September 29, 2020

Complaint re: EdKey Sequoia Choice relationship with AZ Learning Communities

Arizonans for Charter School Accountability

EdKey Sequoia Choice Online and AZ Learning Communities are defrauding the state of Arizona by laundering ADM – EdKey falsely claiming ADM funding and kicking back half of it to the for-profit private micro-school company AZ Learning Community without any services being provided by the for-profit micro-school company.

AZ Learning Communities has a single page website that has very little information about the program other than it is an online homeschool hosted through EdKey Sequoia Choice charter school.

<https://sites.google.com/view/azlearning/home?authuser=0>

“This program is geared towards students in grades K-8. Students learn at home, with their families. They spend time in online learning tools, though we do not expect or encourage the online program being the only mode of learning. This part is up to the parent!”

“We will have a virtual community for parents to share advice/experiences. In addition, as the world opens back up after Covid closures, we will coordinate field trips and talk about what co-op classes look like depending on everyone's geographic locations. In the meantime, I am working on virtual co-op options. The goal is to create a large, virtually-connected community and pockets of smaller in-person communities that support each other and share home-based learning experiences across Arizona.”

“Students enroll in Sequoia Choice AZDL. AZDL is a virtual charter school that partners with programs like us to create more personalized learning environments. The charter school gets state funds for your student that they then use (a portion) to fund our program. We use that money to provide educational materials and resources in addition to funding for resources.”

Az Learning Communities LLC is solely owned by Dennise Jarvis. Jarvis, in an interview with Love Your School founder Jenny Cark, revealed that she is a home school mom with six children. Jarvis stated ““Families that chose home education shouldn’t be forced to give up their child’s education funding, that is something they want to consider.” She explained that while AZ Learning Communities students enroll at charter Sequoia Choice “…parents are the instructors and have a very big say in the curriculum that’s used.” Az Learning Communities uses the Moby Max online program for K-8 core classes (not the Sequoia Choice online program)

Jarvis addressed direct payments to parents enrolled at AZ Learning Communities:

“We want to compensate parents for all the external planning things they are doing so anything they do in regards to planning or coordinating in our community parents are going to receive a stipend for that work – it will be really flexible, it won’t be like you are getting a whole new job. As an independent contractors parents can make a choice about a role they feel very passionate about and if its not currently on our list we’ll talk about it and create that role for you then we will give out monthly stipends for that active participation in our group.”

She also stated that “If you don’t have a computer let us know and we’ll order you one.”

<https://loveyourschool.libsyn.com/website/10-more-school-options-what-are-az-learning-communities>

In an interview with the Sahuarita Sun, Jarvis stated:

“I’m passionate about empowering families to take control of their child’s education and to give them the ability and knowledge,” she said. “A big part, sometimes, is funding because if one parent is staying home or going part-time to do their child’s education sometimes it's hard to pay hundreds of dollars on curriculums on top of making less money and buying supplies.”

Families who participate have access to groups for social activities and also receive a stipend for participating. The program is tuition-free because it’s partnered with a charter school called Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning Families which receives state funding.

<https://www.sahuaritasun.com/news/virus-has-families-looking-at-education-options-homeschool-microschool-online/article_f4c3eeda-221e-5cf9-99e8-1608ea400b34.html?fbclid=IwAR2OHbLdbM57DAKlBiUKw_R5jHo1aZiEyyGx_mP47q2pjVNkz_C3UCUyYZc>

EdKey Sequoia Choice is enrolling AZ Learning Community students and providing no service to those students other than collecting $8,000/pupil from the state and administering the AZMerit test. EdKey is kicking back thousands of state education dollars per pupil to AZ Learning Community, a portion of which is being given as a gift to parents for community involvement and computers, a violation of the Gifting Clause of the Arizona Constitution.

This is nothing more than a scheme to launder state education funds into the hands of private companies and homeschool parents.