



Flagstaff Future Leaders Town Hall Consensus Statement

September 26, 2017

1. **What should be the principle goals for Arizona's preK-12 Education system?** Consider, for example, preparation for careers, preparation for further education after high school, fostering good community members and citizens, and other goals.

Several key goals play a role in students' growth after high school, whether it's working towards careers, pursuing a post-secondary education, or molding good community members for society. We should aspire to send 60% of kids to postsecondary education including university, community college, vocational programs. One way of doing this is by helping students find their passion while still in high school. Vocational courses often generate passion among students and we need to find innovative ways to bring the same level of passion to academic courses. We need to remove the stigma for attending a four-year college, and focus on students achieving life time success.

It's important for the modern day schooling system to think outside the box, add excitement, and provide more than just memorization or teaching to the test. We also should hire more teachers and have smaller classrooms with more one on one time. A new way of learning may stick better than the traditional way of learning, for example, alternative structures for writing essays. We need a better balance between traditional learning and practical applications such as resume writing, balancing a check book, filing taxes, and educating students on the cost of student loan debt would be valuable to students. Vocational courses often generate passion among students and we need to find innovative ways to bring the same level of passion to academic courses.

Early education needs to prep kids for reading and math more efficiently. This is important so they are not left behind going towards the next grade, and it is important to have every student on the same page. Too many kids are moving on to the next grade without proficiencies they should have learned. And while these proficiencies are important, we need to ensure that we do not sacrifice passion-balance is necessary. Another major impediment to preschool is cost. We need to find a way to make preschool more financial accessible to everyone. And we need to make parents aware of the importance of preschool education.

2. **If you could tell Arizona's elected leaders just one thing about funding Arizona's preK-12 schools what would you tell them? What action would you ask them to take?**

There are various responses to what we would tell our state's elected leaders, and actions we would ask them to take, regarding funding Arizona's prek-12 schools. For one, we need to increase funding for public education- \$35 to \$1000 of personal income is not enough. Our elected leaders need to understand that they need to invest in education to ensure Arizona's success. Pay needs to be raised for teachers and we need to encourage recruitment and retention. It is unacceptable to be \$14,000 below the national average for teacher wages. Funding is an issue, as teachers often purchase supplies out of pocket, and some will often hold two jobs. We also need to invest more money into purchasing classroom supplies. Excellent teachers can make a big difference. For example, if a student is not a fan of a subject, a good teacher can help them be more engaged in the subject by making the subject more compelling.

ADVANCING WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

The Arizona Department of Education should change the focus of education away from tests scores toward ensuring students graduate with passion and life success. Ponderosa high school is an excellent model for balancing practical and academic education. Ponderosa also demonstrates the importance of small classrooms. It needs to be understood that standardized tests are often counterproductive to educating students. Often, students do not take the standardized tests seriously since they have no effect on their own performance evaluation. On that note, money spent on standardized testing should go into the classroom.

We should consider student surveys for teacher performance reviews making teachers more accountable for how they teach. We need to make teaching more attractive so it can become a more competitive field, and it can potentially bring out more hardworking and dedicated teachers that have a love for their career and students. We need to recognize that while no one goes into teaching for the money, our teachers need to be paid a higher salary to ensure that the best and most passionate educators go into teaching.

Student commitments following the Flagstaff Future Leaders Town Hall

I will become an advocate of enthusiasm to fellow students to become involved, excited about learning and providing their own input to becoming and doing what they want.

I will push for a salary raise for my teachers, cut funding for useless standardized testing and create more post-secondary preparation programs.

I will advocate to other students to show up and stand up like we did today to have a say in our education and school community.

I will encourage my peers and younger students to not worry so much about a random math exam but rather find their passion in life.

I will work harder every day to become more informed and make sure my voice is heard.

I will make sure to raise awareness of our state funding situation.

I will talk to my teachers about making students more passionate about learning and the educational environment, whether that be through hands on activities or other ways of teaching to instill that passion.

I will encourage and allow myself to better myself and speak when needed to help better myself.

I will work on wanting to go to school and finding my passion. I will work on educating myself and others about the education system in Arizona and the United States as a whole and how we as citizens can help to fix it.

I will make the world better than it was before and won't be alone in doing so. I will want to study more and succeed in things that I want to do more of in life.

I will make sure that my peers are more aware of what is going on with our education and make sure I voice my opinion more about my educational experience.

I will inspire people to pursue other career options other than attending a university. Tell people that within our society most change revolves around the funding for that needed change. Therefore if you want to see a change, you must consider the funding behind what you want to see.

I will influence individuals who are younger than me. I want younger individual to want to go to school and get involved in more hands-on activities. Let younger ones know that smaller schools are better.

I will be more enthusiastic about school and encourage my peers to do so as well, or even more enthusiastic than they may already be.

I will encourage teachers, students, and school staff to invest in ending their passion and pursuing things that will be fulfilling to our future society.

I will continue to fight for my teachers pay raise, something they deserve.

I will work toward informing my friends, school and community of these issues while discussing and debating it. I want to make an impact.

I will help with the attitude of school to help the passion of kids wanting to gain an education and grow.

I will encourage everyone to go follow their dreams of success no matter what. Everything is possible with education.

Thank you to our future leaders who represented the following high schools:

- BASIS
- Coconino High School
- Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy
- Flagstaff High School
- Northland Preparatory Academy
- Ponderosa High School
- Summit High School

Paul Bearchell, Facilitator, Coconino Community College – Phi Beta Kappa

Brandi Brown, Recorder, Coconino Community College – Phi Beta Kappa