

## STATE OF EDUCATION – 2007

For the past four years, I have given state of education speeches at schools. This year, as I start my second term, I am doing it here at the legislature to emphasize that important achievements in education are partnerships: partnerships with you, our legislators, partnership with the state board, and partnerships with schools and numerous other stakeholders.

When I took office in 2003, we announced eight public initiatives. Having made progress in all eight, the theme of my state of education speech in each subsequent year, as we added more initiatives, was “Promises Made, Promises Kept.” This year’s three initiatives are proposed partnerships with you and other stakeholders. I hope we will be successful together. I will go over the details in a minute.

Having served four years on the House Education Committee myself, I appreciate the hard job that you do, and I pay tribute to you. I want to start out by talking about a state legislator who preceded you by about 175 years. In 1832, Abraham Lincoln made his first run for the Illinois legislature, representing Sangamo County. He took out an ad in the *Sangamo Journal* dated March 15, 1832, and published a long letter to the people of Sangamo County. In part, he said:

Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition...I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition, is yet to be developed.

Later, after suffering some political reverses, he became profoundly depressed, and declared himself more than ready to die, except that “he had done nothing to make any human being remember that he had lived.” He sought, and as we now know, achieved, rendering himself worthy of the esteem of his fellow men, and of posterity.

None of us will have the opportunity to free people from slavery, or reunite a divided nation. But we can render ourselves worthy of the esteem of our fellow men and women, and of posterity, by choosing, among the many conflicting priorities with which we are presented, to give the highest priority to the education of our children.

We live in an age where the success of our civilization will depend on preparing our children to compete intellectually in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for our children to know enough of our history to preserve our freedom and representative form of government, and to know enough of culture and the arts to preserve the inheritance of a great civilization.

The importance of education is not solely the consequence of the development of the internet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Here is what Lincoln, the young candidate for the legislature, said in his letter to the citizens of Sangamo County in 1832:

Upon the subject of education... I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive ...an education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance ...

Consistent with these thoughts, our initiatives are aimed at bringing an excellent education to every Arizona students.

Bringing us forward to Arizona in 2007, let me begin with my old refrain of Promises Made, Promises Kept, as I describe my three initiatives from last year to advance excellence in Arizona education. As was done each year, they are divided into three categories: better schools, better teachers, better curriculum.

### BETTER SCHOOLS – AIMS

The first, under Better Schools, was to help students to acquire the skills they need to pass the AIMS tests. Of those who received tutoring, over 90 percent had significantly improved their scores.

The final result was that 94 percent of the students with the credits to graduate from high school passed all three AIMS tests. For students who did not graduate, additional opportunities to take the test are provided, so that when they demonstrate that they have the needed skills, they can obtain their diplomas. We will not give up on anybody.

### BETTER TEACHERS – HIGHER COMPENSATION

The second initiative last year, under Better Teachers, was higher compensation for our educators. Last year, I proposed a \$2,500 raise for each teacher, which would have cost \$150 million. In last year's speech, I stated:

We have worked hard on the accountability side. We are holding our schools and our teachers accountable for results. But none of this can succeed unless we do a better job of retaining the highly qualified teachers that we have, and attracting a much greater number of talented people into teaching.

Sen. O'Halleran, who was then a member of the House Education Committee, introduced a bill to do this, and it passed the House Education Committee unanimously. In my view, this was very much to the credit to the House Education Committee and was an important symbolic victory.

In the final budget, \$100 million was allocated for raises. I believe that this amount was not adequate. In addition, rather than award the raise directly to the teachers, the money was provided to school boards to pass on as a raise. In some districts the teachers received **no** additional raise. It is my hope that this year additional raises will be appropriated directly to the teachers, in an equal amount for each teacher.

## BETTER CURRICULUM – RIGOROUS HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The third initiative, under Better Curriculum, was to encourage more high school students to take a rigorous curriculum, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and other honors courses. Studies have shown that the best predictor of college achievement is the rigor of the curriculum taken in high school.

Department of Education personnel made 60 site visits to schools, talking with teachers and students about the benefits of adopting a more rigorous academic program. Training was held for math teachers to help them to align their mathematics curriculum and raise expectations for academic rigor, and similar programs were held for English teachers.

The results: A 16.3 percent increase in Advance Placement test takers, and a 12.6 percent increase in the number of students receiving a passing score on the Advanced Placement test that usually leads to college credit.

Emphasis was given to low income student participation, because these students in the past have been underserved with Advanced Placement programs and their participation grew 48 percent.

## NEW INITIATIVES

For next year, we want to take steps to make sure that our students are prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands for college, or for the work force, both of which will require much higher intellectual attainments. Students should have individual plans geared to their aptitudes and expectations, should be prepared for the digital skills required in a computerized economy, and should be prepared for the international nature of the coming economy. Our three goals for next year are based on these three concepts:

### BETTER SCHOOLS – PERSONALIZED LEARNING PLANS

The first goal, under Better Schools, is that every student should have a personalized learning plan from the seventh grade onward. With personalized learning plans, students who expect to go college can see that they must take the kind of rigorous curriculum required for college success. Alternatively, some students will want a plan to have the necessary intellectual skills for the job market after high school. I was told of a 28 year old apprentice in a construction trade who said, “I wish I had known about this training in high school. I wasted the last ten years.” With personalized learning plans, this should not recur.

Chairman Anderson has introduced a bill for an appropriation of \$400,000 per year for a statewide web-based system for all students to have personalized learning plans. Principals would be responsible to see that all students had these plans, and they would be a requirement for graduation, to assure that they were universal.

This is the culmination of four years of work that the Department of Education has been doing on the importance of including personalized learning plans, as part of the high school renewal effort. Arizona began its a high school renewal initiative during my first year in office in 2003.

Partners included secondary educators, the Arizona Business and Education Coalition, the governor’s office, Greater Phoenix Leadership, higher education, Rodel, the State Board of Education, school practitioners, and a number of other stakeholders.

We had to choose from a number of available high school renewable programs. We came to the conclusion that “Breaking Ranks II,” which provides schools with scientifically research-based recommendations and strategies studied at Brown University, be the foundation of our middle and high school renewal efforts. It is a bottom-up approach that provides school leaders with realistic “entry points” for school improvement. These strategies and recommendations are based upon each individual school’s strengths and weaknesses, as opposed to a top-down approach that might destroy what works, in order to fit some theorists’ preconceived idea. Because of the successful start of our high school renewal program, I was one of three state school chiefs chosen to address a United States Department of Education national meeting on high school renewal, in December 2004.

One of the seven cornerstone strategies of Breaking Ranks II is personalized learning plans, and our high school renewal initiative has been highlighting their importance within our Breaking Ranks II trainings. A personalized learning plan summit for middle and high school teams is also scheduled in Tucson this coming June.

A number of Arizona Districts, such as the Glendale High School District, have successful systems for personal learning plans.

Adopting this proposal for a statewide, web-based personal learning plan system will accelerate our goal of having all students motivated to succeed by engaging them in the process of planning their own future from seventh grade onward.

## BETTER TEACHERS – DIGITAL SUPPORT

The second goal, under Better Teachers, is to expand a pilot program of digital support in which teachers can better prepare students for the digital economy in a context where every student has his or her own laptop. The Vail School District in the Tucson area has one laptop per student in the Empire High School. At Empire, they used their textbook money. They assure me, that although the students don’t have text books, they do read other books. I am enough of a reactionary to think that it is important for students to continue to read real books.

This program can be copied by other districts, at least in part, because they can also use their textbook money.

In other states, experiments with one student per laptop have led to a number of failures. While there are a number of reasons for this, the biggest factor was inadequate professional development for teachers, so they would know how to use the computers effectively. Vail researched this, prepared their teachers thoroughly, and their program has been a success. They are a highly performing school, which shows high academic performance by the students.

The long-term vision is that every student in the state above a certain age will have his or her own laptop. But, to avoid the pitfalls of failures experienced by other states, we should proceed carefully. I am recommending an expansion to a pilot program of seven schools spread through the state. The schools that agreed to participate in this expanded pilot are: Benson High School in Cochise County, Vail High School Charter School in Pima County, Rio Rico High School in Santa Cruz County, Florence High School in Pinal County, Cyber High School in the Phoenix Union High School District, Gilbert Classical Academy in the Gilbert School District, and Coconino High School in Flagstaff Unified.

Members of the Empire High School staff, who are now experienced with this successful program, will provide professional development to the teachers in these seven schools, starting with a three-day, digital boot camp the summer of 2007. They will be supported by the County Technology Integration Specialists and the ADE. Support will continue throughout the project. WestEd, the federally funded education laboratory for our area, will provide accountability for this project. The cost of the entire program will be about \$1,000 per student. Each of the seven schools has agreed to put up \$500 per student. Unlike Empire High School, which was a new school, they don't have the budget for a entire set of textbooks, but only the money that would be used for the cycle of replacement of textbooks available. I am therefore asking you for the other \$500 and infrastructure, an appropriation of approximately \$2.5 million. It will be an important investment in keeping Arizona on the cutting edge of technology in education, and doing so carefully and successfully.

## BETTER CURRICULUM – INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

The third initiative, Better Curriculum, is for pilot schools of international studies, K-12. This initiative is a partnership among the Department, all three state universities, the Apollo Group, Thunderbird Graduate School, and Chairman

Anderson. Students would begin learning a new language in kindergarten, and a second new language in ninth grade, combined with international studies and exchange programs. They would graduate trilingual, and ready for the international business climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or international service. We are proposing grants of \$300,000 each for three K-12 programs, one in southern Arizona, one in central Arizona, and one in northern Arizona.

In addition, we will propose additional grants of \$100,000 each for international programs in ten high schools throughout the state.

We have thoroughly researched this subject. In New Jersey, test scores of international K-8 schools are 10 to 15 percent higher than the state's traditional schools. Wisconsin's international education K-8 schools score 8 to 12 percent higher than its traditional schools. Kansas' 9-12 international education schools' score 9 to 11 percent higher than the state's traditional school.

Remaining Internationally competitive is one of the central issues of our time. We must produce students who are ready to compete in this new international environment, and this initiative will be a big step in that direction.

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

With these three initiatives, we now have 24 publicly announced initiatives over the last four years. None ever stops. For example, in 2003, I announced an initiative for character education. We are still training over 100 schools a year in character education, and have character education programs at over 600 schools, with a goal of reaching all Arizona schools by 2010.

Two existing initiatives need special attention this year.

The first "Better Curriculum" initiative, announced in 2004, was to fight the tendency of schools to narrow their curriculum to the subjects tested in AIMS: reading, writing and math. Our students deserve a rich curriculum, among other things, in science, social studies, and the arts.

We have made a lot of progress. With the help of the State Board, we have adopted much more content-rich curricula in science, social studies, and the arts than was true in the past. The Fordham Foundation, which studies state standards, ranks Arizona first in the nation in "curriculum, standards, and school choice." The Chief Historian for The History Channel, stated at a news conference: "In developing the Multimedia Classroom, we analyzed the history curriculum of

every state... And it was Arizona that stood head and shoulders ahead of the other 49.”

The most important challenge that we now face is in the implementation of these standards. The most unhappy fact that I must report to you is that there are numerous elementary schools throughout Arizona that are so focused on dealing with the pressure to turn in high scores in the reading, writing, and math AIMS tests, that they teach no history, science, or arts. None. This is unacceptable. .

History is to a country what memory is to an individual. If you take away an individual’s memory, he does not know where he has been, he does not know where he is going, and he does not know how to deal with the problems of the present. The same is true of a country if its citizens do not know our own history. You have the ability to assure that our students know our history in depth, so that they can preserve our freedom. It is unthinkable that students should enter middle school with no knowledge at all of science, history, or the arts. The only reliable solution is to have AIMS tests in these subjects, in selected grades in elementary and middle school and end-of-course tests in high school, that are not high stakes (students would not have to pass them to graduate), but which would be included in determining a school’s achievement profile. Early in my first term, I proposed, and the State Board adopted, a Dual Purpose Assessment, that cut Arizona testing time in half, from two weeks to one week a year. The testing program I am proposing will not significantly add to the burden of testing time, but it will be vital in giving schools the necessary incentives so that our students learn science, history, and the arts.

Finally, we need a more intensive focus on developing leadership, an initiative we began two years ago. Currently we have 30 trained coaches working with and supporting school leaders throughout the state. Our goal is to have 100 trained coaches one year from today.

And the most important leadership is **your** leadership. You will have to choose among competing priorities. If your choice is to give priority to the education of our children, you will have bestowed the most important benefit for our posterity. As Abraham Lincoln would have said, you will have made yourself worthy of the esteem of your fellow men and women, and of posterity.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to working together with you.