

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

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1. What does Hawaii do well with regards to K-12 public education?

Hawaii's public schools do a wonderful job each of their three levels of learning. As a HODOE employee, I can say that the schools in my district approach student learning from a dynamic and equitable approach. It is truly a student-centered approach. The current high school programs expose our students to a wide variety of vocational and educational experiences, to include the various trades and STEM. This student-centered approach also translates to increased services and supports for those who may need it from a district or complex area level, such as my services as a Homeless Liaison, and those provided via the complex area and within the schools.

2. What should Hawaii do better with regards to K-12 public education?

I believe that more supportive services can and should be made available for schools, especially schools with high levels of low-socioeconomic demographics. Learning delays, language barriers, learning disabilities and poor support from their home-front are all common variable in areas with low-socioeconomic demographics. By applying focused supports to the area of that need it, the HODOE can allocate appropriate resources to address these issues and increase student equity and success.

3. How should Hawaii prioritize our spending on K-12 public education (for example: teacher salaries, programs to address learning loss, technology, community partnerships and projects, computer science education, charter schools, distance learning options, etc.)?

I believe that investing in our keiki is investing in our future. In order to do that, its best for us to invest in our teachers. So teacher salaries ad benefits would be my top priority. My next priority would be to fund supportive resources within schools. Most public elementary schools only emply a single counselor. In low-socioeconomic areas, these counselors are swamped with student need for a plethora of issues, issues interfering with their ability to learn. I would like to expland school level fundind for supportive servies. The next area i would focus on is getting Chuukese BSHAs on campuses with high populations of COFA students. This is a major issue in urban honolulu schools and will only grow over time. I would then put money into the STEM and trades programs to increase to the exposeure and potential for Hawaii to generate skilled and able workers.

4. Hawaii should require all students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid before graduating from high school, or complete a waiver.

Yes

4.a Comment

While not every student will qualify for the FAFSA, they should still apply.

5. The Hawaii State Constitution provides for the "establishment, support and control of a statewide system of public schools," but does not guarantee quality education. Should the State Constitution be amended to provide quality education as a fundamental right? Should Hawaii students have a constitutional right to a quality education? Please explain your answer.

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Every child should have access to a quality education in Hawaii. We should not settle with the idea that you have to pay for private education in order to obtain a quality education. It should be a constitutional right.

6. What will you do to improve the relationship between the Hawaii State Board of Education and legislature?

Being a HIDOE employee, one that works directly under a CAS, I would be a great liaison between the BOE and the legislature.

7. What leadership actions will you take for the Hawaii Department of Education, University of Hawaii system, and employers to work more effectively together?

The greatest issue, from my perspective, is that, while all being state agencies, there is limited to no communication or collaboration between the UH and HIDOE systems, and this extends to the UH community college networks. I would push for HIDOE high schools to foster and develop more strong relationships with both the UH main campuses, and the various community colleges. Not every student desires or requires a four-year degree, but the numerous community college trade programs are as fantastic for those wanting to work in those important positions.

8. College going remains flat, with roughly 50% of recent Hawaii public high school graduates going on to college (2 or 4 year). How do you propose to raise these levels so Hawaii is more competitive with states like California, which has a nearly 65% rate?

From my own personal experience, Hawaii focuses too much on going to four-year colleges. Many students may not be able to afford a traditional college pathway like that. What we should be pushing for is more grant and scholarship support for juniors and seniors, but also a drive to attend community colleges. I remember, from my own time in the HIDOE as a Kailua High School senior, that students not getting into a 4-year college were essentially forgotten. This is not acceptable and more needs to be done to promote community colleges.

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