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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Superintendent Douglas Highlights 2015 Education Actions**

(Phoenix, Ariz., Jan. 8, 2016) – Today Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas celebrated important education achievements for Arizona’s students, teachers, and parents implemented throughout 2015.

“2015 was a triumphant year for education,” said Superintendent Douglas. “We listened to the needs of parents and classroom teachers across the state and formally severed our ties to Common Core, so I can confidently say the past year was a success for Arizona.”

**Superintendent Douglas’ statewide tours, AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait! education plan and the formal severance of Arizona’s ties to Common Core are just some of the noteworthy successes under her leadership thus far.** Douglas is dedicated to implementing her plan to fix Arizona’s education system with the input of Arizona citizens and is committed to developing high standards for the unique needs of our students. Follow her continuing accomplishments on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

### **Superintendent Douglas Unveils AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait! Plan**

On her 2015 “We Are Listening Tour,” Superintendent Douglas traveled to 15 meetings to hear the concerns and suggestions of citizens regarding Arizona’s education system. She compiled all of the comments and developed a comprehensive strategy to fix Arizona’s education system. The plan, entitled “AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait!,” can be located at [www.azed.gov/weheardyou](http://www.azed.gov/weheardyou).

**This is the first time a detailed written plan based on public comments will be implemented to improve Arizona’s education system.**

Superintendent Douglas conducted the “We Heard You Tour,” including 11 additional meetings, to provide Arizonians an opportunity to voice their feedback on the proposals.

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## **2015 Education Highlights 1-1-1**

“As I traveled the state for several months on my ‘We Are Listening Tour,’ the number one concern I heard was the lack of funding and support for teachers,” stated Superintendent Douglas.

**Douglas has dedicated countless hours to seeking more money for education, saying that Arizonans can no longer afford to wait to provide higher quality education to our children. In September she called for an immediate appropriation of \$400 million for this fiscal year to go specifically to teachers in classrooms.**

While this initial proposal was modified, the Legislature did come to an agreement to increase K-12 funding. In May 2016, Arizona citizens will vote for what is now called Proposition 123.

**Arizona State Board of Education Votes 6-2 to Sever Arizona’s Ties to Common Core Standards**  
Throughout 2015, Superintendent Douglas advocated for the need to sever ties with Common Core. This was her number one pledge to voters.

“Anyone who followed my campaign knows one thing about me for sure—I oppose Common Core with all my fiber,” she said.

**In October, Superintendent Douglas’ perseverance prevailed when the Arizona State Board of Education voted 6-2 to cut Arizona’s ties to the Common Core standards.**

“This decision gives us the flexibility to make the standards more rigorous and will give us the ability to tailor them to the unique needs of our students,” said Superintendent Douglas. The Superintendent is actively working to dedicate 2016 to developing these new standards.

### **Superintendent Douglas Creates Title 15 Reduction Working Group**

Superintendent Douglas promoted the need to reduce unnecessary burdens and outdated statutory provisions affecting Arizona’s public schools. To achieve this goal, Douglas created the Title 15 Working Group.

“Arizona’s education code over time has grown vastly and is not comparable with student achievement. I strongly support more funding for Arizona’s classrooms, and one way to do that is to free up existing funding by relieving Arizona’s public schools from spending vital funds on unnecessary administrative requirements,” Superintendent Douglas stated.

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## 2015 Education 2-2-2

The working group is comprised of a team of unpaid public volunteers. None of the members are lobbyists, representatives of organizations, or employees of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The members have diverse expertise and knowledge of Arizona's K-12 education system. The Working Group successfully concluded their findings in early December. The Department is working with the Arizona Legislature to put the working group's recommendations into place.

### **Superintendent Douglas Improves Student Data Protection Protocols**

Since taking office, Superintendent Douglas actively worked to improve student data privacy and protection practices at ADE.

"One of my top priorities is and always will be protecting the privacy of the student data that the Department is charged with maintaining," said Superintendent Douglas. "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."

One of the first steps taken by the Superintendent to strengthen data protection was to revise the Department's procedure that allows third parties to request student data. Requests now go through an even more stringent review process before approval, and must demonstrate that the intended use of the data will directly benefit Arizona schools and students.

Superintendent Douglas is overseeing the development of expanded resources for parents concerned about their rights related to data collection and sharing. **Those resources will be added to a redesigned parent gateway on the ADE website, which will go live in the near future.**

### **Superintendent Douglas Continues ADE Certification Services in Southern Arizona**

Superintendent Douglas repeatedly advocated the need to increase support to rural areas. Toward this objective, ADE will maintain its certification office in Tucson so that it will continue to serve current and future teachers in Southern Arizona.

"My goal as Superintendent is to increase the support my department provides to classroom teachers in all parts of our state, so it did not make sense to me that we would stop providing critical certification services in Southern Arizona communities," said Superintendent Douglas. Prior to the Superintendent's arrival at ADE, the Tucson office was scheduled to be permanently closed at the end of the year.

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### **2015 Education 3-3-3**

In July, Douglas also created a full-time position in Flagstaff dedicated to serving the certification needs of Northern Arizona's education community.

#### **ADE Releases New Online Certification Portal**

In March 2015, ADE released the Online Arizona Certification and Information System (OACIS), a public certification portal which will allow members of the public to verify certificate information about Arizona classroom teachers.

"I am pleased that we are now able to offer this simple online access to basic certificate information," said Superintendent Douglas. "It will help our parents more easily understand the qualifications held by their children's teachers and will allow teachers to quickly check their certification status."

Public portal users may now access and search for a certificate by entering the teacher's name or public educator ID number at <https://oacis.azed.gov/>.

#### **ADE Launches Upgraded "Calendar of Events" System to Enhance Arizona's Professional Learning, Streamline Re-Certification Process**

In August 2015, ADE unveiled a new and improved event management system that replaced the long-time "Calendar of Events" registration system.

"The new Calendar of Events features simple navigation and is easily accessible to all education professionals," said Superintendent Douglas.

The new system allows users to select from the full range of ADE professional offerings, including webinars, conferences, trainings/workshops, meetings, and online courses – all in one place. Once registered for events, educators receive personalized login information, allowing them access to events and completion certificates. This improved access to transcripts and completion certificates will greatly simplify and streamline the re-certification process for educators.

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### **What to Look Forward to In 2016**

“Being my first year in office, I have accomplished more than I expected,” said Superintendent Douglas. “During my statewide tours throughout Arizona, I heard from many communities from very diverse backgrounds about the crucial need for education reform. I learned the unique requests from each community, and heard similar pleas statewide. The knowledge I gained from these tours has set the foundation for my education agenda in the upcoming years.”

Superintendent Douglas plans to conduct her statewide tour every year to continue to improve Arizona’s education system with feedback provided directly from the community.

“I will continue to seek input from the students, parents, and teachers who will be impacted by education reform,” said Douglas.

**Superintendent Douglas’ priority for 2016 is her AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait! plan.** Douglas stated she is eager to take the knowledge learned from her first year in office forward into 2016 to make Arizona’s education system the best in the world.

**Douglas and staff are assembling an extensive list of agency accomplishments to be shared with the public at a later date.**

Douglas is thankful for ADE staff and all teachers throughout Arizona. “I’m so very grateful for all you do every day to support the children and parents of our great state,” she said. “I’m honored to serve Arizona as Superintendent and am so very proud to be working with all of you!”

**End**