



Tom Horne Reports to Educators

March 2009

Federal Stimulus Package

Many people appear to be interested in the federal stimulus package, and how it may relate to pending cuts in the state education budget. The following is a summary:

1. About \$400 million of federal funds will be distributed to the schools through the Department of Education. \$178 million is to be distributed as special education funds. This is an average of almost \$100,000 per school (with significant variations from school to school). The Department will also distribute an additional \$195 million in Title I funds. This will be of no benefit to the one-third of schools that are not Title I schools, but will benefit the Title I schools an average of over \$100,000 per school (again with significant individual variations). In addition there will be \$12.4 million in education technology funds.

2. The governor is receiving approximately \$1 billion. Of this amount, \$185 million is to be distributed at essentially her discretion. The other \$831 million is to backfill cuts in state funding of K-12 education and higher education. In 2009, the cuts were \$133 million in K-12 and \$150 million in higher education, for a total of \$283 million. Higher education, but not K-12, must be backfilled for 2009. Some K-12 may also be backfilled due to "proportionality" rules that are not yet clear from the federal government. Disregarding proportionality for the moment, that leaves \$671 million backfill for 2010 and 2011. If all of those funds were used in 2010, then the legislature could cut \$671 million and that would have no effect on education because the federal funds would compensate for the cut. Under federal law, they can cut no more than \$867 million and still receive stimulus funds. If they do cut \$867 million, and all the stimulus funds available are used in 2010, then that would leave an effective cut of about \$196 million for K-12 and higher education combined. Let us assume K-12 takes the entire cut, and higher education takes none, which is probably unrealistic. The overall state education budget is about \$5 billion from the state, \$3 billion from local sources, and \$1 billion from the federal government, for a total of \$9 billion. A cut of \$196 million would therefore be about a 2 percent cut of the total K-12 education budget. In addition, some districts face larger cuts because of override failures or declining enrollment.

As you can see, there are a number of variables, things constantly change, and I can't make any definite predictions. However, this gives you a general idea of what we are dealing with.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne
Superintendent of Public Instruction

In This Issue

Page 1

A Message from the
Superintendent

Page 2

Announcements

Page 3

Comprehension Strategies
for Struggling Readers

Page 4

Teacher Resources

**2009 Great Arizona Teach-In
Education Job Fair
Saturday, April 18, 2009**

Do you have family or friends looking for a job?

The Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services is excited to announce the Fourth Annual Great Arizona Teach-In. This 'One-stop' education career fair will provide comprehensive information to current and future education professionals. Arizona schools will be recruiting SLPs, Special Educators, General Educators, Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Related Service Providers, and more! Schools from around the state will be conducting on-site interviews to obtain the best and brightest to serve Arizona students.

Learn more about the Great Arizona Teach-In online at www.teachinaz.com.

**Arts Education Census Update:
Survey released to Principals on
March 30!**

Attention Principals! You should have received a link to the online arts education survey from the ACHIEVE In-box on Monday, March 30th. This is a first-ever survey of arts education in Arizona, and will allow the Department to a) identify best practices in arts education delivery from rural, suburban and urban areas of the state to share with others and b) identify schools and districts needing support in providing arts education, whether assistance in understanding the arts standards or additional funds.

If for some reason you did not receive this link, please e-mail Lynn Tuttle at Lynn.Tuttle@azed.gov.

Need help filling out the survey? E-mail Lynn or call her at 602-364-1534.

Thank you in advance for spending some of your valuable time helping us gather this information. We look forward to learning more about your arts education programs, and sharing the results of the survey back with you next year!

2009 Academic Contest Funds

It's that time of year again for the Arizona Academic Contest Funds. If your school has a team or organization who participated and won a state-wide event and will compete at the national level you may be eligible for funding. Funds can be used to aid with the cost of travel, accommodations, and meals. Not only does it include the students, but chaperones as well. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about this opportunity. You may download the application from this site and return it to the address provided.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact Karla Bravo at ADEInbox@azed.gov. We look forward to receiving your applications by the **April 24, 2009 deadline**.

**The Governor's Youth Commission
Seeks New Members!**

The Governor's Youth Commission is now accepting applications for the 2009-2010 year.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the application.

**Applications must be received by
Friday, April 17, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.**

The Governor's Youth Commission advises Governor Brewer's Office for Children, Youth and Families on important youth issues. It is a diverse and representative body of Arizona's high school population, and is composed of 36 members from different parts of the state. Each year, members work together on different policy and volunteer projects that impact today's youth across Arizona.

For further information, contact Christopher Bodington at (602) 542-3422 or through email at cbodington@az.gov.

Got a story idea, picture,
or celebration?
We'd love to hear from you!
Email us at: ADENews@ade.az.gov

Comprehension Strategies for Struggling Readers by Shelly Pollnow, M.Ed. and Oran Tkatchov, M.Ed.

We know that comprehension is the “name of the game” when we have our students tackling textbooks written at or above grade level. Students lacking comprehension skills fall further and further behind unless educators can identify the struggling readers, apply interventions and strategies, and begin to systematically bring them up to the level of their peers.

As educators we strive to help our students become independent learners. Reading comprehension is one of the factors that can move students towards that goal. Dr. Anita Archer (2009) states that “Teaching students comprehension strategies promotes independence and will help students become more active participants in their learning.”

Archer (2009) cites the following proven comprehension strategies:

- Model how to preview text material
- Teach students to monitor their own comprehension
- Promote the use of graphic organizers
- Ask a variety of questions
- Have students generate questions
- Use strategies based on text structure (e.g., elements of a story)
- Model and teach summarization (preferably in writing)

To increase comprehension of reading passages teachers should:

- Pre-teach the pronunciation of key vocabulary
- Pre-teach the meaning of key vocabulary
- Activate or teach background knowledge
- Preview the passage

Nagy and Herman (1984) in their study comparing low SES (socio-economic status) first graders with high SES first graders approximated that the higher SES group knew 4,700 more words than the low SES group. In a similar study, Graves and Slater (1987) found 50% more words banked in the high SES group’s lexicon. Marzano (2003) postulates that the higher rates can be attributed to greater experiences and background knowledge in the more affluent group.

Adopting five to six of these strategies across all content areas can assist schools in raising student comprehension. This approach can lead to systems change and increased academic success for all learners.

Resources:

Archer, A. (2009). “Effective reading instruction for older students: The big picture.” Presentation given at the Arizona Department of Education Struggling Adolescent Readers Standards-Based Best Practices Academy, Phoenix, AZ.

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., Hamilton, R.L., & Kucan, L. (1998). “Getting at the meaning.” *American Educator*, Spring/Summer

Gersten, R. Fuchs, L.S., Williams, J.P., Baker, S. (2001). “Teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities: A review of the research.” *Review of Educational Research*

Graves, M.F., & Slater W. H. (1987). The development of reading vocabularies in rural disadvantaged students, inner-city disadvantaged students, and middle-class suburban students. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Moats, L.C. (2001, October 27). A blueprint for professional development for teachers of reading and writing: knowledge, skills, and learning activities. Presentation at A Symposium on the National Reading Panel Report and Teacher Presentation. Los Angeles, CA.

Nagy, William E., & Herman, Patricia A. (1984), *The Futility of Most Types of Vocabulary Instruction*, paper presented as part of the symposium “What Is the Role of Instruction in Learning and Using Vocabulary?”, American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, April).

Shankweiler, D., Lundquist, E., Katz, L., Stuebing, K.K., Fletcher, J.M., Brady, S., et al. (1999). Comprehension and decoding patterns of association in children with reading difficulties. *Scientific Studies of Reading*

New Civics Resource available online from Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has assembled a team of educators, law professors, and technology specialists from across the country who have created a new set of online resources to help students learn about our American system of government from a judicial perspective. Our Courts: 21st Century Civics, found at www.OurCourts.org is a free, interactive, web-based program designed to teach students civics and inspire them to be active participants in our democracy. Arizona's own Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, organized and is leading the creation of the website because she is concerned that students are not getting the information and tools they need for civic participation, and that civics teachers need better materials and support for life in the 21st Century.

Resources on the site include:

- A video of Justice O'Connor describing the importance of civics education. According to national research, less than 1/3rd of all Americans can name the three branches of government.
- A series of games devoted to civics education - including exercising your freedom of speech, acting as a Guardian of the Law, or learning about the Bill of Rights and the Constitution.
- Curricular materials developed by teachers from Arizona and other states, along with educators at Arizona State University
- Talk to the Justice - an opportunity for students to "talk" with the Justice online and respond to questions she poses.

For more information, visit:

www.ourcourts.org/learn-about-civics/talk-to-the-justice

Liberty Day Resources

In celebration of James Madison's 258th birthday on March 16th, we would like to remind all elementary schools there is still a limited number of FREE Liberty Day Constitution booklets with Q&A cards available to 5th graders for Constitutional instruction and studies. These teaching materials are paid for by a grant from the Lions Club Foundation of Arizona. Please place your order as soon as possible. In 2008 Arizona elementary schools received over 4,000 sets of these easy to use booklets and cards. The response from Teachers and Students alike was overwhelmingly positive. This year we will have a bonus for students taking the optional test included in the materials. If they score over 90% they will receive an American Flag Pin and a gift certificate from Pizza Hut.

For more information please email LibertyDay@aol.com

Congress in the Classroom 2009 * Deadline: April 15, 2009 *

Congress in the Classroom is a national, award-winning education program now in its 17th year. Developed and sponsored by The Dirksen Congressional Center, the workshop is dedicated to the exchange of ideas and information on teaching about Congress.

We designed Congress in the Classroom for high school or middle school teachers who teach U.S. history, government, civics, political science, or social studies. Forty teachers will be selected in 2009 to take part in the program. All online applications must be received by no later than April 15, 2009. We will notify individuals of our decisions by April 30, 2009.

Although the workshop will feature a variety of sessions, the 2009 program will focus on two themes: (1) developments in the 111th Congress, and (2) new resources for teaching about Congress. The workshop consists of two types of sessions: those that focus on recent research and scholarship about Congress (and don't always have an immediate application in the classroom) and those geared to specific ways to teach students about the federal legislature.

For more information, please visit:

www.dirksencenter.org/print_programs_CongressClassroom.htm

Masters of Disaster

The Red Cross's Masters of Disaster® education curriculum is now available for teachers to download for free! The Masters of Disaster® series teaches children, kindergarten through eighth grade, about personal safety, how and why disasters occur and preparedness. It also helps reduce fear of the unexpected. The curriculum helps teachers integrate important disaster safety information into their regular lessons for core subjects such as language arts, math, science and social studies. It contains ready-to-go lessons, activities and demonstrations on disaster-related topics that teachers can incorporate into their daily classes.

The topics include general preparedness, hurricanes, wildland fires, floods, fire prevention, earthquakes, lightning, home safety, facing fear and disaster aftermath.

The Masters of Disaster® materials meet national education standards. The materials include background information, lesson plans, videos, answer sheets, glossaries, answer sheets and certificates of completion. To access Masters of Disaster®, visit www.arizonaredcross.org. If you have any questions, call 602-336-6495.