

“Funding preK-12 Education”

Community Town Hall Report

Douglas, AZ – September 23, 2017



FUNDING PREK-12 EDUCATION

Douglas Community Town Hall Report
September 23, 2017

On September 23, 2017, diverse residents of Douglas gathered to consider funding prek-12 education. The report below represents the consensus of participants.

ARIZONA'S PREK-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM GOALS

Opportunities should be available for all children to receive an education that prepares them for higher education and the workforce. Funding in Arizona should be analyzed and re-prioritized to meet children's individualized needs. In addition, we need to support families by providing them with education and opportunities that raise awareness about educating the whole child and the need to compete globally. Community outreach and parent involvement is critical to the development and future success of our education system.

Critical thinking skills and life skills are critical for future careers. In Arizona, a significant emphasis is placed on standardized testing. When Arizona's test isn't consistent with other states, we need to ask: is this truly a value to the student or the education system as a whole? Testing has a place in the education system to ensure the development of student success but it should focus on the growth of the student.

The landscape of employment opportunities is constantly changing. The education system needs to be proactive in delivering services that take account of these changes and that meet industry needs. Industries and job sectors need to be considered when developing educational curriculum to ensure individualized success. Funding for education systems in Arizona should consider Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, workforce internships and higher education.

Our education system should ensure that all children understand their options and opportunities for career readiness and higher education.

IMPACT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The education funding formula should be simplified so that it can be better understood by the public. Funding formulas also should be updated to reflect current needs—not the needs of the 1980s which is when the current system was implemented.

Investments in the prek-12 education system should be higher than what is currently provided by the state. We should look at phasing out the current funding model and focus on a system that better considers the needs of individual schools. Reliance on local communities and organizations should not be the only way to supplement state-funded education. Funding should be provided by the state but controlled locally by school staff and administration. Funding should not be tied to test scores but should be tied to teacher performance, teacher qualifications and the growth of the students.

Inconsistencies in the funding of schools are draining local budgets with mandated requirements tied to state-funded dollars. Restrictions on the use of funding hurt the success of all students. Long term efforts and success are being hampered by yearly budget issues and day-to-day challenges. Schools should be funded equitably and equally regardless of whether they are located in the State's rural or urban geographic areas.

IMPROVING FUNDING FOR ARIZONA'S PREK-12 SCHOOLS

There is a shortfall in government revenue. The funding formula should be updated to match current trends and to compete in the 21st century. There needs to be a combination of politics, policies and networking to inform and raise awareness regarding the need to better fund preK-12 education.

A dedicated tax source is one way to supplement funding for the preK-12 education system. State and local elected officials must be in support of funding education and we must elect candidates who support funding and who do so in the current year and do not delay payment of needed funds.

Economic development must also be examined and reevaluated in local communities to ensure industries are investing in our preK-12 education system.

Perhaps out of the box collaborative efforts could help—philanthropic fundraising, state and national grant opportunities and other efforts could help supplement funding in local communities.

Equitable preK-12 education funding should be available for all children, including rural areas and small school districts. Funding in our state should be prioritized for preK-12 education versus state corrections and public assistance because prioritizing the funding of a robust preK-12 education system will cost less in the long run.

SETTING PRIORITIES AND TAKING ACTION

The state of Arizona should prioritize education for the betterment of all residents. A priority that needs to be addressed is securing a dedicated funding source—one that cannot be swept and used for other purposes, that is protected, and that is not tied to testing. This could be accomplished through legislative action. We should also allow more local control for critical decisions on how to spend funding provided by the state.

We should take actions individually and as a community to honor educators—to lift them up and show them that we value and respect them. These types of actions will allow us to better recruit and retain good teachers.

We all need to take action to raise the consciousness of all Arizonans about the need to adequately and equitably fund preK-12 education

INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions at the Community Town Hall. Some of the ideas shared are set forth below:

I WILL...

- Encourage people to vote for officials who are committed to improving education funding.
- Discuss other funding sources for schools – contact local legislators and educate myself.
- Make sure I attend more events like this and also share everything that was discussed today with as many people as possible.
- Be more involved in community with our elected officials – local and state and promote awareness of the importance of being involved in educational decisions and influences.
- Be more conscious of people that are elected from Cochise county to the state legislature.
- Work to educate elected officials of the results of this Town Hall.

- Regularly contact my state representative and state senators during the legislative session.
- Continue to act in the community to ensure more people are aware of the issues affecting education.
- Reach out to our legislators more.
- Educate people to support education and school funding and to vote for education.
- Become more publically involved in developing polices and network more to actualize this work.
- Promote candidates for office who support education.
- Vote and educate the public.
- Elect individuals who see education as a priority.
- Do better research in casting my ballot for my local and state elected officials.
- Share the message with those who I know about funding issues in Arizona for preK-12 education.
- Apply myself to finding ways: to advocate more as an informed voter; to communicate more; and, to network more with organizations and communities to share awareness of the educational climate and programs that would help our local communities.
- Help to reduce the 16-21-year-old population who is not attending school. In spite of the scarce funding for education, I will do my best to provide them with the skills to go onto higher education or enter the work force.
- Continue to be informed about the education funding issues, situations and processes.
- Be proactive legislatively, making sure that my local state and federal representatives understand the impacts that education funding cause.
- Brainstorm ideas on valuing teachers in Douglas.
- Try to educate people on school funding and the importance of voting.
- Find ways to help inspire my students to seek their passion in life so that they will make the most of their education and seek to be lifelong learners.
- Research candidates specifically to see their views on education funding to help build a culture that celebrates educators.
- Engage in discussions with members of the community about this meeting.
- Do my best to support education funding and see that our lawmakers really care for education and see that they do their work.
- Work with others to promote educators.
- Help to recruit and retain good educators for our community.
- Promote a dinner to show we value teachers.
- Try to educate people on school funding and the importance of voting. I would like to propose an update on how the legislature works, the funding formula and our constitution.

DOUGLAS COMMUNITY TOWN HALL SPONSORS



ARIZONA
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF COCHISE

*Dr. Alfred and
Mrs. Annabelle Wu*



SPONSORS OF THE 110th STATEWIDE ARIZONA TOWN HALL "FUNDING PREK-12 EDUCATION"

PREMIER PARTNER



CATALYST PARTNER



CONSENSUS PARTNER



COLLABORATOR PARTNER



CONTRIBUTOR PARTNERS



SUPPORTER PARTNER

ARIZONA WATER COMPANY

ASSOCIATE PARTNER

HUFFORD HORSTMAN MONGINI
PARNELL & TUCKER PC