



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: Jennifer Pawlik

Office Sought: State Representative                      Legislative District (LD): LD 17

Party Affiliation: Democrat

E-Mail Address(es): Jennifer@JenniferPawlik.com                      Phone: 520-836-9592

Alternate Campaign Contact: Savannah Drake                      909-991-9939

Campaign Website: <http://jenniferpawlik.nationbuilder.com/>

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): Masters of Education - Curriculum & Instruction; Bachelor's of Science - Elementary Education

Previous Elected Office(s) Held: Precinct Committee Woman, Germann Precinct, State Committee Woman

Current Profession: Executive Trainer

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought:

I am qualified to serve as a State Representative because I am a passionate, informed person. I have taught in Arizona's public schools for seventeen years, and I have experienced how the cuts the legislature has made to education have impacted the students and the morale of the teachers. I am a listener, I enjoy collaborating with others, and I am willing to problem solve.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are your top three priorities for public education in Arizona?
  - Attract and retain certified teachers by paying them an appropriate salary that is commensurate to their level of education and experience.
  - Ensuring that the curriculum and technology available to students is modern. (The last few years in the classroom, my two classroom computers were older than the students I taught).
  - Properly maintain buildings and buses so that students, teachers, and staff are safe each day.
  
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?

First and foremost, we must have adequate, dedicated, reliable funding for our schools statewide. It is unacceptable that all Arizona's children do not have access to great schools, five days a week. Secondly, I feel very strongly that teachers should be certified in all schools that receive public funding. I am absolutely against "rewarding" the high achieving schools with additional funding that low or average achieving schools do not receive. Locally (I don't think it should be mandated by the state), the most effective teachers should be working with those who have the greatest needs and class sizes should be small-particularly for those who serve the students with the greatest challenges. Strong mentors should be assigned to new teachers, but all teachers require a positive support system to prevent burn out. Tutoring, summer school, and other research-based remediation programs should be in place to provide opportunities for those who struggle to succeed. We must also remember that an often-overlooked piece of special education is gifted education. We must make sure gifted students have the opportunity for challenge and success, too. This begins by providing gifted testing to broad groups of students, but it also includes having teachers who are certified in gifted education assigned to work with these children.

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

The idea of accountability must be expanded. Students' performance on one standardized test is not enough information, but I do not advocate MORE assessment. Are students testing out of SEI classes because they are proficient in English? What is the pass rate of AP/IB courses? Are special education students meeting their academic goals from one year to the next? We should look at attendance rates and graduation rates. What percentage of students are continuing to community college, universities, or other programs where they will receive a certificate? There are many, many factors that show that a school is performing well. It is much easier to look at performance on one test, but it does not give a true indication of success or failure of a 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 absolutely support these measures IF they are conducted by certified teachers. In my education courses, we discussed that remediation should be delivered by THE MOST highly trained person. It is critical that those with the most knowledge and experience work with the children with the greatest needs. Additionally, the class sizes must be small. Remediation group sizes should be tiny-three students is optimal!

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 had the pleasure of being named a Flinn-Brown Fellow this spring, and this was the very topic my group studied. The key is that the program must be a high-quality program in order to make a positive impact on the children's learning. Again, I advocate highly trained, certified teachers-even for our youngest learners. It is important that the teachers are paid like elementary school teachers-they are NOT babysitters-they are delivering critical foundational skills that the young children need to be successful later in school. Interestingly, I learned that there is a significant reduction in the need for special education and remedial programs for those who attended a quality preschool. They are more likely to graduate from high school, attend a post-secondary program, and less likely to be incarcerated. Likewise, I have been an advocate for full-day kindergarten for many, many years. When my twenty-year-old twins were entering kindergarten, we found the money to pay for them to attend a full-day program. Many suburban districts are able to subsidize the cost of full-kindergarten with local overrides. I believe all Arizona's children should have the opportunity to attend full-day kindergarten regardless of whether their parents or school districts can fund it.

## 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 support similar legislation. I was disappointed that this bill failed to get the final vote.

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

Yes. I'd be willing to sponsor or co-sponsor the bill as well.

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?

At this time, I believe we are in a crisis with respect to school funding. I support the #Invest in Ed AZ initiative, but do not think this is the only solution. I don't believe any ideas can be off the table at this time. All ideas for increasing revenue should be analyzed and considered in a bipartisan manner because we certainly need to change how we are funding our public schools.

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

We certainly have an issue with not having enough revenue in the general fund. There have been significant tax cuts in nearly all of the last 30 years. Individuals and corporations are able to carry forward tax credits for many, many years which in turn is impacting the money available to fund schools. As stated above, innovative ideas should be explored and both parties should come to the table with open minds.



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

As a former elementary school teacher, my top priorities revolve around funding education properly and supporting programs for children. I am concerned that the number of children in foster care remains high (although it has been reduced in the past few years). I am frustrated that federal monies for the Child Care Development Block Grant was left on the table due to inaction of the legislature at the end of session this spring. It is also concerning that Kids Care is often threatened.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Pawlik