

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

| |
|---|
| Name |
| Scott Saiki |
| Office you are seeking: |
| House |
| District Number |
| 25 |
| Candidate Phone/Mobile |
| (808)222-9372 |
| Candidate Email |
| scottsaiiki@gmail.com |
| Campaign Web Site |
| https://www.scottsaiikihawaii.com/ |
| 1. What does Hawaii do well with regards to K-12 public education? |
| <p>Our schools provide opportunities to students. Our schools have developed community-based, niche programs and curriculum that resonate with students and faculty. Schools innovate and search for public-private partnerships to carry out student programs. Extracurricular programs (including athletics) give students opportunities to be leaders. Hawaii's teachers are our greatest strength. Our teachers are committed to supporting their students' success in and out of the classroom. In order to help recruit and retain teachers, the Legislature passed a law (SB 2819) and set aside funding to correct compression within the teacher's pay scale. I advocated strongly for this because it rights a long standing inequity and will help recruit and retain teachers long term. During the pandemic, they adjusted to implement distance learning strategies quickly. To assist with supporting distance learning, we passed a law (SB 2184) to create a digital learning center in DOE. I am committed to continuing to support our teachers and the Department of Education to ensure that we are preparing Hawaii's children for success.</p> |
| 2. What should Hawaii do better with regards to K-12 public education? |
| <p>Teachers need better support from the DOE, BOE, and community. There are more than 13,000 teachers in classrooms across our state. As a community, we need to value and support the work being done by our teachers. Administrators should also have some flexibility when managing their campuses. Parents need to be more involved in their community schools as well.</p> |

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

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.)?

Education is the largest investment in the State Budget. 23% of our General Fund appropriations, more than \$2 billion of our \$9 billion budget, is for DOE. When we add in Federal Funds, Hawaii is investing \$2.4 billion, 14% of our budget, in DOE. I am committed to continuing to invest in public education. Our investment in public education will continue to increase as we move toward our goal of providing pre-K to 3 and 4 year olds. This year, we appropriated \$200 million to expand pre-K facilities. This builds on Act 210, SLH 2021 which created a Hawaii Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program to address the shortage of early childhood educators.

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

Yes, I believe it would be helpful for high school students to complete the FAFSA. College education is a path to improve incomes and enable our youth to be able to afford Hawaii's high cost of living. Completing the free FAFSA can help students and families understand that aid is available to help make college more affordable if they choose that path.

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.

While I appreciate the intent of this question and agree that Hawaii's children deserve a quality education, I do not feel that a constitutional amendment will necessarily lead to "quality" education. The term is vague and I can foresee litigation over the meaning and effect of "quality." I also believe that our teachers and school staff strive towards a "quality" education curriculum regardless of it being explicitly mentioned in the constitution.

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

Open and direct communication is always the best approach especially since the Board is charged with setting education policy in our state. Both sides need to understand their roles and stay in their lanes. This does not mean that the Legislature should de-emphasize its oversight function. To the contrary, the Legislature must ensure that appropriations are correctly spent and that policies are implemented and effective.

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

See no. 6. In addition, there needs to be a common purpose with respect to educational policy. And all of the players should be on board with this purpose.

2022 HawaiiKidsCAN Action Fund Candidate Survey

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?

The Legislature has appropriated funds to make our community colleges and four-year colleges accessible to Hawaii residents, including tuition subsidies and waivers. High school graduates need to be educationally prepared to attend college. Schools should have adequate college prep resources. At McKinley High School, a fair number of graduates each year also enlist in the military or go straight into the workforce, due to their individual circumstances. We need a better assessment of the reasons (or barriers) that preclude more graduates from attending college.



HAWAIIKIDSCAN
ACTION FUND