

“Funding preK-12 Education”

Community Town Hall Report

Phoenix, AZ – September 28, 2017

FUNDING PREK-12 EDUCATION

Phoenix – South Mountain Community College Community Town Hall Report September 28, 2017

Participants of the September 2017 Phoenix – South Mountain Community College Community Town Hall make the following findings and recommendations. This report reflects the consensus achieved through group discussions by Community Town Hall participants.

ARIZONA’S PREK-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM GOALS

Education should focus on promoting traditional and alternative learning, civic responsibility, critical thinking, as well as, diversity of backgrounds and points of view. Education should prepare our students for diverse futures, including higher education, trade schools, arts, etc. Our education system should help integrate all students and avoid creating “outcasts.” Our children need to learn how interact among diverse people and ideologies to be good global citizens. This goal could be realized by including a required ethic civics class and other classes that emphasize the contributions of our diverse communities to our state. Education should be the great equalizer among our children, creating an equitable playing field across the state. Schools must go beyond traditional education and include such things as health services. Encouragement of diverse learning styles is necessary because children learn differently. Education systems outside of the US might offer models from which Arizona can learn. Including mentors and parents in the process is necessary to foster these goals. Increased funding for education is also a necessary component.

IMPROVING FUNDING FOR ARIZONA’S PREK-12 SCHOOLS

What Legislators can do:

- Testing results should not be a prime factor in determining funding.
- Don’t be scared to propose additional tax increases in order to fund K-12 education.
- Listen to the community, teachers and school administrators about what their true on the ground needs are, rather than pouring money into things the schools do not really need.
- Invest more funds in education as opposed to prisons.
- Focus on equitable distribution of funds across all school districts.
- Share information among legislators to understand the positives/negatives of their respective school districts in order to reach common ground on state funding policy for education.
- Revise the state public school funding formula to account for student income levels at the next legislative session.

SETTING PRIORITIES AND TAKING ACTION

The number one priority needs to be reallocation of tax funds from prisons to schools – particularly given that Arizona is ranked 48th among all states for school funding. Equitable distribution of state education funds across the state is needed. Existing funding formulas do not address existing

needs because they are based upon equal funding, not equitable funding. The formulas need to be reconsidered in order to provide more equitable funding across all schools within the state.

Beyond funding of traditional educational programs, extracurricular activities are a critical component of student development and learning. Funds must be allocated to extracurricular activities as well. Providing incentives to recruit and retain teachers is a critical component of educational funding. Such incentives will make it less burdensome for teachers to pursue a career in K-12 education. Parents also need to take the initiative to better understand how funds are distributed and then how they are used by their child's school district and school. Educating people within the community who do not have children about the importance of educational funding is important to foster support for educational funding goals.

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 Phoenix – South Mountain Community College Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Advocate on behalf of the importance of evaluating and revising our funding priorities for education.
- I will fight for a transparent school funding in Arizona
- Get involved in future Town Halls.
- Commit to spend more personal time finding out what public schools need to survive and subsequently to flourish in Arizona.
- Tell elected officials to increase funding for education and donate more to schools in need.
- Continue to research the issues and use data to put all sides in perspective.
- Commit to spend more personal time finding out what public schools need to survive and subsequently to flourish in Arizona.
- Continue to be involved in my community as a “millennial” and student.
- Contact my legislators to share my opinion and concerns.
- Continue support the Arizona Town Hall through membership and engagement.
- I will attend the Legislative Day on January 25, 2018.
- I will attend vote in my primary.
- Shall the Town Hall recommendations with my office, family, and neighbors
- To let more students at ASU to get involved with the Arizona Town Hall.
- Educate parents about the importance of uniformity themselves and being an active voice for children's education.

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