



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: Drew John

Office Sought: Az Senate Legislative District (LD): 14

Party Affiliation: Republican

E-Mail Address(es): DrewJohnaz@gmail.com Phone: 480-652-8405

Alternate Campaign Contact: Heather Floyd Campaign Website: DrewJohn.com

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): High School Diploma

Previous Elected Office(s) Held:

Az House of Representatives 2016 - Present

Graham County Supervisor Dist. 1, 2000-2016

Safford School Board 1994-1998

Current Profession: Retired

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought:

Well-rounded experience and background, heavy community involvement, business ownership, corporate employee, local school involvement and board member, local government employee and County Supervisor, Az legislator, married 41 years, 3 children, 7 grandchildren, honest heart and soul.

QUESTIONNAIRE

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

Proper funding.

Local control and accountability

Quality student results.

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?

I think Az is heading the right direction by allowing student choice to attend the school of their choice and thus creating a more competitive atmosphere and incentive to improve. To complete the fair competitive process, policies and regulations need to be on an even playing field to create true and fair competition.

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

First allow them the freedom to be innovative and with proper funding. I am also a believer in Pre-K and Kindergarten and have visited Pre-K programs in a school in my district that were very inspiring. I would like to provide funding for all schools to have a strong Pre-K program.

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?

I definitely would support it and make sure consistent funding is in place.

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, I would, but it would be very important to create consistent funding with potential funding growth.

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?

To be honest I don't know enough about this as much as I should, but I'm willing to learn more and if it's a good for kids I'm in.

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

I'm sorry but I've had legislative friends that signed pledges before and the rules changed halfway through and was accused of not following their pledge. A perfect example is those that signed a pledge to not increase taxes no matter what. Those individuals have struggled to help move AZ forward on many occasions because the definition and interpretation of tax increase has changed. So, I don't sign pledges on future legislation till I read it. I will support any improvement to education and it is a big priority in my life and you'll just have to take my word for it.

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 believe one of the most important things the state legislature needs to do is make sure proper funding for public schools is in place and sustainable. I would support school finance reform to make it more efficient, less regulated, less duplicated paperwork and to help develop more school funding revenue and be more efficient and sustainable.

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

Being in business all my life I have always worked on efficiencies on the cost of doing business in whatever that might be first, then I prioritize the savings to make sure it is used to further the needed improvements and growth. Then after those improvements and efficiencies are proven and in place then we talk about more efficient and needed revenue streams. I fully respect the taxpayer dollar more than my own and I believe our state has gotten away from our number one priority and that is educating our children to be the best in the world, not just the USA.

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