

THE ACADEMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION & ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Governor Ducey on March 3, 2021 signed Executive Order (EO) 2021-03 titled Using Data to Support Success for Arizona Students.

The order directed the Arizona State Board of Education (“Board”) to utilize AZM2 assessment data, and other assessment or academic data, from the 2020-2021 school year, to draw comparisons to prior years, in order to identify the extent of learning loss that occurred. Additionally, the EO directed the Board to:

- a. Place an emphasis on understanding how the data impacts students of various demographic subgroups.
- b. Produce a report on their findings, which may include recommendation for evidence-based strategies to mitigate the impact of learning loss. The report is due to the Office of the Governor no later than November 1, 2021.

Lastly, the Board may convene or consult with educational and data analysis experts from the private sector, other government agencies, or elsewhere, as needed to complete this work.

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE), alongside the Board and education research partners, will be providing data to meet part of the requirements of the EO 2021-03. This information will support Arizona Educators in making post-pandemic data driven decisions for their students. Areas of strength, or the appearance of resilience, to the pandemic will be identified and assessed to determine root causes of student success. Areas of struggle will be identified in order for resources to be effectively distributed to offset negative impacts caused by the pandemic.

ADE and the Board, along with its research partners and education stakeholders, will provide data analysis, reports and interpretation of academic data. Reports will be longitudinal and impact will be clearly identified by comparing pre-pandemic outcomes to post-pandemic results.

Reports on academic proficiency and growth will be based on the AzM2 state assessments, while English Learner proficiency and growth will be based on the AZELLA. Mobility and enrollment will be based on statewide student enrollment data. Reports will differ from traditional reporting of federal and state accountability components, as the analysis is specifically designed to compare pre to post pandemic outcomes.

The development of the school, district/operator, and county reports and their delivery will depend on the outcome of the analysis. The partners will review the data and work together to develop the best way to present the data in report form for the various education stakeholders.

PARTNERS IN THIS WORK

Dr. Damian Betebenner Center for Assessment	Arizona State Board of Education	Arizona State Board of Charter Schools
Arizona State University Decision Center	Helios Education Foundation	State Accountability Technical Advisory Committee
State Alternative Accountability Technical Advisory Committee	State Arizona Online Instruction Technical Advisory Committee	Arizona Department of Education

INTENDED USE

STATE AND EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders will use the data to determine the overall state level academic change in subject areas, grade spans, locations and in identified subgroups. In some areas of the data, the groups will be combined. For example: fifth grade Hispanic students in mathematics, English Learners in high school attending school in Greenlee County and possibly special education students in K-2 within large school districts.

Reports may show that there were identified areas that overcame the challenges of the pandemic or identify areas of struggle in learning where additional interventions may be warranted. Policymakers should utilize these pandemic outcomes for data-driven system change for academic and socioemotional areas in schools and charters/districts. For example: early literacy intervention, the vital role of school counselors and social workers, planning instructional time and modernized professional development. Through these efforts, the Board can denote evidence-based strategies that benefitted Arizona’s unique population in particular.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Due to individual school or local education agencies’ low participation rates on AZM2, reporting may be limited in some categories in order to maintain student privacy and data quality.

DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Board staff will utilize the longitudinal data compiled by ADE to identify schools and/or districts/charters that exhibit resiliency. School and student characteristics will be considered when identifying these schools and/or districts/charters. Student characteristics will include race/ethnicity, subgroup status and grade level, while school and/or district/character characteristics will focus on rural and urban populations, mobility, access to technology, school size and grade level configurations. Arizona is a diverse state, and the results from the pandemic will differ across it. It is a priority to be representative of school and student differences in providing recommendations.

These selected schools that exhibit resiliency to the pandemic in the longitudinal data will be requested to share the evidence-based strategies they used in response to the pandemic. Taking the Arizona-specific strategies into account, SBE staff will conduct thorough, accurate, and up-to-date literature reviews to corroborate and discover additional evidence-based practices in response to the pandemic. Synthesizing these two will exhibit what effective strategies are currently working for some schools and/or charters/districts in Arizona as well as provide guidance on perhaps underutilized practices exhibiting effectiveness in other state(s). Thus far, national research reports indicate that intensive tutoring ([Hamilton Project](#), [Brown University](#)), increased instructional time ([California](#), [RAND Corporation](#), [Massachusetts](#)) acceleration over remediation ([Chicago](#), [Learning Policy Institute](#)) and a richer examination of students needs and strengths ([McKinsey](#), [PACE](#)), can address unfinished instruction and learning.

CITATIONS

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