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1415**

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Candidate endorsement questionnaire - Duluth office

**Candidate name**

Aron Schnaser

**Election district**

7A

**Party endorsement**

DFL

**Email**

[aronschnaserfor7A@gmail.com](mailto:aronschnaserfor7A@gmail.com)

**Phone**

775 721 7586

**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 will fight to reimplement Rule-90 or a better system. All public employees deserve good retirement benefits, and if a police officer can retire at the age of 55 with full benefits, teachers should have that option as well.

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**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.**

Yes

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**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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Just like the K-12 systems, we need more funding for our colleges and universities so they are not forced to raise tuition or cut valuable programs when they should be doing the opposite. We pay for more funding by expanding our economy by recruiting and expanding businesses in Minnesota that provide good paying, union jobs to alleviate the burden on individual taxpayers.

**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?**

My husband was the first in his family to attend a four year school, so he will be a helpful resource for me. It is important to provide funding for colleges to implement support systems that these students need. They also need a space to come together at each college campus so they can support each other and know they are not alone. We also need to make sure that faculty and staff are trained to address their needs as well. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I can attest how important it is to know the needs of a community. Otherwise well-meaning faculty and staff could unknowingly create barriers to support students from underserved communities without having training.

**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?**

First, we have to pay teachers wages that are competitive with their level of education. Just as important, we need to make sure they feel valued and respected by the districts where they work by providing better benefits (especially for healthcare) and implementing stronger discipline standards for students (especially for bullying) and make sure they are followed. In my building, some students and staff alike feel unsafe due the ineffective discipline practices. For recruitment, we need to make sure teacher candidates can afford the education they need and continue teaching once they graduate. No one should need to take a second job in order to student teach or work in a classroom. Finally, we need to recruit and elect good candidates for school boards across Minnesota.

**Standardized testing**

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

Few, if any, decisions should be made on standardized test scores as they are currently implemented. Studies have shown that they are better indicators of demographic data (especially for low income and marginalized groups) than they are for student success. Schools are heavily judged by these test scores, from family and community members all the way up to the Federal government. Arguing that standardized tests are an accurate reflection of student performance is like looking at a single historical artifact and arguing that you know everything about the time and place it was created. Students can opt out or not try while taking these tests without any personal consequence, yet both reflect poorly on their schools. Instead of Minnesota taxpayers paying a fortune to Pearson (or any other for-profit corporation) for these highly uninformative tests, I think putting that money back into our classrooms and into smaller assessments throughout the year, which actually measures growth, would be much more effective.

**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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Minnesota must prohibit all public schools and libraries (or any institution receiving taxpayer funds) from instituting "red state" style book bans. All of these institutions in Minnesota should be required to provide inclusive content.

**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

**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**

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**policies backed by anti-worker groups?**

Yes

**32. How will you support unions as a state legislator?**

I will support any bill important to Education Minnesota, the AFL-CIO, or any other labor organization. The success of one labor organization helps to make all of the others stronger.

**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, I work at Greenway High School as a science teacher (and my husband teaches English at Rock Ridge High School). While there are many successes of teachers working with students, I see a lot of issues. Staffing shortages, especially for paras and guest teachers, lack of resources, lack of respect for us and our time, and discipline issues. Often, discipline issues in my building are not handled effectively (if at all), especially when it comes to bullying.

**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 primarily go to my local Education Minnesota unit (#1330) and other teachers/staff members in my building. I also communicate with parents of my students about the needs they have regarding their children.

**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?**

As a Education Minnesota member myself, I will collaborate heavily with Education Minnesota as education is one of my top priorities. I think reaching out to local units is important as they all have different needs and issues. If I disagree with Education Minnesota on an issue, I will communicate why and engage in dialogue to reach a point where I do agree.

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

Student needs must come first. I will make decisions that will have the most benefit to students based on the best evidence available to me.