



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: Sean Bowie

Office Sought: State Senator

Legislative District (LD): 18

Party Affiliation: Democrat

E-Mail Address: seanmbowie@gmail.com

Phone: 602-750-9043

Alternate Campaign Contact: None

Campaign Website: seanbowieforaz.com

Education (Please note highest degree achieved): MPP, Carnegie Mellon University

Previous Elected Office(s) Held: State Senator, District 18 (running for re-election)

Current Profession: Professor of Practice, Arizona State University

Please describe why you are qualified for the office sought:

Over the last two years, I've worked hard to restore education funding, strengthen our schools, and reach across the aisle to work in a bipartisan way. I have the record to prove it. I believe my qualifications in the education sector, along with my experience in the state senate, prepare me for another term of representing my constituents in District 18.

QUESTIONNAIRE

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

The first is to continue the momentum we had this year with K-12 funding and continue working to restore the cuts made during the recession. I voted YES on the governor's budget this year because I viewed as a good first step forward, with more work left to do. My second priority is to make targeted investments in our higher education system, by working with our community colleges and technical training programs to ensure that our workforce is trained for the new jobs of the 21st century. Finally, I would work to tweak our state's A-F grading system, as I believe it is in need of reform.

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?

Well, we already have open enrollment, which I believe works well and allows parents to send their children to other neighborhood and charter schools as they see fit. I believe competition is a good thing, and open enrollment has caused district schools and charter schools to grow and thrive. I am all for parents having as much information on their school choices as they need to help them make an informed decision about what is best for their children. I do not support voucher programs that would allow public dollars to go to private schools where there is zero accountability over how those dollars are spent. If public dollars are going into a school there needs to be a minimum level of accountability over how those dollars are spent.

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

Our state's A through F grading system, while well intentioned, could use some reform. I've heard complaints large and small from schools in my district. We absolutely need to hold schools accountable for performance and achievement, and I think there is bipartisan consensus that reforms can be made to make that process better. I'm all for working with members from both parties to help make that happen.

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, absolutely.

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. While the cost for full-day kindergarten would be considerable, we owe it to our kids to work together to find a way to make it happen.

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 was going to be a YES vote on HB 2435 if it received a vote in the Senate. I am ready and willing to be a co-sponsor of another effort in 2019 if I get re-elected.

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?

This year's budget was a good first step, and it's why I voted yes. More work needs to be done. We need to look long term at Prop 301 and look for ways to potentially expand that to get us closer to the national average. I'm willing to have a bipartisan conversation with business leaders and my legislative colleagues on ways we can get this done.

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

As I said above, more work needs to be done. We can look at ways to better target existing revenue to go to K-12, and also look for ways to responsibly target future revenue for per pupil support.

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