



Parents Defending Education Action
4532 Cherry Hill Rd.
Suite 119
Arlington, VA 22207

State Superintendent Tom Horne
The Arizona Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Superintendent Horne:

Parents Defending Education Action is a nonpartisan nonprofit working to eliminate partisan politics from the classroom. As such, we work with policymakers at the state and federal level to create and pass policies that protect students from divisive race and gender ideology.

We are aware that the Arizona Department of Education launched the Empower Hotline last week, whereby concerned Arizona residents can submit reports of classroom politicization. You correctly noted that activist teachers are willing to defy state law to promote such ideas. Similarly, our partner organization, Parents Defending Education, has documented several concerning [incidents](#) of race and gender ideology infiltrating Arizona classrooms.

Such cases speak to the importance of parental involvement in education. However, PDE Action writes today to respectfully share our concerns with directing comments to a hotline staffed by the Arizona Department of Education.

First and foremost, our concern is protecting children and families. Any incident report parents share on the hotline may be subject to a public records request. Activists seeking to push an agenda on our children could use a public records search to harass parents and community members who oppose race and gender ideology in schools.

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin launched a similar reporting hotline last summer. Though well-intended, the hotline became bogged down with concerns and comments unrelated to its original purpose. For example, teachers used the hotline to share glowing reviews of their compatriots, as *Insider reported*. The hotline was shut down just months later. We fear your hotline could face similar scrutiny and fizzle out without having the long-lasting, well-intentioned result you envisioned.

There are other ways the Arizona Department of Education can seek input from the public and ensure students are receiving a rigorous, depoliticized education. The Arizona Department of Education should halt promotion of [social emotional learning](#) or [policies that exclude parents from a child's decision](#) to live as the opposite sex at school. Additionally, the department should enforce existing state laws covering parental rights in education, educational transparency and bans on divisive concepts. Finally, protect parents' first amendment rights to speak up at their local school board meetings.

We share your concerns regarding classroom instruction and sincerely appreciate your willingness to provide residents an opportunity to share their concerns with you. Unfortunately, over the past three years, we've repeatedly seen parents and stakeholders shut out from vital discussions about the wellbeing and education of their children. PDE Action cannot emphasize how important it is for leaders like you to ensure that parents' concerns are headed.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Arizona's children.

Respectfully,

Caroline Moore
Director of Government Relations, Parents Defending Education Action

Alex Nester
Political Director, Parents Defending Education Action