

deaeyc Early Childhood Education Candidate Questionnaire

Answers Submitted By: Sarah McBride

1. What are your views on the needs of young children (birth to kindergarten) and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?

The moral measure of a society is how we treat those who are young, vulnerable, or marginalized. We have an obligation to do all we can to support young children and their families. Early support can have a lifetime of positive outcomes. Delaware should join the growing list of states that have adopted paid family and medical leave so that parents can spend time with their newborn without losing their income. We should pass universal pr-k so that every child, no matter their family's income, can access early childhood education. These steps are critical toward removing barriers and increasing support for families and young children.

2. What are your views on the ways in which we can close the education achievement gap with a particular focus on the early years?

We know that access to early childhood education, coupled with strong K-12 public schools, can set a student up for long-term growth and success. Passing universal pre-k is a proven investment in our children's potential and our collective future.

3. What is the role of the state/city/federal government to provide for programs that will be addressing the socio-emotional and mental health issues young children will experience in the coming weeks and months resulting from the disruption in their lives brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic?

The long term impact of Covid-19 is significant, especially for young people's mental health. I strongly support HB 100, which would fund more counselors and mental health services in our elementary schools. It is my hope that we can build on that legislation to expand funding for mental health services in our schools for all ages.

4. What steps would you take to attract, and retain quality educators in the early childhood education field?

We must not only pass universal pre-k, but also pay our early childhood educators and professionals better. Pay for those who work in early childhood education should reflect the critical role of their work in our community and the lives of our young children.

5. As an elected official, what would be your top 4 priorities in the first 100 days in the position?

Entering the Delaware General Assembly, the new legislature will be facing the worst public health crisis in a hundred years and the worst economy since the Great Depression. First and foremost, we must ensure Delaware comes through this pandemic and recovers stronger than before.

We must learn the lessons from this crisis and meet this moment with meaningful action that makes a real difference in people's lives. If elected, I look forward to helping to immediately introduce and support a paid family and medical leave bill, universal pre-k legislation, and other necessary policies that support our children, our families, and our communities.

6. How would you improve the economy of your city, our State and/or our nation?

As we recover, we must not just rebuild, but reimagine our economy so that it truly works for everyone. Even before COVID, Delaware was at an economic inflection point. For the previous fifty years, we've been able to rely on one industry or on employer to help drive our economy. So many of us remember the role of Dupont and, later, MBNA in our communities. The challenge before us is to create a depth of opportunity for the diverse, rising generation of workers who will work eight or nine jobs throughout their lives. That is a big challenge for a small state, but I'm incredibly optimistic about our potential to harness new technologies and emerging industries.

The foundation of economic growth is through supporting and empowering an educated, creative, and diverse workforce. To grow jobs, we need to win the competition for talent and that means supporting our current residents and attracting new ones. We need to make Delaware the kind of state where people want to live, work, play, and raise a family. We should adopt policies that appeal to working families, including making health care affordable and passing paid family and medical leave. We have to support and improve our public schools so that every child regardless of income or background is able to access a safe and quality education from pre-k through high school graduation. We have to invest in our infrastructure, preserve open space, and ensure dignity for every person no matter their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

We have it within our power to write the next chapter for Delaware's economy. Let's make it the story of inclusive prosperity for all.

