**The Secrecy Continues:  Republican Eddie Farnsworth sold his schools for a $13.9 million profit and is still the sole school board member:**
He holds one public meeting a year to approve the budget

Arizona Open Meeting Law only applies to “multi-member” public bodies so Republican State Senator Eddie Farnsworth made himself a one-man school board for Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools to avoid having to have public board meetings.  Farnsworth completed the sale of his schools to a non-profit he created on December 11, 2018, netting a reported $13.9 million profit for his real estate company LBE Investments. Despite the by-laws of the new non-profit that require appointing a 3 to 7 member school board, Farnsworth still remains the only school board member and there have been no school board meetings at Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools Queen Creek since June 2018, where the sole agenda item was to approve the budget.  Charter school boards are required to set the policies of the school, but Farnsworth has always made all of those decisions in secret, and apparently still does, despite selling the schools.

The non-profit has a three member corporate board (friends of Mr. Farnsworth) that makes all decisions for the school in secret. The non-profit is required to have an additional school board made up of 3-7 individuals to make the policy decisions for the school - as of April 10, 2019 they have failed to do so, according to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools website.

Here’s how useless charter school boards are: The three new non-profit board members have zero experience in education or running schools but haven’t had a single school board meeting in the first three months of operation.  Who is running the place?

Non-profit Benjamin Franklin Charter School Queen Creek indicated in their application for the transfer that they would hire a charter management organization to run the schools and that a request for bids had been made.  Mr. Farnsworth’s for-profit Benjamin Franklin Charter School LTD expressed an interest in continuing to run the schools, but the non-profit was going to look at all bids and make a decision before the transfer. The transfer was made in December 2018 but there has been no public meeting to open bids to award the management contract.  Was the meeting held in secret? We wonder if Farnsworth got the job?

Arizonans for Charter School Accountability has filed a complaint with the Charter Board alleging that the new non-profit Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools Queen Creek is in violation of their charter by:

1. Failing to notify the Charter Board of the date the transfer of ownership took place.
2. Failing to appoint a school board.
3. Failing to hire a management company as required by the transfer agreement.

The Charter Association written SB1394 (that died in the House) made much to-do about charter school boards not being relatives and requiring increased training.  Nonsense.  Eddie Farnsworth has very successfully demonstrated that charter school boards are of little value and do not actually make any meaningful operational decisions for the schools – just set policy (and not even that in Farnsworth’s kingdom).

It is pathetic that a state Senator operates the worst example of a charter school board in Arizona...but not surprising.

Also not surprising is that Senator Farnsworth’s $13 million payday has saddled Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools with massive debt - Benjamin Franklin budgeted more for facilities than instructional salaries, benefits, and supplies this year.  And it looks like he is making even more money continuing to manage the schools.  Pathetic.