



**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?**

<b>Answer</b>
<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 would like to hit (B) - stabilize funding but it's unrealistic in this slow recovering economic environment. Although the sales tax may help alleviate some of the pain of future budget reductions, education is the largest budget item and will likely sustain more reductions.

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

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

**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.)**

<b>Answer</b>
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An effort to close existing tax loopholes
Increase personal income tax
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enact a flat tax on corporate/individual income
Increase property tax
Eliminate tax credits (please specify)
Expand the sales tax to services
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:** We cannot cut our way into economic prosperity - we have to grow our way there by improving AZ's business climate. Now, businesses are penalized for doing business here because of our high corporate property and income tax rates. We must address this so there are revenues to fund education and other critical government services like public safety and the healthcare safety net.

**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?**

<b>Answer</b>
Arizona spends too much on K-12 education. We need to enact further cuts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an adequate level of investment. I do not think we need to invest more in K-12 funding.
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:** Funding levels alone do not determine academic excellence. Arizona ranks in the middle on student performance and some states that spend much more per pupil rank below us. Also, other countries that spend less have better academic outcomes.

**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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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:** The tuition tax credit system is a fair system in that they help parents to afford the best education for their child by redirecting some of the education tax dollars. Without it, taxpaying parents pay twice. The program is a winner for students by providing a good education and a winner for the state that saves per pupil funding and capital cost outlays for additional school facilities.

**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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support the participation in a national standards program, i.e. NAEP.
I support increased charter school funding.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support more teacher accountability.
I support the Common Core Standards created by the National Governors' Association and the state superintendents of education.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support linking teacher pay to student test scores.
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:** School governing boards should remain drivers of reform to keep schools as locally/parent controlled as possible. I support allowing districts flexibility to reward excellent teachers and remove those who are not performing as well as ensuring, as much as is appropriate at the state level, funding is going to the classroom. I will continue to support reforms that increase academic performance such as mandatory third grade retention and move-on-when-ready options that we passed.

**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?**

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

**Comment:** Public schools that are not willing to accommodate parents who want more traditional schools, schools that focus on math & science, music, voc.ed., or others, will be left behind. Charters and private schools are meeting these demands and allowing parents to direct more of their education tax dollars will accelerate this progress.

**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?**

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

**Comment:** It is responsible for the Legislature to allow voters to reconsider spending initiatives such as FTF - especially since FTF early childhood programs are designed to undergird services the Legislature has had to drastically cut or eliminate to keep the state afloat. It makes sense to redirect these revenues to keep critical services in place during this economic crisis.

**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.)**

<b>Answer</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classroom size isn't a crucial factor for student success--many other factors are much more important and we should focus our priorities elsewhere.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 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:** Classroom size is important to parents - I know it was important to me as a parent, especially in the early grades - however research does not support the claim that it is a crucial factor for student success. It is still important that parents have options for their child to be in a smaller classroom and those options can be found but the greatest factors are a parent's involvement in their child's

education and teacher excellence.

- 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.**

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

**Comment:** General Education Diplomas are considered post high school education and generally should be funded by individuals. The state funding was implemented when there were extra revenues but now the state must prioritize its education funds. I am not opposed to state involvement in the future under certain circumstances.

- 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.)**

<b>Answer</b>
<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 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)
<input type="checkbox"/> 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)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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)

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

<b>Answer</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional Public School
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter School

Private School

Home School

University/Community College/Higher Education

N/A I have no children.

**Comment:** Our children benefited from several education options at different times and I hope all parents have the same choices we were able to have.