



NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
Political Action Committee of the
National Education Association

2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire

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Candidate signature

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*Candidates: Questionnaire information and responses are for INTERNAL USE ONLY. Please clearly indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations and other information may be attached, but please be certain to make reference to the corresponding question. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to the Maryland State Education Association, c/o Executive Director Sean Johnson at sejohnson@mseanea.org.

Section A. Opportunity Begins with Great Public Schools for Every Student

Ensuring Every Student Has the Opportunity to Learn

1. Do you support increasing Title I funding with the goal of fully funding it?
yes no
2. Do you support increasing Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding?
yes no
3. Do you support mandatory full funding at the promised 40 percent level for IDEA?
yes no
4. Do you support federal funding to modernize and improve public school buildings and facilities?
yes no
5. Do you support steadily increasing federal investment in Community Schools to meet demand and increase expansion of this model?
yes no
6. Do you support increasing federal investments to help states expand public high-quality prekindergarten programs and to ensure all children have access to full-day kindergarten?
yes no
7. Do you support increased federal investments in and commitment to; Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian education?
yes no
8. Do you support increasing funding for high-quality career and technical education programs that help high school and post-secondary students attain credentials, degrees, and skills to secure in-demand jobs and occupations?
yes no
9. Do you support an honest and holistic education for students, with adequate resources that help them better understand the lives, cultures, and experiences of different people regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, or heritage?
yes no

Health, Wellness, and Safety

10. Please indicate which of the following you support in regards to Medicaid. (Select all that apply.)

- Increasing funding and federal match for Medicaid
- Converting Medicaid to a block grant
- Instituting per capita caps on Medicaid funding
- None of the above

11. Do you support providing universal healthy school meals for all students, regardless of their families' ability to pay? yes no

12. Do you support ensuring healthy nutrition standards for school meals and snacks, such as the standards outlined in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act? yes no

13. Do you oppose any cuts or attempts to block grant funding for school meals, other child nutrition programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)?
 yes no

14. Which approaches to preventing gun violence and improvements to safety preparedness in schools do you support? (Select all that apply)

- Universal background checks for guns bought in stores, online, or at gun shows
- Extending the initial background check review period from 3 to 10 days
- Banning assault-style weapons, high-capacity magazines, and bump stocks
- Prohibition on federal funding to purchase firearms and firearms training for educators
- Preserving the Gun-Free School Zones Act
- None of the above

15. Do you support increasing funding for and access to school-based mental health services offered to students by licensed professionals? yes no

16. Do you support legislation to protect students' personally identifiable information and ensure students' data privacy? yes no

Respect for the Profession

17. Which approaches to teacher preparation programs do you support? (Select all that apply)

- Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to include comprehensive "residencies" serving as clinical practice of at least a year in which experienced teachers provide guidance to teacher candidates and work to develop the skills to be profession-ready upon entering the classroom as the teacher of record
- Providing supports for new teachers, including mentoring by experienced teachers

Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to recruit and retain teacher candidates, especially from communities of color and other underrepresented groups, including male teachers, to expand diversity in the teaching workforce
 None of the above

18. Which approaches to raising educator salaries, as a means of improving teacher recruitment and retention, do you support? (Select all that apply)

Establishing a national minimum salary for first-year teachers
 Using federal funds for raising teacher salaries
 Federal-state partnerships to raise teacher salaries
 Creating grants to support Local Education Agencies or State Education Agencies in raising teacher salaries
 None of the above

19. Do you support measures that would ensure educators have access to mental health resources?

yes no

20. Do you support federal funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which offers valuable professional development and high standards for educators to further their practice? yes no

21. Do you support providing funding that can go toward professional development for education support professionals and specialized instructional support professionals?

yes no

22. Do you believe that each educator has the right to, within generally accepted professional and content standards, exercise their professional judgment in designing age-appropriate lessons, providing resources, and encouraging discussions that offer an accurate, honest, and high-quality education? yes no

23. Do you support preventing federal government interference or intrusion in higher education, so that educators and faculty can embrace academic freedom and pursue their research without political encroachment? yes no

Accountability for All Public Schools

24. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same standards of transparency (i.e. financial, holding public board meetings, and reporting that includes the preservation of historical data) as all public schools? yes no

25. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same accountability standards/requirements (i.e. civil rights, employment, health, labor, safety, educator qualifications) as all public schools? yes no

26. Do you support removing the federal barriers that deter states from replacing standardized tests with new innovative types of assessment for federal accountability purposes? yes no

27. Do you support reducing the frequency and number of federally mandated statewide standardized tests in state accountability systems? yes no

28. Do you support expanding flexibility in statewide accountability systems that would allow for the inclusion and weighting of a diverse array of indicators that can provide a more well-rounded picture of school quality (such as teacher retention, access to advanced coursework, access to school counselors and nurses, and access to a personal learning device)? yes no

School Vouchers and Related Privatization Schemes

29. Please indicate whether you support the following: (Select all that apply)

Private school vouchers

Education savings accounts for K-12 students

Tuition tax credits for K-12 students

529 savings plans for K-12 private school tuition or home schooling

None of the above

30. Do you support private school vouchers for any of these specific populations of students? (Select all that apply)

Students from military families

Students who attend Bureau of Indian Education schools

Students who reside in Washington, D.C.

Students with disabilities

Students who have been bullied or harassed

Students who have been placed in foster care

None of the above

Section B: Opportunity Requires an Economy that Works for America's Middle Class

Creating a Fair Economy

31. Do you support a living wage for public-school educators and other public employees that includes increasing the federal minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour by 2030, with future wage determinations based on the increase in the median hourly wage for all employees? yes no

32. Please indicate which changes to the U.S. tax code you support in order to ensure we have the revenue needed to make critical investments in our students and communities. (Select all that apply)

Reducing corporate tax rates

Increasing corporate tax rates

Closing corporate tax loopholes

Reducing high-income individual's tax rate

Increasing high-income individual's tax rate

Repealing the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions

No change

Making College More Affordable for Everyone

33. Do you support federal reinvestment in higher education to make college more affordable and shift the cost burden away from students and their families?

yes no

34. Do you support tuition-free community college? yes no

35. Do you support broad-based student loan debt cancellation to invigorate the economy and narrow the racial wealth gap? yes no

36. Do you support legislation allowing federal student loans to be refinanced—like mortgages—when interest rates decline? yes no

37. Do you support legislation allowing all federal student loans to be discharged during bankruptcy? yes no

38. Which of these do you support regarding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) programs?

Preserving PSLF and TLF

Improving both PSLF and TLF to ensure borrowers are not denied their benefits due to loopholes and flawed implementation by the U.S. Department of Education
 Neither of these

39. Do you support increasing institutional aid programs under Title III and Title V that provide aid specifically to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian-Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and other Minority-Serving Institutions? yes no

40. Please indicate which changes to the Pell Grant award you would support. (Select all that apply)

Expanding the maximum award to keep pace with annual cost of living increases
 Decreasing the maximum Pell Grant award
 No change

41. Please indicate which solutions for simplified student loan repayment plans you support. (Select all that apply)

Waiving additional interest, as long as the borrower continues to make payments
 Making plans available to all borrowers, regardless of the type of federal student loan they hold
 Factoring discretionary income accurately so that it is easier for borrowers to manage and make monthly payments
 Ensuring payments count toward achieving Public Service Loan Forgiveness, regardless of the type of repayment plan
 None of the above

Employees' Rights and Benefits

42. Do you believe all public sector employees should have the right to bargain collectively? yes no

43. Do you support due process rights for all education employees? yes no

44. Do you support protecting people from being denied health insurance coverage or being charged more for coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions?

yes no

45. Do you support providing strong paid leave provisions for all American workers?

yes no

46. Do you support modifying the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and offering paid leave protections for low-wage workers who do not meet the 1,250-hour threshold currently

needed for FMLA benefits because their position/job classification restricts the number of hours they work? yes no

47. Do you support maintaining the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored health coverage?
yes no

Retirement Security

48. Do you support eliminating or reforming the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision? yes no

49. Do you support raising the Social Security payroll tax cap? yes no

50. Which approaches to Medicare policy and funding do you support? (Select all that apply)

Raising the Medicare eligibility age to 67

Converting Medicare to a voucher system, also referred to as premium support

Means testing Medicare benefits eligibility

Maintaining at least the current level of benefits for recipients

None of the above

51. Do you support the deferral of income tax on contributions to a pension plan?
yes no

Section C: Opportunity for All Requires a Democracy that Works for All

Human and Civil Rights

52. Which approaches to improving school climate and discipline practices do you support?

Increasing funding and access to school-based mental health, including the full complement of specialized instructional support staff (i.e. counselors and nurses) and education support professionals (i.e., health and student services staff)

Increasing funding and/or staff support to implement restorative practices in schools

Increasing funding and/or staff to implement trauma-informed services and age-appropriate responses

None of the above

53. Which approaches in police reform do you support to address systemic racism in the justice system?

Prohibiting law enforcement agencies from profiling based on race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other characteristics

Banning physical maneuvers like chokeholds that apply pressure which slows, restricts, or stops blood flow or oxygen to the brain

Mandating dashboard and body cameras for federal law enforcement and requiring state and local law enforcement to use available funds to purchase body cameras

Eliminating the Department of Defense's (DoD) 1033 program which provides excess DoD supplies and equipment to state, county, and local law enforcement, including school-based police agencies and departments

Removing law enforcement involvement from the school discipline process to reduce unwarranted school-based arrests and referrals of students to the criminal system

None of the above

54. Do you support increased funding for the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights so it will have the necessary resources to ensure timely action and enforcement to secure equal education access for all students through extensive data collection, research, investigation, and enforcement of both individual and systemic civil rights complaints and demonstrated problems in our nation's schools?

yes no

55. Do you support amending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include a ban on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex in the areas of public accommodation, such as education, employment, housing and public spaces?

yes no

56. Do you support federal legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented people, including current DACA recipients, those eligible to apply for DACA, and other immigrant youth?

yes no

57. Do you believe your first and foremost duty is to uphold the U.S. Constitution, and to support future election outcomes that have been certified by proper state authorities, as adjudicated by the courts according to the process set forth by the Constitution and federal law, regardless of whether it benefits you or your party?

yes no

58. Which of the following do you support in an effort to protect voting rights and facilitate greater civic participation? (Select all that apply)

Automatic voter registration

Same-day voter registration

Early voting

Restoration of voting rights for individuals who have completed felony sentences

Restoration of the Voting Rights Act

Prohibition on purges of voter rolls

Ensuring that discriminatory voter ID requirements do not prevent Americans from exercising their right to vote

Enhancing federal support for voting system security and increasing oversight of election vendors

Transparency in funding sources for federal elections

Section D: Short Answer

59. Do you believe the federal government has a role in fostering educational excellence and equal access for all public school students, regardless of race, Zip code, family income, special needs, language, and other factors? yes no

If yes, please provide a short answer describing what you believe that role should be. If no, please provide a short answer describing why you believe the federal government should not play a role in public education.

We have an obligation to provide adequate resources and equal access for all public school students. This is an area that I am intimately familiar with and have been actively involved in. Prince George's County has the second oldest school buildings in the state of Maryland. Where our children go to learn speaks to their dignity, and I saw crumbling schools throughout my county that were not befitting the students of my community. Facing an \$8 billion school construction backlog, we were able to utilize a first of its kind public private partnership (P3) to break ground on six new schools through the P3 model, and an additional four through traditional school construction. In total, we have broken ground on 10 schools in just 2.5 years, and we are opening the doors to the six new P3 schools this school year.

60. What is your personal background or experience with public schools?

As the County Executive of Prince George's County, I am deeply familiar with the important role that the public school system plays in the success of a community. Our schools are often one of the safest places for students, providing them with a full meal and an opportunity to grow and learn. I am proud of the record I have on education and the work we've done to improve outcomes in Prince George's County, from breaking ground on 10 new schools in two years to funding a historic amount for school funding, \$11.4 billion over 4 years. Thanks to our administrations work, we've been able to expand full day pre-kindergarten, we've been able make historic investments in technology and the experience that our students have in the classroom by securing a 1:1 device-to-child ratio, and have made historic investments in providing our students with mental health resources, and free dental and vision services for students regardless of insurance status.

61. If elected/re-elected, how will you work consistently with NEA and the state affiliate for accountability and relationship-building?

I have been honored to have the support of MSEA in my previous races, and would seek to build on my relationships with stakeholders in Maryland to be an effective advocate for teachers and students in the Senate.

62. What would your criteria be for considering confirmation of the president's nominee for Secretary of Education? What stakeholders would you consult and what knowledge, experience, and expertise would you look for?

I would support nominees who share the on-the-ground, jurisdictional experience that I have to make sure that the person who is our Secretary of Education understands the day-to-day issues that teachers, students and parents have. I would seek to consult with the NEA to make sure that any nominee reflects their values as well.

63. What criteria would you use to decide whether or not to support nominees to federal courts and to the Supreme Court of the United States?

- a. Who or what types of stakeholders will you rely upon to inform your decision and what information about potential nominees will be most important to you?
- b. With regard to selection criteria for a Supreme Court justice, what qualifications, knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences do you consider essential for this position?

As a former prosecutor, I understand the importance of the rule of law and have a deep respect for our judiciary. As a Senator, I would support qualified, thoughtful nominees who have shown that they share a respect of the law and the impact that laws have on people.

I would seek counsel with a wide range of groups, such as the American Bar Association and others, to ensure that a robust vetting process has been carried out.

64. What would your criteria be for considering presidential cabinet nominees in general, and what would your process be for vetting nominees' qualifications, expertise, and position on issues?

Cabinet nominees should have practical experience in the areas that they seek to operate in. I would consult with those who have a unique expertise in the specific areas affected by a given cabinet position to make sure that we have fair-minded people who are capable of undertaking the important role of cabinet secretary.