

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD  
LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE SURVEY**

Name: Steven Amundson

District: Senate District I

**Please limit each response to no more than 50 words.**

**1. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges:**

The economy and demographics of Alaska are changing in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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?

The focus should remain on developing core competencies such as English composition, mathematics, and critical thinking skills.

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

The Legislature needs to be responsive to the Alaskan education community and also look at other what states and countries are doing to see if they would be accepted and successful in Alaska.

- 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?

The development of a Dual Diploma program in Alaska would be a great advancement. Also, students need to learn how to communicate with computer based media. That means they need to know how to use Power Point, Publisher and similar programs. Effective communication is a necessity in any field.

**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?

Students need to be proficient and up to date with technological innovations but they cannot use technology as a crutch or before they have mastered the underlying skills.

- 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?

The funding for education, like the funding for everything else in Alaska, will come from the continual responsible development of Alaska's natural resources. In order to ensure Alaska has adequate funding legislators have to ensure our resources are being developed, especially our natural gas.

### **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?

It is imperative that Alaska offers early education for its children. Without early education children may not be capable of meeting educational milestones and they may suffer for the rest of their educational (and professional) careers.

**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?

I think the largest single step the state could take to attract and retain highly qualified teacher and professional staff is to move back to a defined benefit retirement plan.

**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?

Education should be one of the highest priorities for legislators and that includes funding education related capital projects. The legislature ensures matching funds are available for projects approved of by voters.

**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 don't currently have any funding innovations.