

NEA Fund for Children and Public Education  
*Political Action Committee of the  
National Education Association*

2020

Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

***Bryan E. Miller***

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Candidate name

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Campaign website

***Bryan E Miller***

**10 Jun 2020**

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Candidate signature

Date

\*Candidates: Questionnaire information and responses are for INTERNAL USE ONLY. Please clearly indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations and other information may be attached, but please be certain to make reference to the corresponding question. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to your NEA state affiliate.

# Section A. Opportunity Begins with Great Public Schools for Every Student

## Ensuring Every Student Has the Opportunity to Learn

1. Do you support public schools having reliable, sustained, and appropriate streams of revenue and resources suitable to address individual student needs?  yes  no

2. Do you support increasing Title I funding?  yes  no

**Comment:** *The funding of schools is a state, county and municipal level issue thus should be funded at that level. A key exception to that policy I may consider is that of funding programs for individuals with disabilities due to the array of federal laws that require specific programs and physical or psychological support capabilities be provided that often extend well beyond the local communities ability to offer without additional funding.*

3. Do you support increasing Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding?  yes  no  **It Depends**

**Comment:** *As noted above, this is an area where it may be appropriate for the federal government to provide funds due to federal legislation that mandates specific programs and physical or psychological support capabilities be provided that often extend well beyond the local communities ability to offer without additional funding.*

4. Do you support mandatory full funding at the promised 40 percent level for IDEA?  yes  no  **It Depends**

**Comment:** *I would have to better understand the costs associated with the mandate to see if that is an appropriate level of funding as compared to the funds expended by the state, county, and municipal entities responsible for the schools in question.*

5. Do you support including school modernization funding as a part of a federal infrastructure plan?  yes  no

**Comment:** *As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools*

6. Do you support increasing federal investment in the Community Schools model to exceed federal investment in charter schools?  yes  no

**Comment:** *As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools; the funding of schools is a state, county and municipal level issue thus should be funded at that level.*

7. Do you support increasing federal investments to help states expand public high-quality prekindergarten programs and to ensure all children have access to full-day kindergarten?  yes  no

8. Will you urge Congress to support increased federal investments in and commitment to Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native education? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no  **It Depends**

**Comment:** The three cases noted here fall into a completely different category than the individual states due to treaties signed by the federal government. If an increase in funding were determined to be needed to fulfill the U.S. Government's responsibilities under those treaties, I would not support a blanket funding as the ability of the various groups to support themselves varies dramatically from tribe to tribe and reservation to reservation.

## Children's Health, Wellness, and Safety

9. Please indicate which of the following you support in regards to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). (Select all that apply.)

Expanding access and increasing funding for Medicaid and CHIP

Converting Medicaid to a block grant

Instituting per capita caps on Medicaid funding

None of the above

10. Do you support ensuring healthy nutrition standards for school meals and snacks, **such as** the standards outlined in the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act?  yes \_\_\_\_ no

**Comment:** As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools or the federal mandating of standards for schools; the funding of and implementation of standards for schools is a state, county and municipal level issue thus should be funded at that level. That noted, I do support the idea of maintaining a healthy nutrition standard for school meals and snacks as determined by state, county or municipal school districts.

11. Do you oppose any cuts or attempts to block grant funding for school meals and child nutrition programs, particularly the Community Eligibility Provision? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

**It Depends**

**Comment:** As noted earlier, individuals with disabilities and commitments to Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native communities may be, in my opinion, appropriate to fund as necessary to ensure compliance with applicable law and treaties.

12. Which approaches to preventing gun violence and improvements to safety preparedness in schools do you support? (Select all that apply)

Universal background checks for guns bought in stores, online, or at gun shows

Banning assault-style weapons, high-capacity magazines, and bump stocks

Lifting the prohibition on gun violence research and study by the Centers for Disease Control

Increasing funding and access to school-based mental health and trauma-informed services, including the full complement of specialized instructional support staff (i.e. counselors and nurses)

Prohibition on federal funding to purchase firearms and firearms training for educators

Preserving the Gun-Free School Zones Act

None of the above

**Comment:** For access to school-based mental health ....., Depending upon who is doing the funding (meaning the state, county or municipal entities responsible for the schools), I may support such a policy, but not funded at the federal level.

## Striving for Professional Excellence

13. Which approaches to teacher preparation programs do you support? (Select all that apply)

Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to include comprehensive “residencies” of at least a year in which accomplished teachers provide guidance to new teachers

Providing adequate supports for new teachers including mentoring by experienced teachers and appropriate professional development for their level of experience

Providing incentives to states to require the necessary clinical practice to be profession ready prior to becoming the teacher of record

Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to recruit and retain teacher candidates

Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to recruit and retain teacher candidates from under-represented groups to expand diversity in the teaching workforce

None of the above (**as the reponses are presented; see comment below**)

**Comment:** *As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools; the funding of schools is a state, county and municipal level issue thus should be funded at that level. I will note that each of the teacher preparation programs noted above are viable approaches and should be utilized depending upon the source of the candidate (e.g. 4yr degree program, Masters/PhD program, Military to Teacher program, etc.), less the federal government funding portion built into the responses up front.*

14. Do you support federal funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which offers valuable professional development and high standards for educators to further their practice?  yes  no

**Comment:** *As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools. This would include the funding of boards, task forces, or professional organizations supporting the development of standards for any industry or trade not fully owned and/or controlled by the federal government.*

15. Do you support providing funding that can go toward training for education support professionals (i.e., custodial and maintenance personnel, school bus drivers, paraeducators, secretaries, computer technicians, etc.) and specialized instructional support professional (i.e., nurses, speech pathologists, psychologists, etc.)?

yes  no

**Comment:** *As noted above, in general, I do not support federal funding for schools. This would include the federal funding of training or education support for any industry or trade not fully owned and/or controlled by the federal government.*

## Accountability for All Public Schools

16. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same standards of transparency (i.e. financial, holding public board meetings, and reporting that includes the preservation of historical data) as all public schools?  yes  no  **It Depends**

**Comment:** *This depends upon who is providing the funds for the schools.*

17. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same accountability standards/requirements (i.e. civil rights, employment, health, labor, safety, educator qualifications) as all public schools? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

**It Depends**

**Comment:** *In general yes as all businesses operating in the public arena are yet with a caveat as to who is providing the funds for the schools.*

18. Do you support reducing the number of federally mandated high-stakes standardized tests and allowing local teacher-designed methods of assessing learning?

yes  no

**Comment:** *This question seems to be written in a rather biased form to draw out a specific answer that would apply equally to both parts of what is clearly a two-part question so it requires a comment for clarification. I do not support federally mandated testing across the board for a myriad of reasons. Nor do I support allowing local teacher-designed methods of assessing learning as a viable measure of student learning as self-assessments are inherently biased. Assessment methods must be developed based upon the criteria and standards developed by the responsible state, county or municipal communities funding the schools.*

19. For the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), do you support expanding the options available to demonstrate student learning and school performance, such as locally developed assessments, among other options?  yes \_\_\_\_ no

**Comment:** *Yes is the answer I provide for this questions simply because I believe these assessments should be left to the state, county, and municipal communities responsible for the education of their children. As noted in several answers above and expanding on the key point that I do not support federal funding for schools, I am opposed to federal mandates of any kind that stray beyond constitutional constraints.*

20. More specifically, within ESEA do you support requiring the meaningful inclusion of opportunity and school climate indicators that highlight disparities, such as students' access to school counselors, nurses, technology, and advanced placement courses?

\_\_\_\_ yes  no

**Comment:** *As stated in the last question and many of the earlier answers I've provided, federal mandates within ESEA and other several other Acts give the federal government unnecessary and unconstrained control of the education of our children.*

## School Vouchers and Related Privatization Schemes

21. Please indicate whether you support the following: (Select all that apply)

Private school vouchers

Education savings accounts for K-12 students

Tuition tax credits for K-12 students

529 savings plans for K-12 private school tuition or home schooling

\_\_\_\_ None of the above

**Comment:** *And all at the State level vs the federal level, for the same reasons as stated above in many of my earlier answers.*

22. Do you support private school vouchers for any of these specific populations of students? (Select all that apply)

- Students from military families
- Students who attend Bureau of Indian Education schools
- Students attending Washington, D.C. public schools
- Students with disabilities
- Students who have been bullied or harassed
- None of the above

**Comment:** *And all at the State level vs the federal level with the possible exception of students who attend Bureau of Indian Education schools and students with disabilities, for the same reasons as stated above in many of my earlier answers.*

## Section B: Opportunity Requires an Economy that Works for America's Middle Class

### Creating a Fair Economy

23. Do you support raising the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to at least \$15.00 per hour, which would benefit many education support professionals (i.e., custodial and maintenance personnel, school bus drivers, paraeducators, secretaries, computer technicians, etc.), and tying future wage increases to inflation on an annual basis?

\_\_\_ yes  no

24. Please indicate which changes to the U.S. tax code you support in order to ensure we have the revenue needed to make critical investments in our future. (Select all that apply)

- \_\_\_ Reducing corporate tax rates
- \_\_\_ Increasing corporate tax rates
- Closing corporate tax loopholes
- \_\_\_ Reducing high-income individual's tax rate
- \_\_\_ Increasing high-income individual's tax rate
- \_\_\_ Repealing the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions
- \_\_\_ No change

### Making College More Affordable for Everyone

25. Do you support legislation allowing federal student loans to be refinanced—like mortgages—when interest rates decline?  yes \_\_\_ no

26. Do you support legislation allowing all federal student loans to be discharged during bankruptcy?

\_\_\_ yes  no

27. Do you support expanding public service loan forgiveness programs to include contingent or adjunct faculty in higher education institutions? \_\_\_\_ yes  no

28. Please indicate which changes to the Pell Grant award you would support. (Select all that apply)

Expanding the maximum award to keep pace with annual cost of living increases

Year-round Pell Grants

No change

Decreasing the maximum Pell Grant award

## Employees' Rights and Benefits

29. Do you believe all public sector employees should have the right to bargain collectively? \_\_\_\_ yes  no

**Comment:** *I perceive this question to mean should all public sector employees be represented by a union, association, etc. and therefore the members have the right to strike if a collective pay and benefits agreement cannot be reached. My answer is no! I am not a supporter of public sector unions, associations, etc.. Public sector employees are servants of the community just as those of us who served in the U.S. Military were/are setting the stage for an inherent conflict of interest at the most basic level. A conflict that is typically rectified by raising costs on those who depend on public services paid for by tax dollars, which are taken from, not earned from the public by decree.*

*This is in stark contrast to the ability of a private union, association, etc. that strikes to come to an agreement with a private company that is increasing the wealth of the entity based on the toils of those who work for and the produce saleable merchandise (or services) for said entity. In this case, the two parties both have something of value to bargain with: work vs profit. In the case of a private union, association, etc. there is a fair and equitable balance of power in the negotiation relationship. Thus I am able to support private unions.*

30. Do you support due process rights for all education employees?  yes \_\_\_\_ no

**Comment:** *No different than the rights of any other employee.*

31. Do you support protecting people from being denied health insurance coverage or being charged more for coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions?

yes \_\_\_\_ no

32. Please indicate if you support the following approaches to health coverage taxation. (Select all that apply)

Maintaining tax exclusion for employer-sponsored health coverage

Eliminating excise tax on higher-cost employer-sponsored health coverage

None of the above

## Retirement Security

33. Do you support eliminating or reforming the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision?  yes  no

34. Do you support raising the Social Security payroll tax cap?  yes  no

35. Which approaches to Medicare policy and funding do you support? (Select all that apply)

Raising the Medicare eligibility age to 67

Converting Medicare to a voucher system, also referred to as premium support

Means testing Medicare benefits eligibility

Maintaining at least the current level of benefits for recipients

None of the above

36. Do you support the deferral of income tax on contributions to a pension plan?

yes  no

## Section C: Opportunity for All Requires a Democracy that Works for All

### Human and Civil Rights

37. Which approaches to improving school climate and discipline practices do you support?

Increasing funding and access to school-based mental health, including the full complement of specialized instructional support staff (i.e. counselors and nurses)

Increasing funding and/or staff support to implement restorative practices in schools

Increasing funding and/or staff to implement trauma-informed services and education practices

None of the above

**Comment:** *For access to school-based mental health ....., Depending upon who is doing the funding (meaning the state, county or municipal entities responsible for the schools), I may support such a policy, but not funded at the federal level.*

38. Do you support legislation updating the Voting Rights Act to ensure adequate voter protection, access and awareness by including oversight of those jurisdictions that have a recent record of voting rights violations and voter disenfranchisement?  yes  no

**It Depends**

**Comment:** *I would need to see such evidence of the charges suggested and/or need to make such updates and then make a decision based upon the evidence. In any case, I will most certainly move to require a government issued ID to be presented to vote in the United States, our Territories and Possessions, work to update the Act or other legislation to add verbiage that forbids any state to allow non-citizens to vote in our*

*elections, work to require that ½ of the work day must be allowed off for the federal election day for individuals who participate in the election process on that day as a way to increase security and promote public confidence in our election process.*

39. Do you support adequate funding for the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights so it will have the necessary resources to ensure equal education access for all students through data collection, research, investigation, and enforcement of both individual and systemic civil rights complaints and demonstrated problems in our nation's schools?

\_\_\_ yes  no

**Comment:** *In my opinion, the items noted here would fall under the auspices of the DOJ.*

40. Do you support amending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include a ban on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex in the areas of public accommodation, such as education, employment and public spaces?

\_\_\_ yes  no

**Comment:** *I firmly believe that the U.S. Constitution (as amended) and in our state's case, the Wyoming Constitution (see below), encompass the full spectrum of Civil Rights as has been upheld by multiple District Courts and the US Supreme Court in multiple cases. I will never vote to grant special civil or political rights to any individual or group of individuals beyond the text in these great documents.*

#### **TITLE 97 - WYOMING CONSTITUTION**

#### **ARTICLE 1 - DECLARATION OF RIGHTS**

#### **Article 1, Section 2. Equality of all.**

*In their inherent right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, all members of the human race are equal.*

#### **Article 1, Section 3. Equal political rights.**

*Since equality in the enjoyment of natural and civil rights is only made sure through political equality, the laws of this state affecting the political rights and privileges of its citizens shall be without distinction of race, color, sex, or any circumstance or condition whatsoever other than individual incompetency, or unworthiness duly ascertained by a court of competent jurisdiction.*

41. Please indicate which immigration policies you support for aspiring Americans. (Select all that apply)

\_\_\_ Provisional protection – a reprieve from deportation and a work permit for undocumented immigrants who entered the country as children (DACA program)

Protecting family unity

\_\_\_ Creating a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants

\_\_\_ None of the above

**Comment:** *I do not support DACA; I would protect family unity to the same extent that our current laws allow for American Citizens who violate the law and who are detained by lawful authority, and there are already several legal pathways to citizenship for most aliens who illegally entered the United States. They all start with righting the original wrong and getting in line as the million plus who come to the U.S. legally do each year.*

## Section D: Short Answer

42. Do you believe the federal government has a role in fostering educational excellence and equal access for all public school students?   X   yes      no

If yes, please provide a short answer describing what you believe that role should be. If no, please provide a short answer describing why you believe the federal government should not play a role in public education.

**Comment:** *I believe there is a role the federal government has in fostering educational excellence and equal access for all public school students. That role might be limited to ensuring:*

- *Individual's civil rights are not violated where the education community is concerned,*
- *Compiling research regarding and promoting best practices, and*
- *Hosting and coordinating national level of education competitions at K-12 to spur excellence*

*Unless and until someone can convince me differently, after decades of talking with teachers, administrators, and parents (including many extended family members in all three categories) I have come to the conclusion that the U.S. Department of Education as it exists today is not only unnecessary, but since it's inception in 1980 has greatly increased the workload of teachers on the administrative side, reduced the time they can spend with students, and as a result has become increasingly harmful to our nation's youth and the future of our great nation.*

*That noted, I might propose that the U.S. Department of Education be restructured, dramatically, reduced in both size and scope, and placed under another department as a Directorate of Affiliate group.*

*I could foresee a staff of approximately 350 persons including some five branches that would include approximately 50 persons each primarily split across national regions including at least one individual sent by each state, territory, and possession in said region who is intimately familiar with and who maintains constant contact their respective state's education system leadership. One of these branches would consist of representatives from the Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native communities across the U.S. The role of each of these branches would be to compile research regarding their regions educational capabilities, standards, student performance, etc.*

*In addition, a sixth branch of approximately 50 individuals in this directorate would be responsible for hosting and coordinating national level of education competitions to spur academic and teaching excellence with the public education community.*

*The remaining directorate members would make up the executive leadership (appx 20 persons) and administrative staff (appx 30 persons) of the directorate. This executive section would engage with the six proposed branches to consolidate information, analyze data, and derive best practices to share across the education community. It would also be responsible for forwarding recommendations to the the U.S. Department of Justice regarding potential civil rights violations which would then be adjudicated as needed by the DOJ.*

*The cost savings at the federal level would be tremendous considering the current structure of the U.S. Department of Education includes some 4,400 personnel utilizing*

*an annual budget of approximately \$68 Billion. According to the U.S. Department of Education Mission Statement that budget is currently dedicated to:*

- Establishing policies on federal financial aid for education, and distributing as well as monitoring those funds.*
- Collecting data on America's schools and disseminating research.*
- Focusing national attention on key educational issues.*
- Prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education*

*In this proposal, establishing policies on federal financial aid for education, and distributing as well as monitoring those funds would be transferred back to the states, territories, possessions and tribal communities where they would work with the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop policies congruent with federal banking laws to establish state level programs for financial aid support. The current federal program would take some time to ramp down as this occurs but would ultimately, over say 10 years transition all student loans to state banks.*

*In the end, the bulk of the \$68 Billion in tax dollars sent to Washington would stay in the states, territories, possessions and tribal communities without being subjected to the black hole that somehow turns each \$1.00 tax dollar taken in into less than \$.50 cents as it is doled out to students as aid.*

*The detail presented in this answer may just scratches the surface but it fullfills the mission as recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.*

43. What is your personal background or experience with public schools?

**Comment:** *Attended K and 3-12 in public schools. Have dozens of friends and relatives who are teachers both here in Wyoming and across the nation. While in the US Air Force, worked with both DOD and Public schools on bases providing support to a variety of programs as well as dozens of show and tell and information briefs regarding military family, aviation, and local area environmental issues.*

44. **FOR SENATE ONLY:** What would your criteria be for considering confirmation of the president's nominee for Secretary of Education? What stakeholders would you consult and what knowledge, experience, and expertise would you look for?

**Comment:** *I would certainly look for a candidate who has an education background.*

*Considering I'd be the US Senator for Wyoming, I'd consult with the WEA. I'd also poll the dozens of teachers I know (refer to question 43) to see what their criteria would be.*

45. What criteria would you use to decide whether or not to support nominees to the Supreme Court of the United States?

**Comment:** *I'm looking for Supreme Court nominees who evaluate cases with respect to the original intent of the US Constitution as amended and who will not legislate from the bench.*

a. Who or what types of stakeholders will you rely upon to inform your decision and what information about potential nominees will be most important to you?

**Comment:** *I'll look to a wide-array of stakeholders as I see the advise and consent power established in the US Constitution as a core responsibility of the US Senate.*

b. With regard to selection criteria for a Supreme Court justice, what qualifications, knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences do you consider essential for this position?

**Comment:** *Again, I'll look to a wide-array of qualifications, knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences as criteria to review as I see the advise and consent power established in the US Constitution as a core responsibility of the US Senate. I'd expect at a minimum a lengthy career with experience at several levels of the judiciary, deep knowledge of the US Constitution, and as for essential viewpoints, a nominee who recognizes and the original intent of the US Constitution as amended and who will not legislate from the bench.*

46. What would your criteria be for considering presidential nominees in general, and what would your process be for vetting nominees' qualifications, expertise, and position on issues?

**Comment:** *This is an odd question applied to only US Senate candidates. I appears you want to know who I'll vote for in 2020 between President Trump and past Vice President Biden. The answer up to and including this very moment is President Trump! I will not and could not support a candidate who would consider adopting socialism in any flavor as our form of government. I've spent more than four decades now in service to Wyoming and our Great Nation both while in the military and now in my civil life. I will continue to support, obey, and defend the US and Wyoming Constutions and that absolutely includes our form of government.*