



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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stabilize funding to education at existing levels until our economy recovers.
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: Any solution that orients around how much funding is being used as opposed to how it is being used is suspect in my mind, as if getting a value for the taxpayer is somehow a bad thing. The fact is that the education system is the largest part of the general fund and the legislature has the alternative to cut spending or raise taxes. I am all for balancing the budget and good education, but given the financial crisis, I need to be convinced that the money will produce results.

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

Comment: Taxes will fluctuate according to business cycles regardless of how they are collected. We need to have infrastructures that are capable of providing necessary services during good and bad times. One can't go to people who are either unemployed or otherwise financially diminished and keep raising their tax rates.

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
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
<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
<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: I am very determined to end the deficit by whatever means are politically achievable. Neither schools, nor any other service are served by paying interest, renting buildings, etc.

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: Again, my defenses come up with these state comparisons. The goal is good education and there are a number of reasons we don't have it, including the huge number of non-English-speaking children, poor classroom discipline, etc. In those situations where there is a shortage of money, I would be happy to make the case to the legislature to increase it even if it means raising taxes. However the case that we aren't keeping up with the Joneses doesn't cut it.

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

Comment: Here goes my defensive flag again. The tuition program SAVES the state money, and it is not accurate to say that tax dollars are being allocated for it. It is obvious that your group opposes the competition that private school affords to public education. This indicates that you aren't interested in outcome, but control. As to limiting based on need, there may be some merit there, however that must be accompanied by more flat tax.

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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
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.
I support moving quickly to shut down failing schools.
I support creating more charter schools.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula

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 Yes No

Comment: When the concept of public education was formed, there was no ACLU, church-state wall, such that the most basic morality training is now "illegal", and schools fear disciplining disruptive students for fear of litigation. It is obvious to the most casual observer that there is no small amount of indoctrination in secular humanist and socialistic concepts with no fair playing field for any acknowledgment of the role of faith and destroying the very tax base that supports education.

- 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. 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.

- 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.
I will work to restore funding for adult GED services.

Comment: I am open to more education regarding this subject, not fixed in concrete.

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
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)
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: I believe in the enforcement of all laws. I do believe major overhaul is in order up to and including the AZ Constitution. As to funding, obviously there are those who would interpret this as a blank check. This simply isn't the reality of state budgeting.

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

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

Comment: But if I did, I would either home-school or private school if I could afford it, and it would be a very high priority in my personal budget