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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 fluctuating sales tax?

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

Comment: I find this approach helpful not just for education, but for all governmental functions. Placing the largest portion of state revenues in the tax stream that fluctuates first in the wake of economic volatility is a formula for failure. We can do better.

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.
	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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: Job Growth

Comment: An aggressive jobs growth program will stimulate economic activity and help replenish state coffers and other revenue streams that fund education.

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 can do many things to improve education. And additional funding won't make all of them happen. But it is the first step we need to take before we can implement other reforms.

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 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.

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 checked="" 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: I would also support greater levels of continuing education for teachers. Data-driven improvements in teaching methods will only strengthen our educators and better serve our students.

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: What I do support is bringing all stakeholders to the table (legislators and government agencies, school boards, parents, teachers and students) to do the work necessary to make all schools

places where any student can receive a world-class education and graduate with the skills needed for the jobs and opportunities of tomorrow.

- 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: Voters decided they wanted to support early education. The legislature should manage state budgets adequately enough to avoid having to ask voters to let them take dollars from their children.

- 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: I have spoken with educators in my community, and they consistently list class size as a concern. Moreover, they also express concern about how political figures loosely interpret the definition of "administrator" and "teacher" to suit their message about public instruction. Allowing for such ambiguity can lead to widely varying assessments of what is truly happening in our classrooms.

- 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: This is a clear win-win for Arizona. Investment in GED programs is very modest from a dollars perspective. And yet when Arizonans complete them, they qualify for better-paying jobs, generate more sales and payroll taxes and rely less on state social services. Cutting this program was terribly short-sighted.

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)

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.