

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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(1)The early learning education initiatives are great. We need to provide early early activities to connect kids early on to the “joy of learning,” providing as many avenues of learning outside the classroom as well as inside. 2The legislature has also supported (2)alternative education centers for kids at risk to provide connectors with academics and supportive adults (but we need more) and (3) pathways to work for the high school student who doesn’t intend to immediately enter post-secondary education.

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

See above re: expanding more options during the K-12 years to supplement the in-classroom studies. I believe the more stimulation of the mind and body makes for a well-rounded citizen.

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.)?

All of the above. I believe the schools should be empowered to determine the priorities according to their students’ needs. Teacher salaries are, of course, important to attract the best and brightest to teach and inspire our students. As importantly is to incentivize teacher excellence in terms of student performance.

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

No. FAFSA application and support may not be appropriate for some students and requiring them to complete a waive may be embarrassing or too difficult. However, the school should require its counselor(s) to provide a session for all high school students prior to graduation on FAFSA and its benefits and how to 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.

Every student should have the opportunity to a well-rounded “quality” education. I believe that the public schools are required to provide such a curriculum and accompanying standards. It can be done by statute if that is what the Board of Education sees as important to assure that students receive a “quality education.” Changing the constitution to require a “quality” education may have unintended consequences, eg. if we do not define quantitatively, anyone could sue the state for not providing the class(es) one believes should be provided for a “quality” education. And while it sounds great, what does it mean?

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

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I don't see a problem. There will always be friction and differences between the separate branches of government - the legislature establishes policies as it deems needed; the executive implements as it sees best achieves those policies and standards. Better communication and understanding on what is best for our students are key. Perhaps more workshops between the two branches on standards and evolving needs of our students may help in moving us to consensus on how to best support our students to become global citizens and leaders.

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

Before elected to my senate seat I was both an administrator and faculty at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I thus see and understand the different perspectives. If given the opportunity (I do not sit on the senate education committees) I would encourage joint sessions to address the various needs of schools, teachers and students.

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?

While it is important to support students in matriculating in post-secondary education, it is not the only pathway for success. Better counseling and testing at the high school levels to identify student interests, capabilities, and goals. If they point to post-secondary education, then the schools should assist those students in learning post-secondary skills and help them in obtaining FAFSA and other support. If not, students should be supported in other pathways in vocational education and certification e.g. agriculture, health care, information technology. Once a student is interested, he/she will be motivated to seek the training and/or education needed and will excel. I believe the well-rounded citizen is one who excels in whatever vocation or education he/she seeks.

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