



Press Statement:

STAND FOR CHILDREN ARIZONA CELEBRATES VICTORY FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

(PHOENIX, AZ, July 17, 2023) – Stand for Children Arizona today is joining parents, educators, and advocates in celebrating a victory for all Arizona’s children. An opinion released today by Attorney General Kris Mayes and the accompanying statement by the State Board of Education have reaffirmed the strength of our collective voices. We applaud the upholding of the rightful authority of the Arizona State Board of Education to be the sole decision maker on instructional models that were designed to serve English Learners.

“For years, Stand for Children Arizona has been proud to be protect the rights of English Learners in our state. After years of oppressive and ineffective instructional practices, we championed SB 1014 in 2019, which created historic opportunity for English Learners to find success among their peers in Arizona public schools. It was for these reasons that after State Superintendent Tom Horne’s unlawful and harmful actions against English Learners, we sprang into action by inviting educational champions, state legislators, educators, students, parents, and administrators to the State Board of Education standing in unity for the rights of all Arizona’s children,” said Rebecca Gau, Executive Director of Stand for Children Arizona.

The Attorney General’s conclusion regarding this issue clearly establishes that the Dual Language (50-50) Model is a State Board-approved Structured English Immersion (SEI) model, hence no “bilingual waiver” is required for schools using this approach to serve English Learners. Following this opinion, accompanied by the collective voices of thousands of Arizonans delivered by our community to the State Board of Education last week, we are grateful they chose to respect the law, provide leadership for students and families, and take accountability over Superintendent Horne’s ill-conceived overreach of authority. We are proud that after the advocacy and collective voice of thousands of Arizonans who have expressed support for this issue, the unprecedented amount of response ensured we were able to get a quick resolution for schools.

Despite the victory today, the work is still far from over. “We will now turn our attention to communicating this vital information to all school districts impacted, ensuring they understand that they are protected, and the Dual Language programs for their students can continue without fear,” said Daniel Hernandez, Government Affairs Director at Stand for Children Arizona.

We will maintain our vigilance over Superintendent Horne to ensure he does not continue to distort the law in his misguided and unlawful behavior. This victory is significant, but it's only one battle in a larger fight to protect the rights of all Arizona’s children. Superintendent Horne has said that he will pursue further legal action and continue to push his extremist agenda as he has for years. We will remain vigilant and steadfast in our mission to confront abuses of power and fight for the rights of every student to a quality education.

