



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: Ken Clark

Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District (LD): 24

Party Affiliation: Democrat

E-Mail Address(es): kenclarkleadership@gmail.com

Phone: 602-456-9388

Alternate Campaign Contact: Tim Castro - timothy@thec3g.com

Campaign Website: kenclarkforaz.org

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): Masters' degree - American University, Washington DC

Previous Elected Office(s) Held: State Legislature, 2003-2005, 2015-present.

Current Profession: Realtor

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought:

I served in the legislature from 2003 to 2005, and then again since 2015 I have gained valuable experience in a whole range of public issues since that time, as I have served my community. I am running for this seat because I have the right mix of experience, pragmatism and drive to represent this district. I have demonstrated my commitment to Arizona time and again. I don't just talk about it.

My recent voting record and experience show my support of public education, Arizona school children and teachers alike. In 2003, I was the primary sponsor on HB2376, "school districts; procurements; on-line bidding", which allowed schools to save money by doing "reverse

auctions”, like those popularized by Priceline.com and others. Further, I voted against budgets that cut school funding and supported budgets that fully funded education.

Since my first term in the legislature, I have stayed active in support of important movements in Arizona.

QUESTIONNAIRE

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

Funding for public education.

Accountability for taxpayer dollars in public education.

Fully funding the School Facilities Board.

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 believe that we must fully fund public education, reduce class sizes and pay competitive wages to teachers. Further, the Republican Legislature has failed to fully fund the School Facilities Board to the tune of about \$2.2 billion since the year 2000. We cannot expect children to have a positive learning environment if they are in schools with inadequate facilities.

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

The state should report on the successes of schools, not only in over-all test scores, but also in each school’s success in progressing since the previous year’s grade. We cannot divorce the success of the school from the challenges that the school must face in its community, be that poverty, distance to learning or other environmental factors.

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

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 have voted for full-day kindergarten in the past and I would again.

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?

I have and will support legislation that increases flexibility for ELL.

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?

I believe that we must separate school funding from local property taxes as much as possible. Or, at the least, we should fund schools in areas where property taxes raise less revenue at the same level as wealthier areas. That was the model for the School Facilities Board. However, since there was no dedicated funding, the Legislature neglected its responsibility. To add insult to injury, the Legislature passed capitol and soft capital costs down to the local level, thus increasing local taxes and bonding requirements.

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

We need to fully tax on-line sales tax. We need to review the \$6 Billion worth of tax breaks that are on the books to determine priorities based on return on investment. We have cut taxes 28 of the last 29 years, to the detriment of our schools, infrastructure and public health.

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

I believe that Stand for Children has seen my work over the past few years. I have been honored by your endorsement in the past and I hope that I can count on your endorsement, along with that of my running mate, John Glenn. I need the strongest seatmate possible and John has already demonstrated his tenacity and strategic abilities.