



Candidate Survey – David Garcia
Candidate for Governor

1. School Counselors support students in their overall development in the areas of college and career readiness, social/emotional learning and academic success. High ratios impede our efforts to support our students properly. **If elected, how would you support legislation to reduce our 903:1 ratio down to the nationally recommended level of 250:1?**

We need to deal with Arizona's shameful ratio of guidance counselors to students. The best way to do that is to fully fund Arizona's public education system. My campaign has been relentlessly focused on education because it represents half of the state budget, and because our schools are in crisis. My Real Investment in Arizona Schools plan will address the public education crisis that Doug Ducey has allowed to worsen, and when elected, we will end the push toward privatization. My plan calls for enacting real and fair funding that will allow schools to hire new counselors and bring the ratio to 250:1. By not fully funding our education system, we are jeopardizing Arizona's economic future, and the future of every child.

2. Students' unmet mental health needs pose barriers to learning and development. School Counselors are uniquely qualified to provide education, prevention, intervention, and referral services to students and their families. Some school districts label unqualified staff as "academic advisers" or "staff on assignment" in lieu of a school counselor. This is not an acceptable role. School Counselors are required to have a minimum of master's degree. **How do you view the role of a school counselor in our education system?**

This is unfortunately consistent with Governor Ducey's drive to eliminate professional standards in public schools. It is outrageous and reckless, particularly because school counselors are pivotal to the well being of students. Our school counselors MUST meet high professional standards. My respect for the work done by counselors, social workers, and other key support staff is one of the reasons I have been endorsed by the National Association of Social Workers, and why I would be so proud to win this race with your support.

3. School Counselors many times are left out of base salary raises, such as Prop 301, Prop 123, 1% and 20% bonuses, performance pay, and any other future-based pay performance. AzSCA continues to support the demands for equitable salaries, sustainable funding, and proper role designation. **How do you view school counselors as part of future salary compensation?**

Salary increases are a sign of basic respect for work done and are needed simply to return all school employees to a fair and reasonable level. This is one of the reasons I strongly supported the InvestinEd initiative and will work to get legislation passed that addresses education funding. InvestinED provided a dedicated funding source not just for teacher pay increases, but also for other professionals who are critical to ensuring students health and success.

4. It is critical that school counselor voices are heard as we are uniquely qualified to provide education, prevention, intervention, and referral services to students and their families. It is common practice that school counselors are left unheard and left out at the negotiating table with policymakers when discussing [topic]. **If elected, what are some of your ideas to change this?**

Too much of education policy is created by people outside of public education and then brought to educators and support professionals as a done deal. As a lifelong educator, a professor of education at ASU, and former Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction, I strongly believe education professionals--including school counselors--know what policies work best and will ensure they are at the table when policy is created.

5. The American School Counselors Association have coordinated advocacy efforts with lawmakers at the national level. This engagement has led to the introduction of the [Elementary and Secondary School Counselors Act](#), which seeks to provide dedicated funding to states for the purposes of lowering the staffing ratios for school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers. **Which steps do you believe elected officials can take locally in Arizona to support passage and implementation of this Act?**

This is a clear example of where having a governor that shares your goals and values your profession can make a difference. The Elementary and Secondary School Counselors Act is important legislation and, as governor, I will let our state's Congressional delegation know that it is a priority for Arizona. If there is an opportunity for me to provide input to Congress, I will do so. And I will also work with the state's lobbyist in Washington, DC, to make sure the issue gets attention and follow-through on the Hill.