

**2024 Candidate endorsement questionnaire : Entry #
1501**

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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Apple Valley office

Candidate name

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Election district

58A

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?

This is something I'd like to learn more about.

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I was the author of a bill that will most help newer teachers count their student loan payments as their contribution for the pension match so that even if these public servants have student debt, they can continue to save for retirement instead of having to choose one or the other.

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

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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

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

The debt incurred by students for just their education today is astronomical! Some of our young people do not have access to federal funds to offset some of those costs. In Minnesota we can support students who may look to predatory lenders just so students can invest in their futures.

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?

There are already existing programs that are incredibly successful like Promise Fellows, and other programs that follow and support students for many years from secondary education into post-secondary. We can invest in these interventions early which is a long-term cost-savings for Minnesota taxpayers and improves chances for success for these students and their families.

**A not about the potential expansion of the North Star Promise to private institutions: I think the MN private college grants/scholarships is a great program and that can help make those options competitive with North Star Promise, but I'm in favor of that program being for our public colleges and universities only for now.

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?

We need to make sure we're paying our educators what they are worth, we must continue supporting them, encouraging them to stay in the profession, and reduce gun violence all across Minnesota and school shootings specifically. Unions can play a strong role as advocates for their members and with the same goals in mind to best support public school teachers and employees, we can make this a profession folks want to go into again!

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 the original idea behind standardized testing was to be able to show growth, highlight struggling students, and see students' performance change over time- important things to pay attention to! I do NOT believe decisions about school funding or teacher performance should be based on student scores: in lower-performing schools that encourages teachers to leave and/or teaching to the test, not real-world learning for the youth or teachers being able to stay in a struggling school to develop the long-term relationships and skills needed to better assist kids.

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?

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We passed a ban on book bans in the 2024 legislature and I believe firmly that books are doorways into other peoples' experiences and new worlds. It's important for the perspectives of minority groups be shared and available to all students, at an age-appropriate time.

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

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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?

Unions created the middle class, and I'm proud to have grown up in two single-income households who could afford to raise me because both of my parents were Education Minnesota union members. I remember seeing my folks on picket lines during strikes. I knew that collectively bargaining for rights and pay was key to being able to afford our lives and stay in my homes. I reject the idea that organized labor and environmental protection are mutually exclusive and believe in Minnesota we must protect workers and our natural resources.

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! My two children attend our public elementary school in Northfield. I have great relationships with their teachers, paras, speech pathologists, front office workers, school board members, district superintendent and have many friends and acquaintances who teach in our public schools (across Minnesota!) and most of my friends are parents of public-school attending youth. I was "Principal for a Day" in New Prague last Fall and continue to work to develop deeper relationships with teachers/school staff in New Prague and the TCU school districts.

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 serve on the Northfield School District's Finance Advisory Board and have attended several Legislative Action Committee Zoom meetings with our district's superintendent, school board members, and community members wanting to advocate for fully funding our public schools in Minnesota. I learned a lot from them about the special education subsidy and the formula for how our schools are funded. I feel so fortunate to have friends who are teachers and work in our schools and a great relationship with our superintendent whom I can go to with any questions to hear his opinion. I've now also served on the House Education Finance Committee for the past two Sessions!

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?

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I would be so honored to have the endorsement from Education Minnesota, the union both of my parents were proud members of for their entire careers. If I disagree with you on an issue, or if you disagree with me, I'd hope we would have a regular enough open partnership and ongoing dialogue that we'd know that long before a vote takes place or a hearing happens. I value open and direct communication and want to support teachers and our education professionals as well as I am able!

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

I believe in transparency and open communication so I would hope all parties could hold space for conflicting ideas and points of view. If I'm put in the position of making a difficult decision, my goal is to have both communicated clearly and built up enough trust inside of our relationship that you would understand my position and why that is the way the vote went. I've now seen how various education groups and lobbying firms operate in the legislature and on the whole I trust how EdMN has conducted themselves, that's why it's important to me to be a partner and earn your endorsement. Thank you!