

## 2023 How to Caucus Guide

### FAQ:

#### **Why Should I go?**

Caucusing is an important first step in selecting our elected officials. Caucus goers and convention delegates hold all the power in this process. Caucus goers get to select who goes to the Ward and City endorsing conventions. At these conventions is where attendees select School Board and City Council candidates. The City Convention has room for about 400 delegates. Turnout is important, because the DFL controls most elected seats in Saint Paul government, the conventions often play a large role in selecting our elected officials. Candidates will try and receive endorsement by getting support of a super majority of convention delegates. Being endorsed out of a convention means access to Voter Access Networks and monetary support from the DFL party.

#### **Do I have to stay for the whole thing?**

Yes. This is the best process we have for influencing candidates and party platforms. If you know you can't be a delegate to the city convention, you can leave once other business is done.

#### **I'm an alternate. Do I really have to go to the Convention?**

You should! Most likely, you'll be upgraded right away because of absences. Regardless of your delegate status, candidates will want to talk to you, and you should take this opportunity. Additionally, alternates will be upgraded to delegate status as people leave.

#### **Who are the SPFE endorsed candidates?**

We don't have any yet, but we are likely to have endorsed School Board candidates by the City Convention.

#### **What happens if I become a delegate the City or Ward Convention?**

You will be part of the group deciding who gets the DFL endorsement, and making sure the candidates are focused on public education issues.

#### **Who can help me if I have questions before I go?**

Any member of SPFE COPE can help you, or you can contact Lynne Bolton, the SPFE Political Organizer ([lynne@spfe28.org](mailto:lynne@spfe28.org))

#### **Precinct Caucuses**

When: March 19, 11-5pm

Unopposed Ward (2,4,6) Conventions - to immediately follow caucuses. Others scheduled for later dates

Where: Details at <https://saintpauldf.org/2023-st-paul-elections/>

The DFL Party believes democracy starts at the grassroots. That is why we hold precinct caucuses and conventions to endorse candidates, elect party leaders, and shape the party platform. These voter-driven meetings are a great way to get involved in the democratic process and make your voice heard—even if you've never been to a political meeting before.

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### What you need to know to be a Caucus Rockstar

#### Why Caucus?

This year Saint Paul residents will elect seven city council members and four school board members. These elected officials will make decisions that impact our students and our schools. By caucusing and becoming an uncommitted public education delegate to the city convention in early June, we can make certain that these candidates are turning to educators when they make these decisions.

#### Before the Caucus Night:

- Connect with family members or neighbors and take them along. It's a lot more fun when you know somebody.
- Find your best SPFE gear to wear
- Bring food and other necessities to get through a couple hours: food and beverages, a book, phone charger, knitting, etc.

#### What to Expect:

- All Caucus will have a similar agenda and rules. You can contact your City DFL chair and obtain a copy before your convention. <https://saintpauldf.org/contact-us/>
- All offices and delegate elections (but not alternates) are required to strive for gender balance.
- Any candidate running for office (including party offices) will have time to speak. Because 2023 is an off-year election, there will be fewer speeches than normal.
- You will most likely be voting on the following:
  - Election to City (School Board Directors) and Ward specific (your City Councilor) conventions.
  - Resolutions - These are resolutions that will be specific to city level government since there is not any 2023 conventions for larger units of government

#### What to Do at the Caucus:

Public democracy takes time. You should expect your caucus to take 1 -2 hours. Make sure to talk with your neighbors! Here are some suggestions:

- Share \*your\* story as an educator. YOU are an expert on our public schools.
- Share the story of SPFE and how we use our power at the bargaining table to advocate for all members of our communities through Bargaining for the Common Good.
- Share the SPFE message that we must end the myth of scarcity. Corporations and wealthy non-profits need to pay the public schools they benefit from.
- Ask candidates, "How will you support our public schools?" Tell them you will be sharing their answer on social media (then, share it!)
- Look for other SPFE members, allies and people you know and it should be easy if we're all wearing red. Support each other in sending someone to City and Ward Conventions

#### After the Caucus:

- If you are a delegate to the City or Ward Convention, consider serving on a committee. This is a great way to build relationships.
- Share your experience. By demystifying the process for others, we can increase the number of participants.
- Take the next step in political action - join SPFE COPE or schedule a trip to the City Hall or Capitol with SPFE COPE to keep the pressure on those responsible for funding.