



**Arizona Department of Education
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane M. Douglas**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Superintendent Diane Douglas Supports Parental Options in Education

(Phoenix, AZ – Feb. 24, 2015) – The Superintendent of Public Instruction this week reiterated her support for all parental options in education, including charter schools, private schools, religious private schools, home schooling, distance learning, open enrollment and traditional public schools.

Each parent or guardian should have as many educational opportunities as possible for their child, and each of those options should be easily accessible, have high standards, and provide variety so that children can be taught in the most advantageous environment based on their individual needs, the Superintendent said.

At the same time, Superintendent Douglas expressed concern with the state trying to pick winners and losers through the budget process while dollars are so scarce. “I strongly support helping excelling charter schools find more reasonable financing for their capital needs and enabling them to use open space at traditional public schools. I commend Governor Ducey for his innovative proposals,” the Superintendent continued. “However, I have concerns that the \$21.5 million Student Success Funding used for classroom spending in the most successful charter schools and traditional public schools has been eliminated after one year.

“The problem is that starting a program for one year to reward success, then removing the funding, not only discourages districts from depending on such programs, but also weakens the effectiveness of future programs if enacted,” the Superintendent said.

“In current times with such tight budget issues, it is difficult to start new initiatives without removing others. However, government has a poor history of picking the correct winners and losers,” Douglas said. “I would prefer that if we start a program to reward schools, that we be able to continue it until we see if it is successful or not.” (A chart showing the amount received by each district and charter school under this program this fiscal year is attached.)

While the Superintendent supports all options for parents, and knows the school closest to where they live is not always the best choice, it also is difficult to favor one option over another instead of letting the free market, in this case the parents, make that choice, she said.

More

Parental Options 1-1-1

“Optimally, each child would have the proper amount of funding attached to them and parents could choose wherever was best for their child. In the current complicated funding system, it is difficult or impossible for this to happen. Only with new funding over time as the economy grows can we make the strong changes needed to properly level the playing field for all education options,” Douglas said.

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