



### Survey Superintendent of Public Instruction

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#### 1 Why are you running for Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona? Explain in 1000 characters or less.

I believe it is time to change the conversation about public education. The Superintendent of Public Instruction needs to be an educational leader, armed with a depth of knowledge gained over a lifetime of experience in education, not a politician with an ideological formula gained over a lifetime of running for office. We need to move from polarizing political stances to conversations and solutions about what Arizona students need to be successful in the world they will face. High standards and high expectations for our schools, our teachers and our students are essential to our success. In order to be sure we are not just engaging in rhetoric, we also need to talk about the importance of investing in our schools for the future and providing the resources our children need to be competitive and successful. I believe I have the experience, dedication, passion, skill and knowledge to serve this state as a true educational leader and Superintendent of Public Instruction.

2

**In an effort to balance our state budget, legislators have recently reduced Arizona's K-12 and university/community school budgets in cuts and rollovers by \$2.2 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 opinion on balancing the budget? Explain. (Choose one.)**

#### Answer

Enact further cuts to K-12 and higher education funding as it makes up a large share of the overall budget.

Stabilize education funding 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:** I actually believe we will have to stabilize education funding AND look for ways to recover what has been lost in the last two years. This will require that we take this opportunity to review our education funding formula in the context of what resources are necessary to provide our children the kind of education we want them to have. Critical to this effort is a transparent and reliable system of accountability that community members can trust and have faith in.

**3 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 in the education system in Arizona? Explain. (Choose one.)**

<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 Superintendent of Public Instruction, I will advocate for increased funding for public education.

**Comment:** The current funding formula is outdated and needs to be completely restructured. It requires a true assessment of the current structure of funding for different types of school districts and a determination of the real cost necessary to provide the programs and support that are mandated and necessary to ensure student success. There is expertise in this state among business, university and education leaders to achieve this task. As Superintendent, leading this effort will be a clear priority.

**4 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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

**Comment:** I have never supported the use of tax dollars for private and religious education. I believe our first responsibility is to meet our constitutional obligation to our public schools and universities. At the very least, the private and corporate Tuition Tax Credits should be immediately suspended during this budget crisis. A complete review of the program should be undertaken by the legislature, and if not repealed, be subject to much greater scrutiny and accountability.

- 5 **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. As the Superintendent of Public Instruction, do you support this plan? Explain.**

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

**Comment:** Traditional public schools educate 90% of Arizona's students. It is our responsibility to ensure their success. Well run charter schools will continue to provide viable options for parents and students. New and existing charters should be held to the same high standards of quality and accountability as other schools, and this includes greater scrutiny of the use of public resources for operations. The best public education system will include excellent charters and traditional public schools.

- 6 **This year, legislators placed Proposition 302 on the ballot which asks voters to repeal First Things First, an early childhood education program with a dedicated funding source approved by voters in 2006. What is your position on the proposed repeal of First Things First? Explain.**

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:** The legislature has consistently tried to erode vote mandated funding initiatives. We have First Things First because of the failure of the legislature to be proactive and invest in our youngest children. The public understands that investing in early education is the best way to ensure later success in school and in life. Dismantling a voter protected initiative and placing the funds at the disposal of the legislature because of tough economic times is short sighted and will erode our success.

7

**Arizona currently has some of the largest K-12 classroom sizes in the nation. Please check the statements you agree with below. Explain. (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.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.

**Comment:** Arizona has been awarded \$212M in stimulus dollars to save education jobs. We need an immediate assessment of actual class sizes in our schools and a process for making certain those dollars go directly to schools and districts to restore/reduce class size and provide lost support services to our kids. We must also build a long term plan of action for systematically reducing class size, especially in the early grades, and ensure that we have excellent teachers ready to take those positions.

8

**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 Equivalency Diploma) funding was eliminated. One in five Arizonans currently hold a GED, and earn approximately \$8,000/year more than Arizonans without it--bringing an estimated \$8 million to our state economy annually in additional taxes. Please check the statement you agree with below. Explain.**

**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:** Adult basic education is an essential part of the education continuum and we must find ways to support these community and school based programs. The GED program also allows individuals to enter Community Colleges, trade schools, technical institutes and in some cases universities. Limiting the educational opportunities of our adult population limits preparation for the workforce and damages our economy. We must restore the funding and build responsible programs to serve our adult learners.

9

**The Arizona Constitution has many sections impacting the state budget and public education. Which articles of the state Constitution would you uphold if elected to the Superintendent of Public Instruction? Explain. (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:** As the Superintendent, I do not have the ability to enact taxation policy, but I will be a strong advocate for meeting our constitutional obligation for education at all levels. Arizona needs leadership and problem solving to create and sustain an investment in our education system. This will ensure better educated students who can contribute to the development of Arizona's economic future. Business will begin to invest again in our state when they have more faith in our public schools.

**10 Harvard recently released a longitudinal study citing the benefits of all-day kindergarten. If elected to Superintendent of Public Instruction, will you support restoration of all-day kindergarten? Explain. (Choose one.)**

- Answer**
- ✔ All-day kindergarten is crucial to the education foundation of students, and I support it.
  - All-day kindergarten is a great program to have when the state can afford it.
  - All-day kindergarten provides a service to working parents, but there's no educational benefit to the child.

**Comment:** The Study demonstrates the longitudinal benefit of All Day Kindergarten on educational attainment, health and overall success. It is an example of the limitations of test score data as the ONLY means of demonstrating success. It took several years to establish and fund our ADK program. We have serious issues to address in Arizona that are all tied to the success of our children at an early age; reading and math proficiency, graduation rates, and entering and completing post-secondary education.

**11 What steps would you take as Superintendent of Public Instruction to retain quality educators in Arizona? (Explain in 1000 characters or less.)**

The states and countries that have the highest achieving students are very selective about their teacher core. They put an emphasis on qualifications for entry into the profession, systemic support of novice teachers, goal oriented professional development for more experienced teachers, and sound teacher evaluation processes that encourage peer collaboration and review. Research also demonstrates that excellent school leadership is often the key to teacher retention and student growth. Ensuring that the role of Principal as instructional leader is supported is also critical to success in our schools. In both cases we need a rigorous evaluation systems that allow for continuous improvement based on the needs of the students, teachers and administrators. We need to develop a competitive salary structure that has fair and well understood measures of performance in order to institute a performance based compensations system that rewards our best teachers and encourages growth in others.

12 **The state's second largest school district, TUSD, teaches courses about Mexican-American heritage and culture as part of its Ethnic Studies program. Do you support the continuation of these courses? Explain.**

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

**Comment:** Local school districts have a responsibility to ensure the rigor and relevance of their curriculum and adherence to state standards. TUSD has an obligation to ensure that the curriculum and instruction in its schools is high quality and meets the needs of its students. Arizona's diversity is part of what makes us strong and vibrant. Teaching our children the values and structures of our constitutional democracy and government as well as learning about the impact of that diversity is important.

13

**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 two grown children. They attended the Kyrene Elementary Schools and Desert Vista HS in the Tempe Union High School District. My oldest son completed degrees at ASU and the University of Maryland. My youngest son completed degrees at Carnegie Mellon University and Stanford University. My experience as a teacher, parent, administrator and advocate for our public schools and universities has shaped my views about our public schools and the great opportunities we have as a state.