



## MTI VOTERS

### 2021 Wisconsin State Superintendent Election Questionnaire

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#### Who is MTI-Voters?

*MTI-Voters is the political action committee of MTI that seeks to identify those candidates most likely to advance policies supported by the members of MTI, policies that support MMSD staff and students, and advance the quality of public education in the District.*

*The MTI-Voters Committee is a representative body of MTI members, comprised of the Presidents of each MTI bargaining unit, the MTI Treasurer and nine (9) others elected by MTI's Faculty Representative Council. This member-comprised committee, guides MTI's political endorsement process and advances recommended endorsements to the thousands of MTI members who contribute to MTI Voters and vote on endorsement recommendations.*

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Please respond to the following questions. If you wish to add to/clarify your response, please do so by attaching the additional information, and designate your response by the corresponding number which appears in the questionnaire. ***Please deliver your responses to MTI (via Vicky Bernards at [bernardsv@madisonteachers.org](mailto:bernardsv@madisonteachers.org) by January 8.***

***MTI-Voters will be interviewing candidates on the evening of January 13 and 14, between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm.***

1. Why are you running for Superintendent of Public Instruction?

My desire to serve as Wisconsin's State Superintendent is grounded in my experience as a parent of a son with disabilities and a daughter who is gifted and talented. Each of my children presented their own individual challenges and their educational journeys were extremely different. I was inspired to become an educator because of my son. I felt disempowered during the IEP process and knew that to be the best advocate for my special needs child, I would need to pursue my own education. As the granddaughter of sharecroppers, I was a first generation college student. As a single parent, I knew that education would unlock a bountiful future for me and my family. I have served as a paraprofessional, special education teacher, assistant principal, principal, district administrator and adjunct faculty member. Along this career trajectory, I have seen first hand the good, the bad and the ugly. I know what can happen for our students when they are given their inalienable rights to a fully funded well rounded education. I am seeking to serve the state in order to move our educational system further and faster along the

trajectory towards continuous improvement. I feel a tremendous sense of urgency in this matter. It is our students sitting in our Wisconsin schools right now that must be successful. There is no room for complacency. This is the time for working together to ensure the best pathways are in place for our students right now! Like my children had and continuing with all subsequent students I encountered on my journey, I will use my relentless drive to leverage change toward the goal of creating equitable opportunities. It is my goal that each Wisconsin student receives a premier education. I don't feel entitled to the office of State Superintendent, I believe I am destined to do this work due to my common roots, not so common experience and uncommon disposition.

My vision for PK-12 education in Wisconsin is communicated in my "Bill of Rights for Wisconsin Students". Each Wisconsin student is guaranteed inalienable rights to a premier, fully-funded education; experiences that result in achievement at the student's maximum potential; liberty to form opinions and make decisions based on truth and fact, not fantasies and fallacies; and successful transition to post secondary experiences which may include day services or sheltered workshops for students with disabilities, military, trades, Peace Corp, career and/or college. College and careers are not an option for all students.

Each Wisconsin student shall:

1. Have access to a high quality early childhood education (K3 & K4), infused with developmentally appropriate practices centered around attainment of pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-mathematical skills through play and exploration and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals.
2. Receive full day K5, in the areas of pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-mathematics skills, ensuring that students are ready as required for success during the student's primary education (grades 1-3) and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals.
3. Demonstrate 3rd grade reading, writing and mathematics proficiency and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals by the end of the student's primary school education (grades 1-3). Toward this goal, the student will attain proficiency in reading skills required to move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" as required for success during the student's intermediate education (grades 4-6) and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals.
4. Demonstrate 6th grade proficiency in all content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies) and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals by the end of the student's intermediate school education (grades 4-6). Toward this goal, the State will ensure that the student has mastered the ability to read to learn as required for success during the student's secondary education (grades 7-12) and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals.
5. Demonstrate proficiency in all subject areas, including (reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies) and/or achievement of the student's IEP goals by the end of the student's secondary education. Toward this goal, the State will ensure that the student has artifacts to demonstrate proficiency as required for successful transition post secondary experiences which may include day services or sheltered workshops for students with disabilities, military, trades, Peace Corp, career and/or college.
6. Receive instruction in the "essentials", art, music, physical education, computer science and library media beginning in primary school and throughout secondary school.

7. Receive instruction in the “essentials”, communications, financial literacy, economics, health, and civics, in intermediate and secondary school
8. Receive instruction in an additional world language in intermediate and secondary school
9. Receive high quality instructions from licensed teachers who are compensated at or above the rate of other professionals holding similar degrees and credentials, demonstrate mastery of the Wisconsin Teacher Standards and hold a valid certification/permit/license issued by the State.
10. Receive guidance counselor services throughout the student’s secondary school education
11. Receive nursing services, as needed, to ensure the student’s academic success beginning in early childhood and throughout primary, intermediate and secondary school education
12. Receive social worker services, as needed, to ensure the student’s academic success in early childhood and throughout primary, intermediate and secondary school education
13. Receive opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (academic, sports, civic, social, clubs, etc.) throughout their educational experience
14. Receive quarterly feedback on their progress via one on one conferences with the student, parent and teacher throughout their educational experience.
15. Have the option of receiving instruction in different modalities (face to face, online, blended).
16. Receive tutoring or additional academic support to ensure the student’s academic success in early childhood and throughout primary, intermediate and secondary school education in partnership with community based organizations.
17. Receive related services (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, nurse, social work, etc), as needed, to ensure the student’s success on achieving IEP goals and objectives
18. Receive mentoring and/or coaching services beginning in intermediate school and throughout the student’s secondary school education.
19. Identify an area of career interest and complete, minimally, a two semester internship for credit and/or complete, minimally, 6 college credits in a dual enrollment program at one of Wisconsin’s public or private colleges and/or achievement of transition related activities per the student’s IEP goals during the student’s secondary school education.
20. Receive leadership development training during the student’s secondary school experience, culminating with the student developing a personal leadership statement informing how the student will use knowledge, skills and dispositions attained during the experience at Wisconsin’s schools to make a meaningful contribution to the student’s community. The student shall define what community is in their statement.

**2. Do you believe that public schools are sufficiently funded? If no, describe your plan to provide sufficient funds.**

No. As State Superintendent, I will work with the Governor, legislators and tax payers to communicate the importance of fully funding our schools because educating Wisconsin’s students is not a partisan issue. It is a human rights issue. Local property tax base funding in urban, rural and predominantly black and brown zip codes leaves schools in these areas critically underfunded. Wisconsin is in dire need of a funding update for our schools. We have known this for a while and engaged in multiple conversations over the years about it. We need action now.

The per-pupil aid system is inefficient in distributing funds and grossly oversimplifies strategies to power up our next generation of Wisconsinites. We need an updated state funding stream that goes beyond property values. Working with the Governor and legislators, we will seek to raise the revenue intake limit for schools, bolster the state funding budget, and eliminate inefficiencies in funding. My mother always told me that you get what you pay for. Your rate of return is equivalent to your investment. If we want the best and brightest students prepared to be the best and brightest Wisconsites, we have to invest in education and fully fund education, including special education. We must act now and invest in our schools to prepare the future workforce our states requires. We can no longer wait for other states to prepare their students and then attempt to recruit them to Wisconsin's businesses, industries, schools and farms. We have to prepare Wisconsin students aggressively by investing in them. The third Friday count is obsolete. A change is needed. We have attendance data that would allow us to reimburse schools based on actual enrollment of the student and eliminate the third Friday game of getting everyone in the door and ousting certain students right after that.

Our children's future should be a bipartisan issue. As such, I will leverage my relationships in the state legislature to pass policy which unlocks the much needed funding to support these vulnerable students within our schooling system. I will work diligently with our Governor and State Legislature to unlock funds for districts that sadly rely on an ineffective amount of funding to ensure equitable opportunities. I am optimistic that we have an educator as our country's first lady. Without a doubt, Dr. Biden is aware of the challenges and lack of unfunded mandates and under-funded schools. I will seek opportunities to engage with our federal delegation and DOE to advocate for additional federal funding.

**3. Madison schools have experienced increasing attrition over the past five years and increasing difficulty in attracting highly qualified candidates in a growing number of certification areas. What factors do you identify as the causes for this shortage? What measures will you take to promote the attraction and retention of highly qualified teachers and other school employees?**

We need to compensate quality educators commensurate to their commitment to educating our children. It is an investment in our future as a state and a direct investment in our children's futures. More importantly, we must provide additional opportunities for teachers to grow and learn while teaching through fellowships such as the one I completed: Horace Mann-Abraham Lincoln, National Education Association, Teacher Network Leadership Institutions, etc. Opportunities for growth and advancement has been cited multiple times as reasons why teachers leave the field. Additionally, we must ensure coaching for principals in order for them to provide high quality leadership at the school level whereby teachers will feel supported and valued. It's been said time and time again, people don't leave jobs, they leave bosses. Not only do we want to recruit, develop and retain teachers, we want a diverse workforce which is fully reflective of the cultural and racial mosaic that is Wisconsin.

A large body of research supports the fact that all students, not just students of color, benefit from having a teacher of color. When at DPI, I developed a statewide plan to diversify the teacher pipeline and address teacher shortages working with leaders in Wisconsin and nationally

through CCSSO. This led to the repeal and rewrite of PI34 that eliminated racially biased gateway assessment, Praxis I and Praxis II, which prevented many teacher candidates of color from securing a teaching license. We will continue to identify barriers to certification, particularly if they lack empirical data or research to support implementation of it. We will fully fund and implement that plan that has been sitting dormant for 2 years. It includes strategies for recruiting high school students; students that chose to leave Wisconsin to attend Minority Serving Institutions, such as Historical Black Colleges and Universities, recruiting amongst people interested in teaching as a second career, recruiting content area experts and even bringing retirees back to the field of teaching. I will work with the Governor and legislators for an expanded loan forgiveness program beyond the one available for those teaching in high need areas.

**4. What strategies will you enact to support and value Wisconsin's large, urban school districts?**

I served in the Milwaukee Public School district as a paraprofessional, special education teacher and administrator. Having first-hand knowledge of the challenges that urban school districts face uniquely positions me to address them best. Urban school districts serve a diverse population of students and families. It is important to engage stakeholders in all aspects of school operations from recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers that reflect the racial and ethnic background of students to providing students with textbooks that elevate contributions of people of all races and ethnicities to engaging community based organizations and businesses in the work of educating our next generation of leaders.

Urban districts are challenged with staffing shortages. I earned my teaching certification via an alternative certification program, Milwaukee Teacher Education Center. MTEC's special education certification program was developed in partnership with the Milwaukee Public School district and Cardinal Stritch University with the goal of recruiting and developing teachers of color to become certified special education teachers. As State Superintendent, I will continue the work I began while serving as Assistant Director of DPI's Teacher Education, Professional Development and Licensing (TEPDL) team. Under my leadership, DPI, school districts and our state's Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) will develop, approve and implement certification programs similar to MTEC and increase program completion rates for marginalized populations. Education preparation programs developed collaboratively with school districts and IHE's will provide a means to recruit and develop paraprofessionals, interpreters and other non-teaching staff members of color that serve in our urban school districts. Further, our state's IHE's will experience increased enrollment.

Urban school districts benefit from an opportunity to engage various stakeholders in the work by establishing partnerships to support district goals. In my Bill of Rights for Wisconsin Students, every student will receive tutoring or additional academic support in partnership with community based organizations. Funding will be provided to community based organizations who have demonstrated success in providing these services. Developing our next generation of Wisconsin's leaders isn't solely the responsibilities of schools. My Bill of Rights for Wisconsin students call upon current leaders and the business community to mentor or coach our students as

well as provide opportunities for internships. It takes a village to raise a child. As such, community and business leaders are a vital part of the village.

**5. What strategies will you enact to support and value Wisconsin's rural school districts?**

Most rural schools and the communities that they serve are not broken. These communities are often home to deep wells of social capital, tradition, and values that educators can build upon to improve schools. In fact, survey data from rural communities shows higher levels of social cohesion, stronger beliefs in community safety, and stronger opinions that people in the community look out for each other. I was raised in a small rural town wherein the majority of people earned a living by working in industrial or agricultural commodity processing and production, factories or farms. I learned the importance of committing myself to something bigger than me at a very young age. The 4-H are words I live by. I lead with my head (clear thinking eliminating negative thoughts and beliefs that hinder progress); heart (caring for others); hands (giving, putting others before self); and health (maintaining my personal health while thinking, caring and giving). That said, rural schools definitely have challenges. They struggle to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and leaders. The DPI began a program that provided incentives to college students who wanted to complete their student teaching in rural areas. We will expand that program. We will form partnerships with IHE's who wish to implement programs such as UW GB's Rising Phoenix program that focuses on students who want to be teachers. Theoretically, a rural student can graduate from high school with an Associate degree and then attend an IHE for 2-3 years, returning home to teach in their own community. Rural schools also struggle to offer diverse courses for their students. Rural schools lag behind all others when it comes to offering AP classes, world language classes, and other dual-enrollment classes. Again, we will unveil opportunities for success that include essentials for all: art, music, physical education, health, foreign language, computer science, etc. Some of these courses can be provided virtually. Broadband service is a challenge and we will work with the PSC, Governor and legislature to find a way to ensure that lack of access to the internet is remedied. Closing the achievement gaps is closely tied to closing the access gaps.

**6. How do you feel about the current Educator Effectiveness (Teacher) evaluation system? What changes would you like to see to that system?**

Research supports that teacher and administrator effectiveness are the two most important school factors that influence student achievement. As such, we benefit from a model that measures the effectiveness of educators. The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness system was developed for and by our state's educators and provides an example of collaborative efforts. As a comprehensive performance based evaluation system, two factors are measured: professional practice and student outcomes. When serving as an administrator, my school participated in the pilot. During quarterly meetings with educators, we focused on how they were performing on their Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). We were able to determine professional development needs aligned to the areas that educators identified as relative weaknesses. The process aligned with our schoolwide practices of data-driven decision making. EE provided a road map for our work in that we examined our student performance data, set goals, provided professional development,

provided non-evaluative informal performance feedback to educators based on evidence of whether or not educators incorporated strategies taught during PD, examined the data to ascertain if the educator was on track to meet their goals, and started the cycle again. EE is a continuous improvement model and provides a means to keep student performance at the forefront of the effectiveness of the most important school factors, the teacher and the administrator. As State Superintendent, I would like to see the EE viewed as a continuous improvement model that sets educators on a trajectory towards higher professional performance.

**7. What is your plan to work with the Madison Metropolitan School District to assure that all students receive a quality public education?**

My “Bill of Rights for Wisconsin Students” communicates my vision for assuring that all students receive a quality public education. If we wish to achieve results in literacy instruction and grow high performing readers in our classrooms, then we need to be willing to invest and retain quality reading teachers. It is vitally important that we build pre-reading skills in K3 and K4 and ensure that our students learn to read by grade 3 so that when they enter 4th grade they can begin to read to learn. For students who are performing below grade level, additional targeted reading instruction is needed at their grade level as well as their instructional reading level. When I was serving at an elementary school wherein over 90% of the students were children of color and qualified for free or reduced lunch in the impoverished 53206 zip code, we implemented a school wide reading program wherein for 90 minutes a day every day, every adult in the building either taught reading or supporting reading in small groups at each students instructional level using a schoolwide program called Success for All. We need to inculcate a culture where in every school, all teachers are reading teachers. Reading was infused into every aspect of school. Parents were vital partners. Reading books were sent home for students to read to their families. Then and now, distribution of reading material addresses the well known disparities about the lack of reading materials in some students’ homes. Sadly, way too many homes have no appropriate books for their children. This forged a partnership between parents and teachers, supporting home-based parental involvement. After three years of implementation with fidelity, the percentage of students reading at grade level increased from 30% to 70%. School wide targeted reading instruction matters. As State Superintendent, I will lead DPI in addressing this problem. We will identify successful school wide targeted reading programs for districts to choose from based on what students, parents and teachers decide.

**8. Do you believe the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction should continue to be an elected position as currently provided in the State Constitution?**

Yes.

**9. Describe your position on the voucher program.**

It is important to focus on ensuring that all children in Wisconsin achieve because this is in the best interest of the state, our economy, our industries and our farms. When a student completes a college application, IHE’s don’t ask if the student attended a public, private or charter school. IHE’s want new students to be college ready. When a student completes a job application,

employers don't ask if the student attended a public, private or charter school, employers want new employees to be employable. The economy of Wisconsin depends on ensuring that all students graduate transition, trade, career or college ready. We will ensure that whatever the sector the school is functioning within, all schools will operate within the same standards of accountability to ensure the school is delivering high quality education aligned to Wisconsin state standards

**10. Describe your position on independent charter schools.**

It is important to focus on ensuring that all children in Wisconsin achieve because this is in the best interest of the state, our economy, our industries and our farms. When a student completes a college application, IHE's don't ask if the student attended a public, private or charter school. IHE's want new students to be college ready. When a student completes a job application, employers don't ask if the student attended a public, private or charter school, employers want new employees to be employable. The economy of Wisconsin depends on ensuring that all students graduate transition, trade, career or college ready. We will ensure that whatever the sector the school is functioning within, all schools will operate within the same standards of accountability to ensure the school is delivering high quality education aligned to Wisconsin state standards

**11. Wisconsin teacher licensing has the reputation as being one of the most rigorous and respected systems in the country. Recently, proposals were made that would allow any individual with a bachelor's degree or work experience in trades to obtain a teaching license. Do you support these proposals? Why or why not?**

Wisconsin's teacher licensing is rigorous and has benefitted recently from examining unintended consequences that prevented candidates from securing a teaching license despite their successful completion of DPI's approved preparation programs. While serving as Assistant Director of the Teacher Education Professional Development and Licensing (TEPDL) team, I researched pass and failure rates of teacher candidates who completed the Praxis I and Praxis II assessments. Through my research, I found the assessments to be racially biased and presented these findings to the Professional Standards Councils, State Superintendent Leadership Council on Staffing Challenges and other stakeholders. After learning that there exists no data to substantiate that passing these assessments led to better professional performance or higher student outcomes, we realized the assessments didn't add to the rigor of our educator preparation programs. They served as barriers to certification. As a result, we repealed and rewrote PI34 to eliminate these assessments. We learned that requiring Praxis I and Praxis II was adding to our teacher shortage; thus, an unintended consequence. Rigor and respect can not be standards that create challenges such as staffing shortages and exclusion. Every Wisconsin teacher must master the content and pedagogy of teaching. Proposals to address teacher shortages should ensure that each student in Wisconsin is taught by a DPI-licensed teacher that has content knowledge and understands the art and science of teaching. Teacher candidates that possess a bachelor degree and content knowledge can attain pedagogy through our approved educator preparation programs that currently exist. As State Superintendent, I will work with districts and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to develop, approve and implement pathways to licensure that will provide

opportunities for those who hold a bachelor's degree and possess experience in the trades to secure a DPI teaching license in the most expedient manner.

**12. Teachers report a significant increase in mandated meetings and “professional development” sessions that are often unrelated or not embedded to the reality of their daily work with children. What will you do as State Superintendent to provide teachers with the time needed to prepare lessons, collaborate with colleagues, evaluate student work, and reflect on their practice?**

It is imperative that Wisconsin teachers have student-released time during the work day to prepare lessons, examine student performance data, identify ways to reteach skills that students didn't master in previous lessons, develop interim assessments based on standards, collaborate with colleagues, evaluate student performance and reflect. Time will be available for every teacher to prep, plan and collaborate when students are receiving “essentials” as stated in my Bill of Rights for Wisconsin Students. When students are receiving instruction in art, music, physical education, computer science and library media; classroom teachers will have time embedded in their work day to do prep, plan and collaborate. When secondary students are receiving instruction in world languages, communications, financial literacy, economics, health, and civics; middle school and high school teachers will have time embedded in their work day to prep, plan and collaborate.

**13. Do you support restoring the rights of public sector workers to collectively bargain over wages, hours and conditions of employment?**

Yes

**14. Are you interested in receiving MTI Voters endorsement? If so, why?**

Yes. The need is urgent yet there is a long road ahead in order to meet our goal of providing every student in Wisconsin with an outstanding education. By seeking the endorsement of the respected members of the MTI, we will work collaboratively to start building the necessary coalition. This is a nonpartisan election. No matter where a person may stand on the political spectrum, we all passionately agree that a highly effective education for each student in our great state is essential. By endorsing Dr. Hendricks for State Superintendent of Schools for Wisconsin, you are committing to an ALL means ALL trajectory of success for Wisconsin students.

**15. Are you interested in receiving financial support for your campaign from MTI-Voters?**

Yes

**16. Is there anything else you would like MTI members to know about your candidacy and why you are seeking election to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction?**

The state is indebted to Wisconsin's great teachers, education's front line workers, who pivoted from face-to-face instruction to online teaching. Their constant goal was to provide the continuity of education to our students as well as addressing their social-emotional needs in times of uncertainty and increased stress. We vigorously honor their flexibility and commitment. Their hard work and commitment needs to be rewarded with increased compensation, opportunities for growth and increased reliance on the professionalism of our teachers in setting expectations and the channels by which we measure them. When I served as the principal of an elementary school, teachers developed interim assessments aligned to standards. This is an example of teachers leading by establishing channels to measure student achievement. It is also important to look at lessons learned from the virtual paradigm of education and its uses in meeting several of the challenges facing our schools across the state.

We also strongly appreciate the difficult role our parents and caregivers have provided during this pandemic. Without notice or preparation, these people have risen to the challenge of juggling educational support with the other demands in their lives. To acknowledge their dedication, I will work with the legislature to develop a parent rebate. This will be similar to the way our educators have the ability to claim up to \$350 for expenses related to their classroom. Parents, who have once again served as Wisconsin's students' first teachers, deserve to claim up to \$350 for expenses related to instruction at home. As our students return to the brick-and-mortar classrooms across the state, we will follow our national and state medical experts. I will rely on science, safety, and student well-being as our guide. In my capacity as state superintendent, I will ensure the DPI focuses on improving a reopening school buildings risk assessment tool. I will follow interim COVID-19 guidance and provide interim COVID-19 cafeterias and food service guidance. Additionally, a COVID-19 Infection Control Checklist for K-12 Schools will be crucial as we return to in-person instruction.

I look forward to earning your confidence and support as we work diligently, student by student, teacher by teacher, school by school to achieve academic success for Wisconsin. It is imperative to develop a pervasive attitude throughout Wisconsin that our students are capable, can achieve success and with our help they WILL. I know I can. I know we can. I know we will!

**Dr. Shandowlyon Hendricks-Williams**  
**Candidate for Wisconsin State Superintendent**

1/8/2021