

2009 AEA PACE School Board Questions and Candidate Responses.

School Board Candidate Name	<p>1. Currently, approximately 56% of the operating budget is used to fund the AEA contract. Research shows that the single most important factor in student achievement is a quality teacher in the classroom. Do you think the percentage of the budget going to the contract for teachers and other professional educators in the classroom should be reduced, kept the same, or increased? Explain</p>	<p>2. Are you willing to solicit input from AEA and its members and give it credence, even when our input is different from the ASD administration's? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NO Explain:</p>	<p>3. What have you done or will you do to cause the ASD administration to reach out to AEA members to involve them in the important decisions that affect their professional lives?</p>	<p>4. There is an apparent mismatch between the district's upbeat suspension reports and the perceptions of students and teachers about school safety. What are you willing to do to determine the real picture of safety in the schools?</p>
<p>Nels C. Johnson Seat B</p>	<p>I agree that keeping highly qualified teachers in the classroom is the first priority when analyzing the operating budget. With proper management, the percentage of the budget supporting contracts should increase.</p>	<p>YES. It is extremely important to me to know and understand the position the members of the AEA hold on any issue, particularly when AEA and ASD administrative opinions diverge</p>	<p>The AEA is an extremely valuable resource and I will tirelessly encourage the ASD administration and the School Board to consult AEA members throughout my term of service.</p>	<p>I am willing to continue my discussions with teachers and students to better understand the sense of safety experienced through those on the front lines.</p>
<p>David Boyle Seat B</p>	<p>I believe the percentage of the budget for teachers' compensation should be increased if it leads to increased student achievement. Accomplish this by transferring the funding requirement for social programs in ASD to the State. These saved dollars could be channeled to the classroom.</p>	<p>Yes. It is vital to get first hand input from those (teachers) who are closest to the problems and solicit possible solutions without the filter of the administration. I envision a teacher sounding board for suggestions to improve student achievement and identify other problem areas and solutions.</p>	<p>The teaching staff needs to play an active role in the processes that affect their professional lives. This should be a collaborative effort within contractual bounds. The ASD administration would be required to report to the board on a regular basis the specific actions/results they have taken to ensure teachers are included in the decision making process.</p>	<p>Without a safe environment quality education cannot occur. First, survey students and staff in all schools to determine perceptions and reality; second, have law enforcement brief on all issues; third ensure everyone (students, parents, staff) knows the rules and they are enforced; and fourth, enforce zero tolerance.</p>
<p>Michele Quier Seat B</p>	<p><i>No response to questionnaire</i></p>			

<p>Jennifer Lucas Seat B</p>	<p>The ASD budget percentage used to fund teachers/educators should remain the same. 87% of the budget pays educator salaries/benefits. The rest provides items (maintenance, supplies, etc.) that allows quality teachers to function in a classroom.</p>	<p>Yes, 87% of the school district's budget goes towards paying employee salaries/benefits. With over 3500 members in AEA, the input of AEA should be highly valued as the budget directly impacts the lives AEA members.</p>	<p>I will advocate for more reasoned discourse between AEA and ASD to ensure that AEA is considered in decisions made by the school board and that bargains/contracts between ASD and AEA are upheld.</p>	<p>Spending time inside the schools listening to teacher/student safety concerns as well as advocating that other district members do the same is one of many ways that will ensure everyone arrives at a realistic picture of safety.</p>
<p>Mia Costello Seat B</p>	<p>As a former classroom teacher and now one that works with high school drop outs, I know the tremendous impact a good teacher can have on our students. At this time, I support keeping the teacher salaries where they are.</p>	<p>Yes. As a school board candidate, I feel one of my top priorities is to listen to all stakeholders and if elected, I would value the input from members of the AEA.</p>	<p>My experience now as a teacher for high school drop outs and as a nationally-recognized high school teacher with experience in two districts in Alaska, including the Anchorage School District does, in effect, gives teachers a seat at the table. I will listen to teachers and solicit their input to better understand the issues we face.</p>	<p>I do not believe that we truly know the answer to the question of school safety. We need to make sure that our schools provide a safe environment for everyone. As a coach at Nine Star Education & Employment Services, I have asked all my students why they dropped out of high school. Several of my students said they left school because they were bullied by other students. Most of my students say they left because our schools are too big. I believe we can address these issues when we create smaller learning environments where teachers work together and share the same students, allowing for improved delivery of education and for improved relationships among teachers, students and parents. I've been a teacher in a smaller learning environment within a large high school and because of this experience, I have seen first hand when teachers share students and share prep time it allows for better delivery of education and results in a community of learners who know each other and their teachers. The result is that</p>

				<p>teachers can share notes on students they see each day and students know their teachers work together on their behalf as a team. In this situation, students are better able to form important relationships with teachers and will be more likely to share when they do not feel safe. In addition, students know each other better and are working with each other and the instances of bullying and unsafe behavior is much less likely. No student, teacher, administrator or member of the public should feel unsafe when they enter our schools. If elected, I would bring an important perspective, a true understanding of the significance of this problem and solutions for addressing it.</p>
<p>Steve Pratt Seat B</p>	<p>I do not know if 56% is too low to encourage retention, attraction, and satisfaction of quality teachers. It sounds low. How is the rest spent? I will advocate driving resources to the classroom.</p>	<p>I will listen to all stakeholders in policy discussions. Teachers want to be adequately compensated, listened to, given the resources to do their job, and allowed to do it.</p>	<p>I am not sure how AEA members currently interface with District policy determinations - you will need to educate me. I will ask "What works? What doesn't? What are we going to do about it?"</p>	<p>Physical safety? Emotional? School should be a physically and emotionally safe place. What is (are) the issue(s)? What do parents think? Gangs? I don't understand and need an explanation.</p>
<p>Jeanne Mackie Seat B</p>	<p>I realize that the quality of the teacher in the classroom is the most important factor in student success. As a new school board member, I would need to review all aspects of the budget prior to making a definitive statement about a percentage. I strongly support appropriate compensation to attract and retain excellent teachers. I also strongly support legislation (SB23,</p>	<p>Yes. I expect the administration to solicit input from the AEA and its members regularly. As a Board member, I would encourage the AEA to testify to the School Board or contact us via email or other means if they feel that the administration is not soliciting input at appropriate times. In addition, I</p>	<p>I am a new school board member, so I have not yet had that chance. Going forward, I would direct the superintendent to continue to reach out to the AEA when important decisions affecting their professional lives are under consideration. I will work to see that that happens. Educating our kids has to be a</p>	<p>The School Board Policy Committee and the administration will be doing a complete review of the suspension/expulsion policies and discipline procedures over the next year. It will be essential that there be ample opportunity for input into these issues. The School Board will</p>

	and HB30) that would return to a defined benefit retirement system for ASD employees.	will be visiting schools, and classrooms throughout the district and I welcome input from teachers relating to the issues you deal with on a daily basis. I would like to learn what is working, and what is not.	team effort. A good work environment has to be part of that equation.	provide time for teacher and principal input into any changes. I welcome this dialogue. The safety of students and employees is a top priority of mine. An unsafe environment simply cannot be allowed, period.
Starr Marsett Seat B	I believe that the percentage of the budget going to the contract teachers and other professional educators in the classroom should remain the same at this time. I do believe that quality educators are important to student success. I also believe that there are other factors that we need to improve at this time such as, class size, more teachers assistants, a CSF (Creating Successful Futures) program in each school, there are certainly many factors involved in providing quality education to our students, including recruiting and retaining quality educators.	Yes. Any well run business should solicit input from its members. It is important to have all the information to be able to make informed decisions regarding the impact it may have. It is important to let members that their voices are heard. It is easier to have ownership and buy in if the individuals that are affected by the decision had input into that decision.	When decisions are being made, make sure that input is asked for through surveys, questionnaires, meetings, and gather and consider all information before final decisions are made.	It is my understanding that each school is to have a Safety Committee to develop and annually review a plan for providing emergency support. I also believe that they are to review all disciplinary actions. As a school board member I would review those findings from the Safety Committees to ensure that steps are being taking to provide a safe environment for our teacher, staff and students. I would also visit different schools to ask teachers, staff and students how safe they feel coming to school every day. As a school board member our responsibility to the students, teachers, staff and parents is to visit the schools, listen and find out first hand what is working and what is not. We represent those individuals; this is not our agenda, but theirs.
Dan Garcia Seat B	Increased. After working with the staff at an elementary school and middle school for the last nine years, I know that it's the staff that makes the difference. I supported the AEA during the last contract negotiations.	Yes, one should always hear both sides. As a union member I would want to hear from the membership on every issue.	I'm not sure how much a school board member can reach out, but I'll do as much as possible to hear from the AEA.	Would have to visit each school to see for myself. I know of one school that has a problem with locking the doors. It still hasn't been taken care of, due to a lack of funding or priority.

<p>Marc Grober Seat B</p>	<p>The percentage of the budget going to classroom instructional personnel should be increased, but based on current constraints it is more important that the overall budget be carefully increased. For more information http://grober.asdk12.info</p>	<p>All Board members should be expected to not only value input from teachers but to solicit same. I've spent time teaching in-District and have no problem believing reports contrary to the position of the Administration</p>	<p>We have to help the Administration understand that listening WILL make things easier. The Board appointment process demonstrated what the Administration thinks of hearing from teachers, and it is going to take some forceful leadership to turn that around.</p>	<p>Observe, listen, publish. This means ensuring access to students, teachers and parents that is "unsupervised" by the administration and the ability to publish information Independently of the District, and I have done both.</p>
<p>Richard Foster Seat B</p>	<p>Addressing the question of what's makes a "quality" teacher is very complex, as is what produces quality in any profession. As the son of an elementary school teacher who taught in public schools for more than 30 years, it would not be trite to say the best teachers do not teach "for the money," but for the impact they have on a student's life. I would also have to be the first to admit it would be impossible to pay a teacher what they are worth to a student or to the community. However, with that being said, I would admit that without earning a living wage it would be difficult to teach, and that it is a community's failure not to recognize teaching quality in one capacity or another.</p> <p>Recognizing a quality teacher goes beyond the monetary value the district can provide or afford, while along with the support of the administration and parents, there is the ability to teach in a classroom that is not beyond the capacity to manage. While I would support increasing the percentage of the budget covering the AEA contract, I would like to see it come as a result of an increase in the number of teachers across the board thereby effectively reducing the overall classroom size. In the end, this would provide more personal</p>	<p>Yes. Anchorage teachers are the number one asset of the district and I would relish hearing directly from them regarding their concerns regardless of whether it is of the same opinion of the administration or not. I would propose the formation of a "teachers' council," organized at the school and district level as a standing committee with regular reports to the Board. With one caveat, I would expect these reports to consist of recommendations outside of any grievance issues or negotiations.</p>	<p>Again, in addition to the role of the AEA, I would like to form a teachers' council consisting of representatives from the various levels of schools throughout the district that would have input to the school board on numerous subjects and issues directly effecting their profession.</p>	<p>It is difficult to accept any suspension report as being upbeat no matter how presented. For those circumstances where it is apparent the school has not adequately addressed a safety risk, I would like students and teachers to be able to confidentially report issues of safety concerns without recrimination through appropriate procedures. Additionally, as school children constitute nearly 1/5th of the entire Anchorage population, I would like to see the school board receive reports from public safety officers on a routine basis.</p>

	attention and more opportunities for the student, and ultimately promote greater achievement and success.			
William Nye Seat B	Attempting to increase the budget with the impending economic downturn slowly being felt in Alaska and the possible passage of the tax cap ballot measure is probably both irresponsible and impossible. Likewise, decreasing it is not an option as the ASD already has a hard time attracting and retaining educators. Cuts may have to be made in other areas in order to keep current wages intact.	Yes. Currently I work as a substitute teacher throughout the district at nearly every secondary school. It has been this experience that prompted me to run for school board. Speaking with teachers and administration, and actually dealing with all the issues confronting educators has given me a deep respect for teachers. If elected, I would actively solicit input and unceasingly fight for teachers	At every instance that the district is formulating policy, I will remind the board and the superintendent how exactly it will affect teachers and be able to weigh in with what information I have gathered from educators. I will also remind them that the success of their policies depends on teacher implementation. For example, one of the district's main concerns is the dropout rate. I would make it plain and simple to administrators that the dropout rate is almost entirely dependent on effective teachers, educating students in classroom sizes that are manageable, i.e. 25 or less. Making this happen will most likely involve cutting the budget somewhere else to hire more teachers. Much input will be needed from educators to determine what they would be willing to give up in order to have smaller classes.	Working the past several years at the middle and high school level, I am familiar with the problem of school safety. I agree that the district's reports were composed from behind rose-colored glasses and something must be done. Security guards, detentions, suspensions, etc. only fight the symptoms. The solution lies in smaller class sizes, more direct teacher contact, and in parental involvement. We must encourage parents to require appropriate conduct from their children and teachers need more time with each student so as to address his or her needs and therefore keep him or engaged in school and out of trouble.
Stephen Johnston Seat B	Great question. First we all agree that teachers are the most important factor. We also need to look at what we do with the other 44% of the money. So at this point I would say kept it the same but we may to increase it as we go forward.	Yes. I feel you must look at both sides of the issue. The only way you get that is by sitting down with the both side and find out what all the issues are and reach a decision that will be the best not only for the students but the city.	As I said above both side need to side down together. It's a team effort to raise our kids. I will make sure we sit down together so we know the issue.	We need to look at the SRO that are in the schools and see what they are reporting. We need to make sure if a teacher reports a student that the principal follows up. We have guide lines in the student handbook. Maybe we need to set up a group of people (Parents, AEA, APD, ASD.) to address these issue.

<p>James LaBelle Seat E</p>	<p>We should advocate for funding more teacher positions, with fair pay and benefits, in order to reduce class sizes and create better learning environments. The budget should not shrink, but increase.</p>	<p>Yes. I believe the best approach to take, when making decisions that impact everyone, is to get input from all of our stakeholders. Teachers are vital to that process.</p>	<p>The school boards role is to set policy, allocate resources and direct the administration. Positive, outcome focused dialogue with everyone's views represented is meaningful and I will advocate for everyone's voice to be heard.</p>	<p>In meeting and speaking with students and teachers this is a reoccurring theme. If there are differing views, I will ask for all stakeholders to come together and agree on ways to address the issue.</p>
<p>Michael Lindbeck Seat E</p>	<p><i>No response to questionnaire</i></p>			
<p>Bobby Jo Kramer Seat E</p>	<p><i>No response to questionnaire</i></p>			
<p>Kathleen Plunkett Seat E</p>	<p>Our Teachers must be funded at the same or at an increased level in the budget. This is also the last place that should be cut if reductions were imposed by the State or Assembly.</p>	<p>Yes. We need to consult and solicit input from all parties. The groups will have different input because of different perspectives and level of working knowledge. They are all important.</p>	<p>I will reach out to the administration and AEA members, as I have with my volunteer activities. I will listen to and request feed back from all individuals that contact me with information.</p>	<p>I will ask questions of teachers, the administration, and the SRO's. I will work to understand the difference between in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and work all points of this problem. I will proactively work this safety issue with all of the appropriate parties. I have already talked to some teachers and Rob Heun. It is an issue that needs to be handled consistently at all schools.</p>
<p>Don Smith Seat E</p>	<p><i>No response to questionnaire</i></p>			
<p>Jody Smith Seat E</p>	<p>High quality educators are our greatest assets. We must allocate resources for the tools, environment, and salaries needed to attract and retain excellent teachers. I believe 56% of the budget is reasonable at this time, but would like to revisit this in the future.</p>	<p>Yes. AEA members are an important constituency of the school board. Educators have insight on how decisions impact students. It is the responsibility of school board members to actively solicit input from all stakeholders, including teachers.</p>	<p>We all share the same mission—success for all students. With a focus on this mission, I would encourage the administration to work collaboratively with staff and actively seek their input when making important decisions.</p>	<p>I'm eager to get an accurate depiction. I will commit to spending time in each school—not just in the administrator's office, but classrooms and hallways, to get an accurate assessment of the situation.</p> <p>We should be utilizing reliable data, but I would scrutinize the data and conduct surveys if</p>

				the results didn't accurately reflect teachers' and students' perceptions.
Marilyn Stewart Seat E	<i>No response to questionnaire</i>			
Jeff Friedman Seat F	<p>An isolated percentage means little. We should provide pay and benefits that will attract quality teachers, provide mentors so good teachers can become great teachers, and provide support personnel and materials so teachers can teach.</p> <p>The amount spent for professional educators should be increased whenever possible. Spending money where the students are is the first priority. This can be done with smaller class size, increased salary and benefits, use of teaching assistants, classroom supply funds, and improved technology. Teachers are also supported with grant money outside the operating budget.</p>	<p>Yes. I value input from AEA and individual teachers. I will continue to solicit input by visiting schools, meeting with teachers, responding to e-mails and phone calls, and with my e-mail board report.</p> <p>Information from individual teachers has helped me make decisions, suggest changes in direction, and suggest changes in board policy. Testimony at board meetings has also been compelling. I have asked that AEA be represented at board meetings and committee meetings. This has been occurring, and it has been very helpful.</p>	<p>I will continue to expect teachers to be placed on committees and task forces; and expect that the administration will meet with the AEA executive board and president. We will continue to invite participation, but teachers are busy and cannot always participate as much as we would like them to.</p>	<p>I do not believe there is a mismatch. The reports properly highlight successes while addressing areas that need improvement. They are consistent with the data from our annual climate survey. If people think the data is not accurate, I would welcome suggestions for how to get a better view of the perceptions of students and teachers. I will continue to visit schools and talk to students and teachers about their concerns.</p>
Dawn Bundick Seat F	<p>I believe the percentage of the budget going to the contract for teachers and other professional educators in the classroom will and should be increased. As educational needs of our children change and the rapid change of technology so will the ongoing experience that teachers will need to acquire. While the cost of living will continue to rise, so will the certain costs rise to meet the demands of certain aspects of the AEA contract.</p>	<p>Yes. Input from AEA and its members are vital to discussions. I will solicit input by talking with members and gathering facts in reference to the issues and concerns that are vitally important to the members and bring them openly to the board even if the input is different from the ASD administration's.</p>	<p>I will strive to is continue to foster an open dialogue with AEA members as well as encourage all of us as board members to be a steward not just for students and parents but for AEA members as well. As a steward the decisions that affect our professional lives also affect our overall ability to do the job we are entrusted to do. I would want to visit the AEA membership to listen to their concerns and solutions.</p>	<p>First I would inquire about how has the report been administered previously and whom all was involved in the report study. Determine if there is a certain criteria/policy that has to be adhered to and inquire if there can be other identifiable measures in needed. I am willing to find out what the mismatch is and solicit as true a representation from students and teachers. Safety is of utmost important for our teachers and children in any learning environment.</p>
Crystal Kennedy	<p>Using percentages can be misleading but recognizing that the operating budget also pays for principals, librarians, payroll clerks,</p>	<p>Yes. There is real value in conversation on issues that affect our students. Information from those in the classroom</p>	<p>I have chaired the Board policy committee for almost three years. I rely on the expertise provided from the union</p>	<p>For some time I have been requesting a work session on the District's discipline policy. That will begin discussions to</p>

Seat G	tutors, utilities, computers, maintenance, bussing, etc., the AEA contract is adequate for meeting current ASD needs.	daily is critical. Even if there is a conflict, better decisions will be made if both sides are heard.	representatives that attend. AEA now participates regularly and I will continue to encourage that valuable input.	confront some of the inconsistencies I believe exist in current policy implementation and overall effectiveness.
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2009 AEA PACE Mayoral Questions and Candidate Responses

Mayoral Candidate Name	1. Currently our number 1 priority is a return to defined benefit retirement for public employees. As Mayor of Anchorage, would you support this, and would you be willing to take steps to make it happen?	2. Do you see the mayor having a role during contract negotiations for teachers, and what would that role be?	3. Do you have ideas about how school funding could be increased in Anchorage without it further impacting property taxes?	4. Do you have ideas for how the role of education in Anchorage might change over the course of your administration?
Dominic Lee	I love to support teachers. My wife and daughter are teachers. As mayor, I support a return to defined benefit retirement for public employees and am willing to take steps to make that happen.	As mayor, I will oversee the contract negotiation between the parties. I want both sides to be fair to each other and negotiate the contract with good faith and honesty. I will oversee the progress report daily until the negotiation is completed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I would bring a new industries and manufacturing to Anchorage, which would increase the tax base and create jobs. One example would be the \$2.8 billion Tidal Bridge Power project I am initiating. 2) Streamline city and ASD operations. 3) Increase hotel bed tax. 4) Implement a sales tax. 	Because Alaska is moving in the direction of building gas pipelines, renewable energy projects and infrastructure, students will need greater proficiency in language, math, and science to prepare for post-secondary training in skilled trades and occupations calling for technical expertise.
Bob Lupo	I will work to make this happen.	I have taught technical subjects in the military for many years. Also taught electronics classes (nine years) for UAA. I guarantee you will have a friend.	I have a plan to increase the city's revenue and also lower property taxes.	I hope it will be enhanced.
Paul Kendall	<i>No response to questionnaire</i>			
Jacob Kern	<i>No response to questionnaire</i>			
Merica Hlatcu	<i>No response to questionnaire</i>			
Paul Honeman	YES - I spent my own money to	The Mayor actually has a	Yes - 1) federal mandates of our school	I would push for a better

	<p>travel to Juneau when the debate to switch to the defined contribution - Tier 4 was under way. I testified AGAINST the switch and will work hard to return to the defined benefit program. I will be working hard to 'right-the-wrong' that occurred at the hands of some short sighted individuals. I believe that there is momentum in the state legislature - and this would be among my top priorities for ALL MOA and ASD employee pension program corrections.</p>	<p>very limited role in the ASD negotiations process - except to urge both sides to negotiate in good faith in accordance with the collective bargaining process.</p>	<p>district should accompany resource support to fulfill them. I would request support from our delegation in D.C. to get such support. 2) State education formula is disproportionate to the rural schools in Alaska and should be increased. I would lobby with the ASD Board and Superintendent to push for an increased and equitable formula/share. And 3) If the taxpayers (60% were to approve of alternate revenue sources (seasonal sales tax, gross receipts tax - it is ALL on the table for discussion and possible ballot) - I believe that future budget increases (as needed) would be better received and supported by the voter/taxpayers.</p>	<p>accounting of how the districts dollars (as well as the MOA) are actually spent. I would encourage a more accurate Operations and Maintenance budget reserve for the ASD so that the current infrastructure (buildings and non-buildings) could and would be repaired and upgraded - eliminating the need to 'bond' every year for all but new construction. Not all students are meant to be academia scholars and proceed to college. To that end, the ASD needs to be more proactive and perhaps even seek Anchorage and Alaska industry to enhance vocational and technical training tracks. Like all levels of government, beauracracies can always be improved upon with effectiveness and efficiency as a standard. Let us never forget that we - the taxpaying property owners deserve EXACTLY the government AND education thwart we are willing to invest in. With education - it is wise to invest at more than the 'minimum levels' than can be mandated of general government services.</p>
<p>Matt Claman</p>	<p>Yes, I support a return to defined benefit retirement for public employees, and, Yes, I would be willing to help make this happen.</p>	<p>The mayor has a limited or no role in the school district's contract negotiations unless the superintendent and the school board request the mayor's assistance.</p>	<p>I would advocate for additional support from the state. In addition, I would encourage further cooperation with businesses and organizations to provide adequate resources in our schools to prepare the next generation workforce, from trades to professions.</p>	<p>Education is the silver bullet to a stable, prosperous future. My administration will increase emphasis on education for workforce development and find creative ways of bringing the</p>

				school district, business, and the university together to find solutions for the future.
Eric Croft	I absolutely support a return to a defined benefit retirement system for public employees. I fought against SB 141 when I was in the State House, and as Mayor I will take steps to return to a Defined Benefit or hybrid plan. If the state will not act, I will investigate alternatives such as the MOA/ASD forming their own employee retirement system.	I have always supported teachers' rights to a fair contract. As a student, I walked the picket line with my teachers outside West Anchorage High School in the late 1980s.	The foundation formula should be increased. I worked with NEA to craft a class size reduction initiative with significant new money attached. I still think this is a good idea.	Technology will continue to play a growing role in education but the single most important element has not changed in thousands of years. A motivated teacher with time to teach is still the key to learning.
Bill Ray Powers	Yes. I would like to see our public employees have a choice to participate in either defined benefit or defined contribution. I am very much willing to take steps to make it happen. My answer to question #4 addresses how funding will be accomplished.	I am very aware of the shortfalls in teacher pay as I live with a teacher in the Anchorage School District. Teachers invest many years and dollars educating themselves. And yet they are paid a fraction of what other public employees such as firemen make.	Ideas I have will greatly increase teacher's opportunities for increased pay and flexibility. At the same time, these ideas will promote a better education for our students at very little, if any increases in taxes to the municipality. These details are answered in question #4.	Yes I do. Students will have a much greater opportunity to succeed. Teachers, parents and students will have flexibility like never before. I have thought long and hard on how to tackle this subject. With many years of tax and spend leadership in Anchorage and very little innovation, we as tax payers are taxed out. The public is tired of looking at new school bonds to vote on. Our high school graduation rate is atrocious. Our teachers are underpaid. Our properties (schools) are in some cases overloaded and in disrepair. One candidate, Billy Ray Powers, has spent many hours thinking both in and outside the box to try to solve this expensive cultural problem. I am very concerned that Anchorage along with the U.S. falls

				<p>somewhere around 18 among developed countries in the education of its people. Yet we are the biggest consumer nation on the planet. We must be innovative in this economic climate, and use our resources wisely. Two of the elements needed to educate our students are school facilities and personal. Teachers are already not paid what they should be in our city. We must provide our teachers with better pay and retirement benefits. Also religion based teachers are provided tax free housing, then so should teachers in public schools. Now to address our school properties. First we must fund good maintenance; we can not afford to let them deteriorate. We have some fine facilities in Anchorage, this is where I have to thank our tax and spend city officials that have come before. No private or corporate enterprise in the world can have expensive properties sit vacant 30% of the time. Tax payers can't either. We must use our buildings all year. We are going to have to step into the new millennium with a new mindset. A trimester system will save billions of dollars in the next 25 years. I know it sounds a little out there at first, but after many hours of careful thought I am quite sure it is the answer</p>
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				<p>and Anchorage can lead the way. Just because it is not the way it has always been done does not detract from the viability of the concept. The basics are simple; schools will run three 16 week sessions with time off at Christmas and one week between sessions. Students will attend 2 of those sessions. We will provide onsite storage that is convenient for teachers so they have a place for their belongings during sessions that they may choose not to teach. Teachers and staff will have the flexibility of teaching any session that they choose. If they only want to teach one session, (be paid for one) or two (paid for two), or if they want to make more money they can teach year around (all three sessions). Students will also have the flexibility of any two sessions.</p> <p>Students who need extra support will be able to attend all three sessions. This schedule will allow families the flexibility to work and go to school on a schedule that fits their family.</p> <p>The benefits go far beyond what I am able to say here.</p> <p>This new concept will lighten the tax load on families because we will not need to build and maintain new buildings. Our existing buildings will be used year round.</p> <p>Cost savings and flexibility</p>
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				will allow families to participate in their child's education. Anchorage can lead the way and help the rest of the country in these times of economic crisis. Sincerely, Billy Ray Powers Candidate for Mayor
Walt Monegan	The defined contribution plan has not been given enough time to see the impact on recruiting and retention. I would support a return to the benefits program if we can sustain it. The prior program was not fiscally sustainable. www.moneganformayor.com	I don't envision such a role but I would encourage that both parties have professional and meaningful dialog. There is nothing more important in education than having qualified and motivated teachers. I would offer to facilitate the negotiations if appropriate.	Not under our present system, 60% of school district funds come from state and federal sources which may decline in the near future. If the community adopts a sales tax a percentage of it could be structured for education. www.moneganformayor.com	Anchorage's diverse school district with over 90 different languages or dialects. Anchorage is the largest school district in the state, we often become a magnet for special needs students and I expect that to continue. This challenges and compliments teachers.
Sheila Selkregg	A defined benefit retirement system meets the obligations that we have to public employees to provide a real retirement; it's also an important factor in positioning Anchorage to attract and retain the highest quality workforce possible.	Yes, the mayor sets the tone for the contract. She provides the general guidance for the initial direction of the administration's position in negotiations. The mayor is responsible for reviewing union perspectives in the context of community needs and relevant her commitment to collective bargaining and the importance of retaining quality municipal employees.	The state should be required to pay their portion based on the constitutional expectation of the state's commitment to education. The state should also be required to pay for all state mandates that local school districts are required to meet. We should refocus some commitments to future capital improvements back to teacher salary and basic classroom needs. It is also important that we work to reduce administrative overhead.	My administration will continually examine options that will enhance student success. We cultivate a broader community responsibility and commitment to support our at-risk youth, as well as supporting continued growth of healthy and resilient children. All the solutions to meet our children's needs cannot be met in the classroom alone. The United Way's "Anchorage United for Youth" initiative is a great model that provides a continuum of strategies, from the classroom to the larger community, that we can evaluate. Specifically, we need to make funds

				available to support core curriculum while also as funding life skills and vocational training, as well as the arts. We need to provide teachers the flexibility and resources in the classrooms to enhance their own curriculums based on their classroom experience rather than merely teaching towards testing associated with No Child Left Behind.
Larry Shooshanian	No response to questionnaire			
Dan Sullivan	I support a defined benefit plan for public safety employees because of the difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified officers and because of the dangers of their job. I would like to see more data on the returns of self managed plans versus government managed and determine if there is a need to change back. Both plans clearly have suffered in the current economic downturn.	The mayor and the city administration do not have a direct role in school district contract negotiations, but certainly can provide financial information and other economic data that might help guide the discussions. As the spouse of a teacher, I would have to be particularly cautious about interfering in negotiations.	There are a number of ways to increase funding. The most available source is the state of Alaska which has significant cash reserves and additional taxing authorities it could implement. Locally, there has been discussion of a sales tax, but generally the concept has been that it would replace property tax, not add additional revenue. Plus, the 60% vote requirement makes a sales tax a difficult hurdle. Finally, the goal should be to find efficiencies in city and school district operations that will free up money for the classroom. I believe many such opportunities exist.	I think we need to focus more on training students to be successful in the workplace, including vastly expanded vocational training. Too many students are not on a college path and need to have the skills to be productive workers right out of high school. As an employer, I share the concern expressed by many businesses that our young graduates are not adequately prepared to perform even entry level work. Colleges are spending far too much time teaching remedial courses to first year students who should have developed higher proficiencies in high school. We can and must do a better job.
Phil Isley	I must say that I am a little disappointed that your number 1 priority is benefits and not improved education. I am not sure that I could support benefits without some	I believe it is the school system's position to negotiate the contracts. I think the mayor just has to raise his hands in the air	Again more money. Could we try to rethink the current situation to do more with what we have? With all the brilliant, well educated minds of the excellent teachers working together,	I believe if we sit down and work together, that we should be able to work out a viable plan that is best for Anchorage's students,

	<p>plan to improve Anchorage's education system. I would look forward to your comments on increasing the graduation rate and preparing our children for college and the working world.</p>	<p>and say, "You have over half of the city budget. We are turning people upside down and shaking the change out of their pockets. Please show mercy and don't shoot."</p>	<p>could we make a plan to improve our schools?</p>	<p>teachers, and citizens. But I think the education of the students should be the priority.</p>
Richard Wanda	<i>No response to questionnaire</i>			