

2016 Alaska Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Patricia Faye-Brazel- House District 10
Submitted September 8th

Alaska PTA aka Alaska Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. represents approximately 7,000 members from 116 schools around the state. The Alaska PTA Advocacy Committee would deeply appreciate your taking the time to answer our questions about your perspective on public education in Alaska. Providing quality public education is one of the most important sectors that we can invest in, when one considers the impact it has on the future of our children and thus the competitiveness of our state.

The questionnaire will be used to provide a synopsis of candidate positions to our members, in order to better inform them of candidate positions prior to the November election. We respectfully ask that you complete and submit the questionnaire prior to September 15th, 2016.

1. Please provide your name and the Alaska Legislative seat you are a candidate for.

Patricia Faye-Brazel - House Representative HD 10

2. What do you see as the three top challenges facing the delivery of public education in Alaska today?

- Limitation on resources for teachers
- Livable wages for well-educated professionals
- Rigidity of standardized testing

3. What is your understanding of the "Every Student Succeeds Act", and what potential effects it can have on public education in Alaska?

While it is a step forward since the days of "No Child Left Behind", it is a federal standard that does not always take in account Alaskan realities.

For each of the last six years, school districts across Alaska have cut their budgets and eliminated programs and positions due to local, state and federal funding levels that have remained flat. Thus we have the following questions:

4. Do you think Alaska public schools are adequately funded?

I do not. A well-educated population is our only hope for the future. We need to offer the resources and environments that not only serve to enhance our educators and give them the tools required to give their best, but also to ensure that students are offered the books, technology, nutrition, and transportation necessary to achieve their goals.

5. Would you support an alternate revenue stream for public education in Alaska (one example would be an education head tax similar to that which was in place in 1980)?

I think the mechanism is not the problem. We need to foster an appreciation of education which facilitates of talents of each child so that anyone can achieve. While I support all forms of tax revenue to enhance our investments in education, I also support legislation which would protect our educational systems from budget cuts.

6. Do you support the continued minimum enrollment of 10 students to keep rural Alaska schools open to serve our rural communities and students? AND Do you support increasing graduation rates among Alaska Native students since according the National Center for Education Statistics they have one of the lowest graduation rates in the country and are residing in many of these rural small school locations?

To the first part I would say yes -- Although a strict "cost-benefit" analysis of the minimum enrollment issue would say that it would be cheaper to raise the minimum to 25, as has recently been discussed by the Alaska state legislature, doing so would have a far greater cost to rural communities.

If many small rural schools were to close, then those students would either need to take on distance education alternatives or attend boarding schools like Mt. Edgecomb and spend a long part of the year away from their families and communities.

7. Would you support a comprehensive fiscal plan that includes new revenue streams, in order to preserve funding for public education?

I think education is at the top of the list and **MUST** be preserved in a manner that delivers quality education. It is the greatest investment we can make in the future of this state.

There is a large body of research that documents the benefits of early childhood education on overall student outcome, and graduation rates. In addition, this research suggests that pre-kindergarten programs can reduce the possibility of a student becoming incarcerated later in life.

8. Do you support funding universal pre-kindergarten as part of a complete education system in Alaska?

Absolutely. The data is there. How could any developed society not offer the best possible development to our greatest resource, the young minds? It should be a right of all children to access Pre-K school.

The Alaska Legislature has considered legislation that proposed a constitutional amendment to allow public money to be spent on private schools, especially. Private schools can pick and choose students and are not held to the same standards as public schools for the quality and content of education. Public schools serve all students, regardless of race, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status.

9. Do you support changing the Alaska Constitution to allow public money to be spent on private or religious schools?

To divide the people between those of different values serves to segregate. By sharing a common education system, we all see the need to be engaged and involved in the continued struggle to reform and keep our education systems modern.

Research suggests parental involvement in a child's education contributes to improved academic performance, better social skills, greater attendance rate, and a higher likelihood of completing a post-secondary education.

10. Do you support the federal government funding a statewide family engagement center for Alaska?

I think this is desirable as long as it is to scale and available to all communities. It is important to take into account the economic and geographic realities of the state.