



A Message from the Superintendent

I write this report soon after attending, with Governor Napolitano, a ceremonial signing of the all-day kindergarten bill. This was a significant educational and legislative achievement, accomplished on a bi-partisan basis.

We cited studies showing that all-day kindergarten could significantly increase long-term academic performance. Those opposed cited competing studies showing the opposite. My reconciliation of the studies was that all-day kindergarten has a long term positive impact if it is used effectively for academic readiness, but can be ineffective if academics are neglected.

My contribution to the debate was to state that I would be responsible to make sure all-day kindergarten would be used for academic readiness, as set forth in our standards.

Students begin school with differing amounts of intellectual capital. As with financial capital, the amount of capital one begins with affects how much one can accumulate, and differences tend to increase rather than decline over time. Our task is to equalize the intellectual capital with which students begin school, by increasing it for all students. All-day kindergarten, oriented toward academic readiness, and the Arizona standards, is a positive step in this direction.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

In This Issue:

Page 1

Message from the Superintendent

Department Spotlight
Early childhood Ed

NASSP Grant

Free Books

Page 2

Solutions Teams

Good News In Education

Dates to Remember

Page 3

Best Practices

Student Walkathon

R.T.C. Updates

Department Spotlight

The Arizona Department of Education is committed to providing the best possible customer service. In an effort to accomplish this, we will be spotlighting a unit every issue to help introduce ourselves to you, and give you a better understanding of what we do. With that, we would like to introduce you to...



Early Childhood Education

Deputy Associate Superintendent- Karen Woodhouse

To provide leadership and support to schools, organizations, educators, families and communities in implementing programs that assist all children from birth through age 3 to become successful lifelong learners

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs include the Early Childhood Block Grant, Early Childhood Special Education, Family Literacy, Full-Day Kindergarten, and multiple collaborative partnerships. ECE Programs support school readiness and continued learning for children and adults by encouraging the implementation of high quality program guidelines and educational standards. We offer resources, on-site support, funding and professional development.

Early Childhood Education Standards – The Standards are an early learning framework to guide educators in their efforts to develop curriculum, provide instruction and use assessment to support children's learning.

Guidelines for Comprehensive Early Education Programs– The Guidelines are program standards to promote quality practices in the administration and operation of early childhood education programs.

Early Childhood Block Grant - By participating in the program, schools receive funds that may be used to provide pre-school for children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals; provide full-day kindergarten; or supplement the kindergarten - grade 3 academic program.

Early Childhood Special Education – Participating schools receive resources and funding to ensure quality educational services for children with disabilities, ages 3-5 years. Support and technical assistance is provided to schools, early childhood special education staff, and families of young children.

Family Literacy Program – Brings parents and their young children together in a comprehensive, family-centered literacy education program to improve children's academic success and increase parents' economic opportunities.

Full-Day Kindergarten Program - Provides funding and support for full-day kindergarten in schools with high enrollment of children qualifying for free or reduced-price meals.

K-3 Information- Addresses:

- Kindergarten Age Requirements
- How to Register Your Child for Kindergarten
- Academic Standards
- Teaching Tools
- Early Childhood Block Grant Information
- School and Child Care Immunization Requirements
- Child Care in Arizona
- Health and Nutrition
- Parenting Education
- Family Activities
- Web Sites for Kids

Child Development/Developmental Milestones- Addresses

- Delays and Disabilities
- Birth to Age Three
- 3 to 5 Year Olds
- Kindergarten through age 21

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A Call to Action

The overall goal of Arizona High School Renewal & Improvement Initiative (AZHSRI) is to develop a statewide vision and action plan for high school renewal and improvement in order to raise academic achievement, increase the number of high school graduates and increase post-secondary attendance and completion.

An agenda for high school renewal has been developed, focusing on the need to conduct an independent statewide needs and readiness assessment in order to clarify a plan for the initiative.

The USDE has recently approved the AZHSRI's plan to organize regional focus groups and has agreed to provide a \$15,000 line of credit to the ADE to fund the project, which will include the development of a report at the conclusion of each forum in October.

The focus groups, in partnership with West Wind Enterprises and WestEd, will validate the current strengths of Arizona's diverse high schools, as well as identify gaps that are hindering improvement of academic achievement at the secondary level. The statewide needs and readiness assessment will lay the foundation for 1) developing a statewide action plan for high school renewal and improvement; and 2) developing the agenda for our next full summit, based upon the needs of high school stakeholders.

The focus groups, held in Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma, and Flagstaff, will include all education stake-holders. For more information, contact Karen Butterfield at 602-542-5510.

Books For Kids

The Literacy Empowerment Foundation is a 501(C)3 organization that donates free books to Kindergarten & First Grade classrooms all over the USA, through their "Books From Bruce" program, to promote literacy and book ownership. The goal is to give children books that he or she can call their own.

This offer is available by a donation from author Bruce Larkin who feels that book ownership and books in the home are good indicators of future success in school. For more information about how to obtain books for Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms in your district, contact [Laurence Mullaney](mailto:Laurence.Mullaney@LEFBooks.org) at (610) 719-6448 or visit WWW.LEFBOOKS.ORG

Solutions Teams...

Arizona School Site Improvement Support Team (ASSIST)

ASSIST Coaches have finished initial site visits to Year 2 Underperforming schools and are working diligently to provide consistent service to all Underperforming schools in the state. The Coaches maintain School Improvement Logs that contain the documentation of progress of school improvement efforts as they relate to academic student achievement. A Tool Kit, based on the Standards and Rubrics for School Improvement has been created to offer more support to the ASSIST Coach and school personnel when they visit school sites. Compelling evidence that supports targeted professional development is of particular importance as they implement the ASIP and the Solutions Teams Statement of Findings priorities. For more information, please contact Donna Kongable at 602-364-2303 or dkongab@ade.az.gov.

Do you know an outstanding teacher who would be an asset to Solutions Teams visiting underperforming schools? ADE's School Effectiveness Division has trained a number of retired teachers, but would especially like additional actively employed teachers who have assumed leadership roles in improving their schools. There is a particular need for teachers with experience in rural, reservation, high English language learner, and high poverty areas. Teachers who have completed the training and served on teams are reporting to us that this is the most powerful professional development they have experienced. Please encourage exceptional teachers to visit www.ade.az.gov and follow the Solutions Team link for additional information and the application form.

-Dale Parcel~School Effectiveness Division

Curriculum Opportunities At Election Time...

Kids Voting Arizona Can Now Be Done On-line, by Early Ballot, or at the Polls

It is now even easier for teachers to use the activity-based Kids Voting Arizona curriculum and satisfy Arizona Social Studies Standards, K-12 in the areas of civics and government. Discs containing the complete K-12 curriculum have been distributed, and teachers will also receive a classroom poster and an opportunity to enter their class to be named Kids Voting Ambassadors at the National Kids Voting Day celebration in October.

Here are a few suggestions on how your school can support Kids Voting Arizona and make sure your students have the opportunity to cast their votes in November:

- Actively explore the curriculum disc and use the activities as part of your civic education lesson plans
- Encourage kids to VOTE ONLINE. Students can vote from the classroom, the library, at home or anywhere they have internet access. Just visit www.kidsvotingaz.org between September 30 and November 2
- Post a message on your school's marquee to encourage adults and kids in the community to vote on Election Day.
- Write a message for your school's morning announcements encouraging kids to vote online and for teachers to have fun with the exciting activities.
- Place the Kids Voting Arizona logo in your school and community newsletters with the link for online voting. Contact Kids Voting AZ for graphics.
- Most importantly, as a family, VOTE on Election Day. Students can vote online, by mail or at the polls on Election Day.

For more information about Kids Voting, the curriculum, online voting or anything else related to elections and the power of voting, contact Kids Voting Arizona at 602-279-3414 or info@kidsvotingaz.org.

Mock Election Campaign Incorporates Current Events into Lesson Plans

According to "Citizenship: a Challenge for all Generations," a 2003 study from Rutgers, eight of ten 15-26 year-olds know that the animated Simpsons family lives in Springfield, yet less than half know the political party of their states governor, and only 40 percent can say which party controls congress. We fight to teach democracy abroad, yet America still has the lowest voter turnout of any of the world's democracies. Teaching youth the value of participating in the democratic process through first hand experiences will strengthen their sense of patriotism and encourage them and their communities to cast ballots and have their voices heard.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election is a non-profit, non-partisan program that inspires students and parents to realize the power of their vote by allowing them to actively participate in a mock national campaign. In the last two presidential elections over 10 million students nationwide, including 90,000 Arizona students, participated in the program's activities, including debates, press conferences, candidate nights, rallies, and a mock election. Then the vote tally was broadcast live on CNN. This program gives educators the unique opportunity to incorporate current events into their lesson plans. There is no charge for participating and all curriculum materials are available on line.

The University of Colorado found that participating in the National Student/Parent Mock election increased the belief that voting is important, political decision-making ability, informed involvement on current issues, the belief that social studies classes are relevant, and the discussion of political and election topics with their parents. Participation decreased the sense of powerlessness.

To learn more or enroll in this program, visit www.nationalmockelection.com or fax Gloria Kirshner at 520-742-3553.

Dates To Remember...

Sep. 7, Provision 2 and 3 Workshop
 Sep. 8, 2004 Principals Alliance
 Sep. 8, 10, 14, NCLB Training
 Sep. 17, Gifted Ed. - American Indian Students
 Sep. 20, Pre-test Workshop-AIMS High School

Outreach
 Data-Driven ESY Decision-Making
 Sep. 7 Flagstaff
 Sep. 8, Keams Canyon
 Sep. 9, Snowflake

Sep. 14, Tucson
 Sep. 15 Mesa
 Sep. 20, Kingman
 Sep. 28, Safford
Other Dates

Best Practices...**It's About Standards-Based Teaching, Not Teaching To The Test**

Skeptics contend that statewide testing, such as AIMS, which reflects academic standards promotes teachers to "teach to the test." The implication of teaching to the test is that students are subjected to continual drill and practice techniques that emphasize memorization of facts. Repeatedly practicing discrete units of knowledge will supposedly prepare students for the test. The question at hand is can drill and practice techniques (a.k.a. teaching to the test) effectively prepare students for AIMS?

Consider the new Science Standard. Within the Earth and Space Science strand fourth-grade students are expected to be able to distinguish between revolution and rotation. A critic will contend that such information can be spoon-fed to a student the day before the test. This possibility is difficult to debate. For two students selecting a correct response on a related multiple-choice item, it would be impossible to immediately distinguish whether one student had a deep comprehension of the earth's motion while the other had only a cursory understanding. However, the assertion that spoon-feeding information is an effective test preparation technique is faulty. Ultimately, spoon-feeding information to students does not help them remember or understand knowledge; all this helps them to know is the shape of the spoon.

It is necessary to take an even closer look at the depth and scope of the Academic Standards. Objectives for the same fourth graders on the Science Standard include analyzing data obtained in a scientific investigation, identifying trends, forming conclusions, constructing reasonable interpretations from experiments, and comparing results to predictions. Consider these examples.

- Arizona Professional Teacher Standards: teachers are to encourage critical thinking and connect lesson content to real life situations.
- Arizona Mathematics Standards: 2nd grade students are to evaluate the reasonableness of an estimate.
- Arizona Social Studies Standards: 9th grade students are to analyze the rights, protections, limits, and freedoms included in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- Arizona Reading Standards: 11th grade students are to make relevant inferences by synthesizing concepts and ideas from a single reading selection.

Attempting to have students memorize how to analyze data or synthesize information is simply unworkable. Instead, implementing standards-based teaching that emphasizes critical thinking is imperative. An examination of academic performance from over 14,000 fourth-and eighth grade students completing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that in math, students whose teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills outperform their peers by about 40% of a grade level. Even though NAEP is a traditional paper and pencil test, students whose teachers conducted hands-on learning activities outperformed their peers by more than 70% of a grade level in math and 40% of a grade level in science.

Charles Caleb Colton wrote, "Knowledge is two-fold, and consists not only in an affirmation of what is true, but in the negation of that which is false." This sentiment is key. Students are ill served by a teach to the test mindset. Rather, promoting comprehensive standards-based teaching that addresses core knowledge and higher order thinking will best prepare our students not only for standardized tests but to be reflective and vital citizens. -Eugene Judson, Research and Policy

To subscribe to this monthly on-line newsletter, [click here](#).

If you have questions, comments, or story ideas, contact Constituent Services at:

adeneews@ade.az.gov or call 602-542-3710.

Brenda Fox-Gray, Deputy Associate Superintendent

Special Projects & Constituent Services

Designed and edited by Amy Koenig

ADE News Briefs...**Students Supporting Brain Tumor Research Hold 4th Annual Walkathon**

WHAT: An afternoon filled with fun, music, food, friendship and doing something for the greater good. This event is organized entirely by students to ultimately benefit their peers. The school that raises the most money will receive the Governor's Cup, awarded to Pinnacle High School earlier this year. This year's fund-raising goal is \$100,000.

WHO: SSBTR is looking for students and teachers in Maricopa County participate in the walk and look for sponsors. Honorary Co-Chairs for the event are Governor Janet Napolitano, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne and Diamondbacks Manager Jerry Colangelo.

WHY: Brain tumors are the number one cancer killer among high school students aside from Leukemia and this event offers students in Arizona an opportunity to do something about it. Funds raised will benefit the Brain Tumor Society & the Barrow Neurological Foundation.

WHEN: Noon to 3:00 PM, Saturday February 26, 2005

WHERE: Pinnacle High School 3535 E. Mayo Blvd..

HOW: To participate in the walk, sponsor a participant, be a corporate sponsor or parent volunteer, or to make a donation, visit the SSBTR website, or contact Steve Glassman at sglassman@pvusd.k12.az.us or 480-419-4516

Regional Training Centers

In our continuing customer service efforts, ADE is partnering with the Arizona County School Superintendents and the Regional Training Centers (RTC's) in Flagstaff, Tempe, Tucson, and San Simon. to provide a robust system of professional development support that is locally accessible. For the past few years the ADE has sponsored the RTC's to provide training of school personnel, parents, and the community in the use of the administrative services, academic content standards, and the appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

We also sponsor the Regional Support Centers that are housed in county offices and provide professional development in the areas of science and math. We also have reading specialists housed in our county offices and Title I support. Although each of these efforts is useful, they have also produced a certain amount of confusion as to their differences and with limited staff at four RTC's, the demands on time are quite immense.

Therefore, we are working with the different partners to combine these support systems. Our goal is to have a robust system of professional development support in the county offices that supports reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies as well as technology, while not taking anything away. By integrating the content areas, just as you do in the classroom, we will provide a more enhanced service that is locally accessible.