

2022 North Carolina General Assembly Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Michael Garrett

District: Senate District 27

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: State Senator; owner/operator of a marketing business

1. What are your views on the needs of young children (prenatal to age 5) and what specific steps would you take to address these needs?

I believe that the first handful of years of a child's life are absolutely critical and shape the years that follow through the rest of their lives. There is a great disparity between children of families with the means to fully provide for their developmental needs and children of families with lower incomes. I believe that the state of North Carolina should provide funding for early childhood development programs and pre-K for every child in our state.

2. What steps would you take to ensure that children birth to age five have access to high-quality and affordable early learning programs?

The first priority to is to make this a state budget priority. A look at state budgets in recent years shows that this is not the case. Right now, the North Carolina treasury is sitting on billions of dollars in un-spent, "unallocated" funds that can be used for whatever lawmakers see fit. I believe that investment in early learning programs is an incredibly worthy cause and deserves backing by our state government on an ongoing basis.

3. What steps would you take to stabilize and sustain North Carolina's early education system and child care workforce as we approach the end of the federal child care relief funding?

Early education professionals were some of those hit hardest by the pandemic. It hollowed out the workforce and the organizations which employed them. I support state funding to at least partially cover the pending gap in federal funding until we can rebuild and strengthen our early education system. Failure of the system would set back our youngest children irreparably.

4. What are your views on how to provide all children with access to a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood?

Again, the first step must be to make this a clear legislative priority. I listen to the experts on early childhood development when they tell me how critical the first few years of a child's life are. There are no do-overs for this period in a child's life. Our state has the means and ability to make early education the norm for all children rather than the privilege of those parents who

can afford it. I have been a steadfast advocate for public education resources for children of all age during my two terms in the Senate and I commit to continuing that work if I am reelected.