

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

Name
Julie Reyes Oda
Office you are seeking:
House
District Number
40
Candidate Contact Information
91-584 Makalea Street, EWA BEACH, HI, 96706
Candidate Phone/Mobile
8089532054
Candidate Email
juliereyesoda@gmail.com
Campaign Contact Information
91-584 Makalea Street, Ewa Beach, HI, 96706
Campaign Phone/Mobile
8089532054
Campaign Email
juliereyesoda@gmail.com
Campaign Web Site
JulieReyesOda.com
Campaign Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/voteforjuliereyesoda/
1. What does Hawaii do well with regards to K-12 public education?

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

The only statewide school system in the country is a beast, but it could be amazing. We are the only state that could make sweeping changes in every single school, in every district, in every city. Because of the statewide school system, we are more equitable in our funding to schools.

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

We need to do better with access to Hawaiian immersion programs, treatment of school level employees, teacher turnover, and universal preschool.

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.)?

-Teacher salaries. We need to take care of the people directly working with the kids. Improvement must start there. -Proper and full staffing: Counselors, nurses, and enough teaching staff. There are issues other than education that kids need to attend to during school hours. Those professionals need to be there so teachers can teach and kids can learn. -Maintenance of school facilities. The environment in which kids learn is important. Often in low income areas, it becomes a safety issue. School facilities should be maintained in every school so environment does not become a hindrance to learning. -Technology. In private schools, it is part of their facilities. Technology needs to be integrated into education in a way that matters and creates good ethical users of technology. When started young, this would pave the way for computer science education and other partnerships and projects. Technology cannot only be introduced in high school.

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

Unsure

4.a Comment

When a requirement is made for the completion of the FAFSA, this requires the willingness of the parent/guardian to help the child. I remember having one of my friends in high school unable to get assistance for college because her parents refused to give tax information due to constant child support battles with each other. She never did go to college. Working in Nānākuli Valley, I've heard of free programs unable to enroll kids because the requirement is proof of Hawaiian ancestry. Families do not complete the birth certificate paperwork. I worry that schools in areas like mine would end up with students who do not complete the FAFSA requirement or waiver and I wouldn't want to hold up their diploma. This is a wonderful idea, but the unintended consequences for schools in areas of poverty would not be worth it.

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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No, the State Constitution should not be amended yet. Yes, Hawai'i students should have a right to a quality education. If the State intends on providing quality schools, then they must fund them. If the State lacks the funding to create such schools, merely amending the State Constitution would create lawsuits to improve education. This is not how education should be improved. Education is not made better one lawsuit at a time. That is a race to the bottom and a way to just hit minimum standards.

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

The BOE is supposed to manage and the legislature is supposed to fund. There is a delicate balance that needs to happen and many battles are happening. In the past, I've seen funding come in through bills (NBCT), but this session, it was not popular to do so. Education takes up such a huge part of the general funds, it really needs more attention and more discussion with both parties. We need more education on the part of BOE and legislature on what the other does so we both understand the roles and then understand the mission of the DOE. When I listened to discussions, sometimes I felt what we do when working with students got lost in the mix.

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

Make sure that everyone sits at the table and understands that no one is subordinate to another. This is a lateral continuum and everyone holds an important piece that is necessary to make everything happen. I want more people at the table and that would include kids, unions, teachers, admin. Get all of the people who make this system work at the table to really see what we do and how we get this system to work better.

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?

Implement the academy model so students can try to earn credits while in high school or industry certifications. Students will be on a career path and understand that there is a goal instead of just receiving a diploma and figuring it out from there.