

Great Alaska Schools

2014 Candidate Questionnaire

20 Questions on Alaska Education Policy

Candidate Name: <i>Catny Muñoz</i>	Legislative District: <i>34</i>
Mailing Address: <i>2101 Jordan Avenue</i>	
City: <i>Juneau</i> Zip: <i>99801</i>	Phone: <i>907 463-3029</i>
E-Mail: <i>Catnym@riemunoz.com</i>	Cell: <i>907 723 8089</i>
Prior Elected Office, If Any: <i>3 terms CBJ Assembly</i> <i>3 terms State House</i>	

High Standards For Quality Alaska Schools

Background: Great Alaska Schools is committed to the achievement of high quality public education for every Alaska child. To reach this goal we believe Alaska must focus on specific outcomes, and set high standards for schools and teachers. One such set of standards has been established by the Anchorage United for Youth partners with their "90 by 2020" program. They specifically advocate tracking, among other things, whether Alaska children are ready for kindergarten, 3rd grade reading proficiency, 8th grade math proficiency, and high school graduation readiness as measures of educational success. More background information on their efforts can be found at: www.90by2020.org.

1. Do you support efforts like the 90 by 2020 partnership to establish education standards? Yes No
Please Explain

The ASD goal of 90% graduation by 2020 is excellent.

While the State of Alaska has developed statewide standards, we have retained the flexibility to adapt K-12 curriculum for maximum learning opportunity in a state of rich cultural diversity.

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

The teachers who have contacted me have stated that A key goal in all educational settings should be relevance. Are students engaged in learning and does the material have a "real life" connection?

Not all children learn at the same rate so flexibility in how teachers present material is very important.

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.

Dedicated teachers
Strong partnerships with parents and community organizations
High Quality Facilities

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

Overall lagging performance
High drop-out rate

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

Strong community partnerships
STEM initiatives
Focus on career ed. training
dual credit opportunities with UAS

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

Culture of violence - hazing
* need to make perpetrators more accountable

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

The USD has policies in place to address hazing. The administration needs to be proactive in assuring that our schools are safe for all.

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

According to our constitution, the legislature is the appropriating agency ^{and} while the local districts are implement and set policy as autonomous organizations.

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

I believe education funding is as important as public safety, and infrastructure development follows in priority but is also critical to Alaska's economy.

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? Yes No
(If yes, skip to Question 12)

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

Each issue needs to be examined independently.

Education Funding

Background: Between FY2011 and FY2014, the Base Student Allocation (BSA) was unchanged by the Legislature. Over that period, as a result of this inaction in the face of ordinary inflation, the BSA lost over \$400 in purchasing power. During the 2014 Legislative Session, Great Alaska Schools advocated for an increase in the BSA of \$400 in FY2015 and, as a temporary alternative to inflation-proofing the formula, scheduled increases of \$125 in the following two years.

The 2014 Legislature voted to increase the BSA by \$150 in FY15, \$50 in FY16, and \$50 in FY17. In addition, they appropriated funding "outside" the BSA (using the same distribution formula as the BSA) in an amount equivalent to a BSA increase of \$72 for FY15.

Assuming no funds are appropriated outside the BSA in FY16, the BSA would need to be increased by \$425 that year to return to the purchasing power of FY11.

12. Do you support the actions of the 2014 Legislature regarding the level of education funding provided? Yes No

13. Would you support an increase in the BSA of \$425 in FY16? Yes No
(if yes, skip to Question 16)

if funds include current FY16 increases

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

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

For FY16 - In the past session, I supported the House proposal of \$185 + \$58 + \$30 million in funding outside of the formula equivalent to an additional \$100 bsa increase. I also voted for an amendment to add an additional \$100. I was also very involved in the proposal to strengthen teacher retirement system with a \$2 billion investment in the TKS trust-fund.

Co-sponsor

16. Would you ~~introduce~~ a bill to effectuate your desired BSA increase? Yes No

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 - as long as it was not part of the final budget bill.* Yes No

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 No

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? Yes No

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

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