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

Please Explain

Unequivocally yes. The 90 by 2020 program focuses on real solutions that expand over the course of a student's education career. Too often we see these onetime solutions that only work for a handful of students while taking money away from the goal of better schools for all. This includes a voucher program that, overlooking all the damage it will do in anchorage, forgets students living in rural Alaska who do not have access to private schools in their area. 90 by 2020 works for schools all over Alaska, and doesn't draw a boundary between rural and urban schools on success rates.

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

Schools are often at the front lines of much more than academics. The Anchorage School District, for example, is the largest commercial food operation in the State. The District hosts students for whom over 90 languages are spoken at home. Many students arrive at the school setting from a chaotic home environment and are ill-prepared for academics. The consumers and taxpayers need to understand the broad sociocultural role that schools play. If at-risk students (for example) demonstrate stable performance, enthusiasm for projects and participates in clubs, then that indicates that the school is providing a safe and meaningful space for the student. We need to measure more than academics.

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

My perception is that the teachers of Alaska are more dedicated to the educational qualities of the students than any others teachers I have seen. Alaska has a pool of talented teachers and administrators that are dedicated to educating students. Our school districts are also dedicated to investing in new technologies that help these talented individuals to present the lessons in an engaging way, and getting students engaged in education is key to our education systems success. Alaskan students have distinguished themselves in academic decathlons and speech and drama competitions for years. George Guthridge's book "The Kids from Nowhere" documents a dramatic success story of rural school achievement. He makes the case for supporting creative and dedicated teachers rather than stifling them.

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

In rural areas particularly, there is often a double-edge conflict. Teachers are often disengaged with the community and the rural School administrators, vested in the politics of the REAA, are often not supportive of the new teacher. As a result, there is high turnover. Children hesitate to form attachments with teachers who they know will be leaving at the end of the year.

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

Teachers in our area are more willing to engage with local communities and local governments when empowered to do so, which allows them to be more engaging in the classroom.

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

A crippling disconnection between local governments and schools, as well as severe cultural and language barriers.

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

The legislature needs to empower teachers to make decisions about what is taught in schools. Teachers spend years to become educators, and then we put them in a classroom with a class set of books written ten years ago out of state and tell them to use that to teach math. This practice barely works in Anchorage, and is next to impossible to work with in rural schools. The legislature has to be willing to trust that our teachers can create a lesson plan based on each class's individual strengths and weaknesses.

The legislature also needs to allow schools to focus on their own community outreach, breaking down the wall between school and home and allowing for more parent-teacher interaction. We need to make sure that schools are a piece of the community, which means embracing the local culture and language. The current generation of students is the largest generation in memory to be raised by grandparents, and in the villages of Alaska the older generations are not familiar with English, so the only way to build this community connection is to accommodate those who speak English as a second language.

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

As stated above, we need to make sure that there is a connection between school and community, and the best way to do that is to let the community make decisions about their schools. Having said that, local districts will make requests

to the legislature which, in recent years, disregards the interests of districts while pursuing some ideological agenda.

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

At the risk of sounding like I am pandering, my attitude is this: all the investments we make in other things will come to naught if we have an ignorant, unrefined, intellectually lazy and incurious population responsible for the management of those investments in the future. Education is one of the principle driving forces for Statehood and is fundamental to ensuring the common good.

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

Our State's Founders were very clear about the responsibility of the state to provide a system of PUBLIC education and the reason is obvious. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that the health and well-being of our citizens is available through a system of fundamental services. If individual citizens seek to add to or provide an alternative to a good, basic public education, then they are free to do so—at their own expense. The government has a responsibility to provide a good a PUBLIC education system available to all regardless of

socioeconomic or cultural background. “Vouchers” is a recipe for the balkanization of schools and the dilution of standards.

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

Yes **No—NO!** they refused to increase the BSA sufficiently to make up for 6 years of flat-funding.

13. Would you support an increase in the BSA of \$425 in FY16?

(if yes, skip to Question 16)

Yes

I would support an increase to the BSA

14. Would you support any increase in the BSA in FY16?

(if no, skip to Question 16)

Yes No

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

As much as the schools need to be successful.

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 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?

#17, while I would like to see schools get as much funding as they need to be successful, any increase in funding is preferable to allowing it to stagnate and lose value.

#18 The only difference between not raising the BSA to account for inflation, and cutting education funding, is that one is the product of action, the other neglect, and the consequences are unacceptable. Furthermore, I strongly disagree with Mike Hawker who says he doesn't believe in inflation-proofing. ANY investment must take into account the "time-value" of money. Hawker is a CPA, surely he understands THAT!

#19 schools, like households, operate best when there is stability. Stability in funding means less uncertainty in the classroom, meaning more time can be spent focusing on instruction.