




Arizona Democrats LD 8 Monthly Meeting

 April 8, 2025

 Meeting called to order at 6:17 p.m.

 **Attendance:** 45 members in-person, 9 members on Zoom, 5 guest speakers (Tempe Elementary, Save Our Schools, and CD1 Candidates)

Meeting Business

Approval of March Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes made by Colleen Pope, seconded by Jeanne. Motion passed.

Chair's Report:

Chair Steven Jackson provided updates on candidate vetting, fundraising, and community engagement. He emphasized increased scrutiny of political candidates, particularly in Scottsdale and Tempe, referencing concerns around a past candidate's affiliations. The district is working to ensure all candidates are thoroughly vetted and noted the option for a no-confidence vote under the bylaws. Additional updates included:

- A \$2,500 annual grant application was submitted to Contest Every Race.
- The treasurer election will be held next month, with proper notice forthcoming.
- Social events include meetings in South Scottsdale, Tempe (April 23), and efforts to expand into Phoenix and Mesa.

Treasurer's Report:

- Current balance: \$8,000 (up from \$7,100 previous month)
- Recurring donors: 33 (up from 32)

Precinct Committee (PC) Development:

- Kendra reported onboarding scheduled for Monday, April 14, led by Deborah Nardoizzi.
 - PC status: 71 elected, ~100 total, with over 30 appointed.
 - Reminder: Re-election for PCs will be held Jan–Feb 2026. Elected PCs hold more privileges than appointed.
-

TD3 Board President Alison Ewers' - Current Challenges and Innovations at Tempe Elementary School District (TD3):

- **Challenges:**

- Declining birth rate has reduced enrollment from 12,000 to under 10,000 students over the past five years.
- High housing prices in Tempe are deterring young families from moving into the district.

- **Innovative Programs:**

- Launching a **zero-to-five early learning center** to support daycare and kindergarten readiness.
- Expanding a **self-contained gifted program** at ASPIRE to reduce the outflow of students to other districts.

- o Students to other districts.
- o Developing an **Innovation Campus at Fees School**, focused on career identity with student-driven curriculum, modeled after EVIT, offering exposure to trades and career pathways.

- **Sustainability Efforts:**

- o Installing **solar panels over playgrounds and parking areas**, funded by grants and bonds.
- o Sustainability upgrades projected to save **\$15.3 million** over their lifecycle, reinvested back into classroom

Ewers concluded with a call for continued community engagement and support, emphasizing TD3's commitment to creating relevant, high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

Save Our Schools (SOS) Education Roadshow:

- **Overview:** Save Our Schools (SOS) is a grassroots, 20,000+ member organization dedicated to protecting and strengthening Arizona's public education system.
- **Core Message:** Public schools offer the best return on investment for Arizona's future, yet they are under systematic attack through a "privatization playbook."
- **Privatization Tactics:**
 - o Discredit public schools and educators using misinformation.
 - o Defund public schools and redirect funds via vouchers under the illusion of "school choice."
 - o Dismantle the public education system by starving it of resources.
- **Crisis Stats:**
 - o Arizona ranks 49th in per-pupil funding, has the 2nd most crowded classrooms
 - o Bottom-five states for teacher salaries, 2nd worst student-to-counselor ratio

- o \$3 billion in deferred maintenance.

- **Voucher Concerns:**
 - o 1 in 10 K–12 dollars is diverted to vouchers, costing the state over \$600 million.
 - o Many voucher recipients were never enrolled in public school—76.9% in LD8—creating unbudgeted expenses.
 - o Benefits primarily flow to higher-income households, undermining equity.
- **Call to Action:**
 - o Join local Community Action Teams.
 - o Participate in voter registration and outreach.
 - o Support pro-public education candidates.
 - o Host or attend future SOS roadshows.

Legislator Updates

Rep. Janeen Connelly

- Only 2 of 1803 bills have been signed this session, and she's actively working on complex housing legislation involving city permitting and local planning codes.
- All short-term rental (STR) bills failed to advance, prompting her to form a bipartisan caucus to address the issue, especially in Tempe and South Scottsdale.
- She remains optimistic and committed to finding collaborative, bipartisan solutions despite legislative challenges.

Rep. Brian Garcia

- He highlighted the conclusion of his committee work, noting that he had attended 36 committee meetings and reviewed over 275 bills, many of which were now being debated on the floor.
 - Garcia expressed his opposition to anti-immigrant bills, sharing a personal story to underscore the negative impacts such legislation could have on communities.
 - He also discussed ongoing legislative efforts, including an Amber Alert expansion for missing Indigenous people and advocacy against bills targeting higher education courses on sensitive historical topics, while emphasizing his fight against harmful actions toward disabled individuals.
-

Other Speakers:

- Janet Hamlin on behalf of Tempe City Councilmember Arlene Chin
- CD1 Candidate Amish Shah

