Arizona Public Education Champions Call on Lawmakers to Take Real Action on Education Funding in 2019

(Phoenix, AZ) – Just one working day prior to the start of the 54th Legislature, champions for public education called on Governor Ducey and the new legislature to take action on school funding this legislative session.

The group – representing parents, teachers, faith leaders and community partners – held a news conference at the state capitol this morning, releasing a list of Principles for Next Steps in Public Education Investments, emphasizing that public policymakers have a fresh opportunity to adopt new, dedicated funding to close the gap on public education shortfalls. Budget decisions over the past decade have left many Arizona public school students without the teachers, textbooks, technology, and safe facilities they need to succeed.

“Investment in our workforce and our next generation matters to people all across Arizona, people from all faiths, walks of life, and political parties,” said Jeff Procter-Murphy, Lead Pastor at the Dayspring United Methodist Church in Tempe. “We urge a bipartisan dialogue to create a plan for dedicated investments with a combination of revenues that together meet our common goals.”

Advocates are calling on lawmakers to provide more than $1 billion in education funding annually to address the ongoing teacher shortage and to reach the shared P-20 education goals in the Education Progress Meter.

Joe Thomas, President of the Arizona Education Association, noted that the need for increased investment remains urgent and lawmakers have the opportunity to make transformational changes for our next generation. “After the down payment on teacher pay in this year’s state budget, the gaps in classroom resources remain too large. As a result, nearly 1,700 classrooms are still missing a permanent teacher, including more than 900 classrooms with teachers who left their position since this school year began.”

“There are a lot of good options to created dedicated sustainable funding to strengthen our state and our future”, said Dana Wolfe Naimark, President and CEO of Children’s Action Alliance. “We look forward to working with lawmakers and partners to create a plan following these principles that we can all be proud of.”

A high quality video can be downloaded or viewed here.