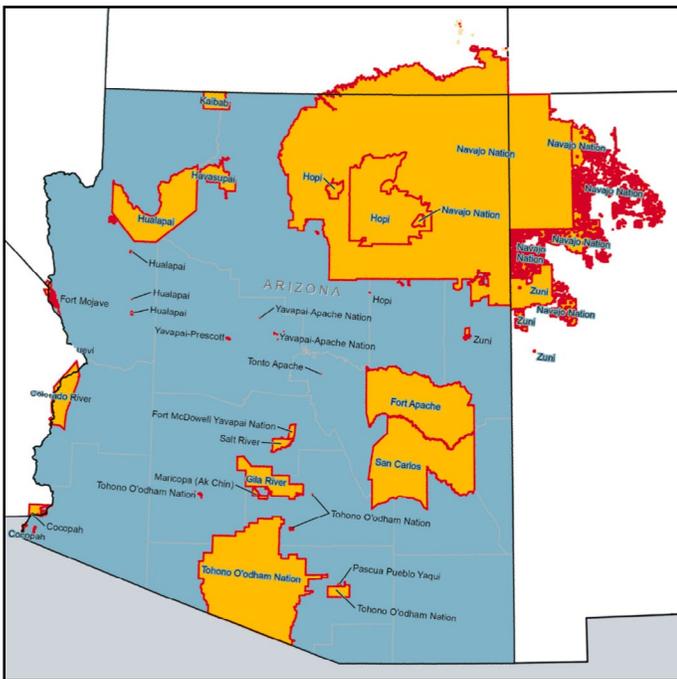


Senate Education Committee Set to Push Through ESA Voucher Expansion Tuesday

This is not a drill! This Tuesday, February 4th at 2 PM, the Senate Education Committee will consider ESA voucher expansion bill SB1224, which aims to expand ESA vouchers [across state lines](#). It's up to YOU to call, email, use Request to Speak, and especially to [come to the committee hearing in person](#) to show your opposition to this misguided, detrimental bill.



SB1224 would force Arizona taxpayers to fund private schools 120 miles outside state borders, nearly to Albuquerque, NM to the east and San Bernardino County, CA to the west. If this major overreach is passed, Arizona would be the only state in the nation using state funds to pay for other states' private, religious schooling.

The costs of this massive expansion are not known. We have no information on how much subsidizing these California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah private schools would cost the state General Fund. The existing ESA voucher program already drains more than [\\$110 million per year](#) in state funding directly from Arizona's public schools.

Despite the existing ESA voucher program's [lax accountability](#) and [rampant misspending](#), SB1224 intentionally contains no additional accountability, management or oversight measures and no outcome-based testing or reporting requirements. Arizona would gain no insight into curriculum, quality or student outcomes.

Its backers claim it's just a narrow fix for a few Indigenous families with nowhere else to turn, yet the entire Arizona Indigenous Caucus - including the representatives of the Navajo Nation - are vehemently opposed. They agree that it's shameful some Arizona lawmakers would champion sending Arizona tax dollars out of state when Arizona ranks at the bottom



The Most Effective Ways to Reach Out to AZ Legislators



Join us at sosarizona.org
or on [Facebook!](#)

Capitol in your SOS red and show lawmakers how strongly we oppose a bill that turns its back on Arizona to benefit other states. Find driving and parking directions [here](#).

nationwide for teacher pay (49th), per-student investment (46th), teacher retention (50th) and classroom overcrowding (49th). No Arizona taxpayer should have to fund private schools in other states while Arizona schools languish in chronic underfunding. No Arizona student should have to leave the state to get a great education, and no Arizona tax dollars should fund private schools other states when 95% of families choose schools in their local community.

Last month, Senate leadership added another pro-privatization lawmaker to the Education Committee, bolstering the odds that SB1224 will pass through committee on Tuesday. Nevertheless, these committee hearings are the public's ONLY opportunity to voice opposition, so plan to come to the

Calls to Action!

- [Come to the committee hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 2 PM](#). Wear your SOS red!
- Use **Request to Speak** to say NO to SB1224, and leave your respectful comments for the committee
- **Contact Senate President Karen Fann** (602-926-5300 or KFann@AZLeg.gov) and ask her to stop the bill's progress
- **Contact your senator** and ask them to oppose SB1224
- Share [SOSAZ messaging](#) with friends and family on email and social media



ALL CALL



**SB1224 will be heard in
Senate Education Committee**

**Tues, Feb 4th, 2PM
Senate Hearing Room 1**



Oppose SB1224



**out of state ESA voucher
expansion to NM, CO, UT, NV & CA**

☎ Call Sen. Sylvia Allen
(602)926-5409

✉ Email SAllen@AZLeg.gov

☎ Call Pres. Karen Fann
(602)926-5300

✉ Email KFann@AZLeg.gov

**Email, call your local senator and
RTS to speak AGAINST SB1224**



Help Support Our Work:

Donate to Save Our Schools Arizona



Bills we're watching:

SB 1048



Schools; Employees; Employment; Discipline

Tracks school personnel, keeps disciplined staff from being rehired

Sen. Kate Brophy McGee

This bill would develop a system under which the Arizona Department of Education could investigate uncertified educators, both district and charter, and ban them from being rehired at other publicly-funded schools for at least 5 years. Fewer than 0.08% of Arizona teachers each year currently fall into this category, but there [now exists no mechanism](#) to track non-certificated school personnel and keep them from being rehired. About 40% of teachers in charter schools are not certified. A good first step toward keeping students safer. Awaiting a Senate floor vote.

SB 1059



TPT; Use tax; Education

Sets up new revenue distributions for education, conditional on ballot passage of SCR1002 in November

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would give schools more flexibility in how they spend the money given to them through the Classroom Site Fund. Currently schools are limited to spending it on Maintenance & Operations. The bill would allow funding to go toward: teacher compensation; educational interventions; voluntary full-day K; student support services; tutoring; character education; school safety; CTE; public accountability compliance; and transportation. 75% of the funding would go to the Classroom Site Fund (the first \$86M of that to ADE for basic state aid); 20% to Arizona Board of Regents to subsidize in-state tuition (the first \$78M of that to universities' Technology and Research Initiative Fund with a 2% escalator for inflation starting in FY 2023); and 5% to community colleges based on their full-time student enrollment (the first \$1.5M going to their trade and workforce development programs). Awaiting a Senate floor vote. MONITORING.

SB 1060



Special Education; Group B Weights

Allows districts to apply for grants for ultra high cost students

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would allow school districts to request extra funding from the Dept. of Ed.'s Extraordinary Special Education Needs Fund for students whose education costs more than 3 times the statewide per-pupil funding average. The bill also contains modest increases for a few special education *(continued to the right)*

weights: Speech Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Self-Contained Severe Intellectual Disability. It's far from enough, but a good start toward better funding for students with special needs, the vast majority of whom choose public schools. Awaiting a Senate floor vote.

SB 1193



Support

Office of Indian Education; Assistance Funds the Office of Indian Education

Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai

This bill would appropriate \$2 million from state lottery funding for the Office of Indian Education to hire 5 full-time employees. Unlike SB1224, this bill offers actual help to thousands of Native American students all over the state as this office is tasked with meeting the educational and cultural needs of Native students, but has never had state funding. It currently employs one person (using federal dollars) to support 22 tribes and 55,572 students. Arizona's Native American schools and students are desperately under-resourced, with students [falling far behind](#) the rest of the nation in test scores, graduation rates and school resources. Teen suicide on the Navajo reservation is 4 times higher than the [already high rate](#) in Arizona overall. Assigned to Senate Higher Education and Workforce Development; not yet on an agenda.

SB 1215



Support

Teachers academy; Counselors; Social Workers Expands AZ Teachers Academy tuition assistance for counselors and social workers who commit to work in AZ schools

Sen. Sean Bowie

Having enough counselors to know and care for the students at a school is critical to student wellbeing and safety and supports their ability to learn. Arizona has the [highest student-to-counselor ratio](#) in the nation, 924 to 1. (The American School Counselor Association [recommends](#) a ratio of 250 to 1.) Tuition assistance is debt relief for potential students and would make a real difference in alleviating Arizona's counselor shortage. Scheduled for Senate Higher Education and Workforce Development, Monday.

SB 1224



Oppose

Empowerment scholarships; Qualified schools; reservations Expands ESA vouchers across state lines

Sen. Sylvia Allen

Would expand ESA vouchers 120 miles [across state lines](#), nearly to Albuquerque, NM to the east and San Bernardino County, CA to the west. This would make Arizona the only state in the nation using taxpayer funds to pay for private religious schools *(continued to the right)*

RTS

CLICK HERE

to have your voice heard through the Arizona Legislature's Request to Speak system.



in other states. The costs of this expansion are not known. The existing ESA voucher program already drains more than [\\$110 million per year](#) in state funding directly from Arizona's public schools, and is rife with [accountability](#) and [misspending](#) issues. No Arizona student should have to leave the state to get a great education, and Arizona tax dollars should remain in Arizona.

SB 1234



Support

Additional assistance; Restoration Accelerates DAA restoration for FY2020-21

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would invest \$135 million of the state's current budget surplus toward restoring [District and Charter Additional Assistance](#), which was severely cut during the last recession and still not fully restored. DAA and CAA are flexible funding for district and charter schools that can be used for building improvements, textbooks, classroom materials and technology, as well as to supplement staff salaries. With schools statewide in crisis, the money can't come soon enough. Lack of funding to properly maintain and replace equipment and infrastructure [may ultimately cost the state more](#) than if schools had been adequately funded all along. Scheduled for Senate Appropriations Committee, Tuesday.

SB 1357



Oppose

Schools; Access; Instructional materials; Review Limit individualized support and responsive teaching in district and charter schools

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would add significant bureaucracy by requiring all district and charter books, instructional aides, mandatory and optional reading materials to be pre-approved the year before school starts, even before teachers meet their students. It would eliminate teachers' ability to work with parents and specialists to assist struggling students, making it illegal for district and charter teachers to give students individually-tailored support, including gifted students and special needs students. With responsive, individualized instruction often cited as a reason parents support "school choice," this bill suggests the 95% of Arizona students in district and charter schools don't warrant the same responsive teaching as their private school peers. Scheduled for Senate Education Committee, Tuesday

SCR 1002



Monitor

Education; TPT; Use Tax Increases sales tax funding for education by 0.4¢

Sen. Kate Brophy McGee

This bill would [ask voters to increase the Prop 301 sales tax](#) permanently from its current 0.6¢ to a full penny. Such a move would voter-protect the funding and add [\\$400 million a year in new money](#) for education. However, the dollar amount is far from enough to address our school funding *(continued to the right)*

crisis, and the sales tax increase [would vault Arizona](#) to one of the highest rates in the nation. Arizona currently has a billion-dollar budget surplus, with another billion in the Rainy Day Fund. Lawmakers have the power to solve our classroom crisis with the stroke of a pen. SOSAZ would like to see funding sources beyond just sales tax, a full restoration of [funding cuts](#), and bipartisan collaboration toward solving our state's education funding crisis. Awaiting a Senate floor vote.



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