



The Coconino Coalition for Children and Youth exists to provide leadership in developing community-wide strategies that enhance the well-being of children and youth in Coconino County.

CCC&Y is non-partisan. Visit www.coconinokids.org to view candidate responses.

CCC&Y 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Paul Deasy

Office: Flagstaff City Council

1. What do you think the two most pressing issues are for youth and their families?

In Flagstaff, I would say poverty and healthcare. Flagstaff has a child poverty rate of over 23% and it's even higher in the surrounding area. We now have 400 children in FUSD that are homeless. Due to poverty, many cannot afford preschool for their children so the kids enter school without the foundational academic and social knowledge to prosper. My wife is a pediatric intensive care nurse at FMC, and my parents are retired OB/GYNs. They have seen firsthand the health issues and related financial strains that children and their families face in our community.

2. What do you believe the role of elected officials is in their communities when it comes to serving and advocating for children and youth?

As an elected official, we represent all people, not just voters. One of the primary responsibilities of councilmembers is to bring awareness and educate the public on the struggles many face in our community. It's our job to protect children, provide for them, and ensure they can reach their full potential in life. Elected officials should properly fund our education and healthcare system for the next generation. It is also our role to protect children from abusive relationships, and generally provide a safe environment for them to grow up in through legislation, financially supporting organizations like CPS and shelters for domestic abuse survivors trying to escape with their children.

3. Within the duties of your elected office, how can you support the children and families of our community? If elected, how will this be expressed in your agenda?

We can continue to do more to protect children's health. I was glad Council decided to pass the ordinance to ban tobacco smoke in city parks, and I want to ensure we take the next step to include e-cigarettes that are currently not part of the ordinance. We as a city should also expand our after school programs that have not recovered to 2008 levels. And although it is not the city government's jurisdiction to properly fund our schools, food stamp programs, and healthcare, we need to advocate and lobby the state and federal government to fulfill their responsibilities to our youth.

4. How would you, as an elected official, support an equitable school system for ALL students, cradle to career? As 90% of human brain development happens by age 5, please additionally share your thoughts on early childhood education and its role in the educational system.

I support our public school system, and as an educational policy analyst, I work hard every day to find ways to improve student success and student outcome. With 3 children under the age of 5, I understand the great importance of early childhood education. Too many children entering kindergarten do not have the fundamental skills of counting, color recognition, and letters because they lacked access to early education. Easy access to early childhood education is not only beneficial for academic and socialization purposes, teachers play a key role in finding medical problems and developmental issues that can be treated if found early. I know a preschool teacher who had a student falling over regularly. The parents thought the child was just clumsy, but upon the teacher's insistence sought medical treatment and found a tumor in the child's brain. That child is alive today because of access to early childhood education.

5. As childhood abuse, neglect and foster care continue to be major issues in Arizona, what prevention and trauma response strategies do you support for our child welfare system, the Department of Child Safety and/or our local communities? How would you propose using local, state and federal funds to improve outcomes for youth experiencing foster care or additionally, work toward prevention of child abuse in our communities?

Prevention is the best approach whenever we can to address this severe issue. Other cities have created access to home visitors such as designated public health nurses or SafeCare counselors available to meet with all new young parents. A lot of

child abuse and neglect stem from substance abuse and alcohol. Working to get outside funds for treatment centers to protect both the children and parents from harm is another preventative tool. I am glad that the city is now offering maternity leave to city employees as well. Maternity leave and family friendly business practices have shown to decrease rates of shaken baby syndrome and domestic abuse as well.

6. Lastly, please feel free to share any further information with voters.

As a father of 4 children and someone who grew up in Flagstaff, I care deeply about the future of the children in our community. A big reason I am running is because being a good father is not enough to ensure my children can live a good, prosperous life. To do that I have to have an impact on the community, an impact that can help all of Flagstaff's children thrive and grow into well adjusted, and well prepared adults.