

It's Time to Start Paying Attention

By Kathleen Rahn, NCSP, AASP Child & Family Advocacy Chair

This has been a busy and eventful legislative session in Arizona. This article reviews some of the bills most likely to impact education and children in our state. This week Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law **Senate Bill 1070**. According to the Arizona Republic (April 25, 2010), "The controversial measure criminalizes the presence of undocumented immigrants and requires local police to enforce federal immigration law." You can read Senate Bill 1070 on the website for the Arizona Legislature www.azleg.gov/ to learn more about the law.

As a matter of fact, all AASP members are encouraged to visit the website of the Arizona Legislature www.azleg.gov/ and find the contact information for your Legislative District's members of the Arizona House of Representatives and the Arizona Senate. It's easy to contact your Representatives and Senator using the link on the home page titled "How Do I Find or Contact My Legislators?" All 90 seats in the Arizona Legislature are to be voted on in the November 2010 elections.

As you are probably aware, there is a **Special Election on May 18, 2010 for Proposition 100**. This will increase the state sales tax by one cent per dollar for three years. The Ballot Proposition Guide: Publicity Pamphlet & Sample Ballot issued by Ken Bennett, Secretary of State, was mailed to every household with a registered voter. It contains very valuable information and I encourage everyone to read the comments of those "For" and "Against" this measure.

There are some organizations that are sharing information with the community about the devastating cuts to education (on top of what we have already witnessed) if Proposition 100 does not pass. Here are a few of the websites that provide great reference materials and let you know how to become involved:

www.yeson100.com/ ; and Arizona Education Association www.arizonaaea.org/

www.expectmoreaz.org/ and Arizona School Boards Association www.azsba.org/

The Arizona Legislative Session is not over and there are other bills that can have a profound effect on Arizona's future under consideration. One of them **HB 2732** establishes competency requirements for the promotion of pupils from third grade and creates the Task Force on Reading Assessment. This bill has "A requirement that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the AIMS test, or successor test that demonstrates that the pupil is reading far below the third grade level." There are exemptions for children with disabilities and limited English proficient students. This Bill can be found on www.azleg.gov; there is a less than 3 page fact sheet to explain the bill. HB 2732 has already passed the Arizona House but has not yet passed the Arizona Senate.

School psychologists are aware of the research questioning the effectiveness of grade retention and high stakes testing. NASP has Position Papers on both subjects and the links are listed below. School psychologists are encouraged to review these documents and contact legislators with the vital information contained in these documents.

Grade Retention & Social Promotion

http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/StudentGradeRetention.pdf

High Stakes Testing

http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/Large-ScaleAssessment.pdf

I am going to be preparing a letter for my State Senator sharing information about the research base on retention and I hope you will do the same. Please contact me if you want more information or want to join the Child & Family Advocacy Committee members in contacting State Legislators. Please contact me at kprahn@cox.net .