

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Gopal, Vin / Email: info@gopalfornj.com

Survey answered on: 10/10/2021 03:34 PM

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

11

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

State Senate

3. Party: (answer type: Short Text)

Democrat

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

8488634303

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

810 Deal Rd Ocean Twp NJ 07712

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

Coby Eiss

845-659-6697

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)

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Gopal, Vin / Email: info@gopalfornj.com

Survey answered on: 10/10/2021 03:34 PM

I believe that school districts should not have to make health decisions on their own as the coronavirus pandemic continues into the Fall semester. Because school administrators are not public health experts, they should not be expected to make the incredibly difficult and contentious decision to shut down a school or establish certain policies in response to the pandemic alone. Local health departments use their existing authority for other contagious outbreaks that could be a potential danger to the students, and these protocols can be adapted for COVID. I have written to the Commissioner of Health asking her to encourage local health departments to use their existing authority within school districts as needed.

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)

Among the biggest issues I see in our local districts are the limitations on how federal funds can be used for capital projects in school districts -- we need to cut through the bureaucracy and red tape to make sure that our children have the best educational environments possible.

I can assist local districts in addressing school infrastructure needs by providing support to increase state funding for the Schools Development Authority, and explore creative solutions to help schools more easily finance capital projects.

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)

I support the state creating resources and opportunities for school districts to best address issues like student mental health, and will continue to work with local educators and administrators within my district to ensure these supports are available. For example, in response to concerns raised by a local school district, I have pushed to protect and increase state funding for school-based youth services programs.

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 believe that we should be assessing to ensure that each student has received an adequate education. However, the assessment itself should not take away from a student's education or create unnecessary barriers to graduation, and I support having multiple routes that students can take to demonstrate their proficiency.

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)

I will continue to build upon the law I sponsored to create grant and tuition reimbursement programs for STEM teachers and explore other creative incentives for aspiring teachers. I will also continue to work with my colleagues to pass legislation I've cosponsored to establish a "Male Teachers of Color Mentorship Pilot Program." Additionally, I will watch as DOE implements the newly enacted legislation to establish pilot programs for issuing limited certificates of eligibility with advanced standing and

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Gopal, Vin / Email: info@gopalfornj.com

Survey answered on: 10/10/2021 03:34 PM

limited certificates of eligibility so that we can improve and expand upon alternate routes towards teacher certification.

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)

When re-elected, I will continue to fight for full funding for special education, and support for districts to provide mental health support to students, teachers, and faculty. I have sponsored bipartisan legislation to establish a School Funding Formula Evaluation Task Force to ensure that our school districts receive their fair share of funding. It's imperative that we do everything in our power to deliver the resources that our students and teachers deserve.