

Tom Horne Reports To Educators



A Message from the Superintendent

Under Arizona law, a school that is underperforming for three years in a row becomes a failing school and faces state intervention. Last year, 80 schools were in their second year of underperforming. This year, we made no changes in the formula for Achievement Profiles of schools. That meant that there was only one way these 80 schools could avoid becoming failing schools: to raise the test scores of their students.

We made it a top priority to do everything we could to help these schools improve their students' learning, so that they could avoid being failing schools. They became the first priority for our Solutions Teams: teams of outstanding Arizona teachers, principals, and administrators who visited the schools and made suggestions for improvement. They were also the top priority for the ASSIST Coaches: department employees who kept in constant touch with the schools to help them improve.

During the year, I received a lot of positive feedback about how well our Solutions Teams and ASSIST Coaches were doing. Now, we have statistical substantiation: of the 80 schools, 68 improved their test scores sufficiently to become performing schools, and only 12 became failing schools.

This is, first of all, a tribute to the dedicated teachers and principals at the underperforming schools who did such a good job of raising the test scores of the students. It is also a tribute to the Solutions Teams and ASSIST Coaches who demonstrated that positive help can make a tangible difference in the test scores of students. The proficiencies that those test scores represent will be a benefit to the students for the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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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...



Character Education



Deputy Associate Superintendent- Tammy Linn

To inspire and support educators, parents and others who touch the lives of youth to instill in youth the traits of positive character

Character Education Defined – Character education teaches universally-accepted values, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, and motivates youth to incorporate these values into their lives. Character education should be non-partisan and non-religious.

Program Support - We provide program support in addition to training through free "What's a Parent To Do" booklets available for ages 4-18, elementary newspaper activities, character bookmarks, activity idea guides and help with locating grant opportunities. Strategic planning sessions for schools or districts to set up an implementation timeline are also provided.

Program Overview - Arizona's goal is to be a leader and model state for character education by: providing voluntary education and training on the core values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship to educators, leaders of youth organizations, children and their families. This is made possible through collaborations with businesses, educators, community organizations, the State of Arizona, state and local agencies that deal with parents and youth, youth sports programs and all stakeholders that work with youth.

Arizona Character Education Survey – We are currently in the process of [surveying Arizona schools](#) on Character Education.

Arizona Character Education License Plate – The 2004 State Legislature passed HB 2206 for Arizona to develop the first ever character education license plate. A contest was held in October 2004 for Arizona students to design the plate. Designs are currently in the process of being reviewed, and the license plate will be available for purchase in March of 2005. Proceeds will benefit Arizona character education non-profit foundations whose goals are to further character education in the State of Arizona.

Character Education Training - We provide teacher in-service training to schools across the state in 2 – 8 hour sessions. Sessions discuss students' development to become more Trustworthy, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Caring and Good Citizens. We also train parents to incorporate character lessons into daily home activities, as well as how parents can support schools that have chosen to focus on good character. Regional One-day Character Education conferences are held throughout the state. Upcoming conferences include Yuma in February of 2005 and Lake Havasu in April 2005.

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2004 Mega Conference "No Educator Left Behind"

WHAT: This year's conference focuses on NCLB Program Administrators and Coordinators. Cost is \$275 per person.
[Register On-line](#)

WHEN: 8:00 a.m. - 4:40 p.m. Tuesday, November 16 - Thursday, November 18. [Registration](#) begins 4:00 p.m., November 15.

WHERE: Radisson City Center, 181 West Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85701 www.radisson.com/tucsonaz

WHO: Sessions will be presented by nationally recognized speakers, program experts from Arizona, and ADE staff to create a comprehensive array of professional development opportunities for NCLB program coordinators, as well as educators who implement NCLB programs.

For more information: [Laurie Larson](#) 602-542-7855

2005 "Polly" Rosenbaum
Writing Contest
for 7-12th grade students

"How is Your Voice
Heard in Our
Democracy?"

Sponsored by the
Arizona Education Foundation
and APS

[Click here](#)
for details

Did You Know?

All school employees are required to file a report with a peace officer or Child Protective Services if they have any reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. Persons who make such a report are immune from legal action if the suspicions are found to be false, but when it comes to our kids, its better to be safe than sorry! In fact, if you have reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected and you fail to report it, you are guilty of a felony under Arizona law!

Read the full statute and make sure you know the ARS 13-3620 Reporting Procedures

Solutions Teams Update...

Arizona System is Gaining National Attention

The system of support being offered to underperforming schools in Arizona is gaining national attention. In July, Associate Superintendent Phyllis Schwartz and Deputy Associate Dale Parcell joined school improvement leaders from 12 other state departments of education at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) headquarters in Alexandria, VA to share ideas and information related to their school improvement initiatives. The meeting, the first of its kind held by ASCD, provided a forum for school leaders grappling with No Child Left Behind mandates, new state assessments, education budgeting crunches, and other challenges to compare and contrast their school improvement efforts and learn from others' successes and failures.

The agenda of the ASCD School Improvement Symposium consisted of six presentations by state school improvement leaders on their state's respective plans. Presenters were asked to highlight successes and challenges yet to be solved. Phyllis and Dale were given an opportunity to share details on Arizona LEARNS and achievement profiles, the Arizona School Improvement Plan, Solutions Teams, the ASSIST coach model, and Best Practices. Other states that presented at the symposium were Kentucky, Illinois, Georgia, Washington state, and Tennessee. The symposium was featured in the summer issue of ASCD Associate News. Arizona has been invited to present to a new group of states at a future symposium.

Additionally, the School Effectiveness Division has learned that the Idaho Department of Education has studied Arizona's Solutions Team concept very closely and has replicated it. In Idaho, it is an optional service, rather than mandated, and state officials report a waiting list of schools desiring a visit. ~Dale Parcell, School Effectiveness

Good News in Education...

Valley Educators Win Milken Award

Two outstanding teachers from the state of Arizona were recognized in October by the Milken Family Foundation and will represent Arizona at a national educators conference in Washington DC this coming year. Debbie Peterson from Village Meadows Elementary School in the Deer Valley Unified District, and Eleanor Gains from Pinnacle Peak Elementary School in the Paradise Valley Unified District were both surprised at school assemblies and presented with a \$25,000 check. Superintendent Tom Horne attended the awards ceremonies, along with Lowell Milken and special guest speaker, NFL Hall-of-Famer Rosevelt Greer. The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards program provides public recognition and financial rewards to schoolteachers, principals and other education professionals who are furthering excellence in education. The program strives to attract, develop, motivate and retain talented people to the challenge and adventure of teaching.



Top: Sup. Tom Horne, Rosy Greer, Ellie Gains, and Lowell Milken at the ceremony

Bottom: Lowell Milken, Debbie Peterson and Tom Horne with Peterson's class at Village Meadows Elementary School in Phoenix.



Best Practices...

Teachers Key to Academic Achievement

The availability of resources, support of peers, and motivation all shape achievement, but chief among the factors affecting student learning is the teacher. Research shows that more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than any other single factor. Notably, effective teachers are effective "with students of all achievement levels regardless of the levels of heterogeneity in their classes" (Wright et al, 1997). If the teacher is ineffective, students with that teacher will not progress adequately. Studies that have examined the attribution of different variables to student achievement show the variance accounted for by the individual classroom teacher is greater than that accounted for by the school as a unit by nearly a 2 to 1 ratio in favor of teachers, versus schools.

A logical question, then, is how best to improve the effectiveness of teachers. A straightforward answer is to promote teacher collegiality. Research suggests that among the best ways for teachers to improve is to spend more time, not with their students, but with their colleagues. This goes beyond simply having teachers gather together to talk about shared problems. Specifically, "if schools want to . . . boost student learning, they should work on building a professional community that is characterized by shared purpose, collaborative activity, and collective responsibility among staff" (Newman and Wehlage, 1995). ~Eugene Judson

Look for more on this topic next month!

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

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

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

Adria Martinez, Director of Special Projects & Constituent Services

Designed and edited by Amy Koenig

Dates To Remember...

- Nov. 3, Food Service Management Contracts
- Nov. 4, 9, Science and Writing Standards
- Nov. 7-8, Curriculum Mapping
- Nov. 5, 10, 23, 16, 29, AADSI - Assessment
- Nov. 12, Communication Skills - Autism
- Nov. 8, Legal Issues in AZ Schools
- Nov. 9, Trainer of Trainers : Discrete Mathematics
- Nov. 16, CTE Directors Meeting Principals' Meetings

Outreach

Standard and Non-Standard Accommodations on Statewide Assessment

- Dec. 2, Payson
- Dec. 9, Kingman
- Dec. 9, Flagstaff
- Dec. 10, Tuba City
- Dec. 10, Yuma
- Dec. 15, Tucson