

Lineweaver Elementary School Recognized Nationally for Public Policy Project

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For Immediate Release

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“PROJECT CITIZEN” SHOWS OUR FUTURE IS IN GOOD HANDS

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[Tucson, AZ] – In mid-July, schools from across the country entered their Public Policy portfolios into the national Project Citizen competition. The event took place in Calabasas, California, where each portfolio was judged by 4 judges. Lineweaver Elementary took home an Exceptional – the highest mark a school can receive. This is Lineweaver’s 5th year going to nationals.

Lineweaver’s project, led by teacher Heather Matchett, focused on school start times and its impact on the natural biological patterns in pre-teens and teenagers. School start times particularly in middle and high schools have increasingly begun earlier and earlier with many students having to be up before daylight for buses and first bell. Recent research has linked a lack of sleep with poor academic performance as well as an increase in adult type medical conditions in children. In schools that have made a bold move to change moving school start times to 9 AM, research shows an increase in student academic performance daily in class and on high stakes testing. Their goal is to have their district move school start times to 9 AM as a way to improve student health and increase student achievement.

Project Citizen is portfolio-based civic education project for middle grade students sponsored nationally by the Center for Civic Education (CCE) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). It is supported locally by the Arizona Supreme Court and the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. The program teaches young people to monitor and influence public policy. Students work cooperatively to identify a public problem in their community. They then research the problem, evaluate alternative solutions, develop their own solution in the form of a public policy, and create a political action plan to enlist local or state authorities to adopt their proposed policy. Participants develop a portfolio of their work and present their project in an oral hearing before a panel of civic-minded community volunteers.

About the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education The Foundation provides technical and financial assistance to legal aid organizations, schools and community groups working toward “access to justice for all Arizonans” through law-related education and free legal services. The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education plays a leading role in preparing Arizona students for civic responsibility. The Foundation reaches more than 100,000 children each year by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. It is also home of LawForKids.org, America’s first Web site dedicated to teaching students about the law.

Helpful Websites/More Information:

- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education: <http://www.azflse.org>
- Arizona Project Citizen: <http://www.azflse.org/pcitizen>
- Arizona Supreme Court: <http://azcourts.gov/AZSupremeCourt.aspx>
- Center for Civic Education (CCE): <http://www.civiced.org>

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