



FALL 2016 REPORT

At A for Arizona

We believe in the enormous power of excellent education. We believe excellent schools are built on the talents of teachers who know their students well, who understand their unique gifts, and who know how to translate those gifts into skills that their young people will possess for a lifetime.

We know...

That the 'A' on a school's front door speaks to far more than great test results. It speaks of a school that revolves around excellent teachers, that engages parents and the local community, and one committed to empowering students to choose their own meaningful future, regardless of wealth or circumstance.

Our Actions

✓ Identify great performance by teachers and principals in low-income schools, convene them frequently to share ideas, innovate with each other, hear from other experts and advise those who create education policy.

✓ Advertise success and increase expectation for what is possible through personal and written communications and sponsoring tours where local leaders can visit our best classrooms and meet the leaders who create and sustain them.

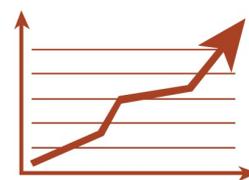
✓ Take advice from these excellent school principals and teachers about what is needed to sustain and expand our best classrooms.

✓ Translate advice into policy proposals.



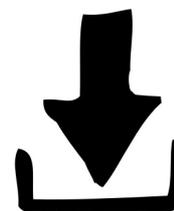
How We Measure

Arizona will see at least 10% more low-income students attending 'A' grade schools.



AND

At least 10% fewer low-income students attending 'D' or 'F' grade schools.



Every year, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year.

Which is now.

We exist to advance the practices and policies proven to rapidly grow Arizona's low-income 'A' schools.

How are we doing?

Rapid Increase in Low-Income Students Attending 'A' Schools

A for Arizona began the work of convening leaders of the state's low-income 'A' and 'On-The-Way to A' schools in the summer of 2014. We congratulated them for their work, we introduced them to each other, and then we asked them to help education across Arizona look more like their schools. We asked them to tell us what they need to grow, to replicate their school, and/or to teach their colleagues their work.

In short, we asked them to commit to a larger leadership role in the state, and we are humbled and gratified to see the first results of their commitment and ours:

Growth in Enrollment for Income-Performance Cohorts¹

Low-Income-High-Performance schools saw the highest growth in enrollment in 2015, growing more than 10 times the statewide rate



1. Income-performance cohort fixed at 2014 for each school
Note: Excludes Alternative schools, and schools for which we have no income or performance measures

Why is it working?

A for Arizona has convened the principals of our 'A' grade low-income schools at least six times a year and connected them to lawmakers and community leaders through events, tours, and personal testimony.

These opportunities have resulted in partnerships across school type and region, have inspired new schools and expansions, and have resulted in an increasing number of policies supportive of their work.

We are growing the number of low-income students who have access to 'A' quality schools because of actions taken by the principals and teachers in those schools. The state of Arizona benefits from their daily decisions.

Our work is to seek the advice of exceptional school leaders and then follow it.

'A' School Best Practices Advise Policy

FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement District:

- ✓ A for Arizona's primary mission to create a set of benefits that will sustain and grow Arizona's best schools is the foundation for Arizona's Achievement District and was proposed by Governor Ducey during his first State of the State speech in 2015. The Achievement District became law in 2015, and the first benefit available to members of the Achievement District is access to the Credit Enhancement Fund described below.

Informed A-F Policies:

- ✓ Because our work depends on a robust and honest 'A' grade, we have been active in the stakeholder meetings on recommendations for a revised, more rigorous A-F accountability system, with multiple academic measures that feature growth and outcomes.

Achievement Weight:

- ✓ In December, the Classrooms First Initiative Council adopted a recommendation of A for Arizona schools by including a finding that Achievement Weights should be part of Arizona's school funding priorities. Such a funding weight would recognize the costs to sustain and expand high performance in all schools, with the highest weight going to support highly performing low-income schools.

Menu of Assessments:

- ✓ Arizona adopted another of A for Arizona's leader recommendations when it became the 1st state in the nation to adopt a Menu of Assessments law. The law allows schools to opt out of the state's assessment in favor of college level or advanced assessments of their own choice, such as Advanced Placement (AP), ACT, Cambridge, or IB exams.

College Credit Incentives Program:

- ✓ The Menu of Assessments law was complimented by a College Credit incentives program that rewards schools and teachers with \$300 per pupil that successfully completes AP and other college-level courses, with \$450 per pupil awarded for students who succeed in college coursework at low-income schools. This law represented a first of its kind funding weight for success in low-income schools.

REGULATION RELIEF

Title 1:

- ✓ Within the new Title 1 conference language, Senator John McCain fought to explicitly allow these funds to support replicating highly performing low-income schools.

Teacher Certification:

- ✓ The passage of SB1208 modifies teaching certification requirements concerning reciprocity, renewal and competency. This was a priority item for A for Arizona's school leaders, given their gap in quality teacher pipelines.

Move On When Reading:

- ✓ This year, legislation was passed that acknowledged the successful practices of 'A' and 'B' rated schools by eliminating their obligation to submit lengthy annual reports on their approaches to reading instruction.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Public School Credit Enhancement Fund:

- ✓ The Arizona Public School Credit Enhancement Program was enacted into law this year after being created by Governor Ducey. This Fund allows high quality schools who qualify for the Achievement District to grow faster by offering them state-backed, lower interest financing.

SPARKING A RADICAL ACCELERATION OF EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

ARIZONA BY THE NUMBERS

OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2,040



PUBLIC SCHOOLS EARNING AN A-GRADE FROM THE STATE

553



PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVING >60% LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

749



PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVING >60% LOW-INCOME STUDENTS EARNING AN A-GRADE FROM THE STATE

86



TRADITIONAL DISTRICT
57%

CHARTER
35%

MAGNET
5%

ALTERNATIVE
3%



EXISTING
Low-Income
'A'
SCHOOLS

A for Arizona is grateful for the generous support of our key sponsors:

