



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
Enact further cuts to K-12 and higher education funding as they make up a large share of the overall budget.
Stabilize funding to education at existing levels until our economy recovers.
<input checked="" 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.

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

Answer
<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.)

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	End tax exempt status for mining, etc.
	Simplify the state tax code
	Corporate tax cuts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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: One thing people need to quickly realize is that we are not in a recession. We are approaching the end of an historic period in industrial civilization. Infinite growth on a finite planet will only be possible if it is suddenly discovered that the laws of thermodynamics are fundamentally incorrect.

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.
	Although I do not think this funding is adequate, I do not think we can increase funding for K-12 education at this time.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.

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.
	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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

Comment: Just the fact that so many people think there is a need for so many private schools should be a wake-up call that the public school curriculum is not serving anyone's real needs. If a public school

education doesn't prepare one for anything more glorious than flipping burgers, we have more than just an education crisis.

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

Comment: None of the above are "reforms." They are slapping band-aids on symptoms. We need to return to teaching critical thinking skills, and teachers shouldn't be baby-sitters instructing children how to take tests.

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

Comment: But public schools must meet the educational needs of students, and re-instill a child's natural love of learning.

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
First Things First funding should be repealed.

First Things First funding should be maintained in accordance with the original voter mandate.

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.
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 checked="" 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.
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: 12-15 students, with a maximum of 20 students.

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.

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)
<input checked="" 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)

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.)

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

Comment: Something else schools must start preparing students for is a future that is not going to be simply a bigger, shinier version of the past. Peak Oil and global warming are real, and we can't continue using our one and only life support system as both an endless supply of resources and a bottomless pit for waste. We must learn what sustainability really means; that growth is not necessary for prosperity and progress; and that we can focus on becoming better instead of merely bigger.