



**Legislator Education Survey 2010**

**Response for:** jkriekard@msn.com

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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 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 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.

**Comment:** We should undertake a comprehensive efficiency study of all government departments as well as a review of the tax structure.

**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:** According to the Tax Foundation, Arizona ranks just below the median of states in state sales tax. When combined with local sales taxes, however, Arizona placed 7th among states in per-person sales tax collections. We rank at or below the median in terms of most individual and corporate taxes, and we have the 10th lowest state/local tax burden (which includes property taxes). Arizona must find a better balance between sales tax and other revenue sources to weather economic downturns.

**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

Increase personal income tax
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
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:** Some of the above mentioned solutions are appropriate to revise in part. A comprehensive study of the short- and long-term effects should be made. For example, tax credits to private schools should be reviewed, but others benefit young people and the needy. Simplifying the tax code could create better revenue streams and more efficient management of the revenue department. Our greatest need: more jobs and thereby more taxpayers. Legislators did not pass a jobs creation bill this past session.

**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.
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.

**Comment:** As a former district superintendent, I truly understand the benefit to students and their success when they have well paid, highly qualified teachers in front of smaller classes and are able to use current materials and access specialized programs. It takes appropriate funding to make all that happen.

**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.)**

<b>Answer</b>
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:** Please check my web page at [www.electkriekard.com](http://www.electkriekard.com) to access the blog that I wrote on this topic.

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

- | <b>Answer</b>  |
|--|
| 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.  |
| 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.  |
| 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  |

**Comment:** I also support taking measures to lower the drop-out rate. Additionally, I believe the state should make a concerted effort to create an emphasis on 21st century skills and entertain application for grants that will initiate more relevant programs for students. Furthermore, a greater effort must be made to pay for more preschool programs.

**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>                          |
|--|
| Yes                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

**Comment:** Arizona's open enrollment policy allows students to attend virtually any public (district or charter) school now. It has created greater competition among schools and increased student and school achievement by many measures. Private schools do not have to operate under the same regulations as public and until they do, they should not receive state funds.

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

**Comment:** As this is funded by tobacco tax funds and run mostly by volunteers, it is a win-win for children and the government.

**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:** There is proven research on the positive effects of lower class size on student achievement and much anecdotal information on the wear and tear on teachers when their classes are large, which negatively affects student learning.

**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:** Research shows a growing gap between the earning power of individuals with college degrees versus high school diplomas versus high school drop-outs. As a retired educator, I know that people deserve a second chance to receive their diploma or its equivalency and have seen the positive difference such an accomplishment can make. Their lives will be enhanced and the state wins by having a more skilled work force.

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)
<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)

**Comment:** Although all of these articles are truly important, the last one holds the most relevancy to me.

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

**Comment:** I have three children who attended public schools; one is a medical doctor working on a cardiology fellowship, and two have their master's degrees and are teachers.