AZ Kids Can’t Wait! 2017

AZ Kids Can’t Wait!

A comprehensive plan to improve Arizona’s education system.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas
Arizona Department of Education
www.azed.gov/weheardyou
@azedschools #ParentsMustBeHeard
Dear Fellow Arizonans,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the 2017 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan. This plan includes new proposals in addition to accomplishments under my leadership at the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

One of my top priorities is to consider public input when determining education plans and policies. I know of no better way to do that than to hear directly from you. Throughout 2015, my first year as your elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, I traveled to 15 locations statewide on my We Are Listening Tour to hear the concerns and suggestions of citizens regarding Arizona’s education system. I compiled all of the comments and developed a comprehensive strategy to fix Arizona’s education system, called AZ Kids Can’t Wait! I committed myself and ADE to implementing these proposals and improving our education system based on the input of Arizona citizens.

Recognizing how rapidly our society changes, I pledged to continue gathering input to build upon and evolve our AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan. My We Are Listening Tour continued in 2016, when I received thousands of new in-person comments. I also received online input and met with dozens of stakeholder organizations and education officials to gather their feedback. It is from this feedback that I created the new proposals for the 2017 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan.

I have completed the second year of my We Are Listening Tour, and I continue to hear Arizonans’ dissatisfaction with the lack of funding for education. I could not agree more with them, so I am posing this question: As a state, do we want the best education system in the United States or the cheapest system we can get by with? From teacher salaries to student achievement, I know I am committed to putting Arizona back on top in every aspect of education and I hope you will all join me in this important mission.

Beyond the accomplishments and the new proposals, the 2017 plan also features progress updates from the original plan. It is important that we work to accomplish the original proposals, or see them evolve them into updated concepts, as the state of our education system is constantly changing. Some of these proposals may
never come to fruition during my time in office, but it is important that we get these conversations started and bring these ideas to light.

I ask that you read the proposals I have included in the 2017 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan, which includes short, medium and long-term goals for the vision of Arizona’s future. Our children are our future and they simply can’t wait. God bless our children, God bless our education system, and God bless America.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Douglas
Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction
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New Proposals in the 2017 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan

“Based on input received from the hundreds of Arizonans who provided input throughout my 2016 We Are Listening Tour, I am proud of the new proposals that have been created. Our vast and diverse state has provided many great ideas that I will work to implement in my upcoming years as your elected Superintendent of Public Instruction. Some of these ideas may be completed through internal changes at ADE, while others may require legislative changes. Either way, I pledge to do my very best to make sure every Arizonan’s voice is heard.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas
Provide Schools Funding to Excel

“I have completed the second year of my We Are Listening Tour, and I continue to hear Arizonans’ dissatisfaction with the lack of funding for education. I could not agree more with them, so I am posing this question: As a state, do we want the best education system in the United States or the cheapest system we can get by with? I know I’m committed to putting Arizona back on top in every aspect of education, from teacher salaries and student achievement to rural schools and parental choice. Please join me and the rest of Arizona in this mission.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Increased education funding is essential in order for our state to provide teachers, schools, students and families the support and resources they need to improve outcomes.

New Funding Proposals:

1) An overall $200 million increase for basic state aid to be used as decided by local LEAs.
2) Increase classroom teacher salaries to retain current teachers and recruit new professionals to the career.
3) Increase rural school transportation funding to compensate for longer distances traveled.
4) Increase funding for rural schools to provide adequate support and services for their unique populations.
5) Fully fund capital for schools to build new buildings as needed.
6) Fully fund building renewal for school facilities to maintain buildings.
## Details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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| **Increase Basic State Aid**                                    | 1) Provide schools funding to use for their specific needs.  
                                                               | 2) Allow local control of spending; expenditures must be included as a line item for audit purposes. | **$200,000,000** |
| **Increase Classroom Teacher Salaries**                         | 1) Provide desperately needed 5% salary increases.  
                                                               | 2) Aid in teacher recruitment and retention.                                      | **$140,000,000** |
| **Increase Rural School Transportation Funding**                | 1) Help rural schools with bus maintenance.  
                                                               | 2) Fill bus driver vacancies.                                                     | **$20,000,000**  |
| **Increase Funding for Rural Schools**                         | 1) Address the unique struggles of rural schools with a 10% increase to basic state aid in the most rural areas.  
                                                               | 2) Increase teacher salaries and benefits to entice recruitment.                | **$40,000,000**  |
| **Fully Fund Capital for School Facilities**                   | 1) Fully-funding school capital.  
                                                               | 2) Reinstate School Facilities Board (SFB) approval of new building projects, up to three years in advance to address capacity issues. | **$180,000,000** |
| **Fully-Fund Building Renewal for School Facilities**          | 1) Properly fund preventative maintenance.  
                                                               | 2) Extend the useful life of buildings.                                          | **$100,000,000** |
| **TOTAL**                                                       |                                                                             | **$680,000,000** |
Teacher Salary Increases for Motivation and Incentive

“Arizona’s teachers are amongst the lowest paid in the nation. Without immediate attention to ensure that all Arizona classrooms are guided by effective teachers, who are properly prepared, compensated and respected, our students will not meet their full potential. How many more children must fail before we truly prioritize education?”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Increase classroom teacher salaries by five percent to provide desperately needed salary increases and strengthen both teacher retention and in- and out-of-state candidate recruitment.

Background:

- Teachers Need Support and Funding
  - The concerns that Superintendent Douglas hears most frequently are the lack of funding and lack of support for teachers. Regardless of how sophisticated standards and curriculum become, only a high-quality teacher, connecting with an individual student, results in learning.
  - Teacher Shortage
    - Nationally, 46 percent of new teachers leave within 4 years of starting teaching.¹
    - In 2014, 24% of first-year and 20 percent of second-year teachers left the profession in Arizona.²
    - Teachers typically report leaving for other careers with higher compensation, more respect, and that provide better support.
- Teacher Salaries
  - In 2015-2016, the U.S. average classroom teacher salary was estimated to be $58,064. In comparison, the average Arizona teacher’s salary for the 2015–16 school year was estimated $45,477.³

³ https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2016_NEA_Rankings_And_Estimates.pdf
In 2016, the average estimated starting salary for beginning educators in Arizona was $31,874.4

Purpose:

- Additional funding allocations, specifically appropriated toward teacher salaries, are critical to provide Arizona teachers with desperately needed salary increases and to aid in both teacher retention efforts and the successful recruitment of in-state and out-of-state teacher candidates.
- We need to encourage individuals to pursue careers as teachers and incentivize current teachers to remain and grow in the profession.

Details of Proposal:

- Arizona’s Rainy Day Fund currently has a balance of $454.5 million (as of October 2016)5
  - Monies should be appropriated for the purpose of increasing classroom teacher salaries, to answer repeated calls for better teacher pay.
  - An approximate 5% pay increase for classroom teachers using the State’s Rainy Day Fund:
    - $45,477 (Average salary) x 5% (salary percent increase) = $2,274 (average increase per teacher)
    - $2,274 x 61,526 (total # of teachers + vacancies) = $140 million (approximately)
    - $140 million x 3 years = $420 million
- To promote local control of these funds, Local Education Agencies will be able to determine the proper distribution of salary increases for their classroom teachers.
- Superintendent Douglas and the ADE will partner with education stakeholders to lobby for additional education funding, specifically appropriated for increased classroom teacher salaries.
- ADE will partner with Expect More Arizona and its Arizona Education Progress Meter Teacher Pay working group to determine specific fiscal recommendations that will be the most impactful statewide.

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4 http://azednews.com/2016/03/02/whats-being-done-to-recruit-and-retain-teachers-in-arizona/
Prioritize Rural School Transportation 
Funding for Distance Compensation

“Our children’s lives are precious and their safety is of the utmost importance. For too long, we have been neglecting proper transportation support to rural districts that face unique challenges caused by rough roads, unsafe school buses and bus driver vacancies. It’s time we properly support rural districts and recognize their extensive operating and capital needs.”

-Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Seek General Fund allocations for the establishment of a grant that schools can apply for to receive additional funding for rural transportation costs in high-need situations.

Background:

- Arizona Revised Statute §15-921 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to evaluate the transportation program and routes for the purpose of evaluating accurate transportation support levels for the budget year.\(^6\)

- Arizona Revised Statute §15-945 details the Fiscal Year 2016 transportation funding levels for each school district which varies based on the mileage of students transported.\(^7\)

- While visiting rural areas of Arizona on the We Are Listening Tour, Superintendent Douglas received public requests to increase transportation resources, specifically the tribal areas that cover hundreds of miles to pick up and drop off students.

- It was reported in 2015 that in an effort to cut costs, 41 mostly small, rural districts moved to a four-day school week.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) [http://azednews.com/2015/05/21/four-day-school-weeks-who-uses-them-and-why/](http://azednews.com/2015/05/21/four-day-school-weeks-who-uses-them-and-why/)
In rural areas, routes that buses cover are often times unpaved and rough:
  - Example: More than half of the 4,200 miles of routes that buses cover in the Chinle Unified School District are unpaved. Because of the rural road conditions, the school district spends approximately $1 million a year on new buses.  

Rural school districts find difficulty passing school bus inspections because of the low funding and high maintenance costs associated with driving on rough, unpaved roads:
  - From 2013 to 2015, Chinle Unified School District failed 94 school bus inspections out of 231, a failure rate of almost 41 percent.
  - The fail rates in the rural parts of our state ranged from more than 40 percent (Window Rock, Whiteriver and Pinon school districts) to 88 percent (Cedar Unified School District).

Rural districts also face challenges with bus driver vacancies because of workforce recruitment struggles:
  - Chinle Unified School District has had bus driver vacancies since 2010. To fill the routes, it was reported that mechanics had to get behind the wheel to drive students to and from school; taking away time spent repairing buses. Administrators and the district transportation department’s secretary also have stepped in and driven routes.
  - Bus drivers in rural areas may be required to drive longer routes to meet school transportation needs, meaning students have to spend more time on the bus.

Purpose:

- It must be recognized that rural school districts face higher maintenance costs for school buses because of the rough and unpaved roads and the longer distances they are required to travel. Immediate action must be taken to combat this higher cost.
- Schools are not intentionally refusing bus maintenance; they are doing everything they can with the little funding they have towards transportation support. We need to increase assistance from a state level to support the transportation needs of struggling rural schools.
- An increase of funding specifically for rural school transportation costs is essential to preserve the safety of our students. Our children are precious, and we cannot continue to put them at risk because of the lack of funding for proper transportation maintenance.
- We need to incentivize the rural workforce to fill bus driver vacancies through higher salaries so that we can reduce the lengthy routes drivers and students complete daily.

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Details of Proposal:

- Partner with education stakeholders to advocate for the appropriation of $20 million for the maintenance of current schools buses and the purchase of new buses in rural areas to replace vehicles that are over 10 years old or have traveled over 100,000 miles.
- Create a Rural School Working Group to determine the provisions of this additional transportation funding for rural schools.
Adequate Funding For Rural School Support Services

“Rural schools face significant financial constraints that are not as common in our urban and suburban schools along with heightened challenges in teacher recruitment and retention. Although I believe schools and classroom teachers statewide are being severely neglected financially, it is the rural schools that are suffering the most. We need to give all our students—whether they are in urban, suburban or rural communities—the opportunity to be successful.”

-Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Add ten percent to the current student weight for students in the most rural ten percent of school districts to increase support and services to those communities.

Background:

- During the We Are Listening Tour’s stops in rural Arizona communities, Superintendent Douglas received public requests to increase funding for rural school districts that face issues related to a lack of resources for their students and teachers.
- The current K-12 school finance system is based on a statutory formula enacted in 1980 and substantially modified in 1985. The established formula aims to “equalize” per-pupil spending among school districts, taking into account student enrollment and property values. Under the current school finance formula, school districts receive approximately the same amount of funding per pupil.11
- School districts receive weights that are applied to a school district’s student count based on varying factors. “Group A” weights are applied based on the number of students taught in certain grade levels. “Group B” weights are applied using specific student characteristics and needs such as special education, English language learners and severe developmental disabilities.
- It was reported in 2015, 41 mostly small, rural districts made the decision to move to a four-day school week in an effort to cut costs.12

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11 http://www.azleg.gov/briefs/Senate/ARIZONA%27S%20SCHOOL%20FINANCE%20SYSTEM.pdf
12 http://azednews.com/2015/05/21/four-day-school-weeks-who-uses-them-and-why/
• Rural communities depend on their schools to serve many functions beyond their primary mission of educating children. Rural school districts are often the largest single employer in their area and serve as the social, recreational and cultural foundation of their communities.¹³

• Rural school districts are underfunded and are disadvantaged by size as well as geography. For example, when rural districts apply for grants, the resulting funds based on number of students are often too small to accomplish the purpose of the award.¹⁴

• Rural education employees serve many roles in their communities and they, too, face many unique challenges, such as:
  o Lower salaries and benefits;
  o Lack of access to professional development opportunities;
  o Professional isolation;
  o Preparation for multiple subjects and grade levels; and
  o Multiple extracurricular duties.¹⁵

• Many Arizona educators and administrators in small and rural school districts feel that in the enactment of educational policies their special concerns are overlooked. They also find it difficult to share resources and valuable information due to geographical isolation.¹⁶

• According to the National Rural Education Association (NREA), rural schools face unique and heightened challenges in comparison to urban schools, such as:
  o Rural areas may be more vulnerable to capacity shortfalls than urban and suburban areas;
  o Education isn’t always “one-size-fits-all” and closing gaps in rural schools may require a myriad of solutions;
  o Rural communities have fewer employment and internship opportunities than non-rural, increasing the implications of poor performance and/or poor postsecondary preparedness.
  o Many rural districts struggle to find teacher candidates for their openings;
  o High teacher and administrative turnover presents a unique challenge for rural districts in that the recruitment pool is much smaller and the local labor force is more limited. Urban and suburban areas have more resources to attract new teachers and administrators; and
  o Rural areas have been slow to benefit in full from recent technological advancements and many lack access to sufficient bandwidth to support simultaneous whole-school online access.¹⁷

¹³ http://www.nea.org/home/16358.htm
¹⁴ Id.
¹⁵ Id.
¹⁶ http://www.azruralschools.org/About_Us
Purpose:

- Rural school districts require additional financial support to address their unique challenges, such as teacher recruitment and retention, access to support and resources for teachers, students and families, and minimal technological access in comparison to urban schools.

Details of Proposal:

- Partner with education stakeholders, Governor Doug Ducey, and the Legislature to generate additional monies in the approximate amount of $40 million for increased rural school funding by adding a 10% increase to the current allocations for base level support in the “Group A” weight.
- Create a Rural School Working Group to define the 10% of highest need rural populations and to determine the provisions of this additional student support weight. Factors to consider include but are not limited to:
  - Distance from Phoenix or Tucson
  - Student population
  - Bus route miles
  - Poverty count
  - Distance from nearest district
  - Employment statistics
  - Employment providers
 Fully Fund Capital Reserves to Build New Schools

“In order for our students and teachers to thrive, we must provide them a solid foundation—and I mean that in a literal sense. Our school facilities are not properly preserved because of lack funding towards adequate maintenance. Our schools are severely overcrowded because construction of new facilities has moved to the bottom of our priority list. Now that our state's economy is recovering, it is time we address these school facilities issues to create the best environment for our students and valued classroom teachers.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Work with Arizona education stakeholders, Governor Doug Ducey, and the Legislature to increase General Fund allocations for the School Facilities Board to use toward increased preventative maintenance. Restore the School Facilities Board's ability to approve new building projects, up to three years in advance, to ensure new schools are ready to open when they are needed.

Background:

- The School Facilities Board (SFB) was created by Laws 1998, 5th Special Session, Chapter 1, through legislation commonly known as Students FIRST (Fair and Immediate Resources for Students Today).
- SFB consists of nine gubernatorially appointed voting members and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (or his or her designee), who serves as a non-voting member.
- Arizona Revised Statutes §15-2002 requires SFB to randomly select 20 school districts every thirty months and inspect them with regard to routine preventative maintenance. The Preventative Maintenance Inspections have revealed some inadequacies in the preventative maintenance being performed by school districts, mostly resulting from lack of funding and staffing levels. That being said, it appears that most school districts are performing preventative maintenance to the best of their abilities with the resources they have available.
- New Facilities Projects:
  - The SFB awards new school facilities funding to school districts that do not have sufficient academic space to house their students, which is determined by comparing a school district's capacity to its average daily membership. SFB collects data and closely monitors changes in the broader social, economic, and housing environment.
  - During the 2013 legislative session, the criteria by which the SFB awards new schools changed via Laws 2013, Ch. 3, § 44 (HB 2003). A district must now exceed capacity in the current year before the SFB may award new space [A.R.S. § 15-2041 (D)(3)]. Prior statutory
language authorized the SFB to award a new school up to three years in advance, allowing it to be designed, built, and ready to open in the year in which it was needed.

- The only project under construction during FY 2015 was additional K-6 space for Thatcher Unified School District.

- **Building Renewal Projects:**
  - The Building Renewal Grant Fund was established for the purpose of maintaining the adequacy of existing school facilities. School districts may apply for these monies to fund primary building renewal projects, including major renovations and repairs of a building, upgrades to building systems that will maintain or extend the useful life of a building, and for infrastructure costs.
  - In FY 2015, the SFB approved 360 Building Renewal Grant projects and increased budgets for 33 previously-approved projects totaling $30,060,105.
  - In FY 2009, the Legislature appropriated $20 million for the Building Renewal Grant Program. SFB staff awarded $7 million in building renewal grant projects and the Legislature swept the remaining $13 million to help balance the FY 2009 budget.
  - Since FY 2010, the Legislature repeatedly appropriated and then swept some of the allocations for building renewal projects. The sweeping of funds resulted in a request for supplemental funding.
  - The FY 2016 appropriation was $16,667,900. A request for supplemental funding is pending review.18

- **Emergency Deficiencies Corrections:**
  - The Emergency Deficiencies Corrections Program is an application-based funding program, wherein school districts may apply to the SFB for funds to correct facility deficiencies that threaten the functioning of the school district, the preservation or protection of property or public health, welfare, or safety. The cost of the correction must also exceed the current year budget.
  - In FY 2015, the School Facilities Board approved 11 Emergency Deficiencies Correction projects totaling $890,393.19

- According to the Arizona Department of Administration, failure to address facilities issues with appropriate funding creates scenarios for undesirable environmental exposures, causes loss of productivity and inventory, increases expenditures in labor and mobilization fees, and further broadens the spectrum of accountability.20

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19 [id.](id.)

Historically, SFB calculated a “formula requirement” for how much should be appropriated for building renewal/capital improvement funds. The below chart provided from JLBC shows the historical appropriations for SFB:

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<td>2015</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26,787,594</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>28,903,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16,667,900</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16,667,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017/3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31,667,900</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31,667,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ These years include $800.0 M of bond financing from Proposition 301 and $267.1 M from the Land Trust.
2/ In FY 2009, Building Renewal Program was converted into a grants program.
3/ $15 M of the FY 2017 funding was one-time.
SFB Conceptual Approval for New Facilities Projects through FY 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Student Capacity</th>
<th>To Be Approved FY</th>
<th>Funding 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado City Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$2,440,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadsden Elementary District</td>
<td>Build Out</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$2,798,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laveen Elementary District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$12,793,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Elementary District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$10,234,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadaburg Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$22,384,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queen Creek Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$8,609,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Creek Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,153</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$18,104,044</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahuarita Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$10,234,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahuarita Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$20,881,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolleson Union High School District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>2,926</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$45,938,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vail Unified District</td>
<td>New School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$20,881,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose:

- Arizona schools lack of funding and insufficient staff to conduct preventative maintenance.
  - Schools are not purposely neglecting maintenance, SFB reports that schools are doing the best they can with the minimal resources they have available.  
- Properly funding preventative maintenance reduces the probability of larger, more expensive problems in the future and equates to smarter use of taxpayer money.
- Properly-funding preventative maintenance lessens the likelihood of school closures because of inadequate facilities, which may leave students out of school until alternative arrangements are established.
- School districts are exceeding their student capacities and SFB is unable to approve new construction until the current year that the capacity is exceeded. By the time approval, design, and construction is completed, school districts will have been forced to serve students while over-capacity.
  - Prior laws allowed SFB to approve new school building up to three years in advance, to ensure the school would be ready to open in the year it was needed.

23 Id.
Details of Proposal:

- Work in partnership with the SFB to determine the correct allocation to better equip school districts with preventative maintenance funding.
- Restore previous practices to allow SFB to approve school district new building projects, up to three years in advance, for those districts who present credible findings and overwhelming evidence that the district will exceed capacity.
- Partner with education stakeholders to develop legislation that redefines SFB new building approval practices and increase the state allocation toward preventative maintenance for schools.
- Partner with education stakeholders, Governor Doug Ducey, and the Legislature to allocate additional monies in the approximate amount of $100 million for SFB Building Renewal funding and $180 million for capital improvements to properly fund school facilities maintenance and school growth.
An Effective Teacher in Every Classroom

“One of the factors that can make the biggest impact on our students’ success in school is having an outstanding educator in every classroom. Currently, there are simply too many barriers to attracting and keeping great teachers in our schools. In order to ensure that every child in Arizona has access to an excellent education, we must develop new and innovative ways to help our teachers flourish.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

The Arizona Department of Education’s Educator and School Excellence Unit will propose updates to State Board of Education Certification rules to ensure that teachers complete training and assessments that prepare them to be effective in the classroom, remove barriers for qualified candidates to enter the teaching profession, streamline processes for teachers to add endorsements to their certificates and offer pathways for certified educators to expand the areas they are qualified to teach.

Details of Proposals:

1) Develop a new ‘micro-credentialing’ system to support and recognize teacher professional growth and expertise.
2) Streamline certification requirements and align Board rule with statute by allowing teachers to qualify for a Standard teaching certificate, instead of a Provisional teaching certificate, once they complete their teacher preparation program and pass the required professional knowledge and subject knowledge exams.
3) Update certification rules to align with the Every Student Succeeds Act.
Develop New Micro-Credentialing Options for Educators

Provide new opportunities for educators to gain credit for completing structured, rigorous local professional learning and training, known as micro-credentials, particularly in specialized areas of study. In the future, financial incentives will be sought to encourage educators to complete micro-credentialing opportunities and to further recognize teacher experience and expertise.

Background:

- The completion of professional learning clock hours is a requirement, or a pathway option, for certificates, certificate renewals and endorsements.
- Current professional learning efforts may, in some cases, lack rigor and structure, leading to wide variations in the preparation of teachers serving in different schools and LEAs.

Purpose:

- Micro-credentials could be used by educators to help fulfill existing professional learning requirements for certificates, certificate renewals and endorsements.
- Help LEAs to identify and recruit teachers that have completed professional learning in key areas of need for their schools.
- Provide new ways to recognize educators for completing rigorous professional learning opportunities.

Details of Proposal:

- Develop a rigorous micro-credential system to provide additional opportunities to support and recognize the professional growth and expertise of Arizona’s educators.
- Seek to update existing processes to allow for teachers’ use of micro-credentials to meet existing professional learning requirement for certificates, certificate renewals and endorsements.
Standard Certification Streamlined for Qualifying Applicants

Amend Board rules to remove language that conflicts with statute and allow applicants who have completed a teacher preparation program and passed all required exams to qualify for a Standard certificate instead of a Provisional teaching certificate.

Background:

- The initial teaching certificate issued to individuals who complete their teacher preparation program and meet all educator exam requirements is a three-year Provisional certificate.
- Under Board rule R7-2-606(D), a performance assessment is established as a requirement for the Standard teaching certificate. However, until the Board adopts a performance assessment, individuals who are certified with a Provisional certificate may qualify for a Standard certificate by teaching for two years during the valid term of a Provisional certificate.
- If they are not teaching, they may apply for a one-time extension for an additional three years and they may apply to re-instate their Provisional certificate after they have used the one-time extension.
- There are four issues with the current Board requirements for Standard teaching certificates:
  - A.R.S. 15-203(A) states that the proficiency examination to qualify for a teaching certificate “shall consist of only a professional knowledge and a subject knowledge test.” Adopting a performance test would conflict with statute.
  - While teachers are certified with a Provisional teaching certificate, they are able to maintain their certificate but are not required to complete any professional development hours that would help them improve their skills needed to be effective in the classroom.
  - The Provisional certificate leads to additional burdens on new teachers by requiring them to submit an application and fee within three years to convert their certificate.
  - The requirements to qualify for a Standard certificate are imbalanced when compared to in-state applicants, since teachers who are certified out-of-state are able to qualify for a Standard teaching certificate under reciprocity rules.
Purpose:

- Remove Board rule language indicating the need for a performance assessment when such an assessment conflicts with statutory requirements.
- Reduce burdens on educators by extending the timeframe of their initial certificate.
- Improve the effectiveness of new teachers in the classroom by requiring professional development under the Standard teaching certificate.
- Make requirements for certification equitable for in-state and out-of-state teachers.

Details of Proposal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current State Board Rule/Arizona Statute</th>
<th>Proposed Rule or Statute Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Board rule R7-2-606(D) establishes a performance assessment as a requirement to convert a Provisional certificate to a Standard certificate. This rule also indicates that two years of teaching experience during the valid term of the Provisional certificate will be required until the performance assessment is adopted.</td>
<td>• Remove the performance assessment rule language under Board rule R7-2-606(D).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Board rules R7-2-608(E), R7-2-609(C), R7-2-610(C), R7-2-611(D), (F), (H), (J), (L) and (N), and R7-2-613(C) and (E) establish that Standard teaching certificates require two years of teaching experience during the valid term of the Provisional teaching certificate if a performance assessment is not adopted by the Board.</td>
<td>• Amend R7-2-608, R7-2-609, R7-2-610, R7-2-611, and R7-2-613 to establish that applicants who meet the teacher preparation and Professional Knowledge and Subject Knowledge exam requirements will qualify for the Standard teaching certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For discussion: because of SB 1208, the Board could consider allowing the Provisional certificate to be issued to individuals who have completed a teacher preparation program but have not met the Professional Knowledge and/or subject knowledge exam requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Update Certification Rules to Align with Every Student Succeeds Act

Background:

- Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), all core academic subject area teachers were required to be “highly qualified” by having a Bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and demonstrating expertise in the subject(s) they were teaching through one of the following:
  - Passing an exam in the subject;
  - Showing completion of 24 semester hours of coursework in the subject; or
  - Meeting requirements under a High Objective Uniform State Standard for Evaluation for the subject area.
- Federal highly qualified teacher requirements were not re-authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), but federal law still requires districts to verify that their teachers meet state certification requirements.
- Due to the changes in federal law, certification rules need to be updated:
  - A “grandfathering” provision is needed to allow teachers who were determined to be highly qualified under NCLB to qualify to add the approved area(s) with documentation of their highly qualified status without the need to complete additional requirements, such as passing an exam.

Purpose:

- Eliminate unnecessarily burdensome requirements for teachers who had been determined to be highly qualified under NCLB to meet new ESSA requirements for them to meet state certification requirements.

Details of Proposal:

- Recommend the State Board of Education take emergency action in December 2016 and January 2017 to provide for the “grandfathering” of teachers who have been previously determined to be highly qualified under NCLB so they may now meet state certification requirements as required by ESSA without requiring additional burdensome requirements, such as passing an exam.
Menu of Assessments Simplification to Promote Local Control

“I am an avid supporter of school choice and local control of education, recognizing that each community has unique needs. The Legislature passed the Menu of Assessments last session, but some barriers have created an imbalance between high performing and low performing schools. I believe every student deserves access to the same options when it comes to their education and I will work to ensure.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Remove the statutory restrictions on the current Menu of Assessments to allow all school districts to select the assessment that is best able to test the progress of their students.

Background:

- A.R.S. § 15-741 directs the Arizona State Board of Education to adopt and implement an annual assessment to evaluate student achievement of the state’s academic standards in reading, writing and math; currently this assessment is the AzMERIT test. School district governing boards and charter school administrators are responsible for administering the test.
- Throughout Superintendent Douglas’ 2015 and 2016 We Are Listening Tours, Arizonans called for reduced testing of students. Many schools are using norm-referenced tests beyond AzMERIT, which equates to more time spent testing.
- In the 2016 legislative session, House Bill 2544 was passed into law. Supported by Superintendent Douglas, the bill requires that the Arizona State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a menu of locally procured achievement assessments from which school districts and charter schools may select an assessment to administer. The menu can in turn give schools using additional testing measures the ability to reduce their testing of students by allowing them to use a test other than AzMERIT to determine their students’ achievement.
- The Arizona Legislature passed Laws 2016, Chapter 7, Article 3 adding section A.R.S. § 17-741.02 directing the adoption of a menu of locally procured achievement assessments with the following limitations:
  - Prohibits “D” and “F” school districts and charter schools from choosing an assessment on the menu, requiring them the continue to use AzMERIT.
  - Eligible schools wanting to select an assessment from the menu must use their own funds to procure an assessment from the SBE adopted menu. Currently, the State only pays for the administration of AzMERIT.
Purpose:

- The path of the menu of assessments is leaning in the direction of school choice and local control, yet as currently constructed it increases the gap between high-performing and low-performing schools and drives a larger stake between wealthier and lower-income areas. It is important that Arizona provides equal opportunities to all students and communities.

Details of Proposal:

- Work with members of the Legislature to remove the current statutory and budgetary restrictions of the menu of assessments (A.R.S. § 17-741.02), thereby allowing all school districts and charter schools, to assess student achievement through any SBE-adopted assessment on the menu.
Implement Comprehensive School Health Programs

“The evidence linking student achievement to school health programs that include healthier foods, increased physical activity, and access to healthcare professionals is clear. We must do a better job supporting the existing programs Arizona has in place and implementing additional programs our schools are lacking.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Support schools in the implementation of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model to acknowledge learning, health, and the school as being a part of and a reflection of the local community.

Background:

- This model supports the premise that schools should address the health of students through coordinated activities, policies, and programs that include but are not limited to:
  - Health education and health services
  - Physical education and physical activity
  - Nutrition environment and services
  - Social and emotional climate
  - Physical environment
  - Employee wellness
  - Family and community involvement

- Schools, health agencies, parents, and communities share a common goal of supporting the health and academic achievement of adolescents. Research shows that the health of students is linked to their academic achievement.24 By working together, the various sectors can ensure that every young person in every school in every community is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

- When we promote the health and well-being of students, staff, classrooms and schools we are developing the environment which is also most conducive to the effective teaching and learning. When we learn who students are, enhancing connectedness between them and the school, we not only increase their sense of belonging and safety, we also better understand what makes our students tick and can better adjust learning methodologies and content to suit. When we reach out

to families and the local community we not only expand the safety net but we also empower key stakeholders in the responsibility and purpose of education.

- Integrating health services and programs more deeply into the day-to-day life of schools and students represents an untapped tool for raising academic achievement and improving learning.25
- Academic achievement is an excellent indicator for the overall well-being of youth and a primary predictor and determinant of adult health outcomes.

Purpose:

- Improving education and health outcomes, thereby increasing academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Efforts to address the educational and health needs of youth should be seen as a schoolwide endeavor as opposed to being confined to a subject or sector.
- Emphasize the relationship between educational attainment and health, by putting the child at the center of a system designed to support both.
- Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), additional Physical Education and Health Education initiatives, while not directly mandated under the new law, will address gaps within Arizona’s existing education policy by directly improving child development, academic success, and increasing parentally-sought school characteristics and available programming.

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25 Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 1998; 152(9): 899–907. 4. Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA,
Increased School Support for Registered Health Professionals

“Our schools are experiencing serious financial strains, and one of the first programs often cut is school health services. Cutting such programs not only puts our students at risk, but puts our teachers at risk if they are not properly trained to handle medical situations. It’s time we prioritize adequate funding these important services and make sure our students stay healthy while they are at school.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Recommend that school districts and charter schools provide school health services for students delivered by a school nurse.

Background:

- A student’s health is directly related to his or her ability to learn. Children with unmet health needs have a difficult time engaging in the educational process.
- The school nurse supports student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. The school nurse addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social health needs of students and supports their achievement in the learning process.
- Students who are medically fragile or who deal with chronic health issues are coming to school in increasing numbers and with increasingly complex medical problems that require complicated treatments commonly provided by the school nurse. 26
  - Chronic conditions such as asthma, anaphylaxis, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, epilepsy, obesity, and mental health concerns may affect the student’s ability to be in school and ready to learn.
- The National Survey of Children with Special Healthcare Needs has determined that 11.2 million U.S. children are at risk for chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions. These students may require health-related services in schools. 27
- Student absences due to infectious disease cause the loss of millions of school days each year. 28

26 Lineberry & Ikes, 2015
27 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2013
28 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011
• Based on standards of practice and community health perspective, the school nurse provides a safe and healthy school environment through control of infectious disease, which includes promotion of vaccines, utilization of schoolwide infection control measures, and disease surveillance and reporting.

• Immunization compliance is much greater in schools with school nurses.29

**Purpose:**

• Keep children healthy, safe and ready to learn.
• Provide safe, quality school health services during the school day.
• Decrease absenteeism and increase student success.

**Details of Proposal:**

ADE, in partnership with other state agencies and organizations, will provide training and guidance for schools and school health services providers to support safe, evidence-based practices in the school setting.

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29 Baisch, Lundeen, & Murphy, 2011
Five Ways a School Nurse Benefits the School

**Attendance** - School nurses improve attendance through health promotion, disease prevention and disease management. Students with a full-time school nurse have about half the student illness- or injury-related early releases from school where no school nurse is present.

**Academics** – Improved attendance means the healthy student is in the classroom and ready to learn. School Nurses enable better performance, which also contributes to reducing drop-out rates.

**Time** – School nurses save time for principals, teachers and staff. A school nurse in the building saves principals, teachers, and clerical staff a considerable amount of time that they would have spent addressing health concerns of students.

A school nurse in the building saves:

- Principals almost an hour a day
- Teachers almost 20 minutes a day
- Clerical staff over 45 minutes a day

> “We know that students need to be healthy to learn. School nurses play a vital role in making sure children are healthy and ready to learn.”
> -- Arme Duncan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education

**Staff Wellness** - School nurses improve the general health of staff. According to school reports, principals, teachers, and clerical staff are **VERY** satisfied with having school nurses in their schools for several reasons:

- Teachers can focus on teaching
- Office staff spend less time calling parents and sending students home
- Healthy staff means increased attendance and productivity

**Accountability** - School nurses help schools stay accountable.

- Promoting compliance with federal and state law mitigates lawsuits
- Advocating for adequate staffing aligns with Healthy People 2020 recommendations of the ratio of one school nurse per 750 well students (1:750)
- Preparing for emergencies saves lives and property
- Addressing student mental health links to academic achievement

School nurses are instrumental in the identification and referral to community resources for health risks and are often the only health professional who see students on a regular basis.

School nurses are responsible for:

- Significantly decreasing the amount of days missed due to asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism, accounting for more than 14 million missed days annually
- Managing students with chronic conditions such as diabetes and seizures to allow them to stay in class
- Identifying and treating accidents and injuries
- Counseling students about physical and emotional issues

Healthy Children = Academic Success
www.nasn.org

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**School Nurses Economic Value**

- Provide health services that increase school attendance
- Prevent and control the spread of communicable disease
- Administer specialized services to students (medications, insulin pumps, ventilators, tube feedings)
- Verification of immunizations
- Screening and make referrals for vision, hearing, BMI
- Provide health professional input and direction for school and community policies and programs
- Educate students and staff on managing their own health and wellness
School Health Services

How Can You Help?

Qualified professionals, such as registered nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, health educators, physicians, physician assistants, and allied health personnel, provide a variety of services to students and families. School health service providers deliver first aid and acute and emergency care for students and assist with managing chronic conditions (such as asthma or diabetes) at school. They also promote prevention and wellness by providing or verifying vaccines, encouraging proper nutrition and physical activity, and providing health education for both students and parents.

School health services staff can connect students and their families to community and other health care providers and promote a healthy and safe school environment. Some schools have school-based health centers that deliver direct medical, dental, nutritional, and mental health services to both students and families.

Knowing the answers to the following questions can help you support your child's school to provide health services. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child’s teacher.

1. Are there School Health Services, including a full-time registered nurse, in the school building at all times to help children with chronic medical conditions or with emergencies?
2. Is there a school-based health center available for students or their families?
3. How are medications and medical procedures administered at school? What are district policies about students carrying and self-administering medications?
4. Are there resources available at the school to help me find out if my child is eligible for health insurance and to help with enrollment forms?
5. Does the school nurse develop individualized health care plans for students with chronic health conditions?
6. Is there a bullying prevention policy in the school or district that discourages bullying or encourages awareness or anti-stigma of students with medical conditions?
7. Does the district and school promote a healthy school environment by providing good nutrition, physical activity, and health education opportunities?
8. Does the school district have a wellness policy to create and support a healthy school environment? If so, is the school following the policy?
Re-Establish State and Local Control of Education through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Submit a State Plan to the U.S. Department of Education required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that reinvigorates state and local control of our education system.

Background:

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed into federal law in December 2015 to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and replaces the previous version of the law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
- ESSA is marketed as affording states greater flexibility and the new law encourages states and schools to innovate, while maintaining a focus on accountability, state and local systems of improvement and a more balanced assessment system.
- Under ESSA, ADE is responsible for creating a State Plan that reflects a statewide shared vision for Arizona’s students and schools. The State Plan will include Arizona’s vision for our unique state and will include topics such as accountability, funding, school improvement and grant-making systems.

Purpose:

- Arizona is given the opportunity to create a unique plan with our state’s vision on how we will implement the new law.
- ADE is collecting statewide feedback with targeted questions for Arizonans to contribute their input throughout the development of the plan.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Education with high-level information, to allow schools and districts the flexibility to adapt to the new provisions of the law and meet the needs of their students, teachers and parents.
- ADE will provide LEAs guidance related to the implementation of ESSA to ensure they are supporting best practices for high student achievement, while following the provisions of the State Plan and the law.
Continuous Improvement of Structured English Immersion (SEI) Programs

“Considering the changing demographics of our state, it is more important than ever to ensure our English language learners, including those in our growing Latino population, are receiving the resources and support they need to be successful based on the unique challenges they face. My Latino Education Advisory Committee expressed a desire to help do just that, and their recommendations are reflected in these proposals.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Seek continuous improvement of SEI Programs through research-based instructional strategies and professional development to increase academic success of ELL students.

Background:

- Latino students account for 85 percent of English language learners in Arizona. 30
- Effective September 2006 under the authority of Laws 2006, Chapter 4, the Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force was established.
- The Task Force was charged with developing and adopting research-based models of structured English immersion (SEI) programs to be used in school districts and charter schools in Arizona.
- A.R.S. 15-756-01 requires that the models include a minimum of four hours per day of English language development (ELD) for the first year in which a pupil is classified as an ELL.
- In December 2014, the State Board of Education (the entity which currently assumes the role of the ELL Task Force) adopted refinements to the SEI Models that allow schools flexibility within the Task Force adopted Models. This flexibility provides the opportunity for Intermediate ELLs in their second or subsequent year to reduce up to two hours of the required English Language Development four-hour block.

Purpose:

- Better support the needs of Arizona’s ELL students.
- Support the implementation of the 2014 refinements to the SEI models.

• Promote research-based instructional strategies that will meet the requirements of A.R.S. 15-756.01, continue to yield success in the language acquisition process, and further academic content area success for ELLs.

Details of Proposal:

• Highly effective practitioners of ELLs will work with ADE to identify research-based instructional strategies that promote both language acquisition and academic success in content areas, meeting the requirements of A.R. S. 15-756.01.
• ADE will deliver professional development that clarifies implementation of the refinements to the SEI model and illustrates best practices in maximizing this flexibility.
Zip Code Project 2.0

“It is impossible for our education system to prepare students to be successful citizens if they are not attending school. The Zip Code Project focuses on disconnected youth, meaning those who are neither in school nor working. All children and young adults, regardless of where they live, deserve a chance to pursue their dreams. Our mission with the Zip Code Project is to help these young adults get back on a path to a successful, happy and productive life.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Expand the current Zip Code Project by mobilizing the power of community collaboration and best practices to help navigate the complex education system for the most at-risk youth in Arizona.

Background:

- The Zip Code Project focuses on underserved and disconnected (unemployed and not attending school) youth in high-need communities throughout Arizona.
- After presenting the Zip Code Project to hundreds of parents, educators, government officials, and community leaders, it is apparent that expansion of the Zip Code Project is very important to the citizens of Arizona.

Purpose:

- Zip Code Project 2.0 is a 5-year expansion plan to achieve a statewide goal by 2023 to reach every Arizona county by establishing a presence and partnerships in over 16 zip codes.

Details of Proposal:

- Continue working with current Zip Code Project partners across Arizona and the nation to enhance the assistance being provided to disconnected youth.
- Expand the number of partnerships to include additional community leaders.
- Establish long-term goals which include developing Education Development Zones.
  - Educational Development Zones (EDZs), in which—similar to empowerment or economic development zones found in other states— incentives such as zero state income tax, zero/nominal property tax, tax credits, student-loan repayment and other similar benefits,
are provided to teachers choosing to work there, or for schools that are established in such areas.

- EDZs will be created in areas with limited educational options, especially those with extreme teacher recruitment and retention issues.
- Increase parental options by providing a variety of educational outlets in areas with limited educational opportunities.
- Provide choices for teachers who wish to take advantage of various incentives within the EDZs, such as no state income tax, increased tax credits for classroom supplies, and even partial/full student loan repayment.
- Provide tax incentives for charter schools to establish campuses within these designated high-need zones.

- Partner with community and charitable organizations to provide needed items for children in Arizona that have difficulty attending or staying in school due to economic hardships, unsafe neighborhoods and other challenges.
  - ADE will establish relationships with organizations throughout the state to provide resources to students in need.
  - Once a student is identified by a school or school district, ADE will connect the school district with an organization that can address the specific needs of that student.
  - ADE will provide information and resources to help schools, districts, and charters address specific needs.
    - For example, if students do not have access to food, ADE will help schools assist students in applying for free or reduced lunch programs and find organizations in the community to provide food to students when they are not in school.
- Implement guidelines for each LEA to provide a discrete and secure location for the storage of items for these children, who often have to carry their life from one location to another.
  - Many Arizona students face the challenges of homelessness or shared custody. One such challenge is having to bring personal items (e.g., toys, clothing, pillow, toiletries) to school because they switch living locations during the week. Kids carrying these items around are often teased and ridiculed or will have items confiscated for violating school policy.
  - Many children today are growing up in single parent homes.31
  - With the elimination of lockers at many campuses, children do not have access to a private, secured space. While this may not create a burden for most children, it does create a burden for those highlighted above. Therefore, ADE will recommend that each LEA provide a closet or lockable space, and a sign in and sign out sheet for the child’s personal items.

31 [http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/22/less-than-half-of-u-s-kids-today-live-in-a-traditional-family/]
This separate location will allow the child to drop their items off in the morning before school and retrieve them after school.

**Zip Code Project 5-Year Plan:**

**FY18**
- Increase the number of communities served by three zip codes (7 total)
- Produce dropout prevention toolkits for LEAs, youth, and families
- Launch the Arizona Disconnected Youth Resource Network
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

**FY19**
- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes (9 total)
- At least double the information provided in the initial dropout prevention toolkits
- Launch a Parent and Family Summit to convene multiple parent groups to discuss youth disconnection and dropout prevention
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

**FY20**
- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of three zip codes (12 total)
- Increase the number of resources provided in the dropout prevention toolkits
- Convene a follow-up to the FY19 Parent and Family Summit
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

**FY21**
- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes (14 total)
- Launch a dropout prevention summit to include a variety of stakeholders with strands dedicated to assisting LEA staff and parents/families. This summit will feature youth who have been at-risk but succeeded at completing school and have moved on to college/career.
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times

**FY22**
- Increase the number of communities served by a minimum of two zip codes in order to reach each county within the state of Arizona (16+ total)
- Convene the FY22 Parent and Family Summit
- Publish a catalog of additional resources dedicated to ending youth disconnection
- Convene each Community Group of Action a minimum of four times
Promote Acceleration, Enrichment and Support for Gifted Programs

“It’s very important that Arizona provides a well-rounded and challenging education for all students. Offering advanced and accelerated learning options like advanced placement programs, gifted education programs, arts, music programs and educational technology choices supports Arizona’s students who may experience academic success at a faster pace than their peers. My goal is to support all students, including those who are excelling.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Expand support for gifted children and their families by providing new information about gifted education programs and services offered by schools and champion innovative uses of federal, state and local resources to promote both accelerated learning programs and enrichment for gifted students.

Background:

- Gifted children have unique academic, intellectual, social and emotional needs, and schools and families require additional support to help meet these needs.
- Gifted students comprise nearly eight percent of the total Arizona student population.32
- A.R.S. § 15-779 – 779.02 require school districts to identify and appropriately serve gifted children K-12. A.R.S. § 15-779.01 A states:
  - “Because it is in the public interest to support unique opportunities for high-achieving and underachieving pupils who are identified as gifted, the governing board of each school district shall provide gifted education to gifted pupils identified as provided in this article.”33

32 http://www.azed.gov/gifted-education/
Purpose:

- Encourage the expansion of K-12 programs, services and supports for gifted children and families statewide through both acceleration and enrichment paths.

Details of Proposal:

- Include new indicators for gifted education programs and student outcomes within online school profile information (school report cards), to include percentages of students identified as gifted, the types of programs and services offered and gifted student achievement.

- Provide schools with support on how to better use federal, state and local resources to expand K-12 opportunities to serve gifted children, and how to more effectively support families of gifted children in their efforts to support their learning at home and at school.

- Support schools participating in the Aligning Efforts for Talent Development Jacob K. Javits Gifted Education Grant Program, a three-year competitive grant awarded to the Arizona Department of Education by the US Department of Education in 2015. In partnership with Arizona’s five Regional Centers (www.azregionalcenters.com) across the state, the grant is focused on:
  - Increasing effective identification of students and student needs, along with aligned programs, services and instructional supports;
  - Providing professional learning support to teachers and leaders; and,
  - Engaging families and communities on how to support gifted children at home.

- Encourage Local Education Agencies to explore expanding gifted education learning options through acceleration and enrichment, such as online learning options for students who progress faster than their peers.
“With nearly 30,000 homeless students enrolled in public school in Arizona, we must continue to provide essential support to Local Educational Agencies in the implementation of their programs for homeless children and youth. These efforts ultimately support the educational outcomes of children and youth experiencing homelessness and foster students. Just like all of their peers, Arizona’s homeless and foster children deserve a world class education.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Develop collaborative partnerships with internal staff and external agencies and organizations to better support the administrative oversight of the Education for Homeless Children & Youth Program and foster care youth at local educational agencies.

Background:

- During the 2014-2015 school year, there were 29,537\textsuperscript{34} children and youth who experienced homelessness enrolled in Arizona schools.
  - This represents 2.6 percent of the 1,116,143\textsuperscript{35} students enrolled in Arizona public schools.
- The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program was reauthorized as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), with an implementation date of October 1, 2016. The EHCY program requires that children and youth experiencing homelessness are immediately enrolled in school and have educational opportunities equal to those of their non-homeless peers. The amendments to the EHCY program, as part of ESSA, help students experiencing homelessness enroll in and attend school, complete their high school education, and continue on to higher education – their best hope for avoiding poverty and homelessness as adults.
- ESSA requires the review and revision of policies that create barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in Homeless Situations.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35} http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/files/2015/03/october_1_2014_enrollment_count.xls
Purpose:

- In an effort to provide outstanding administrative support to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), and ultimately children and youth experiencing homelessness and foster care youth, program staff will collaborate with internal and external partners. Collaborative partners will include, but not be limited to:
  - Arizona Department of Education – Early Childhood Education
  - Arizona Department of Education – School Finance
  - Arizona Department of Education – Title I/Foster Care
  - Arizona School Boards Association
  - Arizona State Board for Charter Schools
  - Arizona Charter School Association
  - FosterEd Arizona
- Building strong collaborative efforts will provide an opportunity to better support LEAs in their implementation of ESSA/EHCY requirements and increase outcomes for foster care youth.

Details of Proposal:

- Program staff will develop and improve existing collaborative efforts, improve partnerships and better support the implementation of ESSA/EHCY requirements. Through these efforts, program staff will support the removal of barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations and foster care youth.
Read 20: Increase Support for Literacy Programs

“Our great state already has amazing literacy and vocabulary programs doing wonderful work for our children. Where those resources may not be readily available, we must shine as much light as possible on them and help families and parents access them for the benefit of our youngest students.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Active promotion and distribution of existing literacy programs that will help promote the importance of language development, early literacy skills and family involvement.

Background:

- Findings show that several school-level factors are predictive of third grade reading achievement.
  - Most notably, two independent measures of student attendance were predictive of school-level reading achievement.
  - Results indicate that policies aimed at increasing school-level attendance rates may be effective and inexpensive methods of increasing early literacy rates.
- Current Arizona-based programs such as Read On Arizona, First Things First, Piper Charitable Trust and Expect More Arizona have existing evidence-based literacy and language-development programs in place that have been developed, vetted and tested.
- Based on the research of national experts, including Dr. Nonie Lesaux, Director of the Language and Literacy Diversity Research Group within the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, the campaign will intentionally work to build increased awareness of the critical importance of the quality versus the size of a child’s vocabulary and to build a child’s language abilities from an early age so that they will continue as they enter school.
• This means a more focused attention on quality of words over quantity and an increased use of language rich vocabulary and back and forth extended conversations in both home and classroom settings.

• To leverage work from some of the leading education institutes based on early learning science, Read On Arizona is also partnering with the state of Georgia to utilize and integrate materials from their Talk With Me Baby campaign, which is focused on helping parents learn tips and simple steps to support their infant’s language development with a focus on “language nutrition” and a “healthy serving of loving words every day for your baby.”

• Integrating all of the best early learning science will help strengthen Arizona’s awareness campaign to achieve maximum results by encouraging parents to talk, read and sing with their children to support their early literacy development.

• The awareness campaign will include materials to share with parents in local communities. Materials, toolkits and other resources for Read On Arizona’s language and literacy campaign are currently under development and will be available for all partners January 2017.

Purpose:

• To increase awareness of available resources and materials for Arizona parents.
• To assist parents and families in developmental areas relating to parent-child interaction.
• To increase resource materials for Arizona teachers to use in early language and literacy programs, as well as continuing language development and literacy programs.
• To assist the transition of English Language Learners (ELL) students and parents.
• To encourage the importance of reading 20 minutes a day with children.

Details of Proposal:

• ADE and Read On Arizona, in partnership with First Things First, Piper Charitable Trust, and Expect More Arizona, will distribute and promote at a state level the resources made available by the new language and early literacy awareness campaign.

• ADE will advocate and provide as resources for parents and families the existing programs for language-development and increasing parent-child interactions. The messaging and tools are specifically for Arizona parent use and are designed for early language and literacy development.
Comprehensive School Report Cards to Enhance Parental Choice

“Today’s parents are faced with many choices when choosing the school most appropriate for their children. School report cards should help parents make the right decision and must include more than a simple letter grade that is based on standardized test results. Parents should have access to relevant and comprehensive information at their fingertips.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Develop an expanded school report card designed to provide parents with more comprehensive details about schools beyond a letter grade based primarily on results from a single standardized test.

Background:

- In 2010, the Arizona Legislature enacted Arizona Revised Statute §15-241 (A.R.S. §15-241) to create the A-F Letter Grade Accountability System, which was adopted in June 2011 by the State Board of Education. The A-F Letter Grades are designed to place equal value on current year achievement and longitudinal academic growth, specifically the growth of all students, as well as a school’s lowest achieving students.
- The A-F Letter Grade Accountability System was first used as the sole accountability system in the 2011-2012 school year.
- Letter grades should be used as just one measure of how well a school is performing.

Purpose:

- Create school report cards that include A-F letter grades as one component, but that focus on a wide variety of factors beyond high stakes test scores.
- Consider learning opportunities for students at the school and the quality of the academic and extracurricular programs the school provides.
- Provide parents with information about each school and district to assist them in making educated decisions.
- A more robust report card will help parents make the appropriate choices for their children.
Details of Proposal:

- School Report Cards:
  - ADE will create a robust school report card that incorporates additional indicators other than standardized test scores.
  - Based upon feedback from Arizonans, the areas being considered for inclusion in a school report card include:
    - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) offerings
    - Arts, Music, and Physical Education (AMP) offerings
    - After School Program (ASP) availability
    - Social sciences
    - Advanced Placement (AP) or other Career and Technical Education (CTE) options
    - Dual enrollment (Postsecondary credit) offerings
    - School Safety Programs
    - Health and wellness offerings
  - A-F letter grades will be one indicator utilized in the school report card.
- While not part of the A-F accountability system, Arizona recognizes the need to provide more useful, comprehensive information regarding schools and LEAs to the public – beyond just summative ratings – particularly with respect to how schools and LEAs are supporting a well-rounded education for their students.
- ADE will provide more comprehensive data and information to the public for schools and LEAs to help inform and empower school choice, which in turn will help parents identify the most appropriate school for their child.
- School and LEA searchable school report card profile information will be made available online through the ADE website and will include more comprehensive information on academic and other programs and options offered by a school or LEA.
Enhance Family Engagement Initiative

“I recognize how much a student’s success can be impacted by the involvement of parents and family in their education. Authentic and effective family engagement that has a positive impact on student achievement is rooted in meaningful home, school and community partnerships. I will continue to focus on enhancing ADE’s efforts to improve family engagement by building upon partnerships that will strengthen parental and family involvement in the education of their children.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Enhance the Family Engagement Initiative by building a Family Engagement Community of Practice (COP) that will bridge partnerships between families and organizations in three phases – planning, formation, and implementation – to build trust, create a collaborative community, and sustain practices that improve parental and family involvement in a student’s education.

Background:

- Superintendent Douglas consistently acknowledges the importance of family involvement in all aspects of students’ education, from preschool through high school.

Purpose:

- To establish working relationships between education professionals, community organizations and families to share knowledge, expertise and tools in order to improve student and family outcomes and success.

Details of Proposal:

- Establish a communications network between state agencies, organizations, local education agencies, and families.
• Develop family engagement action teams throughout Arizona in order to create a viable community and share effective practices.
• Establish key leadership within the Community of Practice to drive success.
• Survey stakeholders to guide the planning process for the Community of Practice.
• Explore multiple measures of success and determine outcome benchmarks.
• Evaluate the effectiveness of the Community of Practice.
Enrich Parental and Family Support of Native American Students

“Increasing parental and family involvement in a child’s education has been a major priority of mine this last year. I recognize that different cultures and communities will require different steps to increase family engagement. We are seeking state funding for our Office of Indian Education to address the many unique needs of our Native American students, including our family engagement efforts.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Work with Native American families to increase family engagement both at home and at school to improve academic outcomes.

Background:

- Students tend to earn higher grades, have better attendance, are more motivated and less likely to drop out when their families are involved in their education.37
- Engaging Native American parents, families and communities in school can outweigh leadership, teacher quality and curriculum.38
- Data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey show that in 2012, seven percent of all U.S. 16- to 24-year-olds were not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school diploma or equivalency credential. That same year, for the same age group, this rate (called the status dropout rate) was 14.8 percent for American Indian/Alaska Native males.39
- In Arizona, the dropout rate for the American Indian/Alaska Native subgroup was 6.95 percent compared to the average rate for all students of 3.46 percent in 2015.40
- Having siblings and/or parents who drop out increases the chance that a student will drop out.41
- Parent involvement can be influenced by parent-

37  http://www.nea.org/home/52849.htm
39  http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf431300/subassets/rwjf431300_3
40  http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/dropout-rate-study-report/
41  http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/citations/172.html
school differences in values and communication styles, perceptions of cultural competency in the staff and curricula, and more.42

- Preliminary discussions have begun with ADE and the Ak-Chin Indian Community for possible action items to increase family engagement.

**Purpose:**

- Native American students have been statistically shown to be Arizona’s most at-risk students, showing lower graduation rates than other subgroups.
- Strong family engagement in a student’s education is nationally recognized to increase the student’s educational outcome.
- Native American families experience different challenges and cultural differences when compared to other subgroups in Arizona.
- A statewide model for family engagement may not align with the unique needs of Native American families. Working on a plan specific to this community is essential to ensure a positive outcome for Native American students.

**Details of Proposal:**

- Develop a structured plan for improving Native American parent and family involvement in schools and communities in Arizona to positively affect the educational experiences of Native American students.
- With successful implementation, this plan would be a model for other Native American tribes and communities in Arizona to increase family engagement.
- Plan components will focus on the following:
  - Parent-to-parent mentoring programs
  - Motivational speakers
  - Fiscal responsibility workshops
  - Parents’ rights and responsibilities workshops
  - Education on culturally respective relationships for parents, students, classroom teachers and community members.

Provide Increased Early Childhood Education Learning Opportunities for Families

Better prepare Arizona’s students for lifelong success through parent and community education opportunities that detail important K-3 education topics.

Background:

- A strong foundation in the early years improves the odds for positive outcomes for kids; a weak foundation increases the odds of problems later in life.43
- Strong family engagement is central in promoting children’s healthy development and wellness, including:
  - Social-emotional and behavioral development
  - Preparing children for school
  - Seamlessly transitioning them to kindergarten
  - Supporting academic achievement in elementary school and beyond44
- Providing children from birth to five with consistent, language-rich experiences – such as talking, reading, and singing – can have important benefits on their brain development and future school success.45

Purpose:

- In order to establish a solid foundation for lifelong learning and a strong sense of cultural identity, workshops should be inclusive of culturally relevant components, have a data-driven focus, and be informed by the many unique disadvantages that different communities face.

43 http://www.readyazkids.com/building-better-brains/
44 http://www2.ed.gov/about/innovations/earlylearning/families.html
45 http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/talk-read-sing
Details of Proposal:

- Provide informational resources for families, such as workshops on early brain development, the importance of reading to young children and accessing healthy foods for children in grades K-3.
- Stress the importance of parental involvement for young students as a means to nurture a habit that may continue throughout the child’s K-12 education path.
Additional Learning Disability Resources

“It is important that we identify students with learning disabilities early, to ensure we take the necessary steps in their learning path to secure academic success. Although classroom teachers certainly play an important role in this process, it is vital that we provide resources to assist parents in the identification of reading and learning disabilities. Parents truly know their own child best and should have the ability to help identify disabilities as soon as possible.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Develop and enhance resources and support for parents with children experiencing learning disabilities.

Background:

- Throughout the 2016 We Are Listening Tour, Superintendent Douglas heard concerns about the lack of resources and support available to students, parents, and families for children that are challenged with reading and other specific learning disabilities.
- Reading disabilities, including dyslexia, are among the most commonly identified educational concerns for both educators and families.
- The most recent demographic data from 2014 indicates that 11.6 percent, or 116,428 Arizona students ages 5-21 years old were identified as having a disability under IDEA.
- Of these students, 5.28 percent were identified as having Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Specific Learning Disabilities can be identified solely or as a combination of learning difficulties that significantly interfere with a student’s ability to benefit from the general education program without the support of specialized instruction (special education services and supports) in reading, writing, math or language.
- For the Spring 2015 administration of the AzMERIT statewide assessment, the following percentages of disabled students passed the English Language Arts test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This data demonstrates that disabled students need additional support with reading at the school level and that they may be less likely to benefit from grade level texts due to reading delays as they move from one grade level to another.

The data also indicates that there is a great need to improve educational interventions that lead to improved reading outcomes for disabled students.

Purpose:
- Develop and implement additional tools and resources for parents and LEAs to assist students with reading disabilities and Specific Learning Disabilities.

Details of Proposal:
- Increase the resources available to parents of youth dealing with learning disabilities.
- Increase parental and LEA outreach efforts to better assist youth with executive function issues, including dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and dyslexia.
- Provide additional resources for parents with gifted children that have a learning disability.
Accomplishments from the First AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan

“In October 2015, I launched my first AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan based on input received from Arizonans and their ideas to improve our education system. Since then, ADE has actively worked to make these proposals a reality. I am proud of the proposals from my original plan that started as an idea and became reality. Although we consider these accomplishments, we will continue to work hard to expand upon these objectives as we build the best education system for Arizona.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas
$400 Million Immediately for Arizona's Teachers

"On September 11, 2015, I called for the immediate infusion of $400 million to go directly to current classroom teachers, or to be used by schools to reduce class size by hiring additional teachers and/or filling vacant teaching positions. While the additional money appropriated through Prop 123 fell just short of my initial $400 million request, I believe the recommendation influenced that increase in education funding."

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Background:

- Throughout Superintendent Douglas’ 2015 and 2016 We Are Listening Tours, thousands of Arizonans expressed their disappointment with the lack of education funding, and specifically low teacher salaries.

- In 2014-2015, the national teacher salary average was $57,678. In comparison, the average Arizona teacher salary was $45,406. In 2015-2016, the U.S. average classroom teacher salary is estimated to be $58,064. In comparison, the average Arizona teacher’s salary for the 2015–16 school year is an estimated $45,477.46

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, Arizona’s Rainy Day Fund had approximately $460 million, with state revenues running significantly higher than expected.47 As of October 2016, Arizona’s Rainy Day Fund had approximately $454.5 million.48

- On September 11, 2015, Superintendent Douglas called upon the Arizona Legislature for the immediate allocation of $400 million from the state’s Rainy Day fund.

- The funds requested would have gone to classroom teachers, either for higher salaries, smaller classroom sizes or both.

- From October 28-30, the Arizona Legislature conducted a special session to address the lack of education funding. The Legislature ultimately passed House Bill 2001, which increased the Base

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46 https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2016_NEA_Rankings_And_Estimates.pdf
Level for FY 2016 and made additional school funding appropriations, subject to voter approval via what became known as Proposition 123.

- The Arizona Education Finance Amendment, Proposition 123, passed on the May 17, 2016 ballot as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment.
- The measure was designed to increase education funding by $3.5 billion over the course of 10 years (2016-2025) by allocating money from the general fund and increasing annual distributions of the state land trust permanent fund to education. Local school boards have the authority to allocate the money as they see fit.

**Purpose:**

- Superintendent Douglas pledged to conduct an annual statewide We Are Listening Tour, to develop an education agenda that incorporated the input of all Arizonans.
- In response to the public request for increased education funding, Superintendent Douglas took immediate action to advocate for desperately needed salary increases for Arizona teachers. She argued that such increases could in turn aid in teacher retention and recruitment, including out-of-state candidate recruitment, and help reduce classroom sizes.

**Accomplishment:**

- Superintendent Douglas' request for additional education monies helped influence the recent legislation and special election that saw an immediate increase of $350 million to education funding in FY 2016, with a planned $3.5 billion to be paid out over the next 10 years (2016-2025).
Deliver High Quality Instructional Support to Arizona Teachers

“One of the most important responsibilities I have as Arizona’s Superintendent of Public Instruction is supporting the work of our classroom teachers. If ADE makes their jobs easier, we will be one step closer to the outstanding education system all Arizonans want to see. My commitment to them includes providing the very best professional development and technology resources so that they can best serve our children.”

-Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Experts at ADE will design a series of trainings in multiple formats designed to provide teachers with information they need.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas wanted to ensure that educators have the resources they need to help children succeed in school, including access to professional development and relevant support materials.
- LEAs provide excellent support systems, but may have limited resources to support teachers.
- ADE specialists have extensive knowledge in best practices and instructional techniques in order to provide relevant support to teachers.

Purpose:

- Offer differentiated technical assistance ranging from conferences, workshops, webinars, or hybrid models of professional development aligned to local needs.
- Tailor support using aligned and collaborative efforts from ADE specialists.
- Provide support in conjunction with partners - such as Regional Centers, County Education Service Agencies, and postsecondary institutions.
Accomplishments:

- In September 2016, the Arizona Career Ready Project for Educators was successfully launched to provide Arizona educators with the needed components to ensure Arizona students leave high school ready for their next steps. The Arizona Career Ready Project was developed and consists of four key modules for educators to complete. Each module includes:
  - Current research and readings covering specific introduced topics
  - Peer discussion
  - Actions plans for next steps in instruction.

- As part of its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan, ADE has developed the Comprehensive System of Support, which is a tiered continuum of comprehensive supports that may be offered in conjunction with other partners including Regional Centers, colleges and universities.

- The Comprehensive System of Support includes the following areas to ensure LEAs and educators have access to resources best suited for their needs: Integrated Support, School Support and Innovation, Coordinated Support, Program Area Support, Peer-to-Peer Support, and Self Empowered Support.

![Arizona Department of Education Comprehensive System of Support](https://example.com/image.png)
Reduce Administrative Burdens on Local Education Agencies

“Last legislative session we celebrated the success of our Title 15 Working Group with the passage of House Bill 2190. The celebration was short lived, however, as the group already reconvened to help further the practice of alleviating bureaucratic regulation on overtaxed schools and freeing up vital funds that have been allocated to unnecessary requirements.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Annually invite an independent group of stakeholders, from across the educational landscape, to develop and propose legislative changes that can help reduce unnecessary burdens and outdated statutory provisions found in Title 15, which contains Arizona's education statutes.

Background:

- Excessive and burdensome regulation of education takes the focus away from educating students and creates unnecessary hurdles for schools, educators, and administrators.
- Many statutes in Title 15 are ineffective, outdated, or no longer relevant.
- Superintendent Douglas created the Title 15 Working Group (Working Group) as a team of public volunteers. Each member is able to provide his or her own diverse knowledge and expertise of Arizona's K-12 education system.
- Members of the Working Group may include school superintendents, school human resources personnel, school CFOs, parents, teachers, and other education stakeholders who are regularly impacted by the statutes.

Purpose:

- Free up time, money, and other resources for public schools, throughout the state.
- Direct education dollars to where they are intended—students—by removing unnecessary burdens, which force local education agencies to increase administrative costs and use vital educational time to jump through legal hoops.
- Remove unnecessary, inefficient, and antiquated statutory language that is not otherwise required and does little to increase student achievement or improve accountability.
Accomplishments:

- The first annual Title 15 Working Group convened in the fall of 2015 to analyze dozens of unnecessary and outdated statutes.
- The 2015 Working Group findings were reflected in House Bills 2189 and 2190; House Bill 2190 was signed into law on May 18, 2016.
- The 2016 Working Group convened in the fall of 2016 to continue the identification of unnecessary burdens and outdated statutory provisions affecting Arizona’s public schools.
- Any bill(s) containing statutory change suggestions from the 2016 Working Group will be lobbied by ADE during the 2017 Arizona Legislative session.
- The Title 15 Working Group will continue to meet annually, throughout Superintendent Douglas’ time in office.
End Arizona’s Relationship with Common Core and Improve Arizona’s Existing Math and ELA Standards

“Just over five years ago, our state standards for Math and English Language Arts were discarded and replaced with Common Core standards in an abrupt departure from Arizona’s traditional standards adoption process. One of my top campaign promises was to move Arizona away from Common Core, and I am pleased that we have taken several steps to ensure our state’s children and parents once again have access to the best possible standards that have been tailored to fit the unique needs of Arizonans.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Recommend that the State Board of Education reverse its decision to adopt the Common Core standards and approve revisions to the Arizona Math and English Language Arts standards following a thorough review and public comment process.

Background:

- Superintendent Douglas’ primary pledge to Arizonans upon taking office was to sever our state’s ties to the Common Core standards, something she fought to do throughout her first year in office.
- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas directed the K-12 Academic Standards Section at ADE to review the Mathematics Standards and English Language Arts standards for grades K-12 with public comment.
- ADE began the revision process with standards revision workgroups comprised of more than 200 Arizona educators from eight counties who contributed more than 2,900 hours to the revision process.
- The standards revision workgroups consulted research from numerous scholarly sources in addition to state departments of education, noted scholars, K-12 teachers, academic and instructional coaches, school administrators, university professors, parents, students, and other members of the public.
- The first drafts of the Mathematics and English Language Arts standards were released for public comment in August 2016.
Purpose:

- Ensure Arizonans have a proper voice in the development of the standards.
- Ensure that standards properly build upon each other within grade levels and across grade levels.
- Ensure an emphasis on phonics instruction at the lower grades to improve K-3 Literacy.
- Clarify mathematics standards regarding the knowledge and skills required of students.

Accomplishments:

- On October 26, 2015, Superintendent Douglas celebrated a 6-2 State Board of Education vote to sever Arizona’s ties to the nationally developed Common Core standards, which gave Arizona the flexibility to make its standards more rigorous and tailor them to the unique needs of our students.
- The Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona State Board of Education worked collaboratively throughout 2015 and 2016 to revise the ELA and Math Standards. After robust public feedback and further revisions by the standards working groups, ADE anticipates the State Board of Education will vote on the Arizona Mathematics Standards and the Arizona English Language Arts Standards in December 2016.
  - In the current draft of the Mathematics Standards:
    - Fluency was defined to encompass Efficiency, Accuracy, Flexibility, and applying procedures Appropriately.
    - Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II standards were clarified and formatted into separate courses.
  - In the current draft of the English Language Arts Standards:
    - Reading Foundational Skills in K-5 were augmented to increase the focus on phonics.
    - A Foundational Writing Strand was created to ensure effective teaching of writing by focusing on handwriting, sound letter basics, and spelling.
Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process

Fully implement the Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process, a comprehensive plan to review academic standards on a consistent and timely basis with extensive public input.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas called for the consistent and timely review of all academic standards, with extensive public input.
- The State Board of Education approved the Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process.
- The Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process was designed to consider timeframes related to the following:
  - The time needed to complete the development/revision cycle of standards.
  - The time between State Board adoption and the start of the next school year.
  - The time needed to transition and begin implementation of the new/revised standards prior to full implementation.
  - Timeframes may be extended or shortened based upon the scope of the task and other statewide education initiatives.
- The Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process includes the process outlined below.

- The Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process was used in the development of the following standards:
  - Arts Education (adopted 2015)
  - Physical Education (adopted 2015)
  - World and Native Languages (adopted 2015)
  - Education Technology (adopted 2009)
  - Health Education (adopted 2009)
  - Social Studies (adopted 2005)
Purpose:

- Ensure all academic standards are continuously improved based on public input, recommendations from ADE specialists and recommendations from Arizona educators at every level and that they are developed with evidence-based practices and research.
- Ensure Arizona’s standards represent the best interest of Arizona’s students.

Accomplishments:

- ADE has developed a review schedule for Academic Content Standards, which includes the following subjects scheduled to be reviewed:
  - Science (revisions to begin in 2017)
    - Public comment opened on October 4, 2016 and will remain open through December 17, 2016.
  - Social Studies (revisions to begin in 2017)
    - Public comment opened on October 4, 2016 and will remain open through December 17, 2016.
  - Health Education (revisions to begin in 2018)
  - Educational Technology (revisions to begin in 2018)
  - World and Native Languages (revisions to begin in 2020)
  - Physical Education (revisions to begin in 2020)
  - The Arts (revisions to begin in 2020)
The Zip Code Project

“Many children face challenges just getting to school, whether or not they have a quality school to attend. Left unaided, these children will often have no choice for their future but crime, welfare or other unacceptable outcomes. The Zip Code Project identifies areas of disconnected youth and focuses on bringing community resources together to help at-risk children holistically.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

The Arizona Department of Education’s Zip Code Project will establish Community Boards of Action to provide assistance to needy children in targeted zip codes.

Background:

- Statewide statistics for student dropout rates and disconnected youth suggest the need to address the issues facing disconnected youth.
-Disconnected youth are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not working or attending school.49
- In the metro areas of Phoenix and Tucson, nearly one in five young people are considered disconnected.50
- Each disconnected youth is missing out on over $695,100 over their lifetime due to decreased earnings and increased public and private expenses for health, crime and welfare.51 Arizona has over 183,000 disconnected youth which equates to $127.3 billion in lifetime economic loss.52

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• The Arizona Mayor’s Education Roundtable has reported that state and local governments are losing $1.5 billion in lost tax revenues and increased welfare costs for the more than 18,000 youth who failed to graduate in 2012\textsuperscript{53}.

• According to Measure of America research, not only are disconnected youth suffering financial losses, they are dealing with increased likelihood of chronic unemployment later in life\textsuperscript{54}. This research shows that labor force participation is important for reasons beyond earning a paycheck\textsuperscript{55}.

• Employment matters for topics such as social inclusion, self-reliance and a sense of purpose, and has tangible advantages for physical and psychological health\textsuperscript{56}.

• Youth whose parents lacked a high school diploma had higher rates of disconnection by 40 percent\textsuperscript{57}. Superintendent Douglas established the Zip Code Project to address dropout prevention and disconnected youth by targeting high-need areas.

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
Organization & Type & Zip Code \\
\hline
A For Arizona & Non-Profit & All \\
\hline
C.O.R.E. & Non-Profit & TBD (Mesa) \\
\hline
Chinle Unified School District & LEA & 86503 \\
\hline
City of Phoenix & Government & 85040, 85031 \\
\hline
City of Phoenix – Parks and Recreation & Government & 85040, 85031 \\
\hline
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\textsuperscript{55} Id.
\textsuperscript{56} Id.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>EAGLE College Prep: Maryvale</td>
<td>LEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith, and Family</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hope College and Career Readiness Academy</td>
<td>LEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA)</td>
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<td>Las Artes School</td>
<td>LEA</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth on the Rise</td>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
<td>85321 +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purpose:
The Zip Code Project focuses on underserved and disconnected (unemployed and not attending school) youth in high-need communities throughout Arizona.

- **Services Provided by the Zip Code Project:**
  - Partnership building between community-based organizations and the Arizona Department of Education to enhance services provided to youth in Arizona.
  - Collaborate with the Maricopa County-based Opportunities for Youth Leadership Council to collectively impact youth in the county.
  - Develop and maintain Dropout Prevention toolkits specifically designed to be utilized by youth, parents, and schools.
  - Assist communities with the identification of issues and roadblocks to success for the at-risk and disconnected youth in their zip codes.
  - Facilitate solution building in high-need communities to reduce and eventually end the disconnection epidemic.

Accomplishments:

- The Zip Code Project launched community meetings in Chinle, AZ (86503) on July 28, 2016. This beneficial meeting focused on youth success and roadblocks.
  - The most valuable outcome was the conclusion that social and emotional learning is a primary issue that youth face in that community. Parents are often absent due to extreme commute time, lack of employment opportunity, and/or substance abuse.
  - ADE also learned about the impressive family engagement that Chinle High School receives. The community of Chinle is proud of their youth and work to promote their success in reengagement of disconnected youth.

- Launched community meetings in Ajo, AZ (85321) on September 26, 2016.
  - One of the key takeaways from this fantastic meeting was that there are no recreational activities available for youth in Ajo. This provides a greater opportunity to be involved in non-productive and sometimes dangerous behaviors. These behaviors can lead to dropping out of high school or becoming disconnected from school and work.
  - Another major issue facing the Ajo region is the lack of steady employment opportunities. Ajo is a seasonal community with a spike in residence during the winter months. Some residents have to commute two hours to the Phoenix area for employment.

- Active member of the Leadership Council at Opportunities for Youth, a collaboration initiative of agencies and organizations to create a comprehensive system of opportunity that re-engages disconnected youth.
This initiative focuses on using a collective impact model to reach the disconnected youth in Maricopa County.

The Zip Code Project is a member of the leadership council, education momentum action team, and youth re-engagement centers action team.

- Re-launched the Zip Code Project website with additional information and easier navigation (www.azed.gov/zipcode).
  - The Zip Code Project Blog launched in October 2016 with weekly updates that will include news, zip code profiles, partner profiles, interviews, and more.
- The Zip Code Project was invited to convene with a national group of professionals in New York City to discuss issues related to disconnected youth and highlight programs that are working to help end the cycle.
- Developed more than 25 meaningful partnerships locally and nationally, including government, non-profit organizations and local education agencies.
- Published the Zip Code Project toolkit, which provides detail on disconnected youth and how the Zip Code Project is going to become a leader nationally on the issue.
Establish, in statute, a Seal of Biliteracy program that recognizes students achieving a high level of bilingual proficiency in English and one or more additional languages.

**Background:**

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed the statutory establishment of the Seal of Biliteracy Program to recognize students who are able to attain high-level proficiency in both English and one or more additional languages.
- Senate Bill 1239 was introduced during the 2016 Legislative session to create a Seal of Biliteracy to celebrate students who have reached proficiency in English and one or more world languages prior to high school graduation.
- High school students who achieve the requisite level of proficiency in English and one or more languages would qualify for the seal to be affixed on their high school transcript and diploma.
- The intent of the seal is to help students attract the interest of colleges and employers and ultimately give graduates access to greater career opportunities.

**Purpose:**

- Recognize students for their accomplishment in learning more than one language.
- Incentivize students to become proficient in languages beyond English to enhance their college and career opportunities.
- Encourage students for whom English is a second language to enrich their bilingual abilities and preserve their native language.
Accomplishments:

- Superintendent Douglas promoted the introduction and passage of Senate Bill 1239 during the 2016 Arizona Legislative Session; it later became law on May 12, 2016.
- The Seal of Biliteracy guidelines, procedures and acceptable language proficiency tests were adopted by the Arizona State Board of Education on October 24, 2016.
- The Seal of Biliteracy program officially launches in 2017 for schools to participate.
- In September 2016 Arizona received recognition for a commitment to multiliteracy and dual language education from the U.S. Department of Education at the Multiliteracy and Dual Language Learning Symposium in Washington, D.C.
Funding for Arizona JTEDs, CTE, and Related Programs

“As a strong advocate for school choice in Arizona, I am very supportive of the many education options we offer our students, especially our career and technical education programs. I recognize that one size doesn’t fit all, and it is important that we continue to offer our students a variety of education paths so they can pursue their talents and dreams.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Support funding for Arizona Joint Technical Education Districts (JTEDs), Career and Technical Education (CTE) and any related programs.

Background:

- State aid funding for JTEDs was earmarked to be cut by $30 million with the FY17 budget.
- Senate Bill 1525 restored funding and initiated new requirements for JTED eligibility.
  Implementation has included the following:
    o All 73 approved Career and Technical Education programs are being reviewed for compliance and eligibility per the requirements of A.R.S. § 15-391.3 and 15-391.5.
    o The Arizona Technical Skills Assessments system is entering its next phase to increase test fairness and reliability and ensure compliance with SB1525.
    o CTE/JTED program reviews have been scheduled through December 2018 to ensure compliance and eligibility for all courses/programs with the new requirements set forth in SB1525.

Purpose:

- Funding for JTEDs and CTE was to be severely cut, which would have reduced the number of students participating in the programs and in turn could have led to:
  o Lower graduation rates
  o Lower academic performance
  o Reduced post-secondary transitions
  o Reduced workforce development
  o Increased social costs
  o Fewer young people escaping poverty and achieving economic independence
• Such a drastic cut to funding may have shuttered some CTE programs entirely. It is projected that, in the first year of cuts, 30% of CTE teachers would have been let go. Those programs would close, and any future attempts at getting those specialized teachers and programs back may have been difficult, if not impossible.

Accomplishments:

• Through a grassroots effort and extensive support from business and industry, educators, professional organizations, community members and other stakeholders, $29 of the $30 million was restored with the signing of Senate Bill 1525 on February 18, 2016.

• The passage of the legislation included significant JTED reform which set new eligibility requirements for JTED courses and JTED programs.
  - Thirteen collaborative meetings have been held with various CTE/JTED stakeholders to discuss the implementation of SB1525 and CTE program eligibility for JTED funding.
  - Each approved CTE program will have a verification template identifying JTED eligibility and compliance with the new requirements.
  - CTE program working groups convened to review JTED eligibility for 23 programs. The groups included CTE Administrators, JTED representatives, CTE teachers, business and industry representatives and CTE/ADE program staff and directors.
  - Industry recognized certifications have been identified for 53 of the CTE programs.58
  - A revised draft JTED eligibility list has been disseminated to all CTE stakeholders.
  - Per A.R.S. § 15-391.5(b), the Technical Skills Assessment System demonstrating skills, knowledge and competencies in CTE programs has been revised to meet the requirements of SB1525.
  - Two quarterly reports have been submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee per Session Law describing the activities conducted by ADE/CTE in the implementation process.

Engaging the families of Latino students will help them better support their children in school and prepare them for future success.

**Background:**

- True parental involvement in our schools begins at the local level, where parents directly interact with teachers and educators.
- Research on parent and family involvement at school shows the following:
  a. Schools that establish and maintain effective two-way communication with families increase participation in the learning process;\(^{59}\)
  b. Families who engage their children in at-home learning activities and monitor homework help students achieve academic expectations;\(^{60}\) and
  c. Families who understand developmental milestones and academic expectations are confident and guide their children toward scholastic and social success.\(^ {61}\)

**Purpose:**

- Actively involve Latino families in their children’s education and ensure they are included in decisions made at their schools.

**Accomplishments:**

- The Latino Education Action Committee worked with ADE’s Family Engagement Initiative, which was established to build and strengthen partnerships between families, schools, and communities, to identify schools with high-density Latino student populations that could benefit from increased family engagement efforts.

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\(^{59}\) [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/mps_model/school/sixtypes.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/mps_model/school/sixtypes.htm)

\(^{60}\) [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/mps_model/school/sixtypes.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/mps_model/school/sixtypes.htm)

During the 2015-16 school year, ADE’s Migrant Education Program held four *State Migrant Program Action Committee* meetings. Topics included, but were not limited to: education, community supports, resources and training to encourage parental involvement leading to student success and joint decision making.

The Migrant Education Program also published quarterly bilingual newsletters featuring information and resources for families and school staff.

ADE developed additional resources for Latino families, including Spanish translations for the 2016 *We Are Listening Tour*, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) resources, social media announcements, and translation functionality on the Arizona Department of Education website redesign.
Expanded Support for English Language Learners

Provide additional support to Latino students who are not yet English language proficient and are at risk of falling behind their peers.

Background:

- Latino students account for 85 percent of English language learners in Arizona.\(^{62}\)
- Effective September, 2006 under the authority of Laws 2006. Chapter 4, the Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force was established.
- The Task Force was charged with developing and adopting research based models of structured English immersion (SEI) programs to be used in school districts and charter schools in Arizona.
- A.R.S. 15-756-01 requires that the models include a minimum of four hours per day of English language development (ELD) for the first year in which a pupil is classified as an ELL.
- In December 2014, the State Board of Education (the entity which currently assumes the role of the ELL Task Force) adopted refinements to the SEI Models which allow LEAs flexibility within the Task Force adopted Models. This flexibility provides the opportunity for Intermediate ELLs in their second or subsequent year of ELD to reduce up to two hours of the required ELD 4 hour block.

Purpose:

- Better support the needs of Arizona’s ELLs.
- Identify issues Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are facing with the implementation of the Four-Hour Model.
- Develop solutions to any identified issues that will meet the requirements of A.R.S. 15-756.01, continue to yield success in the language acquisition process, and further academic success for ELLs.

Accomplishment:

- The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) met with its Latino American Education Action Committee in a summit of highly effective practitioners of ELLs and stakeholders who identified concerns and challenges surrounding the implementation of the Four-Hour Model.
- ADE addressed these concerns in follow-up meetings and will continue to meet with ELL stakeholders in 2016-2017 to communicate best practices regarding the Refinements, including clarification on how to identify children for reduction to two hour immersion and finally for full inclusion in English-proficient classes.
Cross Stateline School Attendance

“My visit to Window Rock last June opened my eyes to an appalling realization that Native American students have been severely deprived of their right to an accessible public education. After hearing about this unacceptable situation, I pledged to assist and support this community. This intergovernmental agreement is a step in the right direction, but there is still much work to be done.”

-Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Allow Native American students to attend schools in other states that may be nearer to their residence. Arizona has nations and tribes whose boundaries cross state lines, but because students are required to attend a school within their resident state many students are forced to travel significantly farther to school than if they were allowed to cross those state lines and attend a school within closer proximity of their residence. Allowing this flexibility will require multiple states to agree to an “open enrollment” for districts in adjoining states.

Background:

- Tribal borders cross state lines and are generally in rural areas, with vast distances between schools.
- Many times Native American students must travel in excess of an hour each way to go to a public school in their resident state when, for a large portion of this population, there is a public school in a neighboring state that is significantly closer.
- Frequent inclement weather on tribal land and poor road quality prevents school access and decreases student engagement, especially in areas where students are required to travel a considerable distance to attend an in-state school.
- A.R.S. § 15-823(F): The governing board may admit children who are residents of the United States, but who are nonresidents of this state, without payment of tuition if all of the following conditions exist:
  1. The child is a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe.
  2. The child resides on Indian lands that are under the jurisdiction of the tribe of which the child is a member.
  3. The area in the boundaries of the reservation where the child resides is located both in this state and in another state of the United States.
  4. The governing board enters into an intergovernmental agreement with the governing board of the school district in another state in which the nonresident child resides. The
intergovernmental agreement shall specify the number of nonresident children admitted in this state and the number of resident children that are admitted by the governing board in another state.

Purpose:

• Help reduce transportation time and allow for better access to schools for Native American students.

Accomplishments:

• In August 2015, ADE’s Director of Indian Education spoke to New Mexico leaders on this issue at the New Mexico Indian Affairs Committee meeting.
• Since then, the Director of Indian Education has worked with ADE’s Director of Legal Services to start the process of establishing inter-governmental agreements between the school districts involved.
• ADE staff worked collaboratively with districts to address the main administrative concerns raised, namely, reporting requirements and funding.
• Window Rock Unified School District (AZ) and the Gallup-McKinley County School District (NM) Governing Boards have passed an IGA for students crossing the state line.
• An agreement between Red Mesa Unified School District USD (AZ) and Central Consolidated School District (NM) is expected in the near future.
Determine Educational and Other Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

“With nearly 30,000 homeless students enrolled in public school in Arizona, we must do better at addressing their needs. Arizona’s children experiencing homelessness deserve access to a high-quality education and ADE will focus efforts on supporting them in and out of school.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Conduct an informal needs assessment to better understand the resources needed for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed conducting an informal needs assessment to better understand the resources needed for children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- In early 2016, ADE program staff worked with targeted local educational agencies that enroll proportionally high numbers of homeless students to conduct a needs assessment of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Purpose:

- In order to better support the academic achievement of children and youth experiencing homelessness, the agency developed a mechanism to better assess the resources needed and better inform the provision of services.

Accomplishments:

- Program staff completed an informal needs assessment to better inform future provision of services to children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Based upon the results of the needs assessment, two broad categories were determined as areas to support and develop in the 2016-2017 school year:
  - Policies and Procedures – Identify agencies who support local districts and schools in their efforts to review/revise policies that create barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.
Internal and External Collaboration – Develop collaborative partnerships with internal and external players to better support the administrative oversight of the Education for Homeless Children & Youth program at local educational agencies.
Support Homeless Students’ Educational and Other Needs

“As a state, it is so important that we provide support to our most at-risk students to give them the opportunity to thrive. I am proud of our strong, dedicated efforts to better support Arizona’s youth experiencing homelessness. By giving these children strong support, we are giving them the tools to a successful future. But as with all accomplishments, we are not done and must continue to fight for them.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Partner with state and local agencies and organizations to support the educational and social needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness, bringing a more holistic approach to supporting students.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed added supports for students’ educational and social needs.
- Program staff developed existing relationships with non-profit programs supporting homeless children and youth, including:
  - Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness
  - Homeless Youth Connection
- Additional outreach and partnership were needed to best support children and youth experiencing homelessness, ensuring the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness were considered in the planning and execution of homeless service delivery.

Purpose:

- Support the educational and social needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Develop and improve partnerships with state/local/social agencies to support families.
- Effectively integrate additional support strategies into the services provided to children and youth experiencing homelessness.
Accomplishments:

- Program staff developed ongoing, sustained partnerships with the following organizations:
  - Arizona Department of Housing
  - Arizona Department of Health Services
  - UMOM New Day Centers
  - Save-the-Family
- Through these ongoing partnerships, the Arizona Department of Education has been engaged in conversations to request additional resources to specifically support youth experiencing homelessness in the Homeless Continuum of Care.
Prevent Students Facing Homelessness from Being Stigmatized

"Homeless students experience many more challenges than the average student. I want to make sure that the state is properly supporting these students, and that we are doing our very best to reduce or remove entirely the stigma a homeless student may face. By properly educating our schools and communities, we can come together to offer these students the encouragement and support they need to be successful."

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Review and develop best practices for students facing homelessness to ensure students are not stigmatized.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can't Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed the review and development of best practices for students facing homeless to ensure students are not stigmatized.
- Homelessness is a devastating circumstance for any child or youth and the stresses of homelessness are multiplied compared to their housed peers. The myriad of challenges faced by children and youth experiencing homelessness puts these students at risk of dropping out or failing in school. Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees rights and services for homeless students.
- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education statute mandates local educational agencies not “stigmatize” children and youth experiencing homelessness. The statute requires State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to “ensure that homeless children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.”

Purpose:

- Students and parents may hide their homelessness because they fear they will be judged or stigmatized.
- By ensuring children and youth experiencing homelessness are not stigmatized while attending school, they may enter school each day ready and eager to engage and learn.
Accomplishments:

- Program staff researched stigmatization best practices and provided materials to all Local Educational Agency Homeless Liaisons supporting the reduction of stigma for children, youth and families experiencing homelessness. Best practices include:
  - Review identification procedures
  - Review enrollment procedures
  - Ensure full participation in extra-curricular activities
- Upon request, additional technical assistance is provided to local educational agencies, to ensure policies, procedures and practices are sensitive to the stigma children and youth experience while homeless.
"Family engagement is the key to a student’s success, so I tasked the agency to dedicate time researching the topic, with a strong focus on the barriers of families experiencing homelessness. Now that we have a better understanding of this topic, this next year will be spent on family engagement to increase parental involvement for those families."

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Determine the barriers families experiencing homelessness face that limit parental or family involvement.

**Background:**

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed a study to determine the barrier families experiencing homelessness face that limit parental or family involvement.
- Parental involvement of families experiencing homelessness tends to be minimal.
- Often times, transportation is the most significant barrier that prevents families from taking part in school activities and opportunities.

**Purpose:**

- By addressing the barriers to accessing parental involvement, students experiencing homelessness may make stronger gains in academic achievement.

**Accomplishments:**

- Program staff researched parental involvement and provided materials to all Local Educational Agency Homeless Liaisons supporting the engagement of parents experiencing homelessness in the education of their children.
- Parents of children and youth experiencing homelessness typically have a limited ability to support the education of their children. However, the National Center for Homeless Education has determined a few areas where parents can support their children during times of mobility. Those areas include:
  - Make sure your child goes to school every day and arrives rested and fed.
  - Provide a quiet place for your child to do homework and set aside time every day to help your child with homework.
- Pay attention to your child’s health needs and take care of problems early.
- Read to your child every day; for older children, set aside time each day for you and your child to read together silently. Talk about what you read.
- Listen to what your child shares with you and talk about any problems he or she is having. You can also talk about these problems with a teacher or school counselor.
- Encourage your child to participate in things like sports and music.

- The Homeless Education Program also actively participates in the Family Engagement Initiative within the Arizona Department of Education, ensuring children and youth experiencing homelessness are represented within the initiative.
Actively Engage All Arizonans

“During my statewide tours across Arizona, I heard from many communities with very diverse backgrounds about the crucial need for education reform. I listened as each community shared their unique requests and heard several consistent pleas statewide. The knowledge I gained from these tours has set the foundation for my education agenda in the upcoming years.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Background:

- In 2015 the Superintendent pledged to travel across the state each year to listen to suggestions from parents, educators and members of the public. The comments would then be reviewed and used to develop plans to improve education.

Purpose:

- Empower Arizonans to be active participants in their education system.
- Continually improve education on an annual basis to meet the current and future needs of Arizona students.

Details of Proposal:

- The We Are Listening tour was developed to actively engage Arizonans in a discussion of statewide education issues.
- Because specific issues impact individual communities, the tour also took into consideration local topics like parental rights or assistance, curriculum concerns, and classroom-specific educator suggestions.
- The We Heard You tour was developed to share the Superintendent’s visions for an outstanding education system for Arizona children, which is based on what she heard on the We Are Listening tour.
Accomplishments:

- On her 2015 We Are Listening Tour, Superintendent Douglas held 15 meetings to hear from citizens regarding Arizona’s education system. She compiled all of the comments and developed a comprehensive strategy to fix Arizona’s education system. The 156-page plan, called AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait!, was released to the public in October 2015.
- This was the first time a detailed written plan based on public comments was implemented to improve Arizona’s education system.
- Superintendent Douglas then conducted the We Heard You Tour, including 11 additional meetings, to provide Arizonans an opportunity to voice their feedback on the proposals in the plan.
- Since then, the Arizona Department of Education has diligently worked to analyze, evaluate and implement as many of the plan’s proposals as practical. The 2017 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan lists the accomplishments and updates from the 2015 plan and features new proposals based on this year’s comments.
- Superintendent Douglas also collected more than 20,000 pieces of public comment used in the creation of the Arizona State Plan required by the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Superintendent Douglas is committed to constant public engagement as a means to develop the Department’s initiatives and policies, and the We Are Listening Tour will continue in 2017.
Support Meaningful Family, School and Community Engagement through Councils and Action Committees

Provide increased opportunities for all families to partner with schools and communities to support student success.

Background:

- True family engagement in our schools begins at the local level, where administrators and school staff have direct contact with families. As noted in the following excerpts from Superintendent Douglas’ family engagement proclamation, research on family engagement at school shows:
  64 65 66:
  a. Families who are welcome in a safe and healthy learning environment that respects cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic differences build positive relationships with school staff;
  b. Schools that establish and maintain effective two-way communication with families increase participation in the learning process;
  c. Families who engage their children in at-home learning activities and monitor homework help students achieve academic expectations;
  d. Schools that include families in the decision-making process develop shared goals and actions to improve schools and students’ education;
  e. Families who understand developmental milestones and academic expectations are confident and guide their children toward scholastic and social success; and
  f. Communities that collaborate to strengthen family engagement initiatives impact positive student outcomes.

64 Head Start, Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework, [https://goo.gl/k0nYtL](https://goo.gl/k0nYtL)
65 National PTA, National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, [https://goo.gl/dbaKC8](https://goo.gl/dbaKC8)
66 National Network of Partnership School, Six Types of Involvement: Keys to Successful Partnerships, [https://goo.gl/XzNEix](https://goo.gl/XzNEix)
Purpose:

- Actively involve all families in their children’s education and ensure they are included in decisions made at their schools.

Accomplishments:

- The Superintendent established education action committees and councils to engage members of the community in an effort to support minority students and encourage cultural inclusivity across our state. One of the top priorities for the action committees is to develop, implement and support initiatives to increase the number of their community members who pursue education as a career.
- In addition, each group has been asked to develop other actionable proposals that they believe will lead to improved outcomes for the students they represent.

  1. African American Education Action Committee
  2. Asian American/Pacific Islander Education Action Committee
  3. Latino American Education Action Committee
  4. Native American Education Advisory Council

- Parent representatives are required participants in state level program advisory groups, providing an additional opportunity for the voice of parents to be heard to influence state policies. Examples include the State Migrant Parent Advisory Council and Title I Committee of Practitioners.
- ADE’s Family Engagement Initiative, which was established to build and strengthen partnerships between families, schools, and communities, will consult with the councils, action committees and projects as needed.
Preservation of Native American Language and Culture

“There is no more underserved set of children in Arizona than our Native American population. As a state with such a diverse number of tribes and nations and representing such an important part of its formation and ongoing success, it is unacceptable to me that the education of these students has been so neglected.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Preserve Native American languages and cultures to prevent them from disappearing as a result of disuse and lack of integration with society.

Background:

- Superintendent Douglas established her Native American Education Advisory Council to identify issues facing Native American students and to develop action plans to better support their achievement and future success.
- Across the world, native languages are slowly becoming extinct. In Arizona, our Native American population faced the same challenge as many others, where for many year speaking their native tongue was punished or met with disapproval and they were forced to use English only.
- Our tribes and nations are on the brink of losing native speakers.67

Purpose:

- Arizona should provide native language instruction both on and off reservations to both Native Americans and non-Native Americans in order to preserve these languages.

Accomplishments:

Through dedicated workshops and outreach efforts by ADE, the number of teachers certifying to teach Native Languages has increased immensely. Based on numbers provided by ADE Teacher Certification:

- The total number of teachers certified to teach a Native language went from 107 in 2015 to 134 in 2016, a 25 percent increase.

The total number of teachers certified to teach a Native language went from 19 in 2012 to 134 in 2016.

Teachers certified to teach Akimel O’otham went from 0 to 4 in 2016.

Teachers certified to teach Apache went from 9 to 21 from 2012 to 2016.

Teachers certified to teach Hualapai went from 0 to 1 in 2016.

Teachers certified to teach Navajo went from 10 to 97 from 2012 to 2016.

Teachers certified to teach Tohono O’odham went from 0 to 9 from 2014 to 2016.

The number of Native languages being taught by certified teachers went from 2 to 7 from 2012 to 2016.

**Native American Language & Culture Programs (numbers based on ADE survey results):**

In school year (SY) 2015-2016, 710 students completed a Native American language course; this year, 1,779 students are currently enrolled in a Native American language course.

In SY 2015-2016, 683 students completed a Native American culture class; 1,722 are currently enrolled in a Native American culture class this year. (Note: 23 are being taught Navajo at South Mountain Community College.)

- Reporting schools had a total of 21 Native Language teachers each year.
- In both SY 2015-2016 and SY 2016-2017, the following languages were being taught:
  - Akimel O’otham
  - Apache
  - Navajo
  - Tohono O’odham
  - Yavapai

**Seal of Biliteracy Program:**

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed the statutory establishment of the Seal of Biliteracy Program to recognize students’ high-level bilingual proficiency in English and one or more additional languages, including Native American languages.
- Superintendent Douglas promoted the introduction and passage of Senate Bill 1239, the Seal of Biliteracy Program, during the 2016 Arizona Legislative Session and the bill became law on May 12, 2016.
- The Seal of Biliteracy program will officially launch in 2017. Native American community members participated in the working group to develop the requirements to represent the Native American languages.
Comprehensive Education Resources and Support for Parents

Provide parents with an easily accessible system of resources and supports to answer questions, address concerns, and promote effective involvement in their child’s education.

Background:

- Many parents who attended the 2015-16 We Are Listening Tour events discussed some of the complex issues facing their children.
- Resources for those parents will better equip them to advocate for their children and aid parents in helping their child learn at home.

Purpose:

- Empower parents to be active participants in education of their children and help them navigate the many situations they may encounter as their students move through our school system.

Accomplishments:

- To elevate the significance of parental engagement, the Arizona Department of Education’s stated mission was updated by Superintendent Douglas to includes parental engagement: “To serve Arizona’s education community, and actively engage parents, to ensure every student has access to an excellent education.”
- A wide range of resources to promote effective engagement in their child’s education are now available on the ADE’s new Parent Gateway website: www.azed.gov/parents.
- An Ombudsman position has been created at ADE to field questions and identify supports for parents, particularly if a local LEA has been unable to assist the parent.
Strengthen Student Data Protection Policies

“Student data should be protected with the care that parents expect and deserve. I’m committed to strengthening our data security and will empower parents and schools with the information they need to ensure student data is zealously guarded at all levels of Arizona’s education system. Data can be a transformative tool in classrooms when in the hands of our excellent educators, but we must not share it carelessly.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Protect the rights of Arizona parents and students by strengthening data privacy management practices at ADE.

Background:

- During the We Are Listening Tour, parents and citizens across Arizona expressed that they are concerned about unnecessary student data collection and sharing.
- ADE’s former policy on sharing student data with external partners was nowhere near stringent enough and has been modified by the Superintendent to ensure that access to data is limited to cases that directly benefit the children of Arizona.
- Access to critical data is not available through the internet or remote access.
- ADE is developing guidelines and advice for LEAs on how to identify, store and protect critical student, parent and employee data. LEAs are sometimes unaware that surveys and other information contain Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protected data.

Purpose:

- Allow authorized external partners to conduct needed research that will improve education in Arizona while placing the highest level of security and protection on our students’ data.
- Protect student data at all levels by handling it with the utmost caution.
- Ensure appropriate enforcement of FERPA.
- Critical data will not leave the building electronically. Those wishing to access such data will have controlled physical access in an ADE facility with tracking of everything they have used and for what purpose.
Accomplishments:

- ADE has implemented a system that allows for innovative and cutting-edge research to be conducted that improves teaching and learning in Arizona for Arizona’s students, while strengthening the protections around students’ most private educational records.
- Under the new process, data that can be directly tracked back to an individual student never leaves the security of ADE’s system for use in research studies.
- Researchers wishing to conduct work using Arizona students’ data must submit a thorough and detailed application, which is vetted by many levels of ADE staff. Only the most rigorous, qualified applications are accepted.
- Once approved, researchers must conduct their work on a highly secure system with supervision by an ADE staff member at all times.
- Researchers are only allowed to take their findings and inferences with them at the conclusion of their study; thus, student data never leaves ADE.
- This new process exceeds requirements under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and has been recognized as a model for other states.
Encourage Local Education Agencies to Strengthen Family Engagement

Provide Arizona LEAs (school districts and charter schools) with resources and proven practices that can help strengthen and sustain strong relationships with families.

Background:

- True family engagement in our schools begins at the local level, where administrators and school staff have direct contact with families.

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of the many benefits of parent and family engagement in a child’s education among administrators and school staff.
- Provide educators with tools to strengthen relationships with parents and families in order to increase student achievement.

Accomplishments:

- Superintendent Douglas proclaimed November 2015 to be Family Engagement Month to celebrate successful family/school partnerships and feature high-impact strategies to build and sustain family engagement programs.
  - The 2015-16 State Strategic Plan goal to have 50 percent of the ADE program area units support one of the six evidence-based principles of effective family engagement during November 2015 Family Engagement Month was achieved with an impressive 94 percent participation through a variety of family, school, and community activities.
  - The November 2015 Title I MEGA Conference featured a keynote presentation and numerous workshops focused on high-impact family engagement strategies. Educators reported principles and practices offered during the keynote presentation and breakout session by the National Network of Partnership Schools founder and director, Dr. Joyce Epstein, would be implemented with high expectations for success.
Parental Engagement in Statewide Education Policy Development

Actively seek out parents for the purpose of hearing their thoughts and concerns about education policy in Arizona and consider their input when making decisions that impact their children.

Background:

- Superintendent Douglas created the 2015-16 We Are Listening Tour events to increase opportunities for parent participation when important education decisions are made at the state level.
- Parents provide a valuable, unique perspective in conversations about our education system.

Purpose:

- Ensure the voices of Arizona parents are heard as policy makers at the state level discuss significant changes to our education system.

Accomplishments:

- During the 2015-16 school year, Superintendent Douglas led 25 statewide We Are Listening Tour and We Heard You Tour events, receiving valuable input from the public, and in particular parents, on issues that are of concern to them. Comments were considered in the development of the Superintendent’s AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait! proposals and other state policy decisions.
- ADE established the AzMERIT Parent/Community Sensitivity Review Committee, comprised of a wide variety of community stakeholders, to review AzMERIT questions for any inherent bias that might be present, which represented one of the first steps toward making AzMERIT a test that truly belongs to Arizona.
Progress Updates from the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan

“I am so proud of the accomplishments that have been achieved and the progress that has been made for the students of Arizona over the past year. I created my 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! plan with direct feedback from Arizonans to make sure they have a voice in improving our state’s education system. Education is constantly evolving, so it is important that my tours continue and new proposals are created. But, it is just as important that we continue the fight to accomplish and advance the original proposals to create the best education system for Arizona.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas
Redesign Arizona’s Accountability System

“Tests scores alone cannot provide a complete picture of how a school or district is performing. Most of our current testing is better at measuring the demographics of a given neighborhood than the efforts of either the teacher or the student. If we look beyond test scores to see what truly makes a school successful, we can give parents the information they need to find the right school for their children. By reducing the emphasis on high stakes testing in our accountability system, schools can start focusing more on instruction and less on test preparation."

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Restructure Arizona’s school accountability system to focus on multiple aspects of student achievement and school performance beyond test results.

Background:

- Test scores in English Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics have been the overwhelming factor when determining school letter grades in the past.
- Parents and educators on the We Are Listening Tour expressed interest in seeing an emphasis placed on more than just standardized tests.
- Based on the current grading methodology, a “D” school can have multiple programs in place to prevent bullying, provide transportation, engage parents, and enhance other important aspects of a student’s education, while schools with a higher rating may invest solely in test preparation.
Purpose:

- Create one accountability system that meets federal and state requirements.
- Hold schools accountable for improving academic outcomes for all students and encourage innovation that will provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for success in college or a career upon graduation.

Progress Update:

- ADE is the liaison to the State Board of Education’s A-F Ad Hoc Committee, which will design and draft policy regarding a state accountability system.
- ADE is working closely with our Accountability Advisory Group (AAG) of external stakeholders to assist in the review of impact data and analyses requested by the A-F Ad Hoc Committee.
- Feedback from AAG, the requests for information regarding an A-F accountability system collected in August, 2016, and feedback gathered from the public during the We Heard You tour fall 2016 have been provided to the A-F Ad Hoc Committee to assist them in their decision making process.
- A new state accountability system will be proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee for adoption by the State Board of Education.
Reduce Emphasis on Mandated Statewide Testing

“When I was a child we would take pop quizzes and other tests during class. Our teacher would then see where we were based on our scores and help the kids that were falling behind. In high school, if you planned to go to college you would take the ACT or SAT as required for college applications. But here in Arizona it seems that testing has been at different times implemented to hold schools accountable, then to hold teachers accountable, and then to hold children accountable. Now it seems we test simply because if we don’t we lose federal money.

“We need to re-examine why we test students at all. My plan is to significantly reduce the emphasis on AzMERIT as the only state level assessment that measures students’ proficiency in English language arts and math. Teachers and schools should be using a variety of assessment tools in thoughtful ways so that teachers know, on a real-time basis, if a student is on the path to proficiency or not and can in turn provide assistance on an individualized basis. Mandated statewide testing should only be confirming what teachers and schools already know about student performance.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Proposals:

1) Ensure all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have access to high-speed broadband networks that can support student learning.
2) Reduce the length of the AzMERIT test.
3) Provide support to LEAs, schools, and teachers to guide their thoughtful use of a variety of assessment tools through the Menu of Assessments.
Ensure all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have access to high-speed broadband networks that can support student learning

“For too many schools and districts in our state’s rural areas, reliable high-speed internet access is simply not an option. This type of inequity is one of the reasons we so often see achievement gaps among our students, and we must address the issue if we hope to see improvement. Arizona has the opportunity to be a leader in expanding broadband technology, and I am excited to help make that a reality.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Continue to increase the state’s broadband infrastructure so every student has reliable access to the virtual tools they need to be successful. Additionally, work to ensure that all Arizona schools have the technological capability to administer appropriate assessments in an online format as desired.

Background:

- During the We Are Listening Tour, Arizonans stressed the need for increased classroom technology, citing as one example that many schools do not meet the current need even for state mandated student testing to be completed online.
- The world is becoming more technology-driven, and without consistent high-speed internet access schools may struggle to keep up.
- Many LEAs have expressed a desire to use computer-based assessment models for both formative and summative tests, but may not have the ability to do so because of limited broadband access.
- Superintendent Douglas has expressed a desire to keep paper testing as an option available to LEAs while making online assessments a viable choice for any school or district wishing to employ them.
- Formative testing is assessment FOR learning that provides teachers with information about student understanding when instruction can still be adjusted.
- Summative Testing is assessment OF learning that measures student learning, at a particular point in time, relative to content standards.
- Sixty percent of Arizona’s schools had the capabilities to administer the AzMERIT online while only 40 percent actually administered it online.
Purpose:

- Improve broadband access to ensure all students, no matter where they are in Arizona, can take advantage of valuable classroom technologies and improve their technology skills.

Details of Proposal:

- Develop a statewide broadband access program allowing reliable connectivity between schools and ADE.
- Advocate for increased classroom technology funding.

Progress Updates:

- ADE has continued to develop the statewide E-Rate broadband access program, and in 2015 secured an all-time high of $86 million to help LEAs gain access to technology that allows reliable connectivity between schools and ADE.
- Typically, only 30 percent of E-Rate funds are granted, but Arizona has had 65 percent of its funding approved. E-Rate has already benefitted 545 schools, 3.2 million students and 2,229 buildings throughout the state.
- Those districts and schools that have received E-Rate funds have witnessed dramatic increases in their broadband speed.
  - Phoenix Union High School District, which secured $1 million in E-Rate funds, has improved from not having any broadband to a 1 GB per second connection.
- For 2016, Arizona has already requested $90.6 million in E-Rate funds.
- In March 2016, Arizona was awarded the 2016 K-12 Broadband and Digital Learning Policy Academy grant as part of a partnership between ADE and the Governor’s Office.
- The grant is designed to help provide broadband access to underserved schools and areas of the state and allows Arizona to receive $10 of funding for every dollar that the state invests into the broadband initiative.
- Ultimately, the project could bring more than $1 billion worth of services to the state.
- Only six percent of Arizona schools meet the FCC target of $3 per MB for internet access; ADE’s vision is for a statewide network capable of delivering 100 kbps per student to every school.
- ADE hopes to provide rural schools with multiple options for internet connectivity that can offer up to 1 GB per student.
- ADE applied for and was awarded a grant to get school districts the resources they need to expand their broadband capabilities. ADE is working collaboratively with the Governor’s office and the Education Super Highway to get up to $1.3 billion worth of broadband services to underserved schools.
Provide Professional Development on the Assessing for Learning: The Formative Assessment Process

Shift the focus away from teachers’ reliance on end of the year testing to training teachers and giving them the tools they need to be more effective in assessing for learning in their own classrooms.

Background

- The We Are Listening Tour comments called for an immediate reduction or elimination of testing for students.
- Superintendent Douglas is dedicated to reducing testing (state mandated and district applied) by changing the reliance on summative tests and focusing on assessing for learning that teachers use daily in their classrooms.
- This assessing for learning is called Formative Assessment. It is part of a teacher’s instruction and takes place throughout a daily lesson plan.
- Studies have shown that of all the things that happen in a classroom to help students learn, teachers have the greatest impact on student success and that impact is even greater in poverty classrooms.68
- Superintendent Douglas believes that all teachers deserve to have whatever they need to do the most important job in Arizona, teaching our children.

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Purpose:

- Support teachers by providing them with the training and tools they need to improve their instruction and understand how to assess students for learning in normal day-to-day teaching in their own classrooms.

Progress Updates:

- To reduce duplicative testing practices, ADE is developing a tool for use by schools to aid them in determining the number and types of assessments being utilized.
- ADE will seek funding for professional development in Formative Assessment (assessing for learning).
- ADE will use the Formative Assessment Insight training (tested and used by more than 1000 teachers in Arizona in 2015-2016) to offer professional development opportunities.
Superintendent Douglas supported this effort and proposes to offer the same type of training to teachers who were unable to take advantage of the training last year.

- Under this proposal, ADE would provide “tried and true” economical and timely training for teachers on assessing students for learning and how to use tools and strategies in their own classrooms. This would lead to improved teaching and learning that results in preparing the children of Arizona to become lifelong learners and productive citizens.
Support the Menu of Assessments

To reduce duplicative testing, allow high quality, locally-procured assessments aligned with AzMERIT test standards to be used in place of AzMERIT testing.

Background:

- In 2016, the Arizona legislature passed the Menu of Assessments bill (A.R.S. 15-741.02).
- Beginning in school year 2017-18, high schools may select from a menu of assessments to administer in lieu of AzMERIT.
- Beginning in school year 2018-19, schools with grades 3 through 8 may select from a menu of assessments to administer in lieu of AzMERIT.
- The intent of this legislation is to reduce duplicative testing.

Purpose:

- Reduce student testing time by eliminating duplicative testing using the Menu of Assessments.

Details of the Proposal:

- Help LEAs and schools make good decisions about which assessments to purchase.
- Provide technical support to the State Board of Education in its development of the rules and procedures for the approval of assessments for inclusion on the Menu.
- Seek input from LEAs and schools about what guidance they need from ADE regarding the use of the Menu of Assessments.

Progress Updates:

- Since passage of the Menu of Assessments, ADE has been working in collaboration with the Arizona State Board of Education and various stakeholders on the development of the Menu.
- Once the Menu is established, ADE will look to expand it with legislation that allows all schools, regardless of their performance, to utilize an assessment that meets the needs of their students.
Prepare New Teachers for the Actualities of the Profession

“When a college student makes the decision to become a teacher, he or she should have access not only to the best possible preparation programs, but should also be made aware of the realities of a teacher’s day-to-day responsibilities. While student teaching is certainly a beneficial part of the preparation process, it may not provide future educators with a full picture of some of the challenges they will face when they begin managing a classroom on their own. Providing a more realistic experience for these teacher candidates is one way we can begin to address our alarming attrition rates among first- and second-year teachers.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Partner and enhance relationships with institutes of higher education to ensure new teachers are effectively prepared for all aspects of teaching when they enter the classroom for the first time.

Background:

• While student teaching is a requirement of teaching candidates, it may not adequately prepare teachers for their classroom if they are not exposed to the more challenging aspects of being an outstanding teacher during college.

• Other programs have had success exposing students to a classroom setting as soon as they declare an education major. They are paired not just with master teachers with great classroom management skills, but also with classes where discipline is a serious issue. This allows students to change their course of study early if teaching is not the right field for them.

• 46 percent of new teachers leave within 4 years nationally.69 During this same school year, 24 percent of first-year teachers and 20 percent of second-year teachers left their positions and were not reported as teaching in Arizona.70 This is after teachers attended four to five years of college and accumulated significant student debt.

• Many teachers cite high paperwork demands and the number of required meetings as reasons they are leaving the profession.71

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70 Id.
71 Id.
Purpose:

- Expose educators early in training to the workplace bureaucracy, classroom management and reporting requirements that they will face once they complete their degrees.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE experts will work with teacher colleges across the state to determine teachers have access to necessary training and resources to be the most effective teachers upon entering the classroom.
- Arizona’s teaching universities are already heavily engaged in making changes in these areas and are outstanding partners.

Progress Updates:

- In addition to its continued partnerships with teaching colleges and universities, ADE will utilize newly collected data in an effort to better understand if a disproportionate number of teachers from particular preparation programs are leaving the profession sooner than their colleagues.
- The goal of this new analysis will be twofold:
  - Help identify best practices in programs producing teachers who stay in the profession for longer periods of time; and
  - Share those high-efficacy strategies with preparation programs that may demonstrate a lower percentage of long-term teaching professionals
Teacher Mentoring and Structured Induction Programs

“One of the main reasons our new teachers are leaving the profession at such a high rate is a lack of support and assistance when they begin their careers in the classroom. If we hope to address our state’s teacher shortage, we must develop new ways to ensure that our new teachers feel that they have the structured support they need to be successful. Strong mentoring and induction programs do just that, so we will help our districts and schools establish successful systems that consistently keep our new teachers in their classrooms for years to come.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Encourage all Arizona LEAs to adopt support programs that give new teachers the help they need to grow, succeed and stay in the classroom.

Background:

- The lack of assistance and supportive teaching conditions are two chief reasons why teachers leave schools or the profession entirely.\(^{72}\)
- These factors are particularly important in schools serving some of our most vulnerable students, including those faced with high poverty rates, high percentages of special education and ELL students, and significant student mobility and absence rates.
- Due to drastic budget cuts in the last few years, many support structures for new teachers have been reduced or eliminated and there is currently no state support for this critical component of teacher retention.
- A recent ADE survey revealed that 26 percent of LEAs did not have a mentoring program at all, and less than two thirds offered their employees a stipend to mentor new teachers. In this same survey, 32 percent of LEAs indicated they do not have a structured induction program for new teachers.\(^{73}\)
- The cost of implementing an effective retention and quality induction program is estimated to be around $6,000 per teacher, which could mean a significant savings for schools considering the cost of recruiting strong candidates to fill vacant positions.

\(^{72}\) Goldrick, L., Policy Director, National Teacher Center, 2014, July, National Public Radio Marketplace

Purpose:

- Reduce the number of new teachers leaving the profession because of a perceived lack of support or a feeling of being overwhelmed.
- Set strong foundations for teachers entering the profession so that they feel confident and are more likely to stay in the classroom as career educators.

Details of Proposal:

- Help create evidence-based structured induction programs for new teachers and support the identification and sharing of evidence-based best practices in mentoring and structured induction.
- Working with LEAs that demonstrate best practices in teacher support programs, ADE will recommend that LEAs implement high quality structured induction (sustained, multi-year mentoring) programs for new educators.
- ADE will provide professional development related to identified issues or challenges that teachers in Arizona are having.

Progress Updates:

- In January 2016 the Arizona Department of Education’s Educator Retention and Recruitment Task Force released its second white paper, which detailed promising practices in beginning teacher mentoring and induction.\(^7\)
- The white paper introduced suggested guidelines for induction and mentoring programs based on recommendations from the National Council on Teacher Quality.\(^7\) The key principles included:
  - Set a goal to require an effective induction program for all new teachers, with special emphasis on teachers in high-need schools.
  - Ensure frequent mentoring support, especially in the first few weeks of school.
  - Select mentors based on their own level of classroom effectiveness.
  - Only strategies that can be successfully implemented should be part of the program.


\(^7\) Id.
South Carolina, which requires all new teachers be assigned a mentor for one year, was identified as a successful example. The state also mandates release time for classroom observations, collaboration, and supportive conversations and mentors are evaluated and provided stipends.76

ADE will continue pursuing ways to help districts and schools implement successful induction and mentoring programs and will be releasing a third Educator Retention and Recruitment Task Force white paper in the spring of 2017.

ADE has helped provide financial support to teachers through retention and recruitment stipends via Title II-A.

Professional development opportunities related to retention and recruitment have been offered throughout 2016.

ADE continues to engage with Professional networks related to mentoring and induction:
  o Learning Forward
  o K12 Center (New Teacher Center Model with west Valley districts and schools)
  o Effective Teachers and Leaders Unit working with Expect More AZ through the Arizona Progress Meter

Induction and Mentoring program initiated at Coolidge Unified School District by Effective Teachers and Leaders Unit.

76 Id.
Provide Enhanced Service to Rural Areas

“Currently, ADE staff is almost exclusively located in downtown Phoenix, with a few employees in Tucson and Flagstaff. It’s important that ADE brings services to rural areas whenever possible. We are a large state with considerable distances to cover when traveling. As a service agency, we must consider on-site assistance throughout the state.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Partner with rural districts in efforts to locate available space to place Arizona Department of Education (ADE) staff on-site in order to deliver direct services to the region, including, but not limited to certification, teacher and instructional support, guidance on federal programs and financial reporting.

**Background:**

- In July 2015, Superintendent Douglas responded to comments on the We Are Listening Tour about the lack of certification assistance in the Northern Arizona, by placing a full time certification staff member at ADE’s Flagstaff office. This new position primarily supports current and prospective teachers in the Northern Arizona region with completion of certification requirements.
- Superintendent Douglas will travel frequently around the entire state to hear the unique needs of each area. She will continue her We Are Listening Tour, in addition to school site visits, time permitting.
- Rural districts in Arizona frequently require services from ADE that would be better served by a local representative who best understands the needs within the rural community.
- The current lack of access to ADE staff with specialized knowledge of unique rural needs has created a need for local representatives to provide services to those locales servicing rural areas.
- By allocating specialists where they are needed in rural areas, ADE staff will not be required to spend as much time traveling and can instead focus more of their efforts on addressing the concerns of schools and communities.
- New teachers and those renewing their certification often have to drive to Phoenix. This commute creates an undue burden to teachers by imposing commuter costs and at times travel safety concerns. Unfortunately, the teachers driving the farthest are often the least compensated and they educate some of the most challenging student populations.
Purpose:

- Provide direct on-site services and support to rural areas that lack access to ADE’s main offices. The lack of access has created a need for increased ADE representation throughout the state and this proposal will reduce travel time and cost so that Arizona’s rural teaching staff can focus on their students.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will work with LEAs to place staff in district offices throughout the state, focusing primarily on rural areas, with the intent of providing increased services and access to resources that best meet the needs of the community. As current staff positions become vacant, candidates from these rural locales will fill positions in these areas, therefore imposing no additional cost and positions will be filled through attrition.
- ADE will ask LEAs for on-site work space rather than leasing or purchasing additional office space. Through this approach ADE can implement the program with little or no cost.

Progress Updates:

- ADE created a new position in its Flagstaff office dedicated to assisting Northern Arizona districts and schools with certification and other Title II-related needs.
- The Department’s Tucson Certification office, which had been scheduled for permanent closure, has been kept open and is available to Southern Arizona educators several days per month.
- ADE continues to expand its offerings of on-site workshops and training events held outside the greater Phoenix and Tucson areas in order to better accommodate the needs of educators in rural schools.
Possible New Locations for Satellite Sites
Current Phoenix ADE Sites
Current Tucson ADE Site
Current Flagstaff ADE Site
Return Arizona to Its People

“The federal government owns nearly half of the land in Arizona. Regaining land that is rightfully ours would create a larger state land trust, allowing Arizonans to determine how to more effectively leverage the land’s value and better fund education. There is absolutely no reason to waste all of this land when it could provide critical revenues for Arizona children.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Request the transfer of title of federal lands, contained within the borders of the state of Arizona—excluding existing national parks, congressionally designated wilderness areas, Indian reservations and military installations—to the state of Arizona.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can't Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed a request to transfer the title of federal lands within the borders of our state to Arizona.
- The Arizona State Land Trust is used to fund education and support schools throughout Arizona.
- The federal government currently owns approximately 48.1 percent;77 private ownership accounts for only about 18 percent,78 while the state of Arizona owns the rest of the land contained within the borders of the state of Arizona.
- The federal government earns approximately 73 cents for every dollar of federal land it manages. In contrast, lands managed by four western states' land trusts—Montana, Idaho, New Mexico, and Arizona—earned an impressive $14.51 for every dollar spent between 2009-2013.79

Purpose:

- Increase revenue used to fund education and support schools throughout Arizona.
- Improve public access for all Arizonans, including sportsmen, tourists, recreational users, subsistence and sustenance activities and emergency personnel.
- Increase local involvement and accountability in maintaining our land.
- Preserve local customs and culture, and protect important wild, scenic and economic resources.

Progress Updates:

- On December 7, 2015, Superintendent Douglas and members of the Arizona Legislature gathered at Wesley Bolin Plaza to request the transfer of federal lands to the State of Arizona for long term education funding.
- ADE is communicating with the Bureau of Land Management and stakeholders to determine the portions of federal land that will be most beneficial and lucrative for the State land trust.
- Since the press conference, Superintendent Douglas and ADE staff have been working with state leaders for strategies to complete this federal land transfer. Staff also attended meetings to support better use and management of the federal lands.
“ADE receives frequent inquiries from other states and vendors asking to purchase or license the innovative systems that our IT Division has developed. The passage of this legislation allows ADE to sell or lease our cutting-edge products to generate revenue and better support our schools and students. Arizona needs sustainable revenue to support these new products and systems.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Authorize the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to sell or license its intellectual property and deposit the earnings into a fund. Revenues in the Intellectual Property Fund will be distributed, in part, to the state’s general fund to repay the money spent on developing the AELAS statewide data system. The monies also can be used to offset development costs and to support new programs benefiting Arizona students and teachers.

Background:

- Arizona’s outstanding Information Technology (IT) team has produced programs that are highly sought-after and extremely advanced.
- Some states have received millions more in funding to develop programs and systems that do not provide the technical capabilities of the Arizona system. Recognizing Arizona’s success, other states have expressed interest in purchasing our advanced IT programs.
- ADE anticipates being ahead of other states in IT development and hopes to continue to innovate in other program areas. As a result, creating a fund allows for Arizona to sell intellectual property and thus create a steady stream of income to offset development costs.
- If the Department of Education does not continue to have consistent revenue to develop these programs and maintain our IT staff at current levels, Arizona risks losing value on its prior investments.
- Additionally, Arizona needs sustainable revenue to support maintenance of these new products and systems. Aside from poor design, lack of maintenance is the primary reason that Arizona’s previous education IT system, the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS), had problems and is now in the process of being replaced; Arizona’s education system can’t afford to let another system go into disrepair.
- Senate Bill 1438 was signed into law during the 2016 legislative session to allow ADE to sell or lease software, computer systems, associated services, and intellectual property.
Purpose:

- Provide revenues to better sustain and make important improvements to the IT functionalities necessary for an effective infrastructure that properly supports the Arizona Education Learning and Accountability System (AELAS). By improving our IT functionality we can provide all levels of the educational community with the tools and data necessary to support education transformation, academic growth, and accountability, while dramatically reducing costs.
- Maintaining AELAS instead of rebuilding a new system in the near future, due to lack of proper upkeep, is the smartest way to utilize taxpayer money.
- Aid other states in finding an efficient and cost-effective way to implement their own systems, while generating revenue for the state of Arizona.

Progress Updates:

- Superintendent Douglas promoted the introduction and passage of Senate Bill 1438 during the 2016 legislative session.
- Senate Bill 1438 was signed into law on May 17, 2016 and allows ADE to sell or lease software, computer systems, associated services and intellectual property.
- Since the passage of Senate Bill 1438, ADE has received inquiries about the purchase of multiple IT systems and unique assessments. These potential transactions are temporarily on hold as ADE seeks completion of the new IT system, AELAS.
- Senate Bill 1438 passed without spending authority. This means that the Department cannot sell services because there is no fund to retain the funds or to distribute to the General Fund. Therefore, upon the completion of the AELAS system, the Department will seek legislation to allow for spending authority of the Intellectual Property Fund.
Increase access to fresh and healthy food for use in school meals through Farm-to-School programs

Work with schools to make fresh and healthy food more readily available to their students and encourage them to purchase from local food suppliers whenever possible.

Background:

- The Let’s Move Campaign[^80] provided a platform to expand initiatives associated with Know Your Farmer Know Your Food.[^81] In part, farm-to-school programming ensures a commitment to strengthen local and regional food systems.
- The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010[^82] provided $5 million in competitive grant funding via the USDA Farm to School Grant Program[^83] to start and expand farm-to-school programming in eligible entities.
- In 2013, USDA launched the first Farm-to-School Census. This bi-annual collection is used to measure farm to-school development nationally. Highlights for Arizona include:
  - In School Year 2011-2012, school districts reported that $10,072,117 of $50,383,290 was spent on locally grown or locally raised foods. 46 percent of the districts that responded said they would buy more local food in the future.[^84]
  - In School Year 2011-2012, 31 percent of districts who responded said they participated in farm-to-school programming, including sourcing local foods for use in school meals or using a school or community garden as an education tool.[^85]
- ADE-administered Arizona Farm-to-School Surveys show the following percentages of districts purchasing locally grown food:
  - School year 2010-2011: 50 percent
  - School year 2011-2012: 77 percent
  - School year 2012-2013: no data (USDA Farm to School Census took precedence).
  - School year 2013-2014: 56.25 percent
- Trends found in local purchasing through the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Produce Program show schools used the following percentages of their DoD entitlement funds to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables:

[^83]: Farm School Grant Program, [http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-grant-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-grant-program)
[^85]: Id.
Purpose:

- Increase fresh and healthy foods offered at meal time and reduce food waste in Child Nutrition Programs.
- Increase quality and freshness of products offered in Child Nutrition Programs.
- Stimulate Arizona's economy by sourcing from local food suppliers when possible throughout Arizona's growing seasons.
- Provide transparency to customers/end recipients of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Potentially impact food service budgets by choosing to purchase local items available in season when prices are best.
- Through school gardens/nutrition and agriculture education promote hands-on education tools that encourage all students to better understand core state standards like math and science.
- Increase the number of school gardens in schools that participate in Child Nutrition Programs.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will encourage LEAs to take advantage of Farm-to-School programming whenever possible and will provide technical assistance and guidance to LEA staff on program implementation and taking full advantage of available offerings.

Progress Updates:

- ADE continues encouragement of LEAs to participate in and take advantage of the Farm-to-School programming. In addition, ADE will continue providing technical assistance and guidance to LEA staff on program implementation and taking full advantage of available offerings.
- Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), healthy food access is not a mandated area of regulation. Despite the lack of consideration at the federal level for inclusion of healthy foods and Farm-to-School programs within ESSA, ADE will continue to prioritize fresh, locally sourced healthy foods in order to better provide service to the students of Arizona.
Implement Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs

Support schools in the implementation of Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs (CSPAP) to provide all students with 60 minutes of physical activity per day, including daily recess for all students in grades K-6.

Background:

- The Institute of Medicine recommends that all children should engage in physical education and meet the recommendation of at least 60 minutes per day of vigorous or moderate-intensity physical activity.\(^8\)
- According to the 2010 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, only 25.7 percent of adolescents in Arizona are physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day.\(^7\)
- 14.6 percent of adolescents in Arizona are overweight (≥ 85th and < 95th percentiles for BMI by age and sex, based on CDC reference data) and 13.1 percent were obese (≥95th percentile BMI by age and sex, based on CDC reference data).\(^8\)
- According to data from the CDC’s Health and Academic Achievement:
  - Higher physical activity and physical fitness levels are associated with improved cognitive performance among students.\(^9\)
  - Time spent in recess has been shown to positively affect students’ cognitive performance and classroom behaviors.\(^9\)
  - Brief classroom physical activity breaks are associated with improved cognitive performance, classroom behavior, and educational outcomes among students.\(^9\)
  - Participation in extracurricular physical activities such as interscholastic sports has been associated with higher grade point averages, lower drop-out rates, and fewer disciplinary problems among students.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) Id.


\(^9\) Id.

\(^9\) Id.

\(^9\) Id.

\(^9\) Id.
Purpose:

- Increase academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Decrease behavior-based discipline problems, absenteeism, childhood obesity rates and community health care costs.
- Ensure time allocated for physical education, physical activity and recess meets national recommendations.

Progress Updates:

- ADE has completed its first set of state standards regarding Physical Education adhering to evidence-based research to be implemented in the 2017-2018 school year.
- Arizona educators participated in the creation of the standards to ensure field input was considered during the creation process.
active kids learn better
physical activity at school is a win-win for students and teachers

GRADES:
20% more likely to earn an A in math or English

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES:
increased 6% over 3 years

JUST ONE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LESSON CREATES:
13% increase in students’ physical activity for the week
21% decrease in teachers’ time managing behavior

physically active kids have more active brains
BRAIN SCANS OF STUDENTS TAKING A TEST:

after 20 minutes of sitting quietly

after 20 minutes of walking

Red areas are very active; blue areas are least active.

MORE RESULTS:
- after 20 minutes of physical activity: students tested better in reading, spelling & math and were more likely to read above their grade level
- after being in a physically active afterschool program for 9 months: memory tasks improved 16%

Learn more about why active kids learn better and how schools can help at activelivingresearch.org/activeeducationbrief.

Source: Active Living Research
Build School and Community Relationships with School Safety Program Officers

In accordance with ARS §15-153, §15-154, and §15-155, School Safety Program School Resource Officers (SROs) and Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) are placed on school campuses to contribute to safe school environments that are conducive to teaching and learning.

Background:

- Through comprehensive prevention and intervention approaches, School Safety Program funded SROs and JPOs maintain a visible presence on campus, deter delinquent and violent behaviors, serve as an available resource to the school community, and provide students and staff with law-related education instruction and training.
- School Safety Program Officers provide Law-Related Education, using best practices, to prepare students to become productive citizens.
- Students and the school community have a more positive view of law enforcement when interacting with School Safety Program Officers on campus. Officers often become an invaluable resource to the students, staff, and community they serve.

Purpose:

- To place School Safety Program Officers on school campuses to provide school, staff, and students with proactive prevention and intervention strategies and to develop positive interactive relationships with staff, students, and communities they serve.

Details of Proposal:

- Promote the School Safety Program to increase the number of School Safety Program Officers on school campuses throughout the state.
- ADE will work with LEAs, schools, and law enforcement to improve collaboration on school safety initiatives.
Progress Updates:

- ADE has been supporting and will continue to support to LEAs, schools, and law enforcement to further partnerships when implementing school safety initiatives, working interactively, and designing future community and school safety initiatives.
Bullying Awareness and Prevention

Bullying behaviors can have long-term, negative impacts on students and on the overall school climate. Offer professional development opportunities to develop LEA strategies for the improvement of school conditions for increased student learning.

Background:

- “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-age children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.”93 There are three forms of bullying – physical, emotional, and social.
- “Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.”94
- Students who are threatened with violence on school grounds will not feel safe, and the lack of focus created will lead to lower academic achievement scores than students that have not been threatened with violence.95
- In accordance with ARS §15-341(A)(37), LEAs and schools are to provide students, staff, and parents with policies and procedures regarding bullying, harassment, and intimidation definitions and how to confidentially report these incidents.

ADE IT staff supports student artists during the 2016 Anti Cyber-Bullying Art Competition

93 http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html
94 http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/index.html
Purpose:

- Provide support and guidance to LEAs and schools to develop or improve policies and procedures in accordance with state statute.
- Recommend all staff, students, and parents receive training on all forms of bullying, how to report incidents, and how the school will investigate the incidents.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will assist LEAs and schools in the implementation of their policies and procedures, trainings, professional development, and evidence-based strategies in accordance with the Arizona ESSA State Plan under the section Improve School Conditions for Student Learning.

Progress Updates:

- ADE will provide continued support of community partnership programs and organizations that focus on student assistance and behavior recognition and correction through supportive systems, and will continue to provide comprehensive professional development and training opportunities for LEA staff.
- ADE will continue to provide family and student resources and programs to increase understanding and awareness of bullying, its impact on student learning, and available resources through the state and community partners.
Improve Emergency Response Awareness and Drills

Improve emergency response awareness and drills through better preparedness and practice to help decrease response times and deliver effective reactions to threats.

Background:

- Experience has shown that every minute during an emergency or other dangerous incident at a school is critical. Therefore, the quicker and more familiar staff and students are with their roles and needs during a crisis, the more lives can be saved, injuries prevented, and incidents mitigated.
- LEAs and schools should build school and community partners, such as local emergency responders, to prepare and practice potential campus incidents, practice drills with students and staff, and keep parents informed of emergency response procedures with frequent communication.

Purpose:

- To mitigate the impact of emergency response incidents at or near schools.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will provide additional opportunities and guidelines in coordination with LEAs, law enforcement, emergency management, public health and fire services.
  - Create awareness of training and exercise opportunities for the enhancement of district and school Emergency Response Plans (ERP) need to address an “all hazard and all community approach.”
  - Preparedness efforts will focus on the topic areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Progress Updates:

Opportunities available will include:

- G-364 Course – Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools taught throughout Arizona
- E-361 Course – Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools Course at the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) National Emergency Training Center (transportation and housing provided by FEMA)
- U.S. Department of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for School (REMS) courses for preparedness
- Technical Assistance to districts and schools by ADE School Safety and Prevention staff
- Resource awareness and training and exercise opportunities
- ADE documents and webinars developed to assist districts and schools with the following:
  - Exercise guidance
  - Incident Command System
  - Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)
  - Template materials for ERP (spell out acronym) development or sustainment
  - Threat and hazard assessment guidelines
Enhance LMS Professional Learning Opportunities

“Providing schools and teachers with the resources they need to be successful is one factor that can positively impact student growth and achievement. I will continue to expand these resources for teachers so they can develop professionally and be effective and comfortable in the classroom.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Allow LEAs to participate in ADE’s Learning Management System (LMS) to provide online professional learning opportunities.

Background:

- Distance learning provides critical, expanded educational opportunities for educators to access professional learning on demand to help build their capacity to effectively support student learning and growth.

- Arizona educators provided feedback to ADE on the development of the Arizona Education Learning and Accountability System (AELAS). During that process, educators expressed interest in access to systems that support distance learning for student and professional development to meet high local demand. Of the comments, this was one of the highest rated systems in terms of need.96

- It has been difficult for school districts and charter schools to procure individual learning management systems. This largely is due to high procurement costs, initial set up and implementation costs and annual licensure costs. The challenges are exacerbated for school districts and charter schools serving smaller populations, which reduces their ability to effectively negotiate with LMS vendors.

- ADE procured an LMS, leveraging the buying and negotiating power of the state. This LMS has the capacity to support both K-12 student learning and professional learning. The LMS is powered by Blackboard Learn™ and Blackboard Collaborate™.97

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Purpose:

- The LMS professional learning program provides industry-leading online learning tools for both students and teachers at a significant cost savings.

Details of Proposal:

- Continue to offer and enrich the program for school districts and charter schools to utilize ADE’s new LMS to support their professional learning goals.

Progress Updates:

- ADE’s LMS system is being used successfully within ADE as an online vehicle for professional development. Additionally, it fully integrates with our event management system to provide educators with a transcript of their completed professional learning.
- Because school districts, charter schools, and educational agencies have expressed a need for low-cost options related to online learning opportunities, ADE will continue to offer and enrich the program so that school districts and charter schools can utilize ADE’s LMS to support their professional learning goals.
Higher Math Standards and Guidance

“We need to make sure we are properly serving all students, including those who are academically excelling and seeking higher level courses. It's important that we create defined advanced mathematics standards to ensure consistency in higher math courses and provide schools the proper guidance to deliver higher math instruction to their students.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Working with educators and parents, create guidance for advanced mathematics courses including, but not limited to, Pre-Calculus, Advanced Statistics, Trigonometry, Calculus, and Qualitative Reasoning, for use by schools and districts statewide.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can’t Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas directed ADE’s K-12 Academic Standards Section to convene working groups of educators, content experts, and other stakeholders to create course guidance documents to ensure consistency in higher mathematics courses.
- In the context of higher mathematics courses, teachers are able to focus on higher-order knowledge and skills for students that include thinking critically, solving real-world problems, and becoming successful in the 21st Century and beyond.
- ADE anticipates new Arizona Mathematics Standards will be adopted by the State Board of Education in December 2016.
- The new Arizona Mathematics Standards will include separate standards for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.

Purpose:

- Prepare students for success in careers and postsecondary degrees that require mathematics beyond Algebra II.
- Ensure all students have equal access to rigorous mathematics instruction.
- Provide Arizona school districts and charter schools with the resources they need to create aligned courses and deliver higher mathematics instruction to students.
Progress Updates:

- In September 2016 the ADE K-12 Standards Section began seeking applicants to serve on the Advanced Mathematics Committee, which will assist in creating guidance documents for fourth credit higher level mathematics courses.
- The committee’s work will include the task of outlining courses that currently have a strong set of standards for courses beyond Algebra II, including Advanced Placement and Dual Credit.
- The committee also will work to create guidance for those courses that do not have a defined set of standards, such as Qualitative Reasoning, Advanced Statistics, Pre-Calculus and possibly Discrete Mathematics.
Enhance Civics, Financial Literacy and Economics Standards

“Civics, finances and economics are important life-impacting topics that students must learn if they are to become successful citizens. We need to make sure we are developing rigorous and relevant standards for these topics so our students are well-informed and prepared when they graduate.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Enhance Arizona standards for Civics, Financial Literacy and Economics for use by schools statewide.

Background:

- In the 2016 AZ Kids Can't Wait! Plan, Superintendent Douglas proposed the enhancement of Arizona's standards for Civics, Financial Literacy, and Economics.
- The most recent adoption of the Arizona Social Studies standards occurred in 2005.

Purpose:

- Ensure students know our system of government in order to be effective citizens.
- Ensure rigorous economics standards with an emphasis on financial literacy.

Progress Updates:

- In September 2016 the ADE K-12 Standards Section submitted an information item to the State Board of Education to begin the process of revising the Social Studies standards.
- In October 2016, the K-12 Standards Section opened public comment on the current Social Studies standards and began soliciting qualified applicants to serve on working groups.
- The revision process will follow the Arizona Continuous Improvement Standards Process outlined below.
Second Language Graduation Requirements

“America is the greatest country in the world, but we fall behind most countries in providing our children with the ability to speak and write in more than one language. Studies have shown that knowing more than one language improves all cognitive functions. Colleges often require more world language instruction than our schools offer. To be truly college and career ready and prepared to succeed in our current and future economy, knowing English and another language is becoming increasingly important.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Create guidelines to increase and improve proficiency in world languages for all Arizona students demonstrating proficiency in English, with the long-term goal that all students graduating high school are proficient in at least one world language.

Background:

- Currently there is no statutory requirement for Arizona high school graduates to complete courses in world language.
- Many universities, including all three Arizona state universities, require students to complete two years of one world/foreign language for freshman admission. These credits include Native American Languages (see ABOR Policy 2-121: Undergraduate Admission Requirements).
- Currently, only 18.5 percent of all K-12 public school students nationally are enrolled in foreign language courses.98
- In May 2015, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted the World and Native Languages Standards, which replaced the Foreign and Native Languages Standards previously adopted in 1997.
  - The revised standards provide the opportunity for students to enter into the study of a new language at any point in the K-12 continuum and the standards reflect student performance expectations based on when that entry point occurs.
  - The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Anticipated Outcomes Table (below) illustrates grade-level targets for performance levels based on when students enter the study of the target language.

This approach to language learning focuses on performance and aims to build learners’ capacity to use the language(s) in functional and meaningful ways.

**Purpose:**

- Ensure Arizona students have the opportunity to learn multiple world languages prior to entering the workforce or attending a university or college.
- Ensure Arizona students have access to a well-rounded education and exceed minimum competencies for college admission or workforce entrance.

**Progress Updates:**

- Full implementation of the World and Native Languages standards began during the 2016-2017 school year.
  - The standards state what students need to know about languages and cultures, including their own; what students need to be able to do to demonstrate language proficiency; and how this knowledge and these abilities relate to the subject matter of other core areas.
  - The standards have a dynamic nature to accommodate individual student and language needs.

Table courtesy of ACTFL
The graphic below illustrates a full scope of student performance and proficiency in a target language over many years of study and across 5 generalized levels of proficiency.99

- The revision of the world language standards to increase and improve instruction is designed to enhance student proficiency in world languages at lower grade levels.
  - Students can enter the study of world languages at any point on the continuum and enhance their proficiency.
- The earlier a student enters the study of a world language, the more opportunities they have to use the language(s) in functional and meaningful ways. This would contribute to enhanced proficiency in the language(s), especially at lower grade levels.
- The K-12 Standards Section offers resources and opportunities for the collaboration of educators in the field of World and Native Languages.
  - Previous collaboration efforts have brought together educators and experts in the field of World and Native Languages from across the state to discuss items connected to the following:
    - Increasing opportunities for students to participate in World and Native Language.
    - Strengthening World and Native Language Programs.
    - Sharing resources and best practices for implementation of World and Native Language Programs.

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99 These proficiency levels are based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines 2012 and can be used to measure performance in an instructional setting. The levels of Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced are further subdivided into sub-levels Low, Mid, and High. As students spend more time in the target language, their performance towards their true proficiency level begins to expand. The highest two levels (Superior and Distinguished) are not included in Arizona’s World and Native Languages Standards because these levels are generally not considered outcomes of K-12 learning.
Focus on allowing students time to eat a nutritional meal

“As we prepare our students for future success, we must remember that time spent in the classroom is only one aspect of their achievement. If children are hungry throughout the school day, how can we expect them to perform at their best? If we give them a nominal amount of time to eat, how will they replenish their energy? If they haven’t been able to exercise, will they really be able to concentrate and absorb the material expected of them? We have to give students the time and resources they need to be healthy, focused learners. If we don’t, they will go to school every day with one more challenge to overcome.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Allow students sufficient time to eat healthy meal options.

Background:

- School meal requirements now include increased amounts of fruits and vegetables and whole grains and new provisions for local school wellness policies related to implementation, evaluation, and public reporting on progress.100
- With healthier meal options, meal consumption may take longer. Consider that it takes more time to chew a whole apple than applesauce or that using utensils and eating an entree salad takes longer than eating chicken nuggets.101
- Most schools are now offering healthier meal options, including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and 1 percent milk. Salad bars are now common in school cafeterias, offering fresh items and less processed foods.102
- Since the implementation of healthier menus, food waste has been studied in school cafeterias; high food waste is not only costly but also reflects the amount of available nutrients which students are not consuming.103
- Hunger is associated with irritability and poor academic performance.104
- Research shows food waste is decreased (and nutrient consumption is increased) when recess is scheduled before lunch.105

102 Smarter Lunchrooms Movement http://smarterlunchrooms.org/
103 Richard B. Russell national School Lunch Act (42 USC 1758b)
104 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Sec. 204 of Public Law 111-296)
105 Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act (Sec. 204 of Public Law 108-205).
Purpose:

- Help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) understand the factors associated with the time allotted for the lunch period and time it takes students to eat the meal, including:
  - Length of the school day
  - Building size and student enrollment
  - Number and design of serving lines
  - Seating in the cafeteria
  - Number of students coming to the cafeteria at any given time
  - Amount of time that it takes students to get to the cafeteria
  - Amount of time spent waiting in line, finding a place to sit, and preparing to eat (open milk carton, peeling fruit or cutting food)
- Increase the amount of nutrients students consume and decrease food waste.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will recommend that all LEAs set policies ensuring that school meal consumption time, defined as the actual time a student is engaged in food consumption, is at least 30 minutes each day.
- LEAs can utilize the local wellness policy to allow students an adequate amount of time to consume a nutritious meal by reviewing current limiting factors, including placement of recess, and smarter lunchroom design.

Progress Update:

- ADE will continue to implement its well established school health programs with LEAS while continuing and expanding partnerships with other organizations and agencies to support these efforts.
- Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), health initiatives are not mandated areas of regulation and concern. However, ADE will continue to spearhead progressive health initiatives such as these in order to continue to focus on whole child health and its direct impact on academic and future success.
Reducing Food Waste
What Schools Can Do Today

USDA’s Economic Research Service estimates 31% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level went uneaten in the U.S. in 2010.

Research shows that reducing plate waste now can help reduce plate waste before updated nutrition standards.

Scheduling recess before lunch can reduce plate waste by as much as 30%.

Extending lunch periods from 20 to 30 minutes can reduce plate waste by nearly one-third.

Smarter Lunchroom Strategies, such as how foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria, can facilitate healthy choices and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by up to 70%.

Schools across the country are stepping up to the challenge with innovative new strategies, such as:

- Allowing students to keep a lunch or breakfast food item for consumption later in the school day
- Using techniques listed on the Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card to help reduce food waste
- Setting up a table for kids to place items they are not going to consume (packaged or pre-portioned items)
- Letting kids self-serve
- Composting food waste for school gardens
- Collaborating with local farmers on composting or food-waste projects
- Collecting excess wholesome food after meals times to donate to charitable organizations
- Sign up for the U.S. Food Waste Challenge to share your story on how you are reducing, recovering, or recycling food waste
School Climate and Student Assistance

Provide a safe school environment of for our students through the development of supportive school climates and student assistance.

Background:

- Provide interventions that prevent student violence and improve conditions for learning.
  - First, create strategies that are delivered to all students to prevent problem behavior, commonly referred to as universal interventions.
  - Second, use targeted interventions to offer additional support to reduce current problem behaviors for students or prevent problem behaviors of students who have not yet exhibited the behaviors but have shown signs or predispositions towards risk taking, violence, or academic struggle.
  - Third, for those students who have already exhibited the behaviors, use of indicated interventions that are specifically designed to meet the needs of students to reduce any barriers in addition to the intensity or the severity of current problem behaviors.
- When using the above interventions, studies show that approximately 80 percent of students will have no need for more focused interventions, greatly freeing up time and resources to focus on those with greatest need, and significantly contributing to a positive school climate.\textsuperscript{106}
- Provide a basic infrastructure for implementation of the above interventions.

\textsuperscript{106}


Purpose:

- Increase ability of teachers and administrators to target and focus efforts on those students most in need of support.
- Aid in the prevention of problem behaviors or provide intervention options for students already exhibiting such behaviors.
- Create a uniform system of support that enhances the capacity of schools to properly address all students' needs, while allowing for different approaches to various issues.
- Benefit all students and improve educational experiences throughout the schools that choose to implement these support systems.

Details of Proposal:

- ADE will recommend increased character model behavior by LEA staff through a lead by example initiative.
- Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), recommended reintroduction of a baseline system for regulation and reporting allowing ADE to ensure greater accuracy of reporting by LEAs for
behavioral issues and corrections, as well as using those reports to provide additional resources, training, and professional development for LEA staffing.

- Continued facilitation between LEA School Resource Officers (SROs) and/or Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) and the University of Arizona’s Law-Related Education (LRE) instruction and training.

**Progress Updates:**

- ADE provides the School Safety Program Guidance Manual as a resource for LEAs when implementing appropriate school safety programs, in addition to providing access to updated Arizona laws regarding child and student safety.
- ADE will continue working with and providing the American Institutes for Research and National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments’ *Making School Climate Improvements Guide*, which provides a number of resources for schools and was impacted by Arizona’s Safe and Supportive Schools grant.
Office of Indian Education Assistance

“During the 2015 We Are Listening Tour, I traveled to different Arizona Native American communities to listen to their feedback and input about education. It was very clear that this community needs additional support to address their unique needs. I fought hard last legislative session to fund our Office of Indian Education, which is specifically dedicated to Native American students. Unfortunately, the legislation failed, and Native American students continue to show patterns of low graduation rates and low reading-proficiency scores. I will not give up this fight, and I will continue to advocate on behalf of these high-need and at-risk students so that they receive the support they deserve.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Seek to expand the Office of Indian Education through additional Johnson-O’Malley federal funding and state funding to strongly support every Native American tribe and nation in Arizona.

Background:

- Currently, ADE’s Office of Indian Education (OIE) does not receive state funding and is staffed by only one individual.
- A.R.S. § 15-244, requires ADE to establish an Office of Indian Education which, in addition to other duties, must:
  - “Provide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations to develop culturally appropriate curricula and instructional materials”;
  - “Provide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations to meet the educational needs of Native American pupils”; and
  - “Provide technical assistance to schools and Indian nations in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of curricula that are culturally relevant and aligned to state standards.” 107
- In spite of this statutory mandate, Arizona has appropriated no state dollars for this purpose.
- 2013-2014 Native American Enrollment for Arizona public schools was 38,067.108
- Arizona is home to 22 Indian tribes. 109

Native American students comprise nearly five percent of the total Arizona student population with a high number of students attending schools on rural reservation lands. Arizona’s Native American students in low density schools have some of the lowest graduation rates compared to other races and ethnicities. Native American students have the lowest reading proficiency scores when compared to all other races and ethnicities in high-density schools.

**Purpose:**
- Provide much-needed support to Native American students statewide.
- Native American children are sitting next to their non-native peers in the same classes and are not achieving the same outcomes as their peers because they face different challenges. Native American students have different needs, and it is important that this community receives proper resources and support to improve student outcomes.

**Details of Proposal:**
ADE will seek additional state and federal funding. With the additional funding, the Office of Indian Education will, in part, assist schools to provide professional development for teachers and staff and increase availability and access to resources for schools statewide.

**Progress Updates:**
- In the 2016 legislative session, $400,000 was requested, to support the ADE's Office of Indian Education to fulfill the statutory mandate of education assistance to Native American students. This budget request was unsuccessful.
- In the 2017 legislative session, ADE will continue lobbying efforts for state funding for ADE’s Office of Indian Education to provide Native American families, communities and students proper resources and support to improve student outcomes.

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Provide Internships to Children Showing Interest in a Particular Career

“We need to do our best to support and assist students as they pursue a career path. Participating in an internship gives them real life experience to explore their interests. Such opportunities are not only positive for students, but also benefit local businesses and Arizona-based companies who gain access to an extra set of hands to help, and possibly even a blossoming employee for the future.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Work in cooperation with Arizona businesses and leaders to increase the number of internships available to children who show an interest in a particular career and connect students’ interests with local businesses.

Background:

- Internships are a useful benefit to both students and businesses and they are not being utilized to their full potential. For the student, they provide on-the-job training and the opportunity to make job networking connections in addition to them a feel for what they may want to do in the future. Employers also benefit as they gain useful insight into the skills of the current generation of students and also can sell themselves as a quality place to work to make sure they obtain the interest of the most talented minds.
- One of the essential elements of all approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs is to offer students work-based participation that involves actual work experience and connects classroom learning to work activities.
- CTE programs offer one or more of the following work-based learning opportunities: internships, cooperative education, school-based enterprise, apprenticeship, health care clinical experiences, laboratory simulation projects, supervised agricultural experience or field experience.
- Per the revised JTED statute A.R.S. § 15.391.5(d), a JTED program requires a majority of instructional time to be conducted in a laboratory environment, field-based environment or work-based learning components.114
- Work-based learning activities have the potential to make significant differences in a student’s learning. Study after study has shown that students of all ages respond favorably when academics are taught in context. Work-based experiences provide additional context, add value through real-

life applications, and bring additional support to the classroom in the form of mentors, sponsors, and other industry-based resources.

Purpose:

• Give students access to opportunities to gain experience in the workforce, which gives students the ability to effectively determine a preferred career pathway and what is required to achieve this goal.
• Ensure students have the required academic and life skills necessary for the jobs they will one day hold.

Progress Updates:

• All 73 approved Career and Technical Education programs offer some type of a work-based learning component. The work-based learning component is offered in some cases as a capstone course after the student has completed the sequence of instruction.
• In 2015-16, CTE students participating in an enrollment reported work-based learning experience were as follows: 1,493 students participated in internships and 1,096 participated in a cooperative education experience. This does not include students participating in field experiences, school-based enterprises, health care clinical experiences, or laboratory simulation projects.
• The goal of CTE programs is to see that all students have the opportunity to learn skills and to be introduced to the working world through a variety of work-based learning activities. Internships have enabled students to be prepared to enter postsecondary experiences with a foundation of career or college ready skills.
Partner with California to Reach Previously Unidentified Migratory Students

“The lifestyle of migrant families is often hard on their children. Migrant workers are an increasing population in Arizona, so the education and success of migrant children is important to me and I will continue working to support programs designed to benefit migrant students.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Develop a comprehensive partnership with the California Migrant Education Program (MEP) to enhance Arizona’s identification and recruitment of unidentified migrant students.

Background:

- The Migrant Education Program (MEP) is a federally funded program based on the number of eligible migratory students.
- These allocated funds support educational needs unique to migrant students.
- The Migrant Education Program heavily relies on the identification and recruitment of students.
  - Each Migrant LEA has at least one Migratory recruiter depending on the size of their program.
  - The recruiter (not the individual interviewed) determines the child’s eligibility on the basis of statute, regulations, and policies that ADE implements through formal procedures.
  - A recruiter’s primary responsibilities are:
    1. To obtain information provided by parents, guardians, and others regarding the child’s eligibility for the MEP;
    2. To make determinations of eligibility; and
    3. To accurately and clearly record information that establishes that a child is eligible for the MEP on a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) or like form.
- Arizona and California share a significant number of migratory students:
  - From AZ to CA: 92.14 percent of overall AZ migratory students
  - From CA to AZ: 93.21 percent of overall AZ migratory students.\(^\text{115}\)

\(^\text{115}\) [http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/recordstransfer.html](http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/recordstransfer.html)
Purpose:

- Without additional identification and recruitment activities, many students will miss out on educational opportunities available to them, including funding for pre-school, tutoring, and summer school.
- With the significant number of students shared with California, a comprehensive partnership with California would greatly benefit our students in Arizona as they migrate with their families.

Progress Update:

- ADE’s MEP is working towards a comprehensive partnership with the California MEP to enhance our identification and recruitment efforts of unidentified migratory students in Arizona.
- ADE is working with the State Director from California to see if they will join us in using the web portal for increasing identification and recruitment for the Migrant Education Program in states like Oregon, New Mexico and Nebraska.
- ADE is currently working with Region 16 Monterey County in California, where Salinas is located. The Arizona MEP has the majority of families that migrate to this area from Yuma and then back to Yuma. ADE is looking for a digital tool to help support sharing information about these students.
- ADE is using the Migrant Student Data Exchange (MSIX) data system to share grades and other information regarding migrant students.
Protect Parents’ Rights

“All Arizona parents have an inherent right to direct their own child’s education. This includes providing them with choices for how and where to educate their child and to opt out of any activities they find objectionable or detrimental to their children. While certain parental rights are defined in statute, I strongly believe that parents’ rights extend beyond, and are not limited to, those expressly outlined in law.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, Diane Douglas

Ensure parental rights are not interfered with by the federal or state government by seeking additional flexibility to ensure that parents have the right to make critical educational decisions for their children, including whether to opt out of statewide testing.

Background:

- Arizona parents currently are not afforded the option to opt out of standardized testing without having their children lose classroom instruction time and face potential consequences at school.
- Under current federal accountability regulations, each school’s rate of participation on statewide tests and is required to be 95 percent. If Arizona fails to meet the 95 percent requirement, it faces the risk of additional federal monitoring or the potential loss of up to $600 million.
- Under the newly enacted Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a 95 percent participation requirement in statewide testing is a mandatory element of a state’s accountability system; however, nothing in the law is to preempt state or local law with respect to a parental decision on assessment participation.
- Parents who wish to opt out from testing may do so only by keeping their children home from school. This creates significant problems, as the potential testing window is approximately eight (8) weeks long.
  - Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-803, a child who is habitually truant (truant for at least five school days within a school year) or who has excessive absences may be adjudicated an incorrigible child as defined in section 8-201. Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the number of required attendance days prescribed in section 15-802, subsection B, paragraph 1.
  - Under A.R.S. § 15-843, school district governing boards shall prescribe rules for the discipline, suspension and expulsion of pupils. Additionally, the rules shall include penalties for excessive pupil absenteeism pursuant to section 15-803, including failure in a subject, failure to pass a grade, suspension or expulsion.
Purpose:

- Enforce parental rights to make decisions for their children in educational settings.
- Give students who have opted out of testing an alternative to having to stay home during the testing window and miss vital time in the classroom.

Details of Proposal:

- Parents have inherent rights with respect to their child’s education, and those rights should be protected. ADE will work to ensure parental rights are not interfered with by federal or state government and will seek additional flexibility to safeguard parents’ right to make critical decisions occurring at an educational facility, including whether to opt out of statewide testing.

Progress Update:

- Superintendent Douglas asked for a formal opinion from the Office of Attorney General Mark Brnovich.
- In a formal opinion issued in late 2015, Attorney General Brnovich said state law does allow parents to exempt their children from certain learning materials and activities they find objectionable. However, his opinion went on to say that parents of students in public schools have no legal right to withdraw their children from statewide standardized tests. Nothing in the formal opinion precludes lawmakers from putting a formal opt-out provision in state law.
- Last legislative session, Superintendent Douglas actively supported opt-out legislation that would have permitted a parent, on behalf of the student, to opt-out of the statewide student assessment system (Strike everything amendment to S.B. 1455). Although this legislation did not move forward in the legislative process, Superintendent Douglas will continue to support opt-out legislation, or any other legislation that protects and reinstates a parent’s inherent right to choose what is best for their child.
LMS K-12 Student Learning Pilot (Distance Learning)

“Arizona as a state is rich in school choice and I look to continuing to expand this movement. Distance learning is an option that can be beneficial for some students, and it is important we provide the proper resources and support for schools to better serve students who benefit from online instruction.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Build upon the successes experienced through our internal Learning Management System (LMS) in order to increase schools’ access to online learning platforms. Continue and enrich the pilot program for schools to participate in the new ADE Learning Management System (LMS) by providing K-12 online student learning opportunities.

Background:

- Distance learning provides critical and expanded educational opportunities for students to access high-quality instruction.
- Online learning opportunities and the use of open educational resources and other technologies increase educational productivity by accelerating the rate of learning; reducing costs associated with instructional materials or program delivery; and better utilizing teacher time.116
- Arizona educators provided feedback to ADE on the development of the Arizona Education Learning and Accountability System (AELAS). During that process, educators expressed concern with the lack of access to systems that support distance student learning and professional development opportunities to meet high local need and demand. Of the comments, this was one of the highest rated systems in terms of need.117
- It has been difficult for school districts and charter schools to procure individual learning management systems. This largely is due to high procurement costs, initial set up and implementation costs and annual licensure costs. The challenges are intensified for school districts and charter schools serving smaller populations, which reduces their ability to effectively negotiate with LMS vendors.

ADE procured an LMS, leveraging the buying and negotiating power of the state. This LMS has the capacity to support both K-12 student learning and professional learning. The LMS is powered by Blackboard Learn™ and Blackboard Collaborate™.

Purpose:

- The LMS K-12 pilot program provides industry leading online learning tools for qualified systems at significant cost savings.

Progress Updates:

- The LMS is a system which can be utilized to enhance and enrich student learning.
- Several districts and education agencies have begun using this system with great results.
- ADE is committed to continuing to offer and enrich the pilot program for school districts and charter schools to utilize the new LMS to better serve students who may benefit from online learning options.

Develop Data Protection Resources for Parents and Schools

“One of my top priorities is and always will be protecting the privacy of the student data that the Department is charged with maintaining. I will ensure that it is used only in the interest of improving outcomes for children in our state and that all necessary measures are taken to safeguard the identity of individual students.”

- Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas

Provide enhanced technical assistance to Arizona parents and schools on student data protection policies and regulations.

**Background:**

- As the We Are Listening Tour traveled across Arizona, Superintendent Douglas was encouraged by parents and members of the public to stop collection of data and provide parents with more information about what student data is shared by ADE and with whom.
- LEAs have reached out to ADE for additional guidance on how to adhere to FERPA.

**Purpose:**

- Increase transparency surrounding what data is collected and who has access to it.
- Empower parents with knowledge of their rights and support schools in their efforts to properly protect student data.

**Details of Proposal:**

- Develop Arizona-specific resources that outline both parental rights and school responsibilities under FERPA, Arizona statutes and rules, and ADE’s policies.
- ADE staff will work to increase transparency surrounding data protection by redesigning the ADE Data Management webpage to:
  - Make it more user friendly for parents and other interested citizens.
  - Present a clear picture of what data ADE collects about students and why and how it is protected.
  - Make publicly available data easier to find and use.
Outline the new process for gaining approval for limited access to data for research and evaluation.

- Experts at ADE will work to ensure schools have the tools they need to protect student data and fulfill their obligations to parents and students under FERPA.

**Progress Updates:**

- A new and improved data governance website is under construction and will host both publicly available data and resources and information for parents and schools.
- ADE is working on increased informational resources for parents with questions about their child’s data and information.