

## League of Women Voters Positions Related to Education (Abridged)

### LWVUS

**Position on Federal Role in Public Education**, Consensus in March 2012.

The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12, essential for a strong and sustainable democratic society.

The League believes the role of the federal government should include the following: leadership and vision to promote a quality education for all children; broad common standards developed by educational experts; a suggested curricular structure or framework as a guide to state and local education agencies; a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students how well individual students have mastered criteria and informs districts how well their populations compare to similar others; and a combination of competitive grants and non-competitive funding to states and local school districts to achieve equity.

We also recognize that primary responsibility for public education resides with the states.

The League believes that the federal government should be primarily responsible for funding any programs mandated by the federal government.

The first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. The League believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. The federal government should support parent education and other supportive services such as nutrition and health care for all children and their families.

### LWVAZ

**Position on Education**, *Consensus 1975, 1979; Reviewed 1995; Revised 1997; Concurrence 1999; Restated 2000*

**Public School Finance:** The League of Women Voters of Arizona supports a funding plan for public education that enhances the equal opportunity of all students. Such a plan should provide for the equitable distribution of state funds, including capital funding; establish criteria for a quality education for all students prior to determining the formula for the distribution of monies; recognize the differences in the needs of school districts; equalize the ability of school districts to finance those portions of their budgets for which they are responsible; require governmental entities that establish mandated programs to continue funding for duration of the project; budget for transportation, social services and special education needs separately from base maintenance and operation support; and ensure that all schools using public funds, including Charters, are held fiscally accountable.

**Funding Sources for Public Schools:** The League of Women Voters of Arizona recognizes the inequities of the local school property tax. Therefore, the League supports decreasing reliance on the local school district property tax; additional statewide taxes for support of public school education; continued use of trust land monies, and requiring development impact fees to be paid to local school districts.

LWVAZ also supports the following: school districts retain ability to bond for building or renovation of schools and for capital expenditures and to hold override elections, determined by a simple majority vote; Arizona's Legislature levies taxes for schools by a simple majority vote, with realistic allowances made for inflation; continued centralized collection and distribution of funding to local school districts, enabling distribution of these funds to provide: 1) a certain basic amount of money for each student; 2) financing over and above the basic amount to ensure equal opportunity for each



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child; 3) equal or equivalent maintenance of buildings, equal or equivalent supplies; 4) strong leadership and quality teaching.

**Position on High-Stakes Testing, *Consensus 2005***

The League of Women Voters of Arizona believes that no single "high-stakes" test should be the deciding factor for graduation from high school. Any such test should be used for identifying and alleviating students' academic difficulties in a timely manner, and identifying necessary changes in curriculum, methods, and materials.

**Position on Charter Schools, *Concurrence 1999; Concurrence 2013***

Charter schools, which are public schools that are privately operated, should be held to the same high standards as all Arizona public schools. Teachers must be well qualified and the curriculum must comply with the Arizona State Standards. Test score results and school ranking must be easily available to the public. Academic evaluation of charter and traditional public schools needs to be equitable, with adequate state staff to monitor student achievement.

Charter schools need more initial direction to comply with legal requirements. Schools that close must arrange for an orderly transfer of students and return to the State available money and property that has been given to them from the State's General Fund.

**LWV of Greater Tucson**

**Position on Education Finance, Consensus in 1994 and 1995.**

The League of Women Voters of Greater Tucson supports the following four aspects of funding for public schools:

- A. More sources of funding. All state taxpayers should be responsible for financial support of public schools. There should be less reliance on the residential property tax, but increased use of the income tax, sales tax and lottery money. There should be continued use of land trust monies and increased use of private funds, impact fees on development, and local education taxes.
- B. Continued centralized collection of funds and distribution of those monies to local site-based managed schools.
- C. Basic funding for the classroom. Populations at school sites differ widely; however, basic educational needs are the same and must be met. Money such as that for transportation, social services and special education needs should continue to be figured apart from the base amount. Formulas and budget forms should be the same among districts and schools and should be clarified so that interested citizens, with study, can understand the formulas and forms and be able to comment on them.
- D. No public monies for private schools.



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