book bans. I think this just passed in the legislature but more action may be needed.

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?

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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've been an Education Minnesota Member for decades. As a legislator I will listen to the concerns educators and union reps bring to the capitol. I will support bills that keep our union strong. I joined Lakeville teachers as they rallied for a fair contract and would have joined them on the picket line if they had not settled.

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 answer these forms as I am finishing up a 44 year career as a science teacher. My first job was teaching 9th grade science at Kettle Moraine High School in Wales, WI.
Then I move to Minnesota and taught middle school life and earth science for Minneapolis Public Schools before being hired by Rosemount High in 1983.
I've experience many changes in education over the years. When I first started at RHS, I was the only female science teacher, now we are more gender balanced. The COVID years were very difficult and in many ways our students are still recovering from those years of isolation but we are seeing improvements every year. There have been changes to how we dress, what we can say, what our student groups are (now we have GSA, Black student union, Latina, etc) and our diversity is much more noticeable and celebrated. The way we teach has changed dramatically too.
I bring my decades of experience with me and my great respect for the teachers, administrators, and support staff I have been honored to work with.

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 attended Lakeville and ISD 196 School board meetings. I have attended meetings at my DCUE union office and helped them lobby at the legislature. I have also helped DCUE interview candidates for endorsement. As a former member of the DFL State Platform committee, I advocated for funding for education. I've also taken course in SEED and attended and lead equity

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trainings at RHS.

As a Biden Nationals Delegate in 2020, I connected with the AFL-CIO and will do so in Chicago in August too.

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 reaching out to Kate Schmidt, Carrie Popp, and others at EDMN to keep up to date on issues. I will share concerns in an open and transparent manner if we disagree.

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

My door will be open to all who wish to visit. I will not compromise my values which strongly align with Education Minnesota in order to placate fringe groups who are often clueless as to what actually happens in our classrooms.