



May 10, 2010

The Honorable Jan Brewer
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

ABEC Officers:

Dave Howell
Wells Fargo
President

Charles Jirach
Global Southwest
Capital LLC
Past-president

Paul Winslow
Orcutt | Winslow
Vice President,
Business

Greg Wyman
Tempe Union High
School District
Vice President,
Education

Panfilo Contreras
Arizona School
Boards Association
Secretary

Robin Berry
Palo Verde
Elementary School
District
Treasurer

Dear Governor Brewer:

We, the **Arizona Business & Education Coalition (ABEC)**, write this letter in support of the Arizona Plan, submitted for “Race To The Top” funding. We believe that our public schools are the foundation on which the state’s economy and its citizens’ quality of life rest. Whether or not we attended public schools ourselves or send our own children to public schools, we interact each day in a world where the outcomes of our public education system are readily apparent. Throughout our state and our country, public schools educate countless children who grow up to be engaged, contributing members of their communities, who teach our children, run our corporations, and provide numerous goods and services. At the same time, we know that many students are leaving public schools each year without graduating from high school or with minimal skills and competencies.

The Arizona Plan offers the opportunity to encourage innovation and provide the training and support LEAs will need as they make new transitions as well as supporting ABEC’s primary policy work: the redesign the school finance system for the 21st Century; creating one that supports high levels of learning for all students, regardless of geographic location, neighborhood wealth, or choice of traditional or charter public school.

To that end, ABEC has examined the connection between funding and student learning; questioned whether or not Arizona has set credible and meaningful goals for students; explored transparency in the system and weighed the degree of flexibility in the use of resources to focus and enable work of educators. We have engaged with local stakeholders and are reinforcing the urgent need for the development of an accurate, real-time data collection and reporting system that provides the tools to evaluate relevant, meaningful goals and we have brought forth a set of policy proposals that efficiently supports all public schools and students, makes room for innovation, and allows educators to deploy the best possible educational strategies to teach Arizona’s children. The work of ABEC aligns well with the Race to the Top application.

It is clear that the results of the Arizona Plan will be integral to the success of transforming Arizona’s school finance system. Establishing high expectations for all Arizona students and having in place an effective, accurate statewide data collection system are foundational for all that follows. In addition, it is vitally important to analyze best practices with an eye toward scaling up those strategies that work. ABEC endorses the Arizona Plan and will assist in all ways possible to ensure its success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Carlson".

Susan Carlson,
Executive Director

The Arizona Business & Education Coalition (ABEC) is a 501(c)3 organization providing a balanced forum for business and education leaders to collaborate and improve K-12 education policy, with linkages to pre-kindergarten and postsecondary education. Guiding principles include: increasing public awareness about the relationship between Arizona’s future workforce and the quality of the K-12 system; actively and effectively influencing education policy; and sharing responsibility for the growth of student achievement in Arizona. For more information, visit www.azbec.org.