



Congratulations on your candidacy for the Arizona 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: Hollace Lyon Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District (LD): LD11 Party Affiliation: Democrat

E-Mail Address(es): info@LyonforAZ.com Phone: 520.302.0329

Alternate Campaign Contact: Linda Lyon lindalyon1222@gmail.com

Campaign Website: www.LyonforAZ.com

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): M.A. in Computer Resources Management - Webster University; Masters of Strategic Studies - Air War College

Previous Elected Office(s) Held: None

Current Profession: Retired Military- Colonel, Air Force

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought:

I am a retired Air Force Colonel who commanded twice, taught senior military leaders war planning, and served in NATO as well as on the Air Force Board at the Pentagon, helping to set budget and strategic goals for the Air Force. I've negotiated agreements between Turkey and Greece for the deployment of nuclear planning systems as well as between the Air Force and Microsoft for a worldwide contract which saved \$200 million and became a model for the U.S. government. I believe my skills and experience will enable me to build coalitions and bridge divides to move LD 11 and our state, forward in a way that best serves all our people.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are your top three priorities for public education in Arizona?
 - Invest in our future - quality public education and modern infrastructure
 - Protect and preserve - our communities, our natural resources, our border (not a wall)
 - Secure our liberties - voter access and government accountability

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?

Update the state funding formula and find new sustainable sources of revenue to provide more stability and ensure districts are adequately funded irrespective of zip code.

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

First of all, the state should require any school that accepts taxpayer dollars to be fully accountable and transparent regarding the return on investment of that funding. Return on investment of course, should be determined by progress made on closing the achievement gaps and improving all student outcomes. The Arizona Education Progress Meter developed by Expect More Arizona is a great place to start in making that determination.

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. Data shows that children who can't read by the third grade are four times less likely to graduate than their counterparts who can read by then. After the third grade, students must shift from learning to read to reading to learn and those who can't, are left behind. It is much better for the child and much less expensive, to spend the time and resources to teach him or her to read up front rather than remediate on the back end.

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. The return on investment can be as much as 13:1, and many children don't have the luxury of a parent at home who can prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. The truth is that we now have kindergarteners learning what was once taught in first grade and preschoolers must learn social skills and at least basic letter and number skills so they can be ready for the next step.

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. I believe children have an infinite ability to absorb and assimilate, especially at younger ages and would like to see as little segregation for English immersion training as possible. These students need more time to interact with their peers and access other opportunities including electives. Evidence indicates the changes proposed in HB 2435 will cause students to progress academically with their peers in required classes, increasing graduation rates and reducing dropouts.

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?

N/A

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?

For the most part, I believe we can find new revenue for schools by rearranging the Legislature's priorities to match those of regular Arizonans. Time and again, Arizonans have said they support providing more funding to our schools, yet our Legislature continues to dole out corporate tax giveaways. Specifically, I would:

- Start with a bi-partisan review of all corporate sales tax giveaways to determine which are providing an adequate return on investment and curtail those performing inadequately, redirecting the funding to education.
- Ensure any future tax giveaways are bounded with sundown clauses.
- Look at all tax credits to see which are serving the state's needs and for those which are not, eliminate them.

Other ways to increase public school funding I would consider include (but are not limited to):

- Freeze individual and corporate income tax cuts still phasing in
- Increase the minimum corporate tax to \$500; must be paid after credits claimed
- Issue bonds for new school construction instead of paying cash up front
- Hire back collectors and audit staff at the AZ Department of Revenue to collect taxes owed
- Redirect results-based funding that's only going to A-rated schools

Unfortunately, recouping revenue via many of the above measures will take time. That's why, if INVESTinED makes the ballot, I will support the initiative.

As validated by both the AZ Town Hall on School Funding in 2017, and Governor Ducey's appointed Classrooms First Council in 2016, it is the size of the state revenue pie that is the problem. But, once we increase the size of the pie, we need to relook the school funding formula to determine how to appropriate the pie slices (the funding) more equitably to ensure better outcomes for all students.

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

We need to stop the bargain basement mentality of many of our current lawmakers that seem intent on selling all our state has to offer at blue-light special prices. Failing to invest in education and allowing our infrastructure to continue to deteriorate, while continuing to offer corporate tax giveaways to lure companies here is a race to the bottom that limits our future. Quality companies want an educated workforce and modern infrastructure that enables them to get up and running and promotes their growth.

Arizona is uniquely positioned to excel in the area of renewable energy production, especially when it comes to solar. We should not only be moving to primarily rely on solar energy for our own needs; but exporting it to neighboring states.

Our state is a tourism Mecca, but we won't be able to ensure that continues to be the case if we don't protect our natural resources. This includes not only our beautiful lands and abundant wildlife; but ensuring clean water and air as well. We must also of course, do what we can to minimize the effect of climate change on our state if we are to continue to draw those from around the world here.

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

I believe one's success in life should not be determined by the circumstances of their birth. If we are to achieve all we can as people, communities, states or countries, we must consider education an investment, not an expense. As the NAACP once used to say in their advertisements, "a mind is a terrible thing to waste." We owe our children every opportunity to ensure their minds...their potential...is not wasted.