

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Eckel, Allison / Email: austin@njdacc.com

Survey answered on: 10/9/2021 11:48 PM

1. Legislative District #: (answer type: Number)

8

2. Office You Are Seeking: (answer type: Short Text)

Assembly

3. Party: (answer type: Short Text)

Democrat

4. Campaign Phone Number: (answer type: Short Text)

609-410-8476

5. Campaign Mailing Address: (answer type: Long Text)

PO Box 1224 Marlton NJ 08053

6. Staff Contact Name and Phone Number (if preferred): (answer type: Long Text)

Austin Lyle 406-459-3019

7. State investment in a state level school facilities strategic plan to address long-ignored school infrastructure needs across all school districts in need in New Jersey (answer type: Multiple Options With Single Answer)

Support

8. Supporting school employees' (including NJPSA members') rights to collective bargaining (answer type: Multiple Options With Single Answer)

Support

9. An ongoing commitment to the scheduled phase-up of funding of public employee pensions according to the schedule set forth in the law (answer type: Multiple Options With Single Answer)

Support

10. Private school vouchers in any form (tuition tax credits, opportunity scholarships, etc.) (answer type: Multiple Options With Single Answer)

Oppose

11. No new unfunded state mandates for public schools (answer type: Multiple Options With Single Answer)

Support

12. What health care policy approaches and priorities do you support for our public schools with the goal of maintaining in-person learning? In your mind, since educators are not health professionals, when do you believe a statewide approach is needed and when is a local approach more appropriate in deciding pandemic-related school health policies? (answer type: Long Text)

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School administrators and the professionals on their team have a tremendous responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone in their buildings, to the best of their ability, under normal circumstances. The pandemic brought extra challenges to that responsibility, and education professionals in New Jersey rose to those challenges. I believe the State must review the guidance, support, and resources it has provided through the COVID emergency and assess how it can do better to support schools. I also believe that statewide guidance is necessary in certain public health circumstances — such as baseline COVID safety measures — and that regional or local directives are appropriate in areas with high rates of transmission.

13. What issues do you see in this area and how can you assist local districts in addressing school infrastructure needs in both SDA (Schools Development Authority) districts and regular operating districts? (answer type: Long Text)

The COVID pandemic brought to light the aging infrastructure of many of our State's school buildings. I support the State reaching out to each school district to ensure they are aware of the opportunities provided by the federal funding and the process for accessing it. For other improvements not covered by the ARP and CARES, the State already has a bond program for schools to access funds they can use for improvements, but those must be tied to school programming. I would like to explore opportunities for the State to work with school districts to fund non-programmatic capital improvements, especially those not covered by extraordinary federal funds.

14. As a legislator, will you support professional educators in their work with their students and avoid the temptation to mandate specific programs for every school district as we work to meet the individual needs of each student, school and district? How will you support the work of educators and principals in your district? (answer type: Long Text)

One of the many reasons why I am an ardent supporter of New Jersey's public schools is my experiences as a parent of two students. My children differ greatly in their learning styles, and the educational professionals in their lives are dedicated to understanding each of them and employing the techniques needed to support each of them. And the same holds true for each of the students in their charge. A desire to support the professional teams in return for all they do for the students is why I joined the Lenape Regional High School District Board of Education. Pre-COVID, our Superintendent brought to the Board the need to support the social and emotional aspects of our students' high school experience. We created a special room in each of our four buildings where a student can go to de-stress and take a moment to relax. As our students returned to the buildings late in 2020, these rooms became even more popular and necessary. Not every school will support their students the same way because each district knows the needs and culture of their students. Applying this idea to curriculum, I believe that consistent requirements for subject competency are needed, but that districts can take different approaches to implementation. I look forward to working with school districts to ensure that their voices and experiences are taken into consideration when discussing education-related issues.

15. Do you believe New Jersey students should pass a state graduation test or demonstrate proficiency in math and language arts standards as described above to earn a high school diploma? (answer type: Long Text)

I am a self-described data nerd, and understand that a few data points are not enough to tell a story. So, a few test scores are not enough to represent the educational journey of a student. Modern K-12

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practice is now to teach the student, rather than teaching the material, and our assessments should be structured to support that. I would like to hear more about NJPSA's vision for a modern system of assessments and how it would align with the State's current data-gathering needs. The goal in all of this is to ensure that our students are well-supported and prepared to progress to the next level. The data we use and the methods through which we gather it should always be a topic for discussion and review.

16. As a legislator, what will you do to promote education as a positive career path to our youth and what types of initiatives will you consider to enhance the educational career pipeline for the future? How will you promote diversity within our future workforce? (answer type: Long Text)

Ensuring that the profession of public school teacher remains an attractive career begins with the State continuing to fund the schools and the teacher pension. This will help the districts keep compensation competitive. As an Assemblywoman, I will support incentive programs for new teachers, which could include grants, scholarships, and loan forgiveness programs. The work that the legislature has already done to make a college education more affordable will make the teaching profession more accessible to a wider population. Coming out of the COVID emergency, I see a need to continue to lift up our teachers and education professionals for the important role they play in our lives, and to continue to support their careers at the professional level they deserve.

17. Will you vote for legislation (S-3284 (Greenstein)/ A-5011 (Wimberly)) that provides the same accidental death benefit to school employees who lost their lives in the service of their school community while performing such essential services? (answer type: Yes/No)

Yes

18. Thinking about the future, what are your goals for our public education system and what actions will you take as a state legislator to support our educators, our students and our schools? (answer type: Long Text)

Maintain the quality of education that has earned us first-in-the-nation status

Continue to fund the pension system

Reassess the school funding formula to improve equity across districts

Review of our State assessment system

Close the digital divide among students to ensure equitable access to resources

Support for social/emotional learning programs and mental health resources