

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Mary Beedle

District or Office: NC House District 79

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Retired Nurse Practitioner

### Questions for 2024 Candidates for State Office in North Carolina

**1. The most rapid period of brain development happens in the first five years of life, laying the foundation for all future learning, health, and success in school and life. What are your views on the needs of young children (prenatal to age 5) and what steps would you take to address these needs?**

Early education in the first five years is critical for child development. To answer my full thoughts and experience with children would take too much space. I learned how important early development when I helped my friend work with her Down Syndrome child. As a Family Nurse Practitioner I worked with the Pediatric population. As a House Rep I would promote early care and especially want to initiate good pay for care center providers. I would press to initiate training in early childhood development so that care givers have the education to work with development rather than just think of themselves as babysitters.

**2. Every county in North Carolina is considered a "child care desert" with not enough supply to meet the demand. When parents do find child care, the average cost is nearly \$10,000/year, which is higher than the cost of public college tuition. What steps would you take to ensure that families have access to high-quality and affordable early learning programs for their children?**

As above but also allocate money for more centers and aide start ups. I would like to work with other like minded professionals to develop guild lines, not as rules, but to give care givers the confidence to create a learning environment.

**3. Currently, child care teachers in North Carolina earn an average of \$14/hour, less than most retail or service workers. Since 2021, federally-funded Child Care Compensation Grants have provided higher wages and bonuses to more than 40,000 North Carolina early educators, but that funding has expired. This summer, the NC General Assembly appropriated funds to extend the grants for a short time, while also recognizing the need to explore long-term solutions to attract and retain a qualified early childhood workforce. 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 Compensation Grant funding?**

I would want that extended. The problem will not go away. A bigger plan needs to be enacted. Programs that might engage multilingual speaking people might be an attractive avenue for some. Study what other communities are doing successfully.

**4. Working parents depend on child care, and businesses in nearly every sector have identified child care as a critical factor in their workforce challenges. A new study from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation found that insufficient child care is costing North Carolina about \$5.65 billion each year. What are your views on how the issues facing our state's child care system impact the state's economy? What specific steps would you take to ensure that our child care system can keep up with the demand as more working families need child care?**

Lack of care systems reduce the ability for families to work which in turn causes lots of stress. Families may chose other states to live in if they have no adequate Child care. If there are little standards for individual care centers and wide ranging prices for care, it makes one wonder what are the expensive care centers doing and are the children getting better preparedness than low cost schools. State support to establish qualified well trained care givers and centers where the pay keeps people in the position. Consistency and stability of the care people will

give the children what they need. Nervous untrained individuals that are worried about money are felt by the children. They are the future.

***5. North Carolina currently spends approximately 1% of the annual state budget on early childhood programs, including Smart Start, NC Pre-K, and Child Care Subsidy Assistance. Nearly all early childhood programs in every county of the state have waiting lists and only serve a fraction of eligible children and families. What are your goals for overall early childhood funding and/or what types of early childhood programs would you support making an investment in at the state level?***

There should be a committee created that studies the best ongoing practices and convince the powers that be to open centers. Create incentives for people to open centers. Guilds to help people establish a center would help. More money needs to be spent but oversight and parent input would be important. Questions like these are awkward to a new candidate because I have not seen the state budget. I have the best interest in early care and the need to support working families.

***6. If elected, what would be your top 5 priorities for 2025?***

Women's Reproductive Rights including Reproductive Education and Birth Control  
Fair Funding for Public Schools  
Find or create Committee for Promotion of pre K expansion and development  
Protection of Water and Air with ongoing monitoring of the PFAS in the system.  
Healthy Food Education and Farming Practices