



Election 2018  
School Board Candidate Survey  
Mesa Unified

**Ben Smith**  
Mesa Unified School District

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Which of the following art forms do you have personal experience (training and/or participation) in?  
(Check all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Instrumental Music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vocal Music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Visual Arts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Theatre
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photography
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative Writing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Film

In which arts activities have your children participated in school? (Check all that apply)



Music



Theatre



Visual Arts



Dance

I have no children.

Other (please specify)

Until 2017, the Arizona Administrative Code required the teaching of music and visual arts in Arizona K-8 schools. Current policy now requires schools offer two of five artistic disciplines (music, theatre, dance, visual arts and media arts). According to the 2018 Arizona Arts Data Project (based on 2015-16 enrollment), under the previous requirement, only 65 percent of Arizona K-8 students had access to music and arts.

As a school board member, would you support a district policy that requires that all K-8 students in your district have access to at least two of the five disciplines, per the new state administrative code?

Yes

I firmly believe that the arts enhances the learning environment. leads to creative thinking, and should be included in all of our schools.

As member of the school board, will you support district-level policies that insure your district schools properly report all data to the Arizona Department of Education about arts education course offerings and student enrollment so that equity and access to arts education can be evaluated and parents are aware of whether their children are receiving a quality arts education?

Yes

I believe parents should be able to compare the services being offered to their kids with other schools and districts to ensure that they are getting the best of what is available for their kids. If services are being offered to kids in another school that they want for their kids, it could drive the conversation to enhance programs.

Would you support a comprehensive district-wide assessment of the degree to which arts education is being offered in your schools, including enrollment, instructional minutes, teacher qualifications, resources and materials, and adequacy of student assessments?

Yes

Creating a district-wide assessment would allow the Board to view services and programs offered to ensure equity among the children who attend.

If elected, will you promote a policy of including arts education stakeholders in the annual required district needs assessment with arts educators appropriately represented on planning teams, etc.?

Yes

I benefited from the arts, and feel that an advocate's voice would add value in an annual needs assessment discussion.

The state A-F Report card for K-8 schools does not currently give a school ANY credit for student achievement in arts education because students often are not evaluated by grades, or “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” measurements. If valid assessments existed, the State Board of Education likely would give credit for student achievement in arts, thereby creating a greater incentive for quality arts education.

As a member of the school board will you promote the adoption of a process to develop valid student assessments of achievement in arts education, based on the Arizona Arts Education Standards?

Yes

While I support this, I believe it would require some discussion. As the saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". The tricky part of grade-level evaluations would be a welcomed discussion.

Currently, the 9-12 A-F school report card only gives credit for student achievement in AP Arts Classes (as part of the College and Career Ready point formula). However, Arizona’s arts standards are sequential with increasing conceptual learning and proficiency to either the junior or senior level. Would you advocate the expansion of the College and Career Ready point formula to include credit for successful completion of study in an arts discipline (e.g., visual arts, theatre, music) to the senior level as is done for other academic and CTE courses?

Yes

The Arts can become a career, and in many cases is a student's college major. If it's done at the collegiate level, it can be done at the High School level.

Arts Education advocates are working to develop a Fine Arts Seal -- similar to the Civics and Biliteracy Seals-- to be affixed to the diplomas and noted in transcripts of graduating students with advanced achievement in high school Fine Arts.

If the state adopts the Fine Arts Seal, will you support the adoption of the seal in your school district?

Yes

I would view this as a point of pride, and absolutely support this!

Please take this opportunity to provide any additional comments about your views on arts education in our K-12 schools, or any other education issue you consider a priority as you seek a position on your district school board.

I am an artist, and a product of public education. As a teenager, my drawings were my release from the adolescent stress that came with High School. It helped to form who I am, and I support the right for every student to have a similar outlet.