

LWVAZ LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION ISSUES – 2015

Funding for Public Schools

Both the State and National League positions support the funding of public schools. The LWVAZ states that we **support a funding plan that enhances the equal opportunity of all students**. It lists many of the components in our State laws and funding formula such as transportation, social services and special education. The LWVUS likewise believes that government at the federal level and state level has the responsibility to **monitor and support access to high quality teaching and learning, supported by quality current learning materials and well maintained educational facilities**.

By the withholding of voter endorsed funding over several years, the State of Arizona has not met its responsibilities to its public schools. LWVAZ can support the return of those funds to the funding of public schools and prevent any further erosion of the funding requirements.

The Arizona Legislature has passed several laws that allow general state funds to support private and parochial schools. This is done through vouchers and scholarship organizations. Although the Arizona Constitution does not allow state money to go to parochial schools, and the League has a position of **no public monies for private schools**, the Courts have said that the monies are going to parents and not the schools. The vouchers and scholarship tax credits are still a drain of the state general funds. The Arizona Constitution clearly states that the primary responsibility of the Legislature is to support public education. With the increasing budget deficit and the minimal funding of public education, it becomes clear that Arizona is not in a position to support both public and private schools.

Common Core Standards

The Arizona State Board of Education has approved the Common Core Standards and changed its name to “Arizona’s College and Career Readiness Standards”. They also awarded a contract to the American Institutes for Research to develop a testing system to determine how well students have learned under the new standards. These are K-12 school standards that were developed in conjunction with other states. Because many candidates ran for office in opposition to those “Federally imposed standards”, it is very possible that legislation might be introduced to minimize or delete the approved standards. The LWVUS has a position that states that federal (and state) government should:

- **Provide broad common standards developed by education experts upon which states and local education agencies can build;**
- **Provide a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students how well the students have mastered the criteria.**

I believe that the LWVAZ can lobby in support of the decisions made by the Arizona State Board of Education. We also can support the funding and implementation of the testing program.

Marion Pickens, Chair
Education

League of Women Voters Arizona