

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE SURVEY**

Name: _____Mark Fish_____

District: _____22_____

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?

It is a lofty goal that all students succeed we must realize that success is a relative term. Some student will do better than others. The goal should be to educate students to live up to their individual potential. Students at a minimum should have the ability to read and research. I would like to see our school acknowledge not only the benefit of education but also instill a work ethic and a sense of citizenship.

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

Fund k-12 education fully at the state level. Remove the property tax component. Oversee reasonable standards of accountability.

- 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 credit for on the job training.

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?

Technology is a tool. We must be careful not to train children in technologies that will be obsolete before they graduate. If a child has a sound background in scientific reasoning they can easily adapt to their changing world.

- 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?

Due to global resource shortages, increasing transportation cost and instability around the world, I believe we must equip student with the tools to survive local market conditions. We must learn to provide for ourselves first. Again, school funding should be provided at the state level not on the backs of local taxpayers.

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?

Three and Four year olds need love and security more than they need education. This is best accomplished at home or in small settings.

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?

We live in Alaska to me that is the biggest reason to work here. I am not sure that I want to attract or retain people who are here solely for the money and benefits. I want our public servants to be Alaskans and remain here after the job is done. Like other frontiers Alaska has always been a diverse state. We need to provide a decent wage and reasonable benefits Those who are driven by money and benefits alone will leave for the highest wage they can find. I do not believe we should offer the highest wage in the country or the world.

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?

Fully fund k-12 education at the state level as mandated by our state's constitution.

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.

Alaska's constitution Article 7 Section 7.1 states;

The legislature shall by general law **establish and maintain** a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions.

This indicates that our states founders viewed children's education as a responsibility of the state. One could argue that it should be the parents responsibility, not the states, however the state has clearly assumed the responsibility in it's founding document.

Presently the state requires a 4 mil property tax effort to be collected by local governments in organized areas of of the state for the purpose of public education.

The question we must ask and have an answer to is:

If it is the states responsibility to establish and maintain public education, then why are local property owners paying for it?

Some may say the local contributions ensures local control. I would suggest those who think this is the case consider how much local control is currently available.

Keep in mind that the most local political subdivision is you state representative district. School board members are elected at large and assembly members districts a larger than house districts.

Your representative in the State's house of representatives is your most local government.

Bottom line:

The state must live up to it's constitutionally mandated responsibility by fully funding children's education and remove the requirement of local governments to collect property taxes for education.