



Candidate Survey – Kathy Hoffman
Candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction

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?**

As State Superintendent, I will continue to be an outspoken voice that supports hiring more counselors for our schools. I plan to lobby our legislature to hire more highly qualified counselors and move our ratio closer to the national average. It is critical for our students to have access to mental health and career development services in the schools. I also will work with school districts, education leaders, and families across Arizona to encourage support for policies that place those counselors in our public schools.

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?**

I have been alarmed by these recent trends and recognize that we are diminishing the quality of services for students when we lower the standards. This issue stems from years of under-funding our schools and the resulting teacher shortage. Children in Arizona deserve the highest quality of services from educators, including counselors, in our schools. To address this issue, we must invest in public education and ensure that all of our educators have competitive pay.

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?**

As a certified speech-language pathologist, I can relate to this concern. I believe that support staff and specialists within our schools should be valued with equitable salaries and raises. The Department of Education should recognize that school counselors are invaluable educators, not simply administrators.

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?**

As State Superintendent, I plan to bring diverse voices in public education to the table to discuss potential policies. I have already begun building relationships with educational leaders and organizations throughout Arizona including AzSCA. In order to address the nuances of school counseling policies, I commit to working with AzSCA and including school counselors in all relevant discussions.

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?**

Considering the staggering high student to counselor ratio, Arizona should take the lead and create a dedicated revenue source for student services including counselors and social workers. We need to take immediate steps to reduce the ratio instead of waiting on action from the federal government. When elected, I can demonstrate my support for the Elementary and Secondary School Counselors Act by making public comments and speaking with our congressmen/women.