

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
2008 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE SURVEY**

Name: Douglas P. (Doug) Van Etten

District: Senate "O"

Please limit each response to no more than 50 words.

1. 21st Century Challenges:

The economy and demographics of Alaska are changing in the 21st Century. Even as state and federal standards require districts to bring all students to greater proficiency, employers demand graduates with continually increasing and changing content competencies.

- A. How do you think our schools/district should change to ensure that all students receive an education that will equip them to succeed?

While I did serve as both a full time classroom teacher for one year and as a substitute teacher for parts of a few years, I do not profess to have the answers. I will rely on the expertise of the Departments of Education at UAA & UAF, the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the public in our communities to provide me and the Legislature with valuable input on how to accelerate, restructure, improve our schools and our educational methodology.

- B. What, if any, is the role of the legislature in implementing or facilitating these changes?

The Legislature needs to listen to the experts in the teachers union; the Department of Education and others integrated into the educational process and system, and then adequately fund those suggestions. Alaska needs to maintain a well educated student body/ work force in order to remain or become competitive with economic rivals and opportunities emerging throughout the Pacific Rim.

- C. What ideas do you have to help school districts prepare Alaska's students to meet the current and growing demand for a trained and technically skilled workforce?

School – business partnerships are an essential element of education to make the schooling relevant and applicable to the needs of our modern society. Using the Anchorage School District as an example, more students need to have exposure to opportunities like those provided at the King Career Center. Union partnerships, business partnerships, work-career mentoring, all need to be implemented &/or expanded beyond their current reach.

2. Increasing Technology Needs for Student Learning and Parent Access to Information:

Not always visible, but critical to the success of the whole education program, technology must receive the increased attention required to keep up with ever-expanding demands.

- A. What role do you see technology playing in education of today’s students for jobs of the future?

The role of technology is well stated in your preface statement above. In the modern world we must offer all students in our schools and training programs to get and stay on the leading edge of technology.

- B. What is your plan for providing adequate funding to meet the growing and ever-changing need for technology in our schools to keep our students competitive in the global market?

I will need to see specifically what is proposed by education technology specialists. This is not an area where a Legislator is an “expert” but needs to rely on the advice and testimony of experts in the field to provide us with funding request/ needs requirements.

3. Early Childhood Education:

Alaska is one of only ten states that do not offer early childhood education for 3- and 4-year-olds. What are your thoughts about providing early childhood education opportunities in Alaska?

We should, we MUST provide early childhood education.

4. Highly Qualified Staffing Needs:

What ideas do you have to help Alaska school districts attract and retain highly qualified and ethnically diverse teachers, principals and other professional staff?

Pay them; house them; induce them to engage in community life. When a teacher has a spouse of significant other, assist them in becoming employed, engaging in volunteerism and other ways to invest that significant other into the community.

5. Capital Needs:

The State of Alaska currently estimates that school districts need about \$1 billion this year to meet current requirements for new schools and major maintenance to existing facilities. Anchorage alone has \$800 million in identified needs (at today's costs) over the next ten years, but outstanding bonded indebtedness has become a concern to local voters. As a legislator, how would you propose that we address this need?

While we have current large budget surpluses, use that money to meet our education capitol needs. As we budget for future years, include in the budget a maintenance and/or replacement reserve. I manage condominium associations that have to budget for roof repair/ replacement, major painting, etc and they do that successfully by budgeting for reserve accounts.

6. Ideas for Improving Alaska's Public Schools:

Please discuss any ideas you have about improving Alaska's public schools or the way we fund them.

I am open to learning what methods and models have been tried here in Alaska and in other areas challenged with remote location/ small school education. What does Canada do? Scandinavia? Australia?