



Wisconsin Green Party

2017 State Superintendent Questionnaire

Congratulations on your decision to run for the Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Wisconsin Green Party is interested both in your views on the issues surrounding education in Wisconsin and your general beliefs.

We would appreciate it if you would answer the following questions and requests for comments. We prefer brief, succinct answers. This document is attached in MS Word format. Please answer the questions in this same editable document.

Please email the completed form to Greens@WaukeshaCountyGreenParty before midnight on December 27th

Why are you running for State Superintendent? The Department of Public Instruction has evolved into bureaucratic elitism driven by political agenda. It's time to remove politics from the classroom and let the families and communities served by our schools drive decision making. As State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the leader of Public Education in Wisconsin, I will focus the resources of the Department of Public Instruction on supporting the classrooms of Wisconsin rather than supporting the political ideologies of outside influences.

What is your "Path to victory?" Include who you have determined are your key supporters and supporting groups? There are a growing number of grassroots organizations across Wisconsin that strongly support "Public Education" for all children. This demonstrates that we have a basic shared vision about the future for our children and Wisconsin. This vision is also shared by the rank and file classroom teachers, assistants, counselors, office staff, custodial workers, building administrators, kitchen workers, and all those who work with all the children of the public school system in Wisconsin. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the students on Wisconsin's public university and technical college campuses who have recently been through public K-12 education, experiencing public post-secondary education, and will be sending their children to the future Public school system. Engaging these groups, in person and through social media, around the state will establish the cadre of voters who understand the need to change the direction and the focus of public education for the future.



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Briefly, offer your opinion on the state of education in Wisconsin. Education in Wisconsin is in a steady decline due to the continually increasing burden put on students to cover more material in preparation for more tests rather than learning material. There is also increased pressure to move children along socially rather than dealing with the mental health and other disabilities they possess in a timely manner. In addition there is a growing burden on all school staff to excessively collect data, justify in minute detail daily and sometimes minute by minute actions, greatly diminishing the time spent actually engaging children in learning activities. Finally, the resources need to complete the most basic tasks of daily education are being diverted to support private and religious schools which have no accountability to the taxpayers. This is an intentional attempt by outside interests to make money off of the taxpayers who are paying to have their children educated in public schools and to weaken one of Wisconsin's greatest strengths, investing in our collective future.

Discuss your views on the issues surrounding testing of students. Testing is a tool that has been used by teachers for centuries as a means for assessing a student's progress. A test score is a momentary marker on a path to learning. When a test score is used for the ranking and sorting of an individual, a class, the teacher of that class, a school, a district or a state, it is of no educational purpose. This is simply an abuse of one of the tools of monitoring the progress of education for political gain.

Discuss your views on educator and administrator's compensation. Compensation for anyone involved in any part of the daily education of the students that are the future of Wisconsin should be, at the very minimum, commensurate with other professions with similar education and experience. These positions should not be marginalized into percentages of "Full Time Employment" to play games with budgeting issues. People who work to prepare the future of Wisconsin in our schools should be able to support a family rather than be eligible for food stamps. Also compensation should be consistent statewide to stop the practice of "stealing" or "poaching" teachers from one school district to a "wealthier" district.

Please express your feelings on School Choice. If by "School Choice" you mean the entitlement program that gives public tax dollars to private and religious schools without oversight by or accountability to the taxpayers, I personally believe it is illegal. Justices may have been convinced that this is somehow legal, but the majority of Wisconsin citizens do not agree that their tax dollars should go to private and religious schools.



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In general, how “local” should education decisions be? Decisions about public education should be a balance of collaboration along the following lines: A Wisconsin diploma should mean the same thing no matter which school district issues it. Therefore the content, skills, and knowledge should be consistent among all Wisconsin public schools. The methods and resources used to help children retain this set of content, knowledge, and skills should be pedagogically sound and largely be determined by the local community and school officials.

How much or little do you believe that Education is funded in Wisconsin? The funding for public education is intentionally being diverted to win political favor for outside interests. This is strangling public education in Wisconsin as well as strangling the future growth of Wisconsin.

How would you change the current school funding formula? I would start by demanding that ALL the money stolen from public education since ACT 10 be immediately returned. After that is accomplished, the funding formula can be addressed. The funding formula itself is intentionally complicated and designed to increase property tax relief rather than address the failure on the part of the Legislature to address the constitutionally mandated support for public schools. The Legislature dictates aids, per-pupil limits, categorical aids, resulting in little if any local control other than to pass referenda. This is even being threatened by the Governor.

The Green Party has ten key values. Briefly reflect on each one as it pertains to educational issues:

http://www.gp.org/ten_key_values_2016

Social Justice: I don't mean to over-simplify, but this is merely the “Golden Rule”. As educators we are asked to instill this in our students. However, children learn most deeply from the actions of the adults in their lives. Increasingly, political and civic leaders as well as sports and entertainment celebrities exert an increasing amount of influence on children's lives. Social Justice can be, and I would say has been, taught in school for generations. Until it is put into practice by “Society” it won't be learned by children.



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Community-Based Economics: This follows from the “Golden Rule”. None of us can be truly free from want unless we are all free from want. Individual effort for the collective good of everyone is not a political ideology, it is the best chance we have for survival as a species.

Nonviolence: Again, this is consistently taught in classrooms across Wisconsin. However, until it is put into action by our leaders, it will not be learned by our children.

Decentralization: It is difficult to teach this concept to children when we use a centralized and standardized model for them to learn in. Community-based education should not be viewed as some theoretical model, but rather as the only effective way to prepare children to become active, productive citizens of the future.

Future Focus/Sustainability: Sustainability has many definitions and interpretations but essentially means collaboration and cooperation for the common good of not only human civilization but the entire planet. Sustainability should not only be taught in schools, it should be modeled in schools. The wisdom of previous generations should be passed on to new generations and the curiosity and imagination of new generations should be applied to issues of today in a socially and environmentally appropriate way for the benefit of all.

Feminism: It is embarrassing that this is even an issue. We are all human beings and all deserve to be treated with the dignity deserving of every human being.

Personal and Global Responsibility: As was mentioned under “Social Justice”, we must all take responsibility for the freedom of all humans. No one is truly free unless we are all free. I see responsibility, sharing, and caring being taught daily in classrooms across Wisconsin. However the “adult leaders” of society project a “me first, screw your neighbor” attitude. We must require our leaders to exhibit what we claim we want from all our children.

Respect for Diversity: Possibly the greatest treasure Wisconsin, and for that matter, the entire country has, is its diversity. Even the most conservative venture capitalist understands the importance of diversity. By addressing new issues from differing perspectives, collective wisdom increases and everyone can share in prosperity.



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Grassroots Democracy: What ever happened to “Public Servants”? We as citizens need to DEMAND that our elected officials represent US! If we don’t DEMAND this, we will continue down the path of rule by a small group of very wealthy people who control elected officials.

Ecological Wisdom: Bill Mollison, the father of “Permaculture”, said, “The greatest change we need to make is from consumption to production ...” If we follow nature’s lead, not only do we have enough resources to feed, clothe, and shelter every human on earth, we can do so with an ecological based economy that assures not only survival of all, but prosperity for all.