



Congratulations on your candidacy for the Arizona State Legislature. Stand for Children is a non-partisan, non-profit education advocacy organization. Our mission is to ensure all Arizona students graduate from high school prepared for, and with access to, college and career opportunities. We do this by educating and empowering community members, advocating for effective policies, ensuring strong policy implementation, and supporting courageous leaders at the ballot box.

In the 2018 election cycle, Stand for Children will consider endorsing candidates aligned with our mission and current policy priorities. In the questionnaire below please provide responses indicating your position on our key focus areas. Please limit your overall responses to 6 pages.

Thank you for your willingness to share your perspectives and preferences regarding public education.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate's Name: Bill Brotherton Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District (LD): LD30 Party Affiliation: Democrat

E-Mail Address(es): billbrothertonjr@yahoo.com Phone: (602)525-9252

Alternate Campaign Contact: Bianca Brotherton

Campaign Website: www.brothertonforstatehouse.com

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): Juris Doctor from University of Arizona is my highest degree. I received my BA from Grand Canyon College located in LD 30

Previous Elected Office(s) Held: I was a state legislator from this district from 1998 to 2007. State Rep. 1998-2003, State Senator 2003-2007, State Superior Court Judge 2007-2017

Current Profession: Attorney

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought: First and foremost, I have held this office before and was known as a very effective representative for my constituents. I have lived in this district for 44 years. Much of my schooling occurred in the district and my wife of 32 years and I have raised two children in the district. I was appointed to the State Superior Court bench in 2007 by Gov. Janet Napolitano and served in that capacity for 10 and a half years. I handled several calendars that involved children's issues including family, juvenile and criminal. I previously served on the advisory council for Magnet Traditional School and on the Board of Trustees for Grand Canyon University when it was a private, non-profit college. As an attorney who has practiced law for 30 years I am very familiar with the legislative and legal systems. I am committed to LD 30 and it is my intent to live in the district the rest of my life. I have no aspirations to higher office but just wish to do the state representative job well.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are your top three priorities for public education in Arizona?

- a) More money
- b) More money
- c) More money

My three priorities may seem unusual, but the public-school system has been starved for funds for so long now getting more resources to schools must be the top priority. In LD 30 we have many high needs children and families. Many times, the resources they need aren't so much material things (although some obviously are) but they are resources in the way of people providing help to these children and families. We need well paid certified teachers and teaching assistants. We need well paid support staff, including nurses, counselors and specialized instructional assistants. We need up-to-date instructional materials and access to computers, etc. so children can function in a world increasingly dependent on computers.

I know there are other priorities, but it is my position that until we fully fund public education these other priorities can't be met.

2. What state policy change(s) do you believe could allow more Arizona children attend a quality school, be taught by an effective teacher and be provided with opportunities to succeed?

Again, much of this involves adequate resources, so I would reiterate that statement. A possible policy change may be in the use of non-certified teachers. The ability to teach, especially young children, is a skill that must be learned. Great knowledge of a subject does not mean someone is capable of teaching that subject. There is too much dependence on non-certified teachers, in large part due to the lack of certified teachers. We must pay teachers commensurate with the rest of the nation and reduce or eliminate the dependence on non-certified teachers. Others changes in state policy could be in charter school accountability. After reviewing the latest ACLU report on how charter schools are picking their students rather than the other way round, I believe that is also an area requiring some policy changes.

3. What role should the state play in holding schools accountable for student academic growth and achievement?

There is a role for more general standards created by the State, but much of the accountability should be on the local level: school districts run by locally elected school boards. The legislature often lacks the expertise to devise standards and the process is fraught with political disagreements. To illustrate my point, after the AIMS standards came out I proposed a bill to require every legislator to pass the AIMS test before they could be sworn into office. I was told that legislation wouldn't work because many of the legislators would not be able to pass the AIMS test, yet they were mandating its use in schools. I sensed some hypocrisy there.

Currently, Stand for Children Arizona is focused on several policy areas: Early Literacy and Grade-Level Reading, English Language Instruction and School Finance. The following questions address those priorities.

Early Literacy & Grade-Level Reading

Based on the Spring 2017 statewide assessment, 56% of Arizona students cannot read on grade-level by the end of third grade, meaning only 44% of students are reading on grade-level. Scores have improved overall, but with the statewide goal of 72% of 3rd graders reading on grade-level by 2030, we have a long way to go. When looking at the data by school and region, it shows the improvement is concentrated in a small percentage of schools while many Arizona schools struggle to increase students' reading ability (see attached data sheet). Reading proficiency at this point in a student's academic career is vitally important. Research shows failure to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade is linked to ongoing academic struggles, failure to graduate high school on time, and it dramatically reduces and creates barriers to entry into a postsecondary institution or career opportunities.

4. Would you support providing targeted funding and evidence-based programs, such as reading coaches and summer school, to improve the reading proficiency of Arizona students?

Yes. But we also need to address broader issues with families including the hyper-mobility of many families. Previously when I was a state legislator, Carol Peck, the Alhambra School District superintendent advised me of the high turnover rate in her schools where the teachers would end a school year with only half of the same students they had at the beginning of the year. When children are constantly relocating it creates an instability in their lives that adversely affects their ability to learn. We must figure out ways to stabilize families to maximize learning.

5. Would you support state funding for early learning opportunities such as full-day kindergarten or quality pre-school for 3 and 4-year olds? Yes.

English Language Learners (ELL)

Current state policies regarding ELL students were adopted in response to a lawsuit and limited by voter-protected requirements. They have been in place for 12 years. These policies use a one-size fits all approach, unlike any other education policy. During the 2018 legislative session, Stand moved H.B. 2435 through the process. The bill allowed for flexibility at the local level while preserving voter mandates and it provided for needed transparency and accountability. HB 2435 passed unanimously out of the House and Senate Education committees. Unfortunately, the bill failed to get a final vote in the last days of the session as time ran out.

6. Would you support legislation similar to HB 2435 to change current ELL instructional requirements in order to provide local flexibility, increased accountability and transparency and more efficient use of funds?

Yes.

7. Would you sign a pledge to support similar legislation, if elected?

Yes.

8. If not, what policies would you support to improve ELL instruction?

School Finance

Arizona's current school finance system is over 30 years old. It was designed to support local school districts funded by their taxpayers with the state providing what could not be raised locally. Since that time, Arizona's public-school system has expanded to include a myriad of choices: open enrollment, charter schools and Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESAs); many students don't attend their local community school. The current system is outdated and continues to increase reliance on state funding. State policies which continue to limit the ability to raise revenue have resulted in the chronic underfunding of public schools. Short-term solutions and targeted investments fail to address the underlying problem. Stand for Children advocates for sufficient funding for all Arizona students, regardless of where they live or what type of school they attend.

9. What would you do or support to increase public school funding to at least the national average?

I would support this in the budgetary process and in committee. I would make it one of my budget priorities.

10. How do you plan to grow state revenue, establish new revenue sources and provide additional resources for education?

I support the Invest for Ed Act and with the new Supreme Court decision on taxing of internet transactions I believe that is another potential source of additional revenue.

Below, please include any additional information you believe Stand for Children should know about your priorities:

I was raised and educated in public schools in LD 30 as were my children. I feel that I and they received a quality education but that is in jeopardy due to the irrational tax cutting done by the Republican controlled Legislature and the slashed public-school budgets. We must act now to reverse this course or we risk losing an entire generation of children. It is my sincere hope that I can be a part of causing this reversal in course.