



Marty McGee for State House

On *Your* Side

July 22, 2014

Great Alaska Schools

2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Marty McGee Legislative District: House District 22

Mailing Address: 401 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 202, Anchorage, AK 99503

Phone (Cell): 907-306-9007 Email: mcgeeforalaska@gmail.com

Prior Elected Office, If Any: N/A

High Standards for Quality Alaska Schools

1. Do you support efforts like the 90 by 2020 partnership to establish education standards?

Yes. Increasing the graduation rate is a good goal. However, we also need funding to prevent teacher loss for a successful education system.

2. Are there other measures that you would consider better indicators of school quality/performance? If so, what are they?

I want to keep an open mind. While an increased graduation rate indicates a certain level of success, there are surely additional measures to consider. The level of literacy and overall academic achievement are measures that should be established at the school district level. Success in life after graduation is indicative of a good education. The satisfaction and engagement of the students is also an indication of performance.

Assessment of Alaska's Public School System

3. Please describe what you consider to be one or two strengths (or successes) of Alaska's public school system statewide.

All students are provided an equal opportunity to a good education, no matter the location of the school. The system has also attracted good teachers to work in schools across the State.

4. Please describe what you consider to be one or two weaknesses (or failures) of Alaska's public school system statewide.

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P: 907-306-9007 • F: 907-258-1626 • mcgeeforalaska@gmail.com • mcgeeforalaska.com

Not having a stable and predictable foundation of funding, which is now discouraging good teachers and jeopardizing education programs.

- 5. Please describe what you consider to be one or two strengths (or successes) of your local school district.**

The King Career Center is a great program, offering students unique opportunities to gain industry knowledge that can prove invaluable in their future careers. The World Languages program is also very strong in the Anchorage School District. Additionally, the consistent quality and commitment of our local teachers has proven to be a great asset to the community.

- 6. Please describe what you consider to be one or two weaknesses (or failures) of your local school district.**

Increasing class room size. Decreasing the counseling and support staff. The education program needs stable and predictable State funding.

- 7. Please describe one or two actions that the Legislature might take that would address a weakness you identified above.**

Rewrite the school funding formula and commit to a stable and predictable multi-year system of funding for local public schools. Support smaller class sizes and retain teachers.

- 8. Do you believe decisions regarding education spending priorities (e.g., technology, school safety, Pre-K, classroom size, etc.) rest primarily with the Legislature or locally elected School Boards? Please Explain.**

The decisions rest primarily with the local School Boards. The Legislature does have a responsibility to ensure effective and efficient use of funds. The Legislature also has a responsibility to develop a stable and predictable plan for funding.

- 9. Which state expenditures (e.g., transportation infrastructure, energy infrastructure, public safety, gasoline, etc.) do you consider a higher priority than education funding?**

All these things are a high priority and the legislature must seek a balance of expenditure in the budget. However, public education ranks as the highest priority in my view.

Public Funds for Private Schools

- 10. Do you support placing a constitutional amendment on the ballot that would allow public funds to be used to fund students' education at private and religious schools?**

No.

- 11. If no, are there any restrictions or requirements that could be put into place that would change your position on Question 10? Please Explain.**

No. I will keep an open mind to new ideas. However, public money should be spent on public schools and all citizens should be given equal access to the education those funds provide.

Education Funding

12. Do you support the actions of the 2014 Legislature regarding the level of education funding provided?

No.

13. Would you support an increase in the BSA of \$425 in FY16? (If yes, skip to Question 16)

Yes.

14. Would you support any increase in the BSA in FY16? (if no, skip to Question 16)

15. What is the maximum increase in the BSA in FY16 that you would support?

16. Would you introduce a bill to effectuate your desired BSA increase?

Yes.

17. If a majority of your caucus did not support the level of BSA increase you supported in your response to Questions 13 – 15, would you still vote to approve such a BSA increase (regardless of the consequences within your caucus)?

Yes.

18. Do you support inflation-proofing the BSA amount going forward to provide durability and stable purchasing power for Alaska's education funding? (If yes, then skip to Question 20)

Yes.

19. Do you support continuing the practice of scheduled increases to the BSA going forward at least three years to provide predictability to education funding?

20. Would you like to explain any of your answers to Questions 12 – 19? (Please indicate which answer you are explaining.)

In explanation of 17 -- I would not be strictly tied to a level of funding supported by my caucus, but would give consideration to the level of funding that is supported. I do not support continued staff cuts. I would seek a funding commitment that is multi-year, inflation proof and predictable.

Please use the space below to expand on any answers for which you need additional space. (Please indicate which answer you are expanding on.)

I want student in public schools to be prepared for life and employment. All students deserve and equal opportunity for a quality education no matter what region, community or background. An adequate number of guidance and career counselors are required to meet these expectations. The ability to attract and retain good teachers is also essential. Adequate wages, benefits and a secure retirement program are needed to attract and retain the staff for our education system. This is an obligation of the State that needs to be honored by the legislature.