

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Farmer, Edwin / Email: edfarmer4assembly@gmail.com

Survey answered on: 9/1/2021 10:31 PM

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

6

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

State Assembly

3. Party: (answer type: Short Text)

Republican

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

609-876-2410

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

Foley Farmer and Super for NJ

PMB 149

Haddonfield Rd. Suite E

Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

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

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)

Oppose

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)

Support

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

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pandemic-related school health policies? (answer type: Long Text)

Even though educators are not health professionals, every school in the state has a nurse or other professional and a school doctor who can and should be advising school boards and administrations. I don't believe that there is a "one size fits all" solutions to the problems being faced today and I firmly believe in local control. Studies have shown that schools have not been "spreader" locations and I firmly believe in following the real science.

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)

More funding cannot be the answer to every school issue. The ARP and CARES act are going to have to be paid for. There is no free lunch. It took many years for our schools to fall into disrepair and they will not all be fixed at once either. Once again, not all districts suffer the same problems or need the same solutions. We need to look at past operations like asbestos removal. Many schools found HIGHER levels of air bourne asbestos AFTER the removal. The upgrades needed today may also lead to unintended consequences.

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)

As I have noted in other answers on this questionnaire, I do not support one size fits all solutions. Educators, like parents and students, need options. Mandates only ensure that one solution is tested. Choice allows districts, parents and legislatures to better see what works and what does not. Then districts can abandon failed policies and adopt those shown to have worked elsewhere. But, this will require measurable standards to determine which policies are working and which are not and districts and administrators should not be punished for good faith failures and should be rewarded for turning those failures around.

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)

A high school diploma should mean something. Students should be held to a standard and the only way to accomplish this is by measuring and assessing. In the mid-70's, I was part of the first graduation exam testing in the state. I passed the evaluation as a freshman. These tests are not designed to hold students to high standards. They address the minimum. Yes, there are some students who do not "test well". There may be a need to provide alternative testing methods but the same standards need to be upheld.

Joe Sobran's statement, "In 100 years, we have gone from teach Latin and Greek in high school to teaching remedial reading in college" is all too true.

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)

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The shortage of quality teachers is not a new phenomenon. Part of the problem is that poor teachers cause students to turn from teaching when they start college. Other good students often consider turning to education but are daunted by the need to catch up on the required education courses.

I would like to see the alternate route process modified and expanded to bring those who have been successful in their careers into the classroom without the hoops that need to be jumped through today. I, myself, considered alternate route to teach high school math and/or science (and I would still consider it!) but the need to find a district that would take me on and the difficulty that I had in getting information about the program from the state prevented me from following through.

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)

No

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)

Educating our youth is one of the most important things that the government does and it does not do it well. I've raised three kids through the public school system in New Jersey and found, even in a well thought of school district, that the quality was woefully low and aimed at the average or middling student. The strongest and weakest were left behind. Strong students often get enough support at home to improve their education level while the weakest are often failed at home as well as at school.

This can't continue.

Our public schools need to get back to basics and they need to start this with their younger students. Reading, writing and arithmetic should be stressed at an early age and those who fall behind need to be given extra help while those who excel need to be exposed to advanced work. I realize that this will not be easy but I believe that we are up to the challenge.

I often read that we should drop classes like Algebra II from curriculums and teach kids to balance a checkbook and understand the mortgage process. The truth is that if more students took Algebra II they would be able to balance a checkbook and understand compound interest. Even students NOT heading to college will be well served. I've known a number of young men and women who have worked through various union apprenticeships and one of the biggest problems was that the union program needed to teach these high school graduates basic math skills.

As a legislator, my primary educational focus will be on supporting students. Educators and schools need to be supported in order to hold up their end of supporting students.

Getting better teachers into classrooms and supporting their activities there is a requirement for a better New Jersey and a better country.