

Fall 2004 Questions for Candidates and Elected Officials

How do we ... Invest in public schools Provide stability & Measure school success

Issue #1

Former Finance Commissioners Gunyou and Kiedrowski: "For the first time in our state's history, the state's investment for both schools and colleges will go down for the next three years." 4/20, Star Tribune. Still, 100% student proficiency is required.

- ✓ **How will you ensure Minnesota invests in public education?**
- ✓ Who should be responsible for increased costs associated with all students meeting state and federal requirements?

Issue #2

We've been reading in the news about parents and others fund raising to provide basic funding for schools—money for crayons, paper and teacher salaries.

- ✓ Specifically, what should an adequate public education include? Arts? Foreign language? AP? Gifted and talented? Technology?
- ✓ How much should parents be expected to pay out-of-pocket for their children's public education?

Issue #3

The state recently provided local property tax relief by accepting full responsibility for funding the general education formula. This cost the state about \$1 billion a year. However, the legislature did not identify a permanent way to fund this commitment. As a result, we may face a \$2 billion shortfall every two years.

- ✓ What is your strategy to cover this ongoing shortfall?
- ✓ **How would you provide more stability to public education funding?**

Issue #4

In 2001 election season, the Taxpayers League asked candidates to sign the No New Taxes Pledge. Candidates are again being asked to sign the same pledge.

- ✓ Have you signed the No New Taxes Pledge?
- ✓ If revenues are not enhanced and, given the expected budget shortfall, what programs and services would you cut?

Issue #5

Currently, private and religious schools receive public funds for transportation, textbooks, counseling and special education.

- ✓ Should private and religious schools be given additional public funds either directly or through tax credits?
- ✓ Should all schools that accept public dollars be held to the same rules, mandates and expectations?

Issue #6

Traditionally, Minnesotans have believed public schools should be locally controlled and that communities should have the right to decide what their children learn. Now we have more state and federal intrusion eroding local control.

- ✓ What is the appropriate role for state and federal government in education?
- ✓ In our district, what is your understanding of the most pressing issue facing our schools?

Issue #7

MCA tests are how Minnesota holds schools accountable, and public perception is influenced by this single indicator. Yet MCAs are not yet based on the new state standards and do not provide parents, teachers or students with information showing individual student strengths and challenges.

- ✓ How do we make the tests more meaningful for parents, students and teachers?
- ✓ **How should a school's success be measured?**

Prepared by Parents United and the Alliance for Student Achievement

When asking these questions, read the opening statements to provide context. The three most critical questions are in bold.



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Join our e-list to get updates and monitor legislation throughout the 2005 funding session. Find out what is happening and how it affects your school.

We are united in our commitment to quality public schools for all children. We will not be divided by geography, race, economic status, generation or the special needs of our children.