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Legislator Education Survey 2010

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1 **In an effort to balance our state budget, legislators have recently reduced Arizona’s K-12 and university/community school budgets by more than \$2 billion during the past two years. During this next session, legislators still need to address the structural budget deficit that remains. Which of the following best describes your approach to balancing the budget?**

Answer	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enact further cuts to K-12 and higher education funding as they make up a large share of the overall budget.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stabilize funding to education at existing levels until our economy recovers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Find ways to recover the \$2.2 billion that was cut. Examine how state revenues are spent and whether the state collects enough revenue to meet its needs.

Comment: I believe there yet remain inefficiencies in the system. Some districts have done a good job in finding and eliminating waste, but over-all, there are still ways to improve the system without spending more. A great deal of waste comes through Washington. If we can eliminate some of the strings attached to programs, we will have more resources to work with.

2 **Do you support efforts to readdress Arizona’s tax structure to alleviate the reliance on fluctuating sales tax?**

Answer	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Comment: We need to find a better way to eliminate the up's and down's of the sale tax.

3 **Arizona’s current budget was devised using a series of cuts, borrowing, financial deferrals and the voter-approved temporary sales tax increase. Which of the following fiscal measures would you consider supporting this year? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An effort to close existing tax loopholes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase personal income tax
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enact a flat tax on corporate/individual income
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase property tax
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate tax credits (please specify)

Expand the sales tax to services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> End tax exempt status for mining, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simplify the state tax code
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate tax cuts
Ensure corporate tax parity (large companies to pay same share as small businesses; tax exemption via out-of-state holding companies prohibited, etc.)
I think the only effective budget solution would be to introduce further tax cuts.
I think our current tax structure is adequate and we just need to wait until the economy rebounds.
Other

Comment: All options should be considered. But it would be best to have a comprehensive plan that addresses how everything will work together.

4 **A number of national surveys rank Arizona among the last in K-12 per-pupil funding. Arizona invests \$61 less per student than it did more than 20 years ago, according to the American Legislative Exchange Council. What do you think of this level of investment?**

Answer
Arizona spends too much on K-12 education. We need to enact further cuts.
This is an adequate level of investment. I do not think we need to invest more in K-12 funding.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Although I do not think this funding is adequate, I do not think we can increase funding for K-12 education at this time.
It is embarrassing to be among the last in the nation in K-12 education funding. As a legislator, I will work this fiscal year (2010-2011) to increase funding for K-12 public schools.

Comment: It is difficult to compare state to state. Some states don't have the construction issues we have. There is a different cost of living in different states. The present economic difficulties will force us to find the waste, so that we will be more efficient when the economy comes back.

5 **Each year, more than \$60 million in Arizona taxpayer dollars are directed to School Tuition Organizations (STOs) for private school tuition through the tax credit program. What do you think about the current private school tax credit program? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer
More tax dollars should be allocated to expand the private school tuition program.
The private school tuition program should be maintained as-is.
The amount of tax dollars allocated to the private school tuition tax credit program should be reduced.
The private school tax credit program should be repealed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The 10% processing fee that STOs are allowed to keep from donations for expenses should be reduced to a lower percentage. (Processing fees in Florida are capped at 3%.)
There should be income limits on the families who benefit from the private school tax credit program. The original intent of the program was to provide access to private schools for poor children.
I think any Arizona family should be able to take advantage of the tax-funded tuition benefits.
I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

Comment: This issue needs more study to determine if private schools are actually saving the state money, given the amount in tax credits that the state is foregoing. Milton Friedman said, "Education

spending will be most effective if it relies on parental choice and private initiative --the building blocks of success throughout our society."

6 **Do you believe reform is needed in our public education system? If so, which reforms do you support? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer
No, reform is not needed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, reform is needed.
Yes, reform is needed but we need to establish adequate funding first.
I support the participation in a national standards program, i.e. NAEP.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support increased charter school funding.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support more teacher accountability.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support the Common Core Standards created by the National Governors' Association and the state superintendents of education.
I support linking teacher pay to student test scores.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support moving quickly to shut down failing schools.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support creating more charter schools.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula

Comment: It's hard to argue against reform when the United States is 24th internationally in education. Linking teacher pay to test scores is too simplistic. However, I believe pay should be linked to performance with appropriate measures.

7 **Some argue that we should move away from traditional public schools and transition to a system with more students attending state funded, privately-run charter schools and private schools with the aid of tax credits and/or vouchers. Do you support this plan?**

Answer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
No

Comment: I believe more competition in education is appropriate. More parental choice, more parental involvement in the selection and performance of their children's schools.

8 **This year, legislators referred to voters a ballot measure to repeal First Things First, an early childhood education program with a dedicated funding source approved by voters in 2006. What do you support?**

Answer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Things First funding should be repealed.
First Things First funding should be maintained in accordance with the original voter mandate.

Comment: Without this repeal, Arizona faces budget deficits that will severely hamper education. First Things First has accumulated a huge amount of money without demonstrating substantial improvement in early childhood education.

The good intentions of this law have not yet been realized, and the State is in dire need of funds to sustain education.

9 **Arizona currently has some of the largest K-12 classroom sizes in the nation. Please check the statements you agree with below. (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer
Classroom size isn't a crucial factor for student success--many other factors are much more important and we should focus our priorities elsewhere.
I think it would be more efficient if we increased classroom size along with teacher pay. This would attract better teachers and decrease the cost of running the school.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I think classroom size is an important factor for student success, but I don't think we can currently afford to increase funding to pay for the additional teachers and/or school facilities.
Classroom size is one of the most important factors for student success--we should be working to reduce class size as one of our top priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If parents believe that classroom size is important for their child, they should consider enrolling their children in a private school with a classroom enrollment cap.

Comment: The research I have seen (understanding that you can find research to show many things) demonstrated that up to about 30 students per class, classroom size has little impact on learning. The most impact on student achievement resulted from the quality of teachers more than any other factor.

10 **Arizona has one of the highest high school drop-out rates in the country. In the last budget, all state aid for adult GED (General Education Diploma) funding was eliminated. Please check the statement you agree with below.**

Answer
GEDs should be funded by individuals.
The state should provide funding for GED programs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I will work to restore funding for adult GED services.

Comment: My bias says that the state should give you only one shot to have your education paid for. However, as a practical matter, we probably need to help these people get more education so that they can improve their lives and improve society. However, it may have to wait until the economy (thus, the general fund) improves before we can restore funding.

11 **The Arizona Constitution has many sections impacting the state budget and education. If elected, which of the following articles do you most identify with? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The legislature shall provide by law for an annual tax sufficient, with other sources of revenue, to defray the necessary ordinary expenses of the state for each fiscal year. (Article IX, Section 3)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No tax shall be laid or appropriation of public money made in aid of any church, or private or sectarian school, or any public service corporation. (Article IX, Section 10)

- The university and all other state educational institutions shall be open to students of both sexes, and the instruction shall be nearly as free as possible. (Article XI, Section 6: paragraph one)
- The legislature shall make appropriations, to be met by taxation, as shall insure the proper maintenance of all state educational institutions & shall make such special appropriations as shall provide for their development & improvement. (Article XI,Sec10)

Comment: Our oath as legislators is to uphold all of the Constitution, not just part of it.

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If you have children, what type of school(s) did they/do they attend? (Please check all that apply.)

Answer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional Public School
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter School
<input type="checkbox"/> Private School
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home School
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University/Community College/Higher Education
<input type="checkbox"/> N/A I have no children.

Comment: We have five children who all graduated from Mesa High School. All were honor students, two were valedictorians. Two of our children were home-schooled in junior high, one for two years, one for one year. All have gone on to higher education.