



SAINT PAUL FEDERATION
OF EDUCATORS LOCAL 28

Please limit the following questions to a yes or no response.

- I. The Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) believes parents, educators, community members, and students should be at the center of decision making around educational policy. However, increasingly out of state millionaires with a vested interest in pursuing a corporate education reform agenda have poured money into political races with the goal of removing local voices from discussions about our children's education.
 - a. **Will you and your campaign reject contributions and independent expenditures from wealthy donors who live outside our community and from market-based education reform organizations?**
Liz Lee: Yes **Hoang Murphy:** Yes **John Thompson:** Yes

- II. Despite recent increases, public education statewide is severely underfunded, and has not kept pace with inflation. Communities have increasingly been called on to make up the lack of funding by passing levies that increase property taxes for home owners, while wealthy corporations continue to receive tax cuts – allowing them to benefit from our communities without contributing to them.
 - a. **Will you as endorse, support, and campaign on increasing revenue that will go directly to public education funding?**
Liz Lee: Yes **Hoang Murphy:** Yes **John Thompson:** Yes

- III. SPFE Everyone who works in public education deserves the same things. Respect for their contribution to the care and education of our students. Fair compensation for their work, including affordable health care. Safe working conditions. Most Education Support Professionals do not receive these necessary protections. These critical educators are often BIPOC and immigrant women, many working multiple jobs during the pandemic to make ends meet, putting them at the most risk of contracting COVID 19.
 - a. **Will you endorse, support, and campaign on passing legislation that supports the ESP bill of rights, including requiring all districts to increase ESP pay to a minimum of \$20 per hour?**
Liz Lee: Yes **Hoang Murphy:** Yes **John Thompson:** Yes

- IV. **Do you support collective bargaining for public sector unions and will you fight to protect them?**
Liz Lee: Yes **Hoang Murphy:** Yes **John Thompson:** Yes



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Please limit your response to 150 words or fewer for each part of the questions below.

- ***What is your personal experience with public education as a student, or parent? How has public education benefited you personally?***

Liz Lee: I am a proud alum of the St. Paul Public Schools, where I received my education from Kindergarten through my senior year of high school. I know that because my parents, teachers, and administrators fought for me, I was able to receive a quality public education that included the International Baccalaureate program (of which I am a graduate, multiple AP courses, and many after school enrichment activities. While I may be an exception, I am extremely grateful I can say my experience in SPPS helped prepare me very well for my undergraduate years at Yale, and for life.

Hoang Murphy: SPPS saved my life. At the age of eight, I attended school for the first time. A teacher saw that I was in danger and triggered the systems that took me out of an unsafe home and put me into the foster care system. I experienced firsthand the transformative impact educators can have on their students.

That's why I became a teacher. Teaching was the greatest honor of my life, but at the end of my last school year, one of my students fell victim to gun violence. The response from the district was a complete lack of support for my students and their families. I felt powerless in facing such intractable challenges and I left to fight for systems change as part of the Obama team. Today, I lead Foster Advocates where I advocate with fosters and I am plotting my return to the classroom.

John Thompson: I am a parent of two honor roll students who both attend SPPS. As a parent, I know that the success that I want to see in my kids begins with what I invest in them in our home. One of our core values is communication, no matter what, so when it comes to navigating challenging courses and as a parent to a student with a majority of AP courses, we have plenty of challenges; I show up with my wife, and we communicate our concerns, issues, and needs to the teachers so that we will receive the support we need to ensure our child success. I always say we because, as a family, we need help, and everyone has a role to play in the education of our children.

Through establishing communication, we have grown to know all the teachers, staff, and admin at the schools, and they have become more like a family, and this relationship has allowed us to receive tremendous benefits.



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Furthermore, as an employee, I've often seen the mismanagement of funds that has led to the school district being over budget, which often trickles down to low pay increases for families who need it most!! Think about the nutrition service workers who were about to strike two years ago because the district could only give them a 1% pay increase. The problem is rent went up 3%, which is problematic for me, to see the families that need it the most receive far less. My friend Philando Castile also worked for St. Paul public schools, and I watched how much work he put in to make sure those kids had a good breakfast; I watched him take change out of his pocket and put in his cash box for kids who didn't have money in their accounts. July 5th, 2016, one of the last conversations I had with Philando, he said plainly to me, John, I love the kids. I started to walk away from him, laughing. He turned me back and then said John, I love everybody!!! The next day, July 6th, 2016, he was murdered, so one thing I will always do in remembrance of my lost friend will always be to love the kids!!

- *An endorsement from SPFE is only given to candidates that show they are a champion for public education. We do not endorse in all races.*
 - a. ***What are your direct connections to SPPS, SPFE, and/or public education?***

Liz Lee: I am a K-12 alum of SPPS. As my mother has been an SPFE member for more than 20 years, I also received an SPFE college scholarship upon my high school graduation.

I feel incredibly lucky to say that public education helped make me the leader and person I am today.

Hoang Murphy: My wife, Mercedes, is an SPFE member and has been involved in various roles in the union. Through her, I have been able to get more involved in and build relationships with SPFE members. I have organized with members in supporting the strike, actions around critical board meetings, and leveraging relationships with policymakers to support SPFE goals and further public education in St. Paul.

Through my work as the ED of Foster Advocates, I work on legislation impacting our foster care community. Much of that work sits at the intersection of children's welfare and education. Schools are where 80% of child protection referrals are



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made and are often our first service to our most vulnerable children. In 2021 we started direct services for Fosters in Ramsey County to help them to and through postsecondary. I also serve on the St. Paul Children's Collaborative where I work in partnership with SPPS.

John Thompson: I have family members that are educators at different schools throughout the district; my kids are students within the district; I personally drop them both at the front doors of both of their schools, I see the day to day grind it takes to get the day going for most of these schools daily, and when I look at it, I won't trade public education in for the world. I'm a proud father of a student that holds a GPA of 4.0 while attending an SPPS! I'd work to transform the systems that hinder educators' ability to effectively provide the proper resources and support to educate our scholars.

b. How would you define “public education champion”?

Liz Lee: This means not only supporting full and robust funding for public education, but also a partner who defends it from attacks.

Hoang Murphy: A public education champion is someone who fights unflinchingly for the rights and wellbeing of students, teachers, educational aides, our union, and our public schools. It means challenging the systems and policies that prevent teachers and education support personnel earn strong wages that allow them to raise families, in the places they teach. That also means investing in our schools to meet the needs of all of our students.

John Thompson: An education champion puts our students, parents, and educators before corporate greed and special interest needs. I believe that for us, as a society, to progress and advance in culture, economics, and collectively, it is through our education systems. Therefore, a public education champion isn't afraid to call out what is wrong with our current education system and will do anything in their power to ensure that the education represents the needs of our children, families, and overall society.

c. How would you describe your current relationship with SPFE member leaders?

Liz Lee: I have been introduced to some member leaders, and I have worked with the local union rep at my high school when I was on the Site Council. But I would love the opportunity to work with more leaders.

Hoang Murphy: My wife, Mercedes, is a teacher in the district and a leader within SPFE. The well-being of my family is contingent on the system doing right



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by St. Paul public school teachers. I also work with and am close friends with several members of our union. I collaborate and work alongside political leaders within SPFE to strategize, share information, and organize to reach shared outcomes. I am committed to deepening this relationship. I am grateful to be in community with SPFE over the past few years. When I see an SPFE hat, I know I have an ally in whichever space I am in.

John Thompson: *No response provided*

d. Why are you seeking an endorsement from SPFE?

Liz Lee: Education and education equity is one of the priority issues I hope to work on as a member of the MN legislature. It's also an urgent issue as we try to build back out of this pandemic. Our students have lost so much learning in the last 2 years. I hope that SPFE will be a partner with me as I work to ensure that students in the Eastside as well as the rest of Minnesota get the resources they need to succeed.

Hoang Murphy: I am seeking the endorsement of SPFE because I know that the only way to have a truly just and equitable education system is to work in partnership with all of our most critical stakeholders to improve how we serve our students, families, and educators. SPFE is at the vanguard of that fight and I hope to work alongside our union to build a system that enables students and educators alike to thrive.

John Thompson: Since becoming a state legislator I've been partnering w/ some of the folks at SPFE in making sure that it's not only me at the decision making table but the constituents that got me here, I'm behind SPFE, their parents, educators, teachers, and union stewards. I will not let their voices be ignored by decision makers. We want to see our students do well, so we must allocate resources to make sure that they get all the needed resources to invest in their future. I want this endorsement to partner with SPFE, so together we can bring resources and change to District 67A.

e. How do you envision working in partnership with SPFE? What does that look like when we disagree?

Liz Lee: I hope that SPFE will be a resource for me, and consider me a resource for them as well.

While we may disagree on policy issues and/or votes, I know that our values are aligned. So consistent with my value of transparency, I would seek to understand the point of disagreement, hear SPFE's rationale, and explain why I would vote a



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certain way, or support a different policy. Of course, I imagine that as partners, we would already be in touch and constantly sharing thoughts and views on items moving through the legislature.

Hoang Murphy: It looks like being in community with others. That means that if I ever come to a different position than SPFE, it is only after having listened to your perspective and reflected on it. It means that the way I act will never come as a surprise because even when we disagree it will not be over shared values but in strategies on how to achieve our shared goals. However, I believe strongly that leadership demands accountability. This is not something I would seek to avoid with SPFE and would hope that in instances of misunderstanding I am called into the community to learn, make amends, and strengthen our capacity to move forward in greater partnership.

John Thompson: SPFE is a stakeholder and partner with me. This is why I'm seeking the endorsement. I agree that we won't always see eye to eye on all issues the same way, however, it's about us coming together and compromising so that we come up with the best options for our students. The solution is working together and having everyone's input.

- *In March of 2020, as the pandemic was beginning, SPFE went on strike for the first time since 1946.*

a. **What do you understand to be the reasons SPFE went on strike?**

Liz Lee: I understand that this was the result of bad education policy from the Pawlenty Administration - specifically, the removal of the deadline for labor agreements that would normally force school districts to finalize a contract with teachers and education professionals.

Hoang Murphy: Educators around the country are beyond their breaking point. The very basic idea of public education has been assailed on all fronts by those who want to entrench inequity and maintain their power. However, due to the solidarity of working folks in our schools, these attempts have been met with fierce opposition.

SPFE went on strike to ensure that the classrooms that educators work in are worthy of the genius of the students in our buildings. Safe working conditions, equity in pay for our ESPs, and ensuring mental health support for students were key reasons SPFE had to strike. SPPS has not valued SPFE's partnership and



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was unwilling to negotiate in good faith. Educators have the right to negotiate beyond compensation, but also the services provided to our families. I was proud to have supported the strike and joined the line in solidarity.

John Thompson: The Students needed better support for their English learners , smaller class sizes and more mental health specialists as well as restorative practices and what I believe to be obvious higher living wages!

I stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters from SPFE, which I have done literally on several occasions when the school district forgets that the ones in the class teaching every day know what's best for the students. They serve as activists. I have had to use my voice and my bullhorn in solidarity with SPFE to remind leadership at the district level of 360 Colborne that we are serious about our union brothers and sisters. More than anything, we are serious about our kids!! These leaders already know that John Thompson is the guy that will push the needle on issues that are important for the betterment of our educators and scholars that they work with daily.

b. SPFE is currently in negotiations with SPPS. What do you understand to be SPFE's top priorities?

Liz Lee: At the very core, it's ensuring that SPPS students get the resources they need - which includes mental health support and resources during these unprecedented times, as well as smaller class sizes when there is a nationwide teacher shortage.

As the daughter of an ESP, I am also heartened that priorities included a living wage for ESPs who really help round out a quality educational experience for students of color and students who need extra support

Hoang Murphy: My family has 80 picket signs in our garage and we were ready to strike. However, I am glad that SPFE was able to secure a strong contract that averted a strike and that the contract was recently ratified. SPFE's priorities were to protect recess times for students, classroom size caps, and ensure fair wages for teachers and ESPs.

John Thompson: Fair and reasonable cost of living wages, for our educators guiding our future, is of the utmost importance! Showing our students, they matter regardless of what they look like, where they are from, or how much their parents make; an equitable learning environment—hiring more bilingual EAs as well as anti-racist training and hiring more specialists to help with students with special needs for more one on one support.



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- c. ***Across the country, educators have been willing to strike so they can bargain for the things they know their students need. While no one wants a strike, sometimes this drastic step is necessary. How will you support Minnesota educators that avail themselves of this tactic? Under what circumstances would you support the hiring of replacement workers?***

Liz Lee: I would definitely lend my platform and resources as needed.

I would support hiring staff to ensure that students who have no place to go during a strike are supervised and have access to food and homework help as they would if school were to be in normal operations.

Hoang Murphy: When teachers strike, they are not doing it alone. They are doing it with their students, families, and community interests in mind. I will always fight to protect unions' ability to strike. If SPFE strikes I will join my wife on the picket line to fight for our union and the protections it provides to educators, students, and families.

Educators are not disposable and cannot be treated as such. There is no replacement for an educator who has built a relationship with a student. I would not support the hiring of replacement workers for educators on strike. I have personally donated to the SPFE strike fund and as a legislator I would support amending state law to allow for striking workers to qualify for unemployment insurance.

John Thompson: 1. Educators are the pillars of our education system. I will stand alongside our educators to ensure they receive the contract they deserve and their resources.

2. I would only support hiring replacement workers to prevent circumstances that may harm or lead to unsafe environments for our students. However, this decision will be necessary to consult with SPFE and other stakeholders. I'll stand in solidarity with all educators across the nation. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for some great educators who invested in me.



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- *Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has a diverse student population, with over 75% identifying as BIPOC and/or immigrant students. Parents and educators agree that in order for students to be successful, we must have culturally competent curricula and educators that reflect the diversity of our city.*
 - a. ***Segregation and poverty are harmful to all of us, especially our students and their families. How will you work to integrate our city and our schools?***

Liz Lee: As a beneficiary of SPP's city-wide busing program in the 90's, I think it's really important that we try to bring that back to the district, understanding that there are bus driver shortages to contend with. But I do think this is one of the best ways to ensure that the wealth of teachers and resources at SPPS are accessible to all students.

Hoang Murphy: Families on the Eastside are struggling. Almost 40% of families in the district are already paying over a third of their income on their mortgage or rent. The overwhelming cost of housing prohibits these families' economic mobility. The state must invest resources in affordable housing and ensure that those resources are spread equitably, in order to ensure that our neighborhoods and by extension our schools are integrated.

A legislative vehicle to support this effort is to thoughtfully amend and increase funding from the state through the Achievement and Integration Program. This would allow districts like St. Paul get targeted funding to achieve school integration goals.

John Thompson: Education is a crucial factor in our children's future. Our educators help and make sure our students do well in school. This relationship is more profound than just about test scores; if our kids don't have a stable home, that plays a critical factor in our students' performances. We must ground ourselves in looking into passing a statewide minimum wage that parents won't have to work multiple jobs so they can support their kids with their school activities and homework. The last thing a student should worry about is not having a home; we must work outside of the box in tackling jobs that

- b. ***Our students of color deserve educators that look like them. While tiered licensure provides pathways to bring BIPOC and immigrant educators into relationship with students, it also prevents many from accessing the benefits and important worker protections of union***



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membership. What are your ideas for expanding protections for these educators?

Liz Lee: This is yet another relic of the Pawlenty Administration that has to go. Under the ruse of getting more BIPOC and immigrant educators into the profession, this system has ended up keeping qualified folks from earning living wages.

Anecdotally, I understand that the licensure tests are extremely difficult, and would be open to exploring more holistic, culturally competent, and relevant assessments for teacher licensure.

Hoang Murphy: When I resigned from the Department of Education after the Obama term I knew I wanted to return to the classroom. Folks were saying I was “crazy” to be leaving to “just” teach, I knew teaching was the greatest good I could do. Being able to teach in a community that saved me and where students looked like me would be no greater honor. I was incredibly disappointed when I was told by SPPS that despite my experience teaching, a Master’s in Secondary Education, and my five-year license from Maryland didn’t make me qualified. I would still like to return to the classroom.

Teachers are professionals and we should treat them as such. Ensuring the ability to join our union and the protections it provides is a must. That is why I support the Increase of Teachers of Color Act and moving away from the flawed tiered system.

John Thompson: We have to be serious about what we are saying we want to do when it comes to retaining educators that resemble the students they serve. Furthermore, we need to do everything to keep them in positions that will allow them to be eligible for union benefits after 90 days of working. Also, it is essential to remember that “we cannot continue doing the same things and expecting different results. (insanity)support good legislation, like the teacher of color legislation, that was proposed last year by representative Ruth Richardson in the house.



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- *At a time when our country and our state are facing many challenges – workers struggling with stagnant wages, BIPOC and immigrant communities are facing increased instances of race-based discrimination, communities being devastated by gun violence, and the ravages of COVID to name just a few examples – SPFE believes that bold steps and leadership are required to create a more just and secure society. It is no longer enough to “take the right votes”.*
 - a. **Aside from increased education funding, what one piece of legislation will you bring forward to improve the lives of working families? How will this improve the lives of our students?**

Liz Lee: A key policy proposal for me is pushing municipal broadband in Minnesota - which would positively impact the health and wellness of all Minnesota residents, as well as enriching the lives of children in Minnesota.

Even though it is highly unlikely for entire school districts to move to a virtual instruction again, having municipal broadband would ensure this is no longer a homework gap for students who do not have access to the internet in both rural and urban areas of Minnesota.

Hoang Murphy: Inequitable funding results from many different policies, but the most impactful one is the concentration of low-income housing that reduces communities' fiscal capacity.

The problem was further exacerbated by the housing collapse and its uneven recovery, which discriminated against the poor and specific ethnic and racial groups. This caused further harm because the controlling municipalities needed high property taxes to offset the lack of revenue, often disincentivizing homeownership and forcing out middle- and high-income earners.

There's a policy of indifference that causes discriminatory practices in vulnerable communities, as well as a political incentive to not spend tax dollars based on need. It is what prevents good schools from existing in poor communities, feeding the cycle. Everything starts with home and addressing disparities in ownership, affordable rent, and housing segregation would be a legislative priority. Supporting a state housing guarantee and amending state statute around stabilizing rent are my immediate goals.

John Thompson: Along with the Naacp St. Paul chapter, we have proposed a piece of legislation to the governor titled "The Philando Castile Act of 2020; the goal is to have affordable housing be a portion of this proposal. We have asked



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the governor to provide immediate funding to increase affordable housing and homeownership for Minnesotans by expanding the capacity and role of those affected by the disparities that currently exist in our communities. Also, we are asking to produce more housing and equitable education for all students and families. We plan to assist those with homeownership difficulties in attaining livable wages to remain self-sufficient. We will assist residents with finding suitable homes throughout the state of Minnesota. I like proposing "Bills of empowerment" legislation that brings money to communities of color to build families, education, housing, and promote entrepreneurship.

b. What past work (either at the legislature or your capacity as a private citizen) would you point to as bold leadership? How has this work positively impacted public education?

Liz Lee: As a Congressional staffer, one of my proudest accomplishments will always be securing millions of dollars in multiple years specifically for school districts to create computer science programs for girls and students of color. Tech is the future of our national and global economy, and our students will be left out if they do not have adequate skills to compete with their counterparts around the world. I was more than happy to help do my part in narrowing this skills gap for American students.

Hoang Murphy: I founded Foster Advocates in 2018 based on an audacious idea: that child welfare systems change could, and should, be led by the people most impacted. Since then I have led the organization's growth from one person to a team of five, passing two laws, and expanding programs to support SPFS Fosters.

I am proud of drafting the most comprehensive college support bill in the country. In just a year, during a pandemic, and with a divided government, I stewarded passage of a law that gives Fosters a real chance at a quality postsecondary education. Our Fostering Higher Education Act allows Fosters to attend any Minnesota accredited institution of higher education for free, including tuition and living expenses. This is groundbreaking work, and it happened because I organized with Fosters to share their stories and build power. Now, rather than just being celebrated for being resilient –we can dream.

John Thompson: I am currently working in public schools to help scholars develop alternative ways to handle conflict. I want scholars to learn the proper ways to resolve problems, other than fist fighting and harsh words, also by helping the school district find more alternatives that work other than suspensions and expulsions, through my work as the co-president of Community Mediators of Minnesota.



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c. *How are you creating pathways for young and emerging political leaders?*

Liz Lee: As a Lifetime member of Girl Scouts, I'm always looking for opportunities to encourage more girls and women to be engaged in the political process.

More specifically, I actively participate in Asian American-focused organizations and associations to support AAPI and AAPI women interested in leadership and public service.

Hoang Murphy: I founded Foster Advocates because I believe that those closest to a problem are the closest to solving them. We work to organize and develop the leadership of Fosters to conduct advocacy, policy, and research to improve outcomes for our community. We have a fellowship to train the next generation of foster care impacted leaders. I know I cannot be effective going to the Capitol alone, and I want to build the bench for young people to learn of their power. It will be a paid opportunity for our community to explore their agency, learn about root cause analysis, selective storytelling, and unpack their relationship to power.

As a legislator I will make it my duty, from day one, to encourage others to run for elected office. I will share my time, resources and expertise with the leaders of tomorrow, with a particular focus on building power alongside marginalized communities.

John Thompson: I am creating pathways for young and emerging political leaders by mentoring our youth and showing them that they can also be the change they want to see by just getting activated. I take our youth to the state capitol and show them how a thought can become a bill, and in some cases, these bills become law. Many children in my community are shocked to see some of the bad laws that are on the books as legislation, so I motivate them to want to be the ones that get the bad ones off the books.



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- *Public education is the center of our democracy, and yet many support the “disrupting” public education through “school choice” and privatization in the form of online learning, charter schools, increased reliance on standardized testing and vouchers (sometimes called scholarships).*

a. *What is your understanding of how education reform policies impact public education?*

Liz Lee: The biggest concern here is that charter schools siphon off funding from an already underfunded public school system.

I am particularly concerned by recent movements funded by extremely wealthy funders who have a vested interest in creating future workers for their industries, but may not have the best interest of students or teachers at heart.

Hoang Murphy: Taken in its most well-intentioned way, the education reform movement is about bringing market solutions in an attempt to improve education systems. However, this is an idea that has missed the mark. Schools are not markets; efforts to treat them as such are undermining the very communities they claim to serve. Instead of working alongside allies in the education and labor space to create change, many reformers have made alliances with corporations and billionaires who are using their efforts to undermine public education in the name of false progress in test scores.

Weakening teacher preparation does not create better outcomes. Segregating students does not create better outcomes. Having schools unaccountable to the public does not create better outcomes. These efforts to “disrupt” education have only hurt our communities. We should abandon them as failed ideas.

John Thompson: It always seems that there is a room full of folks who don't necessarily look like the folks who negatively impacted the decisions made in the name of reform. However, my question is, how can you leave the ones who are affected out of the decision-making process and expect a room full of folks who have never felt the adverse effects of changing anything? Real reform comes when you empower those genuinely affected by the problems to be a part of the decision-making process.

b. *What is your understanding of how charter schools differ from local public schools?*

Liz Lee: This answer will vary by state. Generally, the concern with charter schools is that there is less accountability and oversight over issues like funding, director salaries, and for students, civil rights violations.



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Hoang Murphy: Minnesota started the charter school movement and its charter schools differ from traditional public schools in significant ways. The most significant is their accountability system is with an authorizer, which can range from a private company, nonprofit, or an institute of higher learning. Unlike public schools which have a publicly elected school board, charters have their own boards similar to nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, charters in nature are independent and are granted autonomy to hire staff, fundraise, create curriculum, and have budgets free of the regulations under which district schools operate. Also, charter schools in Minnesota do not provide protections to their staff as they are not unionized (with the exception of one school).

John Thompson: I understand how charter schools and public schools differ because charter schools receive funding from the government; however, they operate independently. Whereas public schools have regulations imposed upon district schools to follow, they also receive funding from the government.

- c. ***Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools and charter school expansions so that a comprehensive study can be done on the impact of charters schools in our communities (including segregation, tax base, land use, and neighborhood impact)? Who would you partner with for this study? Who would you include as stakeholders?***

Liz Lee: Yes. The University of Minnesota as a premier research institution; the Center for Economic Inclusion; community-based organizations for in-language stakeholder consultations like Hmong American Partnership, CAAL, Oromo Community Of Minnesota, etc.. to represent Minnesota's diverse student population.

Hoang Murphy: I support a moratorium. However, I would also like to see a process for closing down charter schools that are not serving our students well and reviewing the authorizers. The churn and burn style to staffing educators has damaging short-term and long-term effects on our educator workforce. I have also witnessed deeply troubling and unethical actions from charter systems that are considered some of the best in Minnesota. I want the days of Minnesota's wild west approach to charter regulation to end.



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In this effort, I want to partner with our unions, community organizations, as well as advocacy groups. This impacts all of our communities and I would want to see a robust effort to include every resident as we all have a stake in our schools.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

- *The state of Minnesota presently does business with institutions that engage in practices that destabilize our community through predatory lending practices, investing in private prisons, and corporate tax avoidance. These practices have led to economic injustice and racial discrimination in our city.*
 - a. ***How will you use your role to make sure that the largest corporations in Minnesota pay their fair share?***

Liz Lee: I am committed to supporting legislation and proposals from the Governor that would make sure corporations in Minnesota pay their fair share.

Hoang Murphy: As a legislator, I would refuse to vote for any tax bill that allowed corporations to avoid taxes by hiding earnings overseas. I would advocate for progressive income taxation such as a wealth tax, rather than relying on regressive sales taxes that fall disproportionately on the backs of working families.

John Thompson: There must be accountability here. We must make sure that corporations are paying their share to our city, not just a minimum but at their fair share. As state legislators we must task ourselves with asking the hard questions, making sure that the heavy load isn't left to our community members. Since being elected State Representative, I have made sure that corporations are held accountable.

- b. ***Predatory lending practices increase foreclosure rates, destabilizing families. Will you join with SPFE in calling on banks to refrain from foreclosing on homes of school age students during the school year? What steps will you take to separate the state of Minnesota from institutions that participate in predatory lending?***

Liz Lee: I'm also happy to support legislation that would prevent the State from doing business with institutions that participate in predatory lending. I am also happy to look at pushing for administrative procurement procedures in the short term.



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Hoang Murphy: Yes. I will also fight to ensure that the state retirement system is only contracting with and investing in ethical financial institutions. I also think it's important to ensure that all employees of the state are aware of the options they have to invest in indices that reflect their values, such as not investing in oil companies, industries that are benefitting from ICE detention, and corporations that are undermining public education.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

c. Will you commit to working with SPFE to seek the revenue we need to have racially equitable schools? What does this look like to you?

Liz Lee: Absolutely! Racially equitable schools mean: Recruiting and retaining teachers and administrators of color - this is important at schools that have diverse student bodies and culturally competent and linguistically accessible family support programs - which are important at all stages, but especially in elementary schools - so that parents and families of color feel welcomed, and feel like full participants in their children's education.

Hoang Murphy: Yes, and I was not exaggerating when I said SPFS saved my life. As a result, I am passionate about education - and about improving education systems - because every student deserves to have the opportunities I went on to have. It shouldn't come down to just one teacher saving a child; we need all adults and systems working together to make sure that every kid gets what they need and deserve. This means correcting for the racial injustices of the past and present. It means providing schools and communities that have been historically disenfranchised with more resources to ensure school staffing that reflects our students and funding to remedy the difference in communities' fiscal capacity. It also means fighting against segregation and increasing funding for integration efforts like the Achievement and Integration Program.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*



- *The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear to all what educators have always known. Our communities and public schools have been harmed by decades of white supremacy and systems of oppression. Repairing this harm will require time, commitment, and funding, especially in our urban districts. Even with the recent influx of federal dollars via CARES and ESSR, our urban districts do not have the financial security necessary to provide the targeted funding our students and families need. Consistent underfunding by the state has mean that local school districts must ask local tax payers to increase their education levies, a solution that is unfair, and unsustainable.*
 - a. ***Everyone says they want to fully fund public education. Doing so would require new taxes, and it would only be fair for those to come from corporations and the wealthiest Minnesotans that currently don't pay their fair share. How will you support the move to a more fair tax structure in Minnesota in order to fully fund public education?***

Liz Lee: Minnesota's tax structure is objectively regressive, and especially so when you look at the disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. So I am committed to supporting legislation that ensures corporations pay their fair share, since we've seen that there are really two different economic recovery stories unfolding in the US right now.

Hoang Murphy: I would use my voice as a former teacher and lift up the voices of my teacher constituents, to tell the story of what happens when we fail to fully fund education. Truly effective change only happens at the State Capitol, when we mobilize around the stories of working people.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

- b. ***Using property taxes as a stopgap measure to fund public education is unstainable. How will you bring urban and rural legislators together to end this practice and fully fund public education statewide?***

Liz Lee: Property taxes are definitely not a sustainable way to fund public education. Further, I've heard from many voters what we already know - the economic devastation from the pandemic has made it harder for residents to meet their property tax rates.

I am committed to working as part of a large coalition to fully fund public



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education statewide. I think Minnesotans everywhere will agree increasing property taxes in the middle of an economic recovery is not helpful.

Hoang Murphy: My life, particularly my experience in foster care, is often seen as success story for government engagement and the pernicious “bootstrapping” myth that allows those in power to deny responsibility for the inequities that exist. I always reject such narratives and work to center on the benefits that come from serving the collective to create movement energy and organize people.

As someone who spent his childhood on the Eastside and in rural Ada, Minnesota, I will speak firsthand to the impact of regressive school funding. I will use those shared experiences and leverage my relationships with Greater Minnesota legislators to rallying point for enacting change. The state legislature must do a complete audit of all existing tax breaks. If they do not demonstrate a meaningful impact on racial and environmental justice, they should be eliminated and the resulting revenue should be directed towards public education.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

- c. *In urban districts, public schools have seen their budgets slashed. Schools that serve white, wealthy communities often raise additional funds through parents, an option that many BIPOC, immigrant, and poor white communities do not have, increasing the disparities these students face. What are your ideas for supporting our schools in the most financial need? What steps will you take as a legislator to repair this harm?***

Liz Lee: Again, there are many things that we have to undo from the Pawlenty Administration. One key change is at the very least, bringing the Extended Time revenue cap back up to an additional weight of 0.5.

Additionally, we must ensure that the Compensatory funding formula stays up to date with inflation. The State has to be vigilant and ensure that real per pupil aid across districts in the state are not wildly different. For example, it’s unacceptable that from 2003 to 2019, St. Paul dropped by \$181 while the real per pupil aid rate increased by \$228 across the State.

As a multilingual speaker, I understand there are issues about identifying ELL learners, but I disagree with another Pawlenty legacy to lower the maximum number of years a student can spend in ELL and would support an increase.



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Hoang Murphy: Any decisions that I will make as a legislator would be driven by a laser focus on equity. When the state raises revenue, it must raise it through progressive taxation on corporations and Minnesota's wealthiest earners, not through regressive sales taxes. As recent developments at DHS have shown, in order to control costs, the state must focus on ensuring that state agencies are audited and held accountable to processes that ensure that money is spent wisely. The only way to close inequities is to directly invest in the communities historically harmed. Creating funding vehicles that support schools based on need is a must. Minnesota's uniform funding formula is only entrenching existing inequities. I support creating a reparations workforce and would fight to pass legislation that takes ownership of and attempts to correct harms of our states racist practices.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

- *In 2018, SPFE joined our institutional partners in calling for elected officials to engage in co-governance and people-centered democracy. As a practice, this means engaging with your partners in all areas of public work, a willingness to be held accountable to promises, and on-going, open communication.*
 - a. **What do the terms co-governance and people-centered democracy mean to you?**

Liz Lee: A core philosophy of mine is policy design that centers people who will be most affected - which is what "people-centered democracy" means to me. I know a lot of my delegates and voters on the Eastside already because we have been community for a long time. If elected, I fully plan to bring everyone with me when I make big decisions.

I also very much identify with the servant-leadership philosophy, so while I will be in the driver's seat, I know that I am only a temporary steward and I will lead with the guidance and support of my constituents. To me, this is at the core of what co-governance is.

Hoang Murphy: I'm running because of my commitment to justice and equity, and out of deep concern that the direction that our country has been headed. I think Minnesota can and must do more to base our decisions on progressive ideals.



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My commitment as a leader is to be a voice alongside constituents. As a group representing community, I will value your input, both during my campaign and once I am elected. As someone who believes deeply on collaboration, I will be responsive to your concerns and will also seek your counsel as issues arise. I will always welcome opportunities to meet, provide updates and dialogue on the pressing issues that face us all.

My commitment to a people centered democracy includes building, co-governing, partnering, and working alongside with SPFE to pass legislation. This means partnering with SPFE leaders and members to build trust and accountability, the basis of a successful relationship.

John Thompson: *No response provided.*

b. What groups and individuals will you look to for guidance? Please be as specific as possible.

Liz Lee: Local neighborhood groups, district community councils, and business associations; faith-based groups; women's empowerment groups; advocacy groups that work on early childhood development and education equity

Key stakeholders I look forward to working with include: Center for Economic Inclusion, YWCA, LatinoLEAD, African American Leadership Forum, Coalition of Asian American Leaders

Other unions: MN AFL-CIO, SEIU, MNA, etc...

Hoang Murphy: With any given policy, I will seek out the guidance of those affected, especially those who historically have not been given a seat at the table. In the case of education policy, I will seek out the perspective of SPFE leaders, teachers, educational aides, students, and their families.

I also look to organizational partners that I work in allyship with such as SPFE, the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, Root and Restore, St. Paul 350, and my organizations many partners.

John Thompson: Parents, students, community leaders, teachers, educators, city council, district councils, etc. this has to be the way to go or we are just repeating what has been in place for years, we have to include everyone to be a part of the process I will seek the help of the voices who felt like they had a voice. Your voice and your ideas will finally be heard. by someone who considers himself a change agent.



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c. *What steps will you take to make sure decisions are made with communities, instead of for communities?*

Liz Lee: I am committed to being a leader who is a listener, and ensuring that I not only uplift voices of our most vulnerable, but empower and amplify their voices and work to make sure they are understood.

Hoang Murphy: At the state capitol, the biggest barrier to transparency is the process. I will remain in constant contact with my constituents and allies, even in the waning days of session when the process gets dizzying, to ensure that they have every opportunity to hold myself and my colleagues at the Capitol accountable.

John Thompson: I firmly believe the community should be at the decision making table at all times, in order to accurately transform systems, we have to work together collaboratively because any decision made for the people w/o the people leads to the same outcomes that we've seen time and time again. I will always engage w/ the stakeholders, community, and SPFE to ensure and seek help to create meaningful legislation.

d. *How will you separate your accountability to the public good from your personal feelings?*

Liz Lee: For me, this comes naturally as I grew up with a collective mindset, and my parents taught me to value and respect public service. I will always value good policy over personal gain.

Hoang Murphy: I know that if I am elected, I will be sent to the state legislature as a public servant. That seat belongs to the people of House District 67A. I will ground myself in remembering that fact and being able to articulate how everything I do as a legislator will improve the lives of my constituents.

John Thompson: I said it two years ago, and my answer remains the same. When it comes to this topic, I will not bend nor fold on what I've said since the day I decided to run. People over political rhetoric!!!" Now that we know that we have achieved real progress, this will be easy to listen to those living in the conditions that we're trying to improve. Furthermore, my policy-making decisions will have the people's stamp of approval before I propose anything. As long as I'm in the office, this will always be the way I govern!!! (people first)!



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- ***What specific steps will you take to protect the right of workers – especially public sector workers – to bargain collectively? How will you encourage all workers to be part of a union, should they choose to?***

Liz Lee: I would oppose all legislation that would weaken the right for workers - especially public sector workers - to bargain collectively.

I am happy to always talk about the value of a union and share what benefits union members might earn. I would also support efforts to explain these concepts (unions, worker's rights etc...) in a culturally appropriate, and linguistically competent way.

Hoang Murphy: I have been a proud member of both the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers' International Union (BCTGM) and the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU). I have seen the consequences of breaking solidarity first hand and the protections organized labor provides. I will always fight to preserve the collective bargaining rights of our unions. We are surrounded by "right to work" states and have had a front-row seat to what weakening unions rights do to drive down wages for all workers. I will not allow that to happen in Minnesota.

I will also push our federal legislators to fight restrictions on workers' rights to organize by the National Labor Relations Board. I will also use my platform to encourage others to join and support our unions. Sharing my own experiences and the legacy of my various foster families stories as members of the Teamsters and the American Postal Workers Union.

John Thompson: It hasn't been easy, but I know what it feels like to have a strong union support team behind you as a former union worker. My answer is simple when it comes to this topic, and I will not bend or fold on what I have said since the day I decided to run for this seat, "put the people over the political rhetoric!!!" Now that we know that we have achieved real progress, this will be easy to listen to those living in the conditions that we're trying to improve. Furthermore, my policy-making decisions will have the people's stamp of approval before I propose anything. As long as I'm in the office, this will always be how I govern!!! (people first)!



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As a union worker, I know it feels like to have a strong union support team behind you. I also know from my experience as a union steward how hard we have to fight for the rights of our union members. I will make sure that I protect the rights of workers. I firmly believe that all workers deserve to work without fear. Fear of not being treated fairly and not being respected at work. Furthermore, I firmly believe that workers should not be subjected to harassment or violence. I will protect the rights of immigrants, women, P.O.C., and my LGBTQ workers. This also means fighting hard to strengthen workplace fairness and safety laws. No workers shall be retaliated against for standing up for fairness. I will take the same passion to the M.N. house to protect the rights of our union brothers and sisters, especially within the public sector.

It will be this way for me, for as long as I am in the office. I will act as a human magnet to encourage all of our workers to become a part of a union. I believe that we are so much better in this fight together, and that's what union rally means to me TOGETHER WE WIN!!!