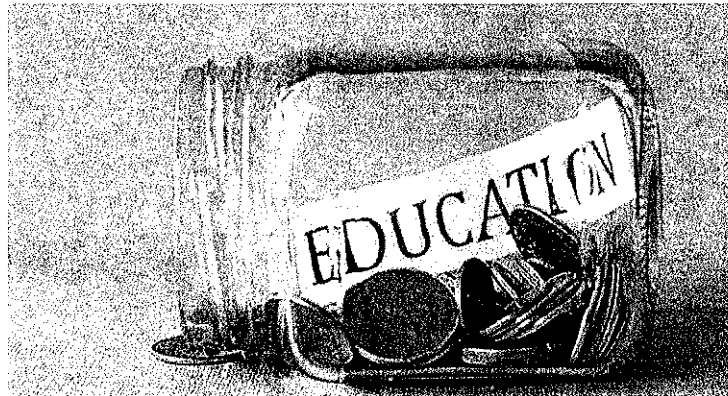


## Arizona needs to reinvest in public education

By: Guest Opinion June 16, 2016 , 3:49 pm



While we are pleased that, as a result of the Prop. 123 election, teachers and students across Arizona will see an increase in public school funds, there is a reason that Governor Ducey and Prop 123 supporters described the measure as a "good first step." Prop. 123 settles a lawsuit over inflation funding and provides only 18 percent of the funding that has been cut from Arizona public education since 2008. Most Arizona voters clearly understand that. Based on exit polling conducted during the special election, a large majority of both YES and NO voters believe that Arizona public schools need more funding to fill in the gaps.



Christine Marsh

It is up to voters and elected leaders to join together to make sure that the meaningful next steps. Arizona parents, teachers, school board members and others have formed a coalition called *AZ Schools Now* with specific public education goals for lawmakers as we move forward to take next steps to securing a long-term funding solution for public schools.

Legislators need to live up to their campaign promises to strengthen public education and make steady progress to increase funding each year for public education to fill the gaps created by previous budget cuts. Lawmakers must commit to stop expanding tax cuts, tax credits and school vouchers. These revenue-draining practices undermine the confidence of the public and have made it virtually impossible to sufficiently invest in our schools.

Additional investment is needed in three key areas to fuel student success.



Beth Simek

First, lawmakers must appropriate additional funding for teacher compensation and professional support. The most important thing we can do to achieve better academic results is to ensure there is a quality teacher in every classroom. Arizona has a teacher shortage crisis. Lack of mentoring and insufficient support are top reasons teachers leave the profession, and with 25 percent of our state's teachers scheduled to retire within the next three years, recruiting and retaining teachers will be crucial.

Second, teachers need up-to-date tools to excel, including classroom supplies and up-to-date textbooks and technology. Students can't learn up to their potential in overcrowded classrooms without enough books or desks.

Third, Arizona schools have not received the funding they need to keep-up with building maintenance and over a decade. Our schools are crumbling around us. Learning is disrupted when school AC units break down.

hot day or classrooms are flooded when pipes break. These types of incidents will continue to happen in Arizona schools unless we reinvest in school facilities.



Jennifer Johnson

We can no longer continue to cut taxes each year without finding long-term funding for education. Voters expect stronger support of public schools, which is why the legislative elections this August and November are so important. We need legislators who will make education funding a top priority.

*Christine Marsh of Chaparral High School is 2016 Arizona Teacher of the Year. Beth Si president-elect of the Arizona PTA. Dr. Jennifer Johnson is executive director of Support Schools Az. All are members of AZ Schools Now.*

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### 3 COMMENTS

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**Steve Lowen**

June 16, 2016 , 5:05 pm at 5:05 pm

Interesting that the 'Special Interests,' came, shamelessly, right back to the feeding bowl immediately; they decimated a 'sacrosanct' State Fund. The comments within the article show a tone-deaf reaction. Taxpayers DO fund education, according to a formula that WILL allow education to take place. What we buy into is the overpaid administrators (Scottsdale Supt. \$245,000 + copious prerequisites), consultants, dicey meetings, seminars, minions in abundance, hacks doing PR, ad nauseum. Perhaps, our fundraisers (teachers?) should try teaching, motivating, and WE will be pleased to pay for performance.



**Bob Smith**

June 17, 2016 , 7:21 am at 7:21 am

I don't think Steve understands 123 really buys the everyday classroom teacher so I'll explain it to you. I will get starting next year a whopping 1400 \$ raise.. Yay me . Except my insurance premiums went up. I will do the math. Don't think for a second if I can find a better job I will because 35k is no longer appealing. hey at least the AC in our building is finally going to get fixed after 5 years of quick patches and 95 deg teaching conditions ..



**Steve Lowen**

June 17, 2016 , 11:34 am at 11:34 am

'Bob..' Your Comment, responding to mine, is illiterate and confused. If in fact you are a teacher I pity the students you come in contact with.