

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

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

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It provides a majority of our keiki with a well-rounded education that is the foundation for future success.

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

We need to better prepare all our students for a variety of future job options—be it a vocation trade or matriculating to college. Additionally, we must address the gender equity issues in high school athletics, provide comprehensive special education instruction and support to meet students' needs, and implement more STEM programs.

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.)?

The highest priority for public school spending begins with a focus on teacher recruitment, training, and retention. We must also prioritize spending on direct student support based on their specific needs—from addressing learning loss, access to distance learning, or forging stronger community partnerships tailored to the needs of the community, rather than a one-size fits all approach.

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

No

4.a Comment

I would not be comfortable forcing a student's parent or guardian to divulge financial information for a student to graduate, but I do think we should invest more in college counselors to work individually with students on accessing college.

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.

It depends on how "quality" is defined. If the constitution is amended to include this language, we must have a clear way to measure what "quality" means, otherwise it is subject to interpretation that potentially opens the State to litigation. It should be a given that every student has a right to quality education. It should not require a constitutional amendment to achieve.

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

While there will always be disagreements between the legislature and the BOE, I think the relationship is working as intended. My administration will work to ensure our leaders are always focused on doing what is best for our students.

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

My administration will heavily invest in Hawai'i's future by ensuring our keiki receive access to quality education from universal pre-K to the opportunity for every high school graduate to attend a Hawai'i community college. I will also incorporate into my economic plan a focus on growing sustainable industries, and forging partnerships with our educational institutions and the private sector to prepare residents to compete economically for jobs.

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?

One of the biggest hurdles to attending college is cost. As a legislator, I proposed providing free tuition to every qualified Hawai'i high school graduate who wished to attend a community college. I will once again submit this proposal to the legislature if elected. I believe this is one of the most effective ways to address cost because it still affords a student the opportunity to attend a 4-year college upon completion of the 2-year course, while substantially reducing the overall cost of college.

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