



## MAKING ARIZONA SCHOOLS WORK

### SUMMARY:

- Too many holes have been poked in the bucket of money we use to fund Arizona schools.
- I intend to plug those holes. But money alone will not fix the problem.
- We must STOP the prescribed, rigid, scripted, micromanaged approach to K-12 education and replace it with local control, rational standards and accountability for teachers, students and parents.
- As Governor, I will have a legislative package ready to go at the start of the legislative session that tackles these goals.

### POLICY DISCUSSION:

Arizona's children deserve the best from Arizona's public schools. Yet, for too many Arizona students, our system fails.

Monica and I are the proud parents of a public school 6<sup>th</sup> grader. Like all children in our state, he deserves the best from Arizona's public schools, and Arizona must step up to provide better support for our schools. For our son, and for all children in our public schools, I have a simple goal: in 10 years, **Arizona will be ranked in the top 10 states in educational achievement.**

Arizona can be a model for quality education, preparing our children to succeed. We must do our homework, roll up our sleeves, and find solutions that include:

- Quality early education and full-day kindergarten at every neighborhood school;
- The opportunity for post-secondary education for every student, whether it be technical education, a community college or a four-year university;
- Academic standards and policies that foster educational excellence;
- Standards for teacher quality and accountability;
- Reform of Arizona's school finance system.

Educational excellence is not simply a feel-good goal. It is a moral, a social, and an economic imperative. Our economy will never thrive with our current inadequate public school system. Arizona graduates must be prepared for high-tech, highly-skilled jobs here at home, across the nation and around the world, and they must be informed citizens ready to fulfill their unique role in our extraordinary democracy.

The time is now to transform public schools in Arizona. We can no longer rely on the same models and methods of the past century or even the last decade. As our economy evolves, as technology explodes, and as international relationships become just as important as interstate



commerce, we must reengineer our schools to prepare students for *their* 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need to identify the necessary skills and knowledge our kids will need and adopt research-based, proven practices to give the next generation the opportunities our parents and grandparents provided for us. As your governor I will invite parents, students, business leaders, the philanthropic community, and, of course, education professionals to work with us on this most critical endeavor.

### **Student Opportunity**

With the variety of life choices available to them, we must make multiple pathways available to students. All pathways start with quality early childhood education and that means all-day kindergarten available at the neighborhood school. Every path to a sustainable future will require some post-secondary education, so we must adopt academic standards and set the policies necessary for each student to be successful in his or her choice. These education pathways should also be flexible enough to allow students to change paths if their goals change. The Goddard administration will ensure that students will be prepared for and have access to post-secondary education, whether it is technical education, community college or a competitive four-year university. My goals:

- Coursework will reflect the national Common Core academic standards<sup>1</sup> and will incorporate the rigor and relevance necessary to meet the diverse needs of all students;
- Research-based and appropriate assessments will measure student progress and achievement;
- Schools will offer a variety of curriculum choices in areas of the core academic standards as well as in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and life skills;
- Schools will offer multiple options for school completion leading to increased graduation rates and greater access to higher education.

### **Teacher Quality**

Teachers provide the foundation of a quality education, and they must have the necessary background, tools, and support to do their work. To make it possible for every Arizona student to be taught by a highly accomplished teacher, the Goddard administration will give new focus and emphasis to teacher quality, including recruiting from the most skilled and accomplished prospects, expecting the highest of standards for teacher preparation, providing a state-wide system for the induction and mentoring of new teachers, and offering standards-based and aligned professional development for continuous improvement. Our goals:

- Teacher quality will be measured by both content knowledge and instructional practice;
- Every new teacher will receive appropriate induction and mentoring;

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<sup>1</sup> In early June the National Governors Association and state school chiefs released a set of state-led education standards, the Common Core State Standards. In less than two months following release of the recommended English-language arts and mathematics standards for grades K-12, 27 states have adopted them and about a dozen more are expected to do so in the next two weeks. The Standards, established to provide clear and consistent goals to prepare our children for success in college and work, were developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including content experts, states, teachers, school administrators and parents.



- Highly accomplished teachers will be placed equitably across school districts;
- Teacher evaluation systems will lead to the identification of appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities;
- Multiple pathways for teacher certification will all guarantee a consistent, high level of skill and knowledge.

### **Accountability**

In order to provide all of Arizona's students the opportunity to succeed, our schools – and all of us who count on them – must commit to a *reciprocal accountability*. We are all stakeholders – students and their families, teachers and school employees, community members and private sector leaders, elected officials and government employees. Each of us has a role and responsibility in the teaching and learning equation, and we must all be accountable for that function. The Goddard administration will acknowledge that human, financial, and social resources are necessary for school success, and we expect that all entities will be accountable for their part. Our goals:

- Accurate data on student, teacher, and school performance will be used to improve performance and identify needs;
- Best practices, effective professional development, and successful school models will be identified, promoted, and supported;
- Appropriate assessments will be given for the needed purposes, and the data will be used only for those purposes;
- Performance-based pay plans for school employees will be based on proven criteria.

The safety and security of our schools is part of that commitment to accountability. As Attorney General, I have focused with success on the threats posed by bullying and cyber-bullying and I have made removing child predators from our communities a priority. As Governor, that focus will continue. Our children must not have their ability to learn blunted by fear.

Our plans for accountability will include Charter schools. They must be to the same standards as other public schools in terms of student and teacher performance, and in terms of fiscal responsibility. As Governor, I will propose that new Charter schools undergo a probationary review period, allowing the state time to assess performance in the classroom and ensure these schools are operating within sustainable financial boundaries that enhance student achievement.

### **State Obligation**

In Arizona, public schools – their necessary funding and support – are a constitutional responsibility. Our state must live up to that obligation. The current state policies and funding structures are in many ways dated and anachronistic. Furthermore, recent legislatures have tried to micromanage details of practice and implementation best left to the State Board of Education or to local school districts. The state imperative is clear: articulate the goals and outcomes we expect from our schools and provide the resources or access to the recourses required for school districts to achieve those goals. The school districts, with assistance from the Department of Education and guidance from the State Board of Education, have both the responsibility and the authority to enact the policies and practices in order to carry out their charge. To this end, we must:



- Revamp the outdated school finance formula;
- Link academic programs to proven accountability measures in order to support successful efforts and eliminate those that don't work;
- Eliminate unfunded mandates;
- Review all education legislation to fix the current patchwork of laws and piecemeal policies;
- Make the Career Ladder program available to all districts that choose to participate;
- Restore full-day kindergarten – we know it works.

We only have one chance to educate our children. We cannot waste a moment. We must get it right; this is no time for trial and error. We actually know what works, but it is beyond tragedy that we have waited so long to do it. We can and we must open the doors of opportunity for the next generation; we can and must provide them with the highest quality teaching that our state has ever seen; we can and must hold ourselves and all others accountable.

Very simply, Arizona has to acknowledge and shoulder the obligation expressed in our Constitution. The Goddard team is prepared for those commitments and is committed to Arizona's success. It's time for our state to rise from what is barely acceptable and strive for what is excellent. We *can* become one of the top 10 states in educational achievement in the next 10 years. Join me. Together, we will make it happen. Together, we will make our schools work.