

Alaska Parental Rights in Education Candidate Survey

Barbara Haney — Candidate for Alaska State House, District 33

1. What types of education did you personally experience as a child (K-12)?

☒ Public

Comments: I attended public school throughout K-12. I also attended a privately funded after school religious program. I attended public universities, but my graduate school was the University of Notre Dame.

2. What types of education have your children experienced (K-12)?

☒ School at home

Comments: I worked with Rod Popcock to set up the framework that ultimately led to the creation of the IDEA homeschool program in Alaska. I worked on advocacy and testimony to support SB 134 sponsored by Loren Lehman and Jeanette James which enabled homeschooling back in 97-98 timeframe. My children were homeschooled through IDEA, and some of my grandchildren have been or are currently involved in correspondence programs. I also homeschooled independently for a time. Some of my children attended public school for a time.

3. What does "School Choice" mean to you and is this something you will support if elected?

School choice means parents — not the state — decide which educational setting best fits their child, whether that's a public school, a private school, a charter, correspondence, or homeschooling, and that state dollars should be able to follow the child to that choice. I have lived school choice personally: I attended public school myself, and my own family helped found Alaska's IDEA homeschool program and homeschooled our children through it. I will support school choice policy as a legislator, including protecting and strengthening correspondence and homeschool options against new restrictions. I was one of the loudest voices this year in the legislature when Senator Tobin introduced legislation to restrict homeschool choices.

4. Do you support mandatory testing for Alaska K-12 students?

☒ NO *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

No, and this is personal for me. I am a founder of Alaskans Against Common Core, and I led the fight against mandatory high-stakes testing in Alaska — including the effort that kept Alaska out of the PARCC testing consortium. Standardized testing has a role in measuring outcomes at the system level, but I do not support state mandates that override a family's or a school's choice of assessment method — particularly for homeschool and correspondence families, who should not be forced into a one-size-fits-all testing regime to prove what they already know about their own children's progress. I have already fought and won this battle once, and I will not let Alaska drift back into it. If the point of the test is to inform parents, and parents are the teachers, they don't need the state to step into the parent child relationship.

5. Do you recognize the fundamental right of parents to direct the education of their children?

☒ YES *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Without qualification. This is a foundational belief of mine — government should recognize and support the fundamental right and essential duty of parents to direct their child's health and educational well-being. I worked with Sen. Dunleavy on parents' rights legislation.

6. Who is ultimately responsible to direct the education of a child?

☒ **Parent(s)/Guardian(s)** *Troxel v Granville.*

7. Do you support the right of parents to opt out of educational content they do not believe to be in the best interests of their child?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Parents should always have the right to opt their children out of curriculum or content they judge unsuitable, no exceptions. That was part of the bill I helped write.

8. If current state laws with respect to correspondence schools should be changed how would you improve them?

I would work to reduce administrative friction between correspondence programs and the families who use them — clearer, faster allotment processes, less duplicative paperwork, and stronger protection against local districts imposing restrictions beyond what state law requires. Families who have chosen correspondence should not be treated as an afterthought in how the system is administered.

9. Should teachers and school administrators be legally required to promptly inform a parent or guardian if a student has requested to change their gender identity?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Parents have the right and responsibility to know what is happening with their own minor child at school. Schools should not keep this from parents.

10. Do you support the inclusion of biological male (non-XX) students on girls athletic teams or in spaces set aside for girls under any circumstances?

☒ **NO** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Biological males should not participate in girls' athletics or occupy spaces set aside for girls, without exception. Open categories (eg. Swimming) is fine, but in areas reserved for specific genders, those should be protected.

11. Should families that choose a correspondence program not affiliated with their local school district be required to go through their local school district to access it?

☒ **NO** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Families should be free to access the correspondence program of their choice directly, without being routed through a local district as a gatekeeper.

12. Should students participating in non-district education programs be permitted to participate in competitive athletics alongside their peers in their local school district?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Homeschool and correspondence students are part of their local community and should have the same opportunity to compete alongside their public-school peers. Their parents' tax dollars go toward the maintenance and upkeep of those programs, and they have just as much right to them as a brick and mortar student.

13. Do you support the presence of a school chaplain on school campuses?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

I support allowing schools the option of a voluntary chaplaincy program, consistent with the First Amendment and available to students and families who choose to participate.

14. Do teachers and school employees have a right to self-defense with a firearm at their place of employment, or do they lose that right by virtue of working on a school campus?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Teachers and school employees do not surrender their right to self-defense by going to work. I support allowing qualified, trained staff the ability to protect themselves and their students. Active shooter training should be part of every school district's training for staff.

15. Should Alaska high school graduates be eligible to apply for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) based on college entrance exam scores alone, regardless of which school or home school they graduated from?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

A student's demonstrated performance on the ACT, SAT, TABE, or WorkKeys should qualify them for the APS regardless of whether they came from a public school, private school, or home school. The scholarship should reward achievement, not the type of school on a transcript.

16. Should charter schools be permitted to choose accreditation through either a local school district or the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED)?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

Charter schools should have the flexibility to choose the accreditation path that best fits their program.

17. Should Alaska immediately end state policies that discriminate against high school graduates applying for employment in corrections and law enforcement on the basis of whether their diploma is from an accredited school?

☒ **YES** *(Yes / No / Unsure — answer marked above)*

A homeschool or correspondence diploma should not be a barrier to serving as a corrections officer or law enforcement officer. These policies should end.

18. Have you requested or received an endorsement or other support from the NEA or any of its affiliates?

☒ **No**

However, I have answered their surveys to better inform them of other perspectives. My opponent, Pepper McFarland, is on the board of the NEA.

Additional comments (optional)

As a founding family of Alaska's IDEA homeschool program and a co-founder of Alaskans Against Common Core with Candice Brunty, education freedom is not a talking point for me — it's how I raised my own children and a fight I have already led and won in this state, keeping Alaska out of the PARCC & SBAC testing consortiums. I received the Eagle Forum Award from Phyllis Schlafly for my work on Alaskans Against Common Core. Even though my children were grown, I continued to fight for better educational standards, parents' rights, and educational freedom. I'll bring that firsthand experience, along with my background as an economist and former director of UAF's Center for Economic Education, to defend parental rights and school choice in the Alaska Legislature and at the federal level.