



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne - 15 Initiatives 2023-2027

This report outlines the 15 initiatives for improving educational outcomes in Arizona, detailing successes, future plans, and expected evidence of success over the next four years.

(Initiatives are not in order of importance)

Initiative #1: Improvement Teams (Project Momentum)

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- **Improved Academic Performance:** Demonstrated measurable gains in literacy and mathematics proficiency across participating schools.
- **Teacher Development:** Provided targeted professional development, resulting in increased instructional effectiveness and positive teacher feedback.
- **Community Engagement:** Strengthened collaboration with families and local communities to support student success.
- **Resource Management:** Successfully directed resources to historically underserved schools, reducing achievement gaps.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- **Scaling Interventions:** Expand the program to include more schools while tailoring interventions to meet the needs of diverse communities.
- **Sustained Professional Development:** Deepen teacher support with ongoing training in evidence-based practices.
- **Enhanced Data Systems:** Implement advanced data tracking to monitor student progress and guide instructional adjustments in real time.
- **Policy Alignment:** Align the initiative with broader state education goals to ensure sustainability.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- **Academic Growth Metrics:** Increased student achievement scores in literacy and mathematics across all participating schools.
- **Reduced Achievement Gaps:** Significant narrowing of performance disparities among student subgroups.
- **Teacher Retention and Satisfaction:** Improved teacher retention rates and enhanced satisfaction surveys.
- **Sustained Outcomes:** Schools continuing to thrive with reduced reliance on external support due to embedded best practices.

Initiative #2: Leadership Training

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- Total # of Participants at Academies & Trainings (note: academies have multiple sessions): **2281**
- Total # of Session Attendees overall: **2833**
- Added **3 new leadership academies** in addition to our Supervisors of Principals' Academy & Principals' Leadership Academy:
 - Assistant Principals' Leadership Academy
 - Instructional Coaches' Academy
 - Teacher Leaders' Academy
- Ensured that academy participants receive coaches to help them implement tools provided.
- Added **3 new trainings** in addition to Qualified Evaluator Training:
 - **The Well-Managed Classroom (discipline); 779 teachers & leaders have attended**
 - Positive Teacher-Student Relationships
 - Superintendent support of Instructional Leadership (@GCU)
- Have provided **onsite trainings in 8 counties**: Cochise, Graham, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, and Santa Cruz
- Have **served participants from 12 counties**: Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Graham, Greenlee, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- Align all trainings to create a System-Based Approach for raising Student Achievement
- Add Early Career Teacher Academy
- Add Department Chair Academy
- Scale up Principals' Leadership Academy
- Scale up Instructional Coaches' Academy
- Design a Principal/Assistant Principal Evaluation Protocol & Rubric with state-wide design committee (exemplar not mandated tool)
- Add trainings: School Board School; Expanded Opportunity Models for Increasing Achievement; Systems for Managing Difficult Student Behaviors; Systems Design
- Add on-demand trainings
- Increase the number of participants
- Provide Leadership Academies in counties other than Maricopa

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- # of trainings (Goal: 350 total training events provided)
- # of Participants (Goal: 8,000 total participants)
- # of counties served with onsite trainings (Goal: all 15)
- Training Measures:
 - 98-100% of participants recommend the trainings
 - 95-100% of participants report an increase in knowledge/skills/abilities
 - Rating of at least 4.5 out of 5 on the educational value of the training



Initiative #3: Student achievement proficiency data by economic group

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- **Increased Transparency:** Launched an accessible and interactive online platform presenting comparative student proficiency data, empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions.
- **Community Engagement:** Fostered discussions among schools and communities on performance and equity by highlighting economic context in achievement comparisons.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Building strong partnerships with schools and districts to ensure data accuracy and usability.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- **Platform Enhancements:** Refine the platform with additional metrics such as growth trends and subgroup analyses to provide a more comprehensive view of achievement.
- **Training and Support:** Offer workshops and resources to schools and communities on interpreting and leveraging data for improvement.
- **Expanded Comparisons:** Incorporate state and regional benchmarks to contextualize performance further.
- **Continuous Feedback Loop:** Establish regular stakeholder feedback sessions to keep the tool relevant and user-friendly.
- **Data Utilization:** Enabled schools to identify peer institutions excelling in similar contexts, facilitating the sharing of effective practices.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- **Stakeholder Utilization:** High engagement rates with the platform among school leaders, educators, and community members.
- **Actionable Insights:** Documented cases of schools adopting successful strategies from peers identified through the tool.
- **Improved closing the achievement gap:** Reduction in proficiency gaps among economically similar schools as data-driven strategies take effect.
- **Sustained Impact:** The platform becomes an integral part of Arizona's school improvement toolkit, driving continuous progress in student achievement.

Initiative #4: Move On When Reading – Mississippi Miracle

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- Updated SBE policy to require remediation or retesting for third graders not reaching the MOWR threshold.
- Completed vetting all major tier 1 curriculums to ensure they are aligned to AZ standards and current MOWR legislation. We are also in beta testing for our MOWR portal with 10 different LEAs.
- P3 Coaching – We have fully funded our P3 coaching grant for this school year. We are seeing some exciting gains in literacy rates for students in grades K-2 (They aren't old enough to take the AASA.) We are also seeing teacher retention in those schools that participate in the grant.
- K-5 Literacy Endorsement – This supports MOWR and all literacy initiatives. We have offered over 1400 teachers' free courses to complete the requirement for this endorsement. Teacher certification has statistics showing a higher percentage of teachers are passing the Reading exam on their first try.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- Continuing to vet new curricula for the program.
- Completing a major vetting of all supplemental programs.
- The new MOWR portal is currently in beta testing and will roll out to the field for the 2025-2026 school year. This new portal will streamline entries and make submittals easier for LEAs.
- P3 Coaching will continue as a major literacy initiative. We have requested additional funding for the program and more FTEs for ADE to support this program.
- K-5 Literacy Endorsement – Will continue to offer these courses and more in the coming years to help train teachers in the science of reading.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Improved feedback from LEAs to impact their literacy funding through MOWR, leading to higher achievement as LEAs know what is expected of them with MOWR.
- Evidence that those students who participated in P3 take the AASA.
- K-5 Literacy Endorsement – more educators becoming certified and trained in the science of reading. This is expected to help raise proficiency scores on the AASA.
- Proficiency gains overall and reduction in need for remedial measures.

Initiative #5: English Language Learning

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

In January of 2023, a restructuring of the Office of English Language Acquisition Services took place, with a change in the Deputy Associate Superintendent. The selection of a leadership team followed and included three directors, one for each of the areas of work: Monitoring, Professional Learning/Technical Assistance, and Program Effectiveness.

Monitoring Successes – 2023-2024

Overall Monitoring Results:

- 58 Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) completed Desktop Monitoring (Cycle 6)
- 44 LEAs remaining from 2022-2023 (previous administration) Monitoring – completed Corrective Action Follow-up with 28 LEAs Complaint – 64%
- 36 (New) Initial Monitoring – LEAs
 - 14 LEAs Compliant – 39%
 - 61% of LEAs scheduled for follow-up Corrective Action

2024-2025 Monitoring Plan –

- 38 LEAs Corrective Action Follow-up from 2023-2024
 - Successes:
 - Completed 36 Corrective Action Follow-up Visits with
 - 1 Continued in Corrective Action, 32 Released from Corrective Action Status
 - 3 LEAs will receive follow-up before the end of the 2024-2025 School Year
 - 2 LEAs on the calendar for visit before the end of the 2024-2025 School Year
- 34 LEAs – Initial Monitoring – Scheduled Spring 2025
- 72 LEAs to complete Desktop Monitoring

Professional Learning/Technical Assistance Successes – 2023-2024

- Targeted and Integrated Instructional Sessions and Technical Assistance -In-Person and Virtual Attendance:
 - 2023-2024: 1730
 - 2024-2025 Total-to-date; 4790 attendees

- Practitioners of English Language Learning (PELL)
 - Meetings/Trainings (2) – 516 Attendees
 - EL Coordinators' Boot Camp – 149 Attendees

- Webinars/Wednesday Webinar/One per month
 - Virtual/Statewide – 797 Attendees

- County-wide Trainings: Cochise, Graham, Yuma, Phoenix area, regional; Northern Arizona, regional
 - 16 Professional Learning Sessions; Total of 98 Attendees

- Arizona and Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Conferences
 - Attendees receiving Professional Learning from OELAS Staff: 483
 - Conferences include Teacher's Institute, IDEA Conference, Migrant Education Program Boot Camp, ADE Assessment Conference, Yuma County Professional Development at Arizona Western College

Program Effectiveness Area Successes – 2023-2024

Our concerted effort to move from Compliance to Program Effectiveness in the instruction of English language learners has taken several forms in 2023-2024:

- In June of 2024, a four-week **summer school** program for ELs resulted in an average growth of 24% for participants. A pre-and-post- test resulted in this growth. AZELLA spring test will track these students for reclassification.
- In 2023-2024 the Wednesday Webinars titles have supported the intent to educate our practitioners of English language learning in areas of work with our ELs.

Examples are the following:

- 2023 – High School ELA Credit
 - Supporting Long-Term ELs
 - Dual-labeled ELs (EL and Special Education)
 - 2024 – EL Program Evaluation
 - Parent and Community Engagement for ELs
-
- **SEI Endorsement Course Approvals** – 21 Courses reviewed and recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

Monitoring (2025-2026) -

Initial Monitoring Continues -

- A minimum of 32 LEAs
- Beginning with LEAs that serve the highest enrollment of English language learners in Arizona.

Professional Learning/Technical Assistance (2025-2026) -

- Professional Learning emphasis in grades K-3 training with Structured English Immersion, the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and Performance Indicators (PIs) to effect change in early childhood ELs.
- Instructional videos, on-line modules to build capacity, with a Library of micro-modules for instruction.

Program Effectiveness - (2025-2026)

- Continuation of Summer School for English Language Learners (funding is being sought). This is focused instruction for teachers and increased reclassification for ELs.
- ELAC (English Learner Advisory Council) - Continuation of discussion and recommendations for Program Effectiveness.
- AI - Artificial Intelligence - Collaboration with ADE partners to advance program effectiveness for English language learners - remediation (correctives) and increased learning.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Continuation of Summer School for English Language Learners (funding is being sought). This is focused instruction for teachers and increased reclassification for ELs.
- ELAC (English Learner Advisory Council) - Continuation of discussion and recomm1z

Initiative #6: Teacher Preparation Colleges

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- **Initial Outreach:** Conducted preliminary meetings with key teacher preparation colleges, such as Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University, to identify areas for collaboration.
- **Needs Assessment:** Gathered feedback from both colleges and school districts to understand gaps in teacher preparation and align program outcomes with classroom realities.
- **Renewed Relationships:** Reestablished lines of communication with institutions previously disconnected from the Arizona Department of Education, signaling a renewed commitment to partnership.
- **Collaborative Survey:** With ABOR, surveyed teachers to gather feedback on teacher preparation colleges.
- **Foreign National Teacher Professional Development:** Partnered with ASU to develop a professional development series aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of foreign national teachers in Arizona.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- **Collaborative Curriculum Development:** Partner with colleges to incorporate state-specific challenges into teacher preparation programs, such as strategies for teaching in rural areas and addressing diverse learner needs.
- **Internship and Placement Programs:** Work with colleges to expand student-teacher internships in high-need districts, ensuring smoother transitions from training to employment.
- **Advisory Committees:** Establish advisory committees, including representatives from both colleges and K-12 schools, to ensure ongoing alignment between teacher preparation and workforce demands.
- **Continuous Engagement:** Schedule annual statewide forums with teacher preparation institutions to share insights, best practices, and workforce data.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- **Increased Teacher Retention:** Higher retention rates among new teachers, particularly in underserved districts, as preparation aligns more closely with classroom realities.
- **Expanded Pipeline:** Growth in the number of teacher preparation graduates choosing to work in Arizona schools and entering teacher preparation programs.
- **Improved Collaboration:** Routine and productive engagement between the Department of Education and teacher preparation colleges, with shared initiatives driving measurable outcomes.
- **District Satisfaction:** Positive feedback from school districts regarding the readiness and quality of new teachers entering the workforce.

Initiative #7: AZ Education Economic Commission

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

Note: Official launch of the initiative: October 2023

- Established an Executive Leadership Committee and partnerships with major industry leaders, career and technical education districts, high schools, school superintendents and post-secondary adult education providers
- Formed nine AEEC Industry Groups (Semiconductor, Advanced Manufacturing, Manufacturing Food and Beverages, Natural Resources, Aerospace, Defense, Healthcare, Construction and Transportation)
- Established two cross industry groups (AI, Cybersecurity and Neurodiverse Population)
 - o Neurodiverse students – currently engaged in work-based learning at U-Haul
- Four Industry Groups identified high need occupation positions needing filled (Healthcare, Semiconductor, Construction and Natural Resources)
- Continued to align education standards with current future industry demands
- Developed Professional Career Onboarding (PCO) paid work-based learning and guaranteed interview with the industry
- Established post-secondary workgroup to ensure high school students enroll in post-secondary or become employed
- Increased CTE student participation in taking the Technical Skills Assessments (TSA) with an 80% pass rate
- Increased number of CTE students receiving industry recognized credentials
- Introduced the AEEC to LEA CTE administrators at three separate meetings
- Held four AEEC meetings with working sessions between industry and education groups: CTED's, District CTE directors
- Hired a Work-Based Learning (WBL) Director

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- CTE to develop a strategic plan, with stakeholder input, to identify areas of need to promote and develop programs that meet that need.
- Regional outreach to CTE Administrators, CTEDS, School Counselors and Post-Secondary providers to partner with industries
- Identify CTE and Adult programs that align with industry group high need in-demand jobs and provide to CTEDs and CTE Administrators
- Identify the gaps in programs that would meet in-demand industries
- Increase connections with secondary, post-secondary and business and industry participants
- Engage with industry groups to monitor immediate and long-term needs for in-demand jobs
- Ensure standards and curriculum are aligned with in-demand job requirements
- Increase students and adult learners in work-based learning/professional career onboarding opportunities

- Continue to collect data on the amount of participation and the opportunities acquired because of participation (certifications earned, job placements, etc.)
- CTE development of a Work Based Learning (WBL) database to collect data
- Work with CTE administrators and Counselors to identify and capture students who are not college or career bound
- Increase Adult Learners in high demand jobs
- Maintain current relationships with Industry Leaders
- Engage Local Workforce Boards

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Increased CTE enrollment in all 15 counties
- Increased WBL experiences
- Increased number of industry recognized credentials
- Increased number of industry and education connections
- Identified pathways for career pipeline
- Increase placement in high - demand jobs.
- Industry feedback to improve students enrollment in CTE programs



Initiative #8: Teacher Retention & Recruitment Task Force

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

Quick Facts:

- 39 members of the Task Force
- WestEd Region 15 Comprehensive Center support
- Meetings held July 2023-March 2024
- Met in person and online
- 3 main recommendation areas:
 - Teacher Voice
 - Induction with Robust Mentoring
 - Retention Plans
- All recommendations include practical strategies for LEAs to implement that will make a positive impact for educators
- Each recommendation area contains:
 - Importance of the recommendation area related to recruitment and retention
 - Recommendations
 - Critical Components
 - Important Components- if applicable

Successes include the publication of the final Task Force Recommendation document in March 2024, followed by presentations from the Educator Recruitment and Retention (ERR) team regarding the overall recommendations at the following:

- Spring 2024 Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association (ASPAA) conference
- Summer 2024 Leading Change conference
- October 2024 Arizona State Board of Education meeting.
- WestEd's Rural Community of Practice
- ADE's School Improvement Elevate cohort
- 2024 Fall ASPAA conference

The Task Force overwhelmingly agrees that educator salary is an important ongoing factor that significantly impacts educator retention and potential educator decision-making in selecting teaching as a career. The Task Force focused on strategies that can be immediately implemented by local education agencies (LEAs). While each of the Task Force Recommendation areas has several components and strategies, a few of the more notable include:

- Develop clearly defined systems to gather, implement, and follow up regarding feedback from teachers
- Have supportive administrators who value teachers and build a positive culture
- Have dedicated funding to support Induction and Mentor programs
- Provide teachers with ongoing support, particularly within the first few years in the profession or when moving to a new grade level or content area
- Prepare and utilize a Retention Plan with priority areas, goals, and evidence-based practices.

The ERR team has continued to share the three recommendation areas, specifically focusing on Retention Plans. This area includes all the recommendations: clearly defined systems, supportive, strong leadership, induction and mentoring programs, data-driven decision-making, and continuous involvement of Teacher Voice.

Additionally, the team published its first case study: *Nogales Unified School District: It takes a village*. The case study focused on NUSD's recruitment and retention strategies, which was showcased at the October 2024 State Board of Education meeting.

All Task Force documents, including additional guidance and templates, have been published on the ERR's website.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

Over the next two years, the ERR team will continue to present the Task Force Recommendations, both locally and nationally, focusing on showcasing LEAs who have successfully implemented them as evidenced by their retention rates via the public workforce dashboards. The team plans to engage with stakeholders who were part of the original Task Force to continue conversations regarding the Recommendations, seeking feedback and input after various implementation timeframes (i.e., 1 year, 1.5 years, etc.).

The ERR team will also create a Hiring and Retaining Staff training course that embeds many strategies and additional best practices. This training will be offered to LEA and site-based leadership to assist in the recruitment and retention of educators.

A Community of Practice (From Induction to Retention) is being planned with LEA stakeholders from various parts of the state. This COP will share ideas and strategies to grow recruitment and retention programs and create and build new ones. The ERR team is excited to launch this COP in the spring based on the Task Force recommendations.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

Measures of success would include an increase in the number of LEAs creating and/or strengthening Induction and Mentoring programs that are aligned with the Arizona Beginning Teacher Induction Standards.

Additionally, a measure of success will be an increase in requests for the ERR team to visit and assist LEAs with systems that support recruitment and retention and an increase in the number of codified LEA Retention Plans.

Finally, and most importantly, with the training, support, and additional guidance from the ADE Recruitment and Retention team regarding the Task Force Recommendations, a higher retention rate will be seen at both the LEA and the state level.



Initiative #9: County Consortium

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

The initiative was to have County Consortium Specialists to be a liaison between the Arizona department of Education (ADE) and Mohave, Yuma, Cochise and Graham County rural areas. Each of the County Consortium Specialists have continued to gain knowledge as they are being provided with training to assist in these rural areas. The County Specialists, in coordination with ADE, have offered technical assistance with grants and provide targeted professional development. To date they have coordinated the following trainings:

Yuma: 37 trainings for 1200 educators
Graham: 5 trainings for 55 educators
Cochise 2 trainings for 42 educators

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

To continue and increase the trainings and collaboration between ADE and rural areas to increase Academic Standards.

The above is dependent on the legislature continuing to fund the program. There has been substantial turnover in both houses of the legislature and in legislative leadership so this should not be assumed. ADE has 11 funded items for the upcoming session. While it is likely the program will continue (revenues have increased somewhat), it is not guaranteed. The long-term goal was to place someone in each county.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

Academic gains will be evidenced by increased student academic achievement on state assessments. with the comprehensive needs scatter plot that is now built into our school improvement comprehensive needs assessment. Proving the viability of the program through measurable success in the four above-mentioned counties would constitute success and pave the way for implementation in the other 11 counties in future budget years.

Initiative #10: \$50 million for free tutoring

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- Created a program to make tutoring available to all public and charter students in Arizona.
- Established contact with numerous school districts to deliver tutoring through teachers of record in addition to existing private sectors tutoring providers on contract.
- Developed a pre- and post- testing program to enable measurement of progress of student participants.
- Designed an appropriate contracting strategy to coordinate payments, enrollments, and bonuses for test progress.
- Successes from program inception in October 2023 until present include:

Students: 18329 (Many of these are repeat students who attended more than one session.)

Subjects: reading, writing, math, ACT Prep

Results: For sessions 1-6 we averaged a gain of 6 months or more growth for 22% of the students tutored. Over 50% of students tutored showed some growth.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- This ESSER-funded program will be sunset in 2025
- Identify future resources

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Monitor and assess student's progress on AASA and make any changes, if necessary.

Initiative #11: School Safety – SRO & SSO on campuses

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

Under the past administration, the School Safety Program (SSP) supported the placement of 565 School Counselors (SC) / School Social Workers (SW), 190 School Resource Officers (SRO), and no Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO).

The current three-year SSP grant cycle started on 7/1/2023 and will conclude on 6/30/2026. The current grant supports the placement of 566 SC / SW positions, 301 SROs, and 2 JPOs. Due to a sworn police officer shortage in our state, 66 SRO positions that could not be filled statewide have been converted to School Safety Officer (SSO) positions, allowing for the placement of off-duty, full authority peace officers in schools that would have otherwise gone uncovered. This was made possible through a first of its kind partnership with a third-party vendor, Off-Duty management (ODM), who manages the placement of SSOs statewide.

In September 2024, SSP staff identified significant carryover funds available in the program that could be used to fund additional positions. After requesting and receiving a waiver from the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), a new \$30 million grant opportunity was made available from October 21, 2024, to November 8, 2024. As a result, 131 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) / Charters representing 332 schools submitted applications for the following positions: 198 SROs / SSOs and 134 SCs / SWs. The total dollar value of these requests was \$55,645,017.

Thanks to support from our Budget and GME teams, the original \$30 million grant was raised to \$48 million allowing for all 198 SRO/SSO positions and 66 SC/SW positions to be funded. The addition of these new grantees brings the reach of the SSP to over 1,000 schools statewide. For context, in FY20, in its entirety the SSP was \$12 million and funded 113 officers.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

With the conclusion of the current SSP grant cycle on 6/30/26, it remains to be seen what the program funding level will be, thereby greatly affecting the number of positions that can be funded. In the interim, we will be running a School Safety bill this session that seeks to amend elements of ARS 15-154. If signed into law, the bill will, among other things, add the School Safety Officer position to the statute, allow retirees who retire in good standing to return to service as SROs or SSOs, and permit grantees to use SSP funds to pay for safety technology, safety training, or infrastructure improvement. These changes to statute will allow for greater grant flexibility and enhanced coverage in our schools.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

Success will be measured by the continued growth of the SSP in conjunction with a corresponding reduction in criminal activity at participating schools.

Initiative #12: Character Education

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

The Character Education initiative accomplished a first ever, student and parent Character Counts advisory cadre. In the last year the cadre has convened three times. During the meetings, leadership skill sets have been showcased by inviting motivational speakers. The students grade K-12, with the support of families, have returned to their campus to share the skill sets by creating a civic leadership project.

Since 2023, Character Education started to recruit Character Counts leaders statewide. An annual student led poster contest showcasing one of the six pillars was initiated. In January of 2024 Superintendent Horne honored the student winners and families by recognizing their accomplishments at Every Students Success Act conference.

In April of 2023 Character Education was highlighted by the Character Counts program for starting the first Arizona "Field Day Experience." The Field Day Experience included a tour of the Arizona State Capitol incorporating fourth grade social students' curricula with physical activity from the physical education curricula. A video of the event can be referenced:

<https://youtu.be/v1X6WrI5dl4?feature=shared>

Future events being planned include Character Counts poster contest, student led for 2025 and awardees. Second annual Field Day Experience will take place in April 2025. In addition, a mini-grant project is being opened to help expand the Character Education programs in Arizona. Since the beginning of the current administration, the number of LEAs participating in the matching grant increase from 6 to 13 and number of sites offering character education programs increased from 25 in the SY2023 to 38 in the SY2025.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

The plan for the next 2 years includes increasing site participation with Character Education promotion. The awareness will expand by offering strategy sessions during upcoming educational conferences hosted by Arizona Department of Education. In addition, a webinar professional development cadre with school coordinators has been planned to launch in 2025. The webinar series will allow local educational agencies to share ideas on character education implementation and promotion seamlessly woven into the culture and climate of K-12 sites.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

Evidence of success after the 4 years will be the increased student and family's participation with Arizona Department of Education cadres that foster the family engagement, within their school. Student led civic projects will be recognized by Arizona Department of Education using social media awareness and conference panel presentations.

School coordinators will present at conferences demonstrating effectiveness of Character Education in reducing behavioral referrals, increasing student engagement and consequently rising the academic achievement of schools implementing the character education. Arizona Department of Education Character Education Unit will advocate for increase in legislative funding to allow increased number of schools to receive Character Education funding for the upcoming 3-year matching grand cycle.

**Initiative #13: Red tape out of schools. Needs assessment:
168 questions reduced to 20. Kindergarten Evaluation
Assessment testing time reduced by 80%**

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- **Simplified Needs Assessment:** Reduced the annual comprehensive needs assessment from 168 questions to 20, saving significant time for school leaders and allowing them to focus on strategic planning.
- **Streamlined Kindergarten Assessments:** Cut assessment time for kindergarten students by 80%, easing burdens on teachers and providing more instructional time.
- **Improved Communication:** Conducted surveys and listening sessions with schools and districts to identify additional pain points, ensuring that ongoing efforts address their most critical concerns.
- **Budget Narrative Standardization:** Standardized and simplified the budget narrative across the agency.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- **Grant Processing:** Work to streamline the application and reporting processes, reducing administrative workloads for districts.
- **Automated Processes:** Introduce automation for routine interactions, such as reporting and compliance submissions, to further minimize manual input and errors.
- **Feedback-Driven Refinements:** Establish a formal feedback loop with schools and districts to continuously evaluate and improve ADE's processes.
- **Transparent Timelines:** Develop clear timelines and communication protocols for ADE interactions, ensuring predictability for schools and districts.

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- **Time Saved:** Quantifiable reductions in administrative time spent by schools on ADE processes, documented through annual time audits.
- **District Satisfaction:** Increased satisfaction ratings from schools and districts, as measured by surveys and focus group discussions.
- **Efficiency Gains:** Faster processing times for grant applications and other submissions, demonstrated through year-over-year data comparisons.
- **Sustained Improvements:** A user-friendly, transparent system that schools view as a collaborative tool rather than a compliance burden.

Initiative #14: AZ Digital Education Library (ADEL)

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- Created and developed a unique, standards-aligned teacher-facing online library system with elements of artificial intelligence, supporting teaching, lesson planning and curriculum.
- Engaged with the field to generate used and feedback, ensuring that ADEL is driven by teachers to provide the resources they need to teach to the standards.
- Developed partnerships with PBS, the Arizona Science Teachers Association, Arizona Geographic Alliance, EDSITEment, and Illustrative Mathematics to provide resources, lessons, and videos for teachers.
- Worked with the provider to create an AI lesson plan builder within ADEL. This lesson plan companion takes teachers through steps to help them create exciting and innovative lessons using AI that are tied to Arizona standards.
- Collaborated with Project Momentum to add customized flexible units to enable easier communication and project planning as they work toward increasing academic achievement.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- Increase outreach and user accounts (currently 620).
- Strengthen and grow partnerships with organizations and teachers to maintain maximum relevance to teachers.
- Increase numbers of videos of teachers teaching AASA, AZELLA, and Special Education standards.

What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Monitor site usage reports and user accounts.
- Assess level of usage and exposure through various means, including survey.
- Track and respond to requests for professional learning on ADEL.
- Increased usage and development on all measures.

Initiative #15: AI (Artificial Intelligence)

1. What successes have been accomplished in the last two years? (2023-2024)

- Introduced a comprehensive AI offering for up to 100,000 Arizona students and teachers.
- Required groundwork included:
 - * Comprehensive review of AI offerings, including novel and established programs
 - * Assurance of maximal adherence to safety and data protection considerations
 - * Contracting with the best supplier at the lowest possible price
- Total enrollments as of this writing are 60,000 with sign-ups underway exceeding 40,000.

2. What is the plan for success for the next 2 years? (2025-2026)

- Continued assurance of best practices
- Monitoring utilization and comparing to progress where applicable
- Keeping up with discrete implementation and use of rapidly changing AI capabilities.
- Creating active user groups comprised of the various stakeholders, to develop usable resources and guidance for the field.
- Intra divisional participation to increase marketing of AI

3. What will be the evidence of success after the 4 years?

- Establishing Arizona's leadership in AI through evidence, public messaging and research.

