



[Print Report](#)

Legislator Education Survey 2010

Response for: wademclean@comcast.net

Completed: 7/06/2010 - 3:21 PM EDT

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.

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: Our educational programs are the key to economic recovery. Businesses will not relocate to Arizona unless they believe their employees' children can attend excellent schools. Also they will not come unless we have a highly trained workforce which means excellent K-12 and Higher Ed schools and institutions.

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

Answer

Yes

No

Comment: It is obvious that the current reliance on sales tax as the state's chief revenue source is too volatile to do any long range planning. When revenues are high the state has cut taxes and then when the sales tax revenue decrease there is not adequate funding to meet the needs of the people of Arizona. The conversation to restructure how the state's revenue is generated is essential.

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 |
| 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. |
| 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. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Selecting one or more of these options is what has been our problem in the past. |

Comment: To my knowledge there has never been a comprehensive analysis of the state's budget. There needs to be a conversation to determine the current essential needs of the state and what programs should be implemented in the future. I don't believe that the solution to this problem is as easy as checking a box.

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. |

Comment: Arizona's support for public K-12 education has been spiraling downward for several years. Expectations of student success have been increased without the commitment of resources to assist in this endeavor. Not only should funding be increased, the state should not dictate how it is spent. The setting of priorities for spending should be remanded to local governing boards.

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 type="checkbox"/> | The private school tuition program should be maintained as-is. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The amount of tax dollars allocated to the private school tuition tax credit program should be reduced. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The private school tax credit program should be repealed. |
| <input 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%.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 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 type="checkbox"/> | 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: The Arizona Constitution requires the state to adequately fund public education. State revenues are being diverted to private schools. This should not be occurring.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula |

Comment: The K-12 student in Arizona is evolving. This student comes from varying economic and social conditions. I do not believe you can legislate improvement. I believe in high expectations and accountability coupled with sufficient funding to meet these requirements. I don't believe the legislature has the expertise to mandate accountability systems or compensation systems based on accountability. Professionals need to be involved in the conversations before reform will be successful.

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: I believe parents have the right to search for the best possible education for their children. I don't think

the state is responsible for funding private schools. The success of charter schools is varied. There are times when a parent does not have the knowledge to evaluate the data and make good school choices. We need to continue having excellent neighborhood schools. A system based on expectations of excellence and choice will give parents and students the opportunity to make sound decisions.

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: I believe First Things First is making a difference. There is obviously a need for the services presented. It is important to note that the decisions are made at the regional level by local community members. The voters in Arizona decided this was important. I will vote to maintain the level of support that First Things First receives. The legislature needs to be responsible for setting a budget and not continually asking voters to make the decisions they need to make.

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: Research is varied on the effects of class size on learning. It appears that class size is more important in a child's early years. We need to emphasize early childhood education so that students have a base level of skills that will enable them to be successful in a K-3 program. I support all day kindergarten.

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: Many jobs for entry level positions require either a high school diploma or a GED. Without a GED program, dropouts will not be able to meet this employment requirement. Without the ability to gain employment they will become a burden on the taxpayer. In this situation, we all lose. The decision to cut the GED program was shortsighted and will have a negative impact on the state's economic recovery.

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 support the Constitution of the State of Arizona. The legislature has not made decisions consistent with the requirements of our Constitution. Unless the Constitution is changed, our legislature must comply.

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

- Answer**
- Traditional Public School
 - Charter School
 - Private School
 - Home School
 - University/Community College/Higher Education
 - N/A I have no children.

Comment: I am a product of Arizona's public school system. I believe I received an excellent foundation that allowed me to earn my Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees from the University of Arizona. I am a lifelong learner that believes we should teach our children how to learn. I am extremely concerned about the K-12 education system in which my grandchildren are currently enrolled. I believe they should have every opportunity to be successful in school and in life.