

NJPSA Questionnaire for NJ Legislature - 2021 General Election

User: Turner, Shirley / Email: senturner@comcast.net

Survey answered on: 9/23/2021 08:48 PM

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

15

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

Senate

3. Party: (answer type: Short Text)

Democrat

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

609-369-2415

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

125 Lawrenceville-Pennington Road

Lawrence, NJ 08648

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

Meredith Rivera 609-369-2415

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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We must rely on the health professionals who have access to the data and science to make those determinations, and not leave it up to educators or politicians. In person learning is preferable, but not at the expense of the health and welfare of students, teachers, and other school personnel. In most cases, decisions about closures and steps needed to protect the school community should be made locally depending on the number of outbreaks.

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)

Anytime there are infrastructure needs, we need to come up with the funds to address those needs. I support providing additional resources to all of our schools to ensure that they are meeting the health and safety standards we expect in our educational facilities.

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 a career educator, I have always supported our professional educators. I do not believe in a one-size fits all approach and mandates are not applicable to every district. I will continue to listen to our educational professionals to help inform and guide my policy decisions.

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)

Standardized tests should be used to help inform instruction in the classroom only. It should not be used as a graduation requirement or presented in a way that causes extra stress and anxiety for students. Standardized tests are now computerized, and, therefore, not on a level playing field for all students. Students that do not have the same access to technology as their peers and students with disabilities are at a disadvantage. I am the prime sponsor of S1335, which eliminates the use of standardized assessments as a measure of student growth or progress in evaluations of teachers, principals, assistant principals, and vice-principals.

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)

One of the first steps is to provide educators with competitive salaries to attract them to the profession. Second is to prevent the erosion of public pension systems by ensuring they are adequately funded. It is very scary for college graduates with high amounts of student loan debt to enter a profession and pay toward a pension that may not be available to them when they retire. We must also remove barriers, such as the requirement to complete performance-based assessments as a condition of eligibility for CEAS and CEs. I am the prime sponsor of S3936, which would eliminate the edTPA requirements. I am a coprime sponsor of S969, which would provide the incentive of loan redemption to allow teachers to redeem a portion of NJ CLASS Loan amounts for service as a teacher in high need fields in low-performing districts. A portion of debt forgiveness can help to attract individuals to the teaching profession, but especially in districts that are experiencing a

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shortage of qualified teachers. We also need to make it more affordable for students to attain degrees in New Jersey.

To help make the pool of teachers more diverse, I am the coprime sponsor of S2825, to establish loan redemption program for certain bilingual education teachers. I am a cosponsor of S2825, which establishes the male teachers of color mentorship pilot program. Last legislative session, I also cosponsored S703, which was signed into law in May 2019, to establish a pilot program in the Department of Education to recruit disadvantaged or minority men to teach in certain underperforming schools under the Alternative Route Program.

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)

My goals are to help to ensure that every child will receive a world class education, regardless of their zip code; ensuring that schools have highly qualified teachers, and to do that, they must provide competitive salaries and benefits; make the cost of education less reliant on property taxes, which will help reduce the education gap between the haves and have nots.