Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators in Arizona

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Section 1: Introduction

The mission statement of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is, "To serve Arizona's education community, and actively engage parents, to ensure every student has access to an excellent education."[1] Such a mission calls for all Arizona children to receive the high-quality education they deserve and requires access to effective teachers along with school and district leadership that is focused on improving student achievement. ADE recognizes that Arizona's educators are the most important component of success for Arizona's students and is committed to the goal that students of color, students in economically disadvantaged areas and students with special needs are not taught by inexperienced or ineffective educators at higher rates than students outside those demographics. ADE further recognizes that leadership is an equally important component of a quality education and also seeks to meet a goal that schools with students in the previously mentioned underserved populations are not led by unqualified or ineffective administrators.

Arizona is home to 1,116,143 students in 2,121 charter and district schools. There are 255 school districts and 618 charter holders in a K-12 system that employs more than 60,000 teachers. Arizona is geographically the sixth largest state and is divided into fifteen counties. Of those fifteen counties, two are predominately urban, while the remaining thirteen counties contain many rural and Native American communities. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income is nearly $4,000 below the national median at $49,774 and the poverty rate is 2.5% greater than the national average at 17.9%. Of the state's total population:

- 24.4% are under age 18 (28% of those are in low-income families)
- 42.2% are racial or ethnic minorities
- 26.8% have a home language other than English[2]
- 58% of Latinos (Arizona's largest minority demographic) live in poverty.[3]

In 2006, ADE submitted to the US Department of Education (USED) a report detailing its Equity Plan for Highly Qualified Teachers in response to requirements of the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as No Child Left Behind.

The conversation among Arizona educators and policy makers has shifted from ensuring students are taught by highly qualified educators to highly effective ones. This follows a national trend of using data and performance measures to define quality instruction that correlates to increases in student achievement. During school year 2014-15, ADE set in motion

[1] Arizona Department of Education, Strategic Plan, FY 2015-2016 (proposed)
[2] United States Census Bureau (*Arizona QuickFacts 2013*)
[3] National Center for Children in Poverty

a process to review and address the long-term needs for improving equitable access to effective and highly effective teachers and leaders. This revised plan is in response to the July 7, 2014 letter from U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in order to comply with Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the ESEA.

Arizona values local control and current statutes allow for districts to develop their own definition and measurement of "effective" and "highly effective" educators with guidance from ADE.[4] Districts and charters were to have these definitions in place by school year 2013-14. However, The *Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness* recommends defining "Highly Effective" as, "…consistently exceeds expectations. (This) teacher's students generally made exceptional levels of academic progress. The highly effective teacher demonstrates mastery of the state board of education adopted professional teaching standards, as determined by classroom observations required by ARS §15-537."[5] Other key terms are defined later in this document.

The Framework was adopted by the Arizona State Board of Education in 2011 and measures teacher effectiveness through performance data made up of student assessment data (33-50% of the measurement), instruction observation performance aligned to the InTASC teaching standards or ISSLC leadership standards (50-67%) and an optional set of school level or system level data which could include parent and student surveys as well as Student Learning Objectives. This data then informs a score that corresponds to one of four performance labels: highly effective, effective, developing, and ineffective.[6]

It is important to note that by examining the need for equitable access to effective educators for students in underserved populations, ADE is actually looking at how to expand access to effective and highly effective instruction for all students. As indicated by the resources available from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, these state plans should not be, "a narrow and impractical redistribution of high-quality educators from low-need to high-need districts, schools, and classrooms, but rather a comprehensive approach to strengthening and maintaining teacher and principal effectiveness across the state, with an emphasis on…schools and classrooms with the greatest need."[7]

To create this document, the ADE Associate Superintendent for Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders assembled a team of leaders and specialists and developed an action plan that:

1. Brainstormed the actions needed to review and document this process.

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[4] ARS §15-203 and ARS §15-537
[5] Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness
[6] Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness
[7] Center on Great Teachers & Leaders at American Institutes for Research

2. Developed a long-term planning guide to research the issue and root causes, then examine potential strategies for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators. The plan divided the work among team members to research data, write plan elements, conduct stakeholder meetings, and communicate with internal and external partners.
3. Researched and reviewed data provided by USED Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), ADE, local education agencies, and other data systems to identify equity gaps.
4. Examined current state-level policies and statutes such as plans for educator retention and recruitment, human capital management policies, educator preparation programs, current licensure requirements, and all data surrounding the implementation of the state's Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness.
5. Conducted internal staff meetings to discuss potential root causes and strategies.
6. Established a communication plan for contacting stakeholders for individual interviews and Town Hall sessions around the state.
7. Conducted a series of stakeholder meetings to gather quantifiable and qualifiable data, complete root-cause analyses, and generate a common understanding of the issue and its challenges.
8. Set measurable targets and created a plan for measuring and reporting progress and continuously improving this plan.
9. Submitted plan for approval among ADE leadership as well as LEA partners and stakeholders.

During the internal discussions (Step 5), ADE acknowledged that the vast geographic size coupled with the diverse demographics of the state would make it difficult for the agency to craft a "one-size fits all" plan. The agency decided to focus on three geographic/socio-economic regions of the state, each with very unique characteristics and challenges. Within those areas a set of school districts was chosen that would not only be an effective representative sample of the region but were areas that the agency worked closely with and would be most receptive to providing data and trying new strategies. The hope of course would be that if the strategies are effective in these particular districts that they could potentially be replicated statewide.

Region 1 is Arizona's vast Native American population. The Navajo and Hopi Nations in the northeast corner of the state and the Apache Nations along the central and eastern sections of the state make up the majority of tribal lands. However, Arizona is home to twenty-two sovereign lands whose members make up approximately 6% of the state's population.[8] While Arizona ranks third behind Oklahoma and California in tribal population, more than 16% of the

[8] American Indian Tribes and Communities in Arizona.

nation's Native American students are enrolled in Arizona schools.[9] In this report, we examine the needs of two districts that demonstrate the unique needs and characteristics of very remote sites. One is a member of the Navajo Nation and the other is a member of the Apache Nations.

Region 2 examines the rural areas that make up the majority of the state's land mass. For this area we compare five districts: one in central Arizona near metropolitan Phoenix, two in northern Arizona, and two in southern Arizona along the border with Mexico. It is important to note that these rural districts differ in demographics and median income due to remoteness, proximity to ranch land or an urban area, or nearness to a neighboring state and its economic benefits.

Region 3 focuses on the challenges of some of the state's urban districts. Our four selected districts appear similar at first glance, particularly in that each district is either bordered or bisected a major state or interstate highway. But upon closer examination each present their own special set of challenges and celebrations.

Data for this process was gathered from a variety of sources, including stakeholder meetings, the districts being profiled, and within ADE's own databases. The ADE team first discussed the issue and arrived at a common understanding of terms, challenges, and data points. After this internal analysis and the development of a plan of action, the team was able to:

- Review current policies and initiatives,
- Identify specific contact points and stakeholders within the targeted areas,
- Present existing state policy and practice for improving educator recruitment, retention, development, and support as well as current licensure and reciprocity policies,
- Connect with Educator Preparation Programs within the state to examine concerns about the availability of students choosing to enter the education profession,
- Analyze the data surrounding the state's Framework for Measuring Effective Educators and the availability of data indicating educator performance ratings,
- Conduct interviews with current district leaders and noted researchers,
- Facilitate meetings with local stakeholders including teachers, administrators, higher education officials, government officials and parents, and
- Examine all available data provided by the CRDC as well as the longitudinal school data available in ADE's systems as reported by the Local Education Agencies in the state.

[9] American Indian Congress

Section 2: Stakeholder Engagement

Arizona is home to the sixth, thirty-third and thirty-eighth largest cities in population in the United States (Phoenix, Tucson, and Mesa respectively). [10] These three cities help form two large urban counties: Maricopa and Pima. While the rest of the state has urban pockets (Flagstaff and Prescott in particular) those areas outside Maricopa and Pima remain mostly rural, agricultural, and remote, particularly the Native American communities on the two largest tribal lands in the far eastern and northern parts of the state. These two urban counties drive most of the economic and political decisions for Arizona causing some in rural areas to anecdotally refer to this area as the "State of Maricopa." The state is geographically very large and its diverse population is made up of a wide variety of people representing many racial and ethnic classifications as well as every level of socio-economic status. Each of these classifications are distributed across age groups and education levels. Arizona has the nation's third largest Native American population with the majority of the Navajo Nation Reservation's 16 million acres located within its borders.[11] Arizona's climate, both environmental and political, attracts residents from across the United States and the world leading to diverse views, communities, and types of legislation.

Each of these demographic data points greatly impacts the levels of educator effectiveness across LEAs in the state. ADE recognizes it is important to develop a plan that addresses the equity issue in general enough terms to provide guidance for individual LEAs to implement strategies that will best fit their needs and the needs of their communities. Such a plan requires input from stakeholders from around the state to help identify root causes, assist in suggesting possible strategies, and provide constructive feedback on the overall plan. ADE also believes that this plan should not just be a document to comply with federal requirements but exist as an evolving guidance tool to support LEAs in creating and implementing hiring and evaluation practices that will lead to an effective educator workforce connected to all students.

ADE assembled a team within its Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders Division charged with researching and examining the impact of this issue. The team attended webinars and national conferences, researched state and national data and then organized a series of Town Hall meetings in spring 2015 to examine root causes, discuss potential strategies and continually gather feedback. The team was also able to be on the agenda of a variety of community, business, and government policy groups to present and gather feedback on the issue. Three of these groups, the Educator Retention and Recruitment Taskforce, the Yuma County School Superintendents, and the Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council are particularly concerned with this issue and are each examining ways to increase the pipeline of effective educators in the state. See Appendices B and C for a breakdown of the town hall meeting

[10] Top 50 Cities in the US by Population and Rank, published by Pearson, Inc.
[11] 2013 American Indian Population and Labor Force Report

invitation, agenda and outcomes as well as information on the stakeholders engaged in the process.

The purpose of these Town Hall meetings was for stakeholders to:

- Generate a common understanding of the issues surrounding equitable access to excellent educators,
- Review data and examine the root causes of Arizona's Key Concerns,
- Identify and prioritize root causes of inequities in access to excellent teachers and leaders,
- Identify and develop potential strategies to address the issue, and
- Review and provide feedback on the draft plan.

Using its distribution lists of district and school contacts, community and civic groups, parents and personal networks, ADE connected with stakeholders across the state to secure meeting locations and publicize the event. The agency's communication department sent out an invitation email to our distribution lists indicating where and when a Town Hall meeting would be held in a particular area of the state. Multiple meetings were held in the Phoenix Metropolitan area and then at least one formal session organized by ADE was held in almost all of the other fourteen counties. ADE members, as part of their regular duties, also attended a variety of communities of practice, conferences and county sponsored meetings and were able to get sufficient time on those agendas to take participants through several group discussions in order to gather feedback on the plan, identify root causes and assist in identifying strategies. We did struggle in getting the word out initially and some stakeholders did not receive the messages early enough to be able to plan to attend. Our greatest success in attendance came from those areas where ADE team members had personal contacts and were able to send the message through their own "grapevine."

Each meeting was attended by a diverse group of citizens and included educators, administrators, school board members, parents, students, community leaders, representatives from the universities and community colleges, business leaders, and ADE staff. A list of attendees was gathered at each meeting which included their contact information. To ensure that the conversations were productive and solutions-oriented, we used structured discussion protocols and had available the Public Agenda discussion guide on equitable access to excellent educators.[12]

[12] How Can We Ensure That All Children Have Excellent Teachers 2015

ADE facilitated each Town Hall by first leading the participants through a brief review of the data and historical context of the equity issue. Initially, small discussion groups comprised of like members were formed and focused on discussing three essential questions:

1. What does equitable access to excellent educators mean to you?
2. What are the struggles related to equitable access to excellent teachers in your community?
3. What opportunities exist for implementing solutions?

The team received a great many answers to these questions. Each response, regardless of the location of the meeting, highlighted the crisis situation Arizona faces with regard to access to effective educators, especially for Regions 1, 2, and 3. The initial feedback included comments such as:

- In rural communities, you get the folks you can get.
- Tenured teachers get to teach the classes they want.
- In order to move teachers, we need recruitment stipends.
- Legislators need to spend time in schools to see the dire straits.
- Students should have access to effective educators regardless of school, district, SES, ELL, etc.
- Every student should have access to a quality educator. Every Arizona graduate should promote from one level to the next prepared to succeed in the next.
- One issue for us, staff turn-over, annually or at any time "I'm not coming back on Monday".
- We're impacted by the varying salary schedule of neighboring school districts.
- Lack of candidates.
- C, D, F schools can have incredibly effective teachers who work very diligently to overcome socioeconomic factors. A, B schools can have poor teaching but great test scores and their teachers are "effective". This is the main issue.
- Districts with low SES and high minority populations may not be able to attract (let alone retain) teachers meeting this criteria. Teachers working in these districts and under these conditions may not feel supported by administration and leave for better working conditions (pay, working climate, respect, etc.)

Over time, as the team gathered more and more commentary, the sessions evolved. We provided the ADE root cause analyses and conducted an exercise with each group to not only gather feedback on the prior work but to have them generate their own possible causes. This information fed the team's "fishbone" analyses included later in this report and then helped support conversations leading toward strategies and implementation. Conversations at the later meetings naturally grew toward solutions and by the end of the process in May, the final set of scheduled meetings, including a statewide webinar, served to gather feedback on this final

document prior to submission to USED. The statewide webinar was designed as an opportunity to connect back to all the individuals that attended the stakeholder meetings to see the progress of the repot and provide additional feedback before this final report was submitted.

Each discussion group was attended by members of the ADE team who recorded the responses to the questions and served to keep the conversation on track, but the groups were allowed to proceed through the activities on their own in order to develop a rich conversation that was particular to the needs of each group. The smaller discussion groups later returned to the main meeting area and shared their responses which informed a larger group understanding of the issue as well as identified potential strategies for implementation and feedback for the plan. This commentary and the root cause activities helped inform ADE's theory of action, described later in this report.

Following each meeting, the session participants were emailed a copy of the compiled responses and were encouraged to continue the dialogue. It is ADE's intent to also send participants a copy of the final plan, if they would like one, as a type of "insider's" guide to the equity strategies. Because they attended the Town Halls, they get the first opportunity to implement the suggested strategies.

The ten identified districts within Regions 1, 2, and 3 provided valuable resources such as demographic data as well as anecdotal information gathered through in person interviews. It is ADE's intent to continue to involve these districts as the plan moves forward to support them with the implementation of suggested strategies in the hopes that successful processes can be replicated across the state. After the plan is submitted in June and we receive the necessary feedback from USED, ADE intends to reform the planning team into a work group that will organize sessions to provide training opportunities to LEAs and then continue to provide support to individual LEAs if they choose to implement the suggested strategies listed in Section 4. Ade further proposes to review the plan after years one, three and five to continue to research the issue of equitable access and determine how to evolve the plan to continue to present and support best practices in leadership and instruction.

Section 3: Equity Gaps

Definition of Key Terms

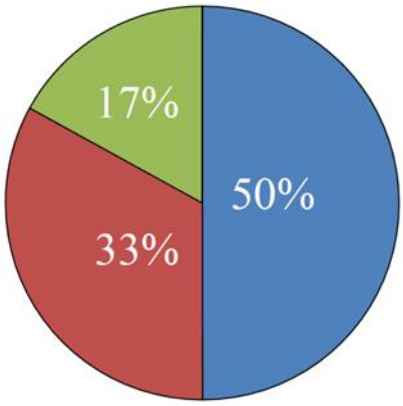
Arizona's diverse student population and multiple socio-economic levels across and within its communities, combined with its economic and political climate, has resulted in teachers and leaders of varying effectiveness being employed in its schools. In order to examine the data and discuss strategies with stakeholders, it is important to have a common language for key terminology in the equity issue. Such key terms as "student of color," "economically

disadvantaged," "inexperienced," and "unqualified" are derived from federal definitions and appear throughout the data sources. Discussion of this issue at the federal level has also moved from "qualified" and "highly qualified" to "excellent." Arizona's evaluations of teachers and leaders uses such terms as "effective" and "highly effective" in place of "excellent." See Appendix C for a definition of key terms.

For Arizona's classroom performance measures and definitions of effectiveness it is important to reiterate the state's preference for local control. While guided by state statute to develop a performance evaluation model that rates a teacher's effectiveness, each LEA is free to define each level on their own. All but two of the LEAs we profile in this section have adopted the language recommended by the Arizona School Boards Association and ADE believes that is representative of most districts in Arizona. The other two have not adopted any language to comply with this statute.

LEAs also self-report their information to ADE leading to some gaps or inequalities in the data. Statute requires that the effectiveness rating come from an aggregate score derived from multiple data points including classroom observations and student achievement data with the possible inclusion of parent and student survey data. Most ratings are calculated similarly to Figure 1 with 50% classroom observation data and at least 33% student achievement data at the classroom level.

Figure 1



In this example, 50% is observation data, 33% classroom achievement data and 17% overall school achievement data.

Some LEAs have created their own models based on the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, but the majority in Arizona, that we are aware of, uses one of the following:

- Charlotte Danielson's *The Framework for Teaching,*
- James Stronge's *Teacher Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System,*
- National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's *TAP: System for Teacher and Student Achievement* (implemented by districts partnering with Arizona State University in a Teacher Incentive Fund 3 grant), or
- Maricopa County Education Service Agency's *Rewarding Excellence in Instruction and Leadership* (implemented by districts partnering with MCESA in Teacher Incentive Fund 3 and 4 grants).

Regardless of the model used, the difference between an effective teacher and a highly effective teacher is significant. Most definitions would indicate the effective teacher is "proficient", meaning they are skilled, competent, or experienced in the art of teaching and that students make expected levels of academic progress of one year or more. The highly effective teacher is often described as "exemplary". They are the model teacher that demonstrates the

highest instructional and pedagogical skills and their students routinely perform above expected levels of academic progress with sometimes at least two years of growth.

Description of Data Points

In order to fully determine the inequity that exists within the state, ADE had to examine a variety of measurable data surrounding educator effectiveness. The team quickly realized that the issues at the heart of inequity vary in intensity across the state and differ particularly among the urban and rural areas. The team decided to explore three regions and particular school districts within each region to provide a snapshot of the larger set of issues. Data points that were examined include:

- The district's report card grade,
- Percentage of free and reduced lunch students as a measure of poverty,
- Ethnic and racial groups as a measure of minority status,
- Teacher absenteeism,
- Number of inexperienced teachers,
- Combined number of non-highly qualified and out of field teachers, and
- LEA self-reported numbers of teacher effectiveness ratings.

State and School Profiles

Data on the following charts represent 2012-2013 Report Card data. Teacher effectiveness ratings were self-reported by each district to ADE by December 2014 and are for the 2013-14 school year. This report starts first with a statewide profile of the data points then disaggregate by poverty quartile with Quartile 1 being the grouping with the highest socio-economic status (or the lowest poverty percentage) through to Quartile 4 with the lowest SES / highest poverty percentage. Upon first glance, it appears that the largest inequity appears in Quartile 1, rather than the expected Quartile 4, except with regard to Hispanic students in that lower SES Quartile. After much analysis and discussion among the team it was decided to then further disaggregate the quartile based on charter or district LEA status. In Arizona, charter school teachers, except special education teachers, are not required by law to be certified which may partially explain the larger number of out of field or not fully certified teachers in Quartile 1 as there is a large grouping of charter schools at that level.[13]

The ADE team also discussed the importance of the data points for inexperienced and out of field teachers. There is national research that supports a positive correlation to student achievement regardless of certification status assuming the teacher was teaching in their specifically trained content area while those teaching out of field had a negative effect on student achievement.[14] Along those same lines, there are reports that the number of years of experience a teacher has will not necessarily negatively impact student achievement if they are teaching out

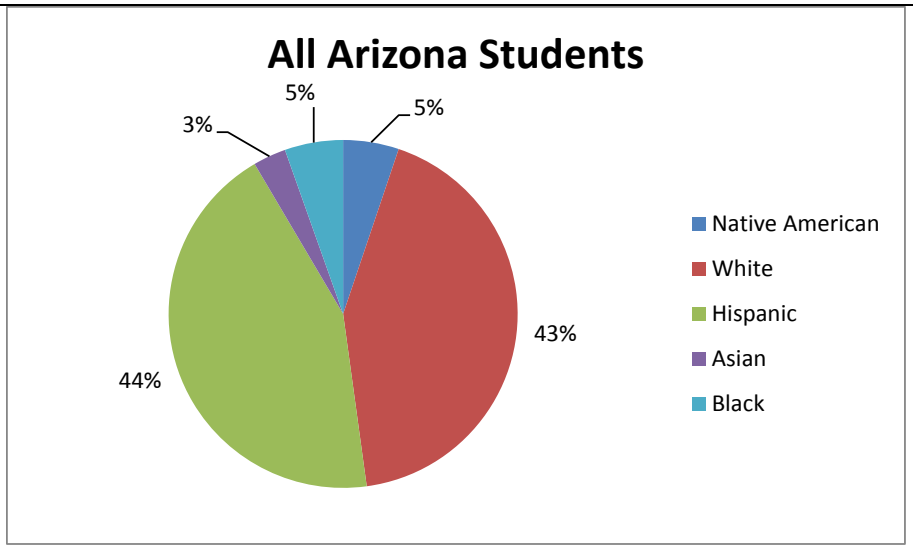
[13] Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-183 (E) (5)
[14] Darling-Hammond, et al., 2001; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000.

of field. Ferguson & Ladd (1996) suggest inexperienced teachers often have newer ideas for instructional approaches and an enthusiasm for teaching that comes across more clearly to students. However, the number of years of experience does benefit the classroom by allowing the teacher to more effectively support classroom management and planning.

The Equity Gap in Arizona

The following tables present the data points for all Arizona students and schools, statewide poverty quartiles, poverty quartiles disaggregated by charter and district schools and then a profile description of the eleven districts ADE examined to support the equity gap and root causes analysis. It is important to disaggregate the charter school information to provide a more accurate depiction of the access minority and high poverty students have to effective educators because of the charter laws in Arizona that do not require teachers to be appropriately certified.

Table 1

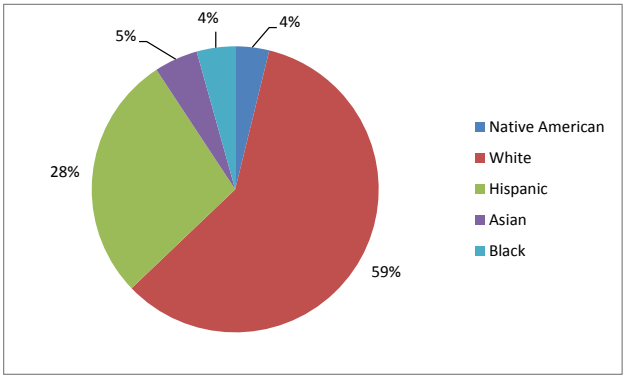
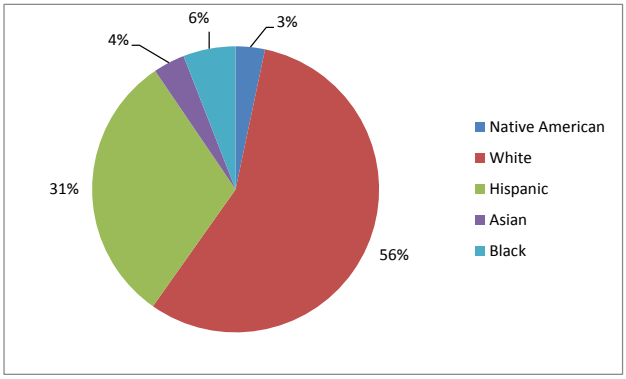


Average District Report Card Grade	B-	Average Salary	$40,801
Grades Served	K-12	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	4539 (9%)
Number of Students	1,116,143	Inexperienced Teachers	7575 (15%)
Free and Reduced Lunch	48%	Absenteeism	12,638 (25%)
		Ineffective Teachers	920
		Developing Teachers	3745
		Effective Teachers	31,532
		Highly Effective Teachers	15,043

As evidenced by Tables 2.1 and 2.2, when accounting for the difference between Quartile 1 and Quartile 4 for all students, Arizona actually has an equity gap of -3 when discussing students of poverty.[15] There is a disproportionate amount of Hispanic students in Quartile 4. However, the rates of out-of-field and inexperienced teachers are similar enough in both quartiles as to not show a significant disproportion in the effectiveness of the educators. This presents further evidence of the question we consider later in the root causes discussion that the Widget Effect may still be in practice and that evaluation scores are not reported accurately. There is some disparity when comparing the combined numbers of ineffective and developing teachers. There are more than 480 of those teachers in Quartile 4 than in Quartile 1. One very important distinction is that absenteeism statewide is 3% higher in Quartile 4 than Quartile 1 and may speak to another of our causes, namely the perception of the profession.

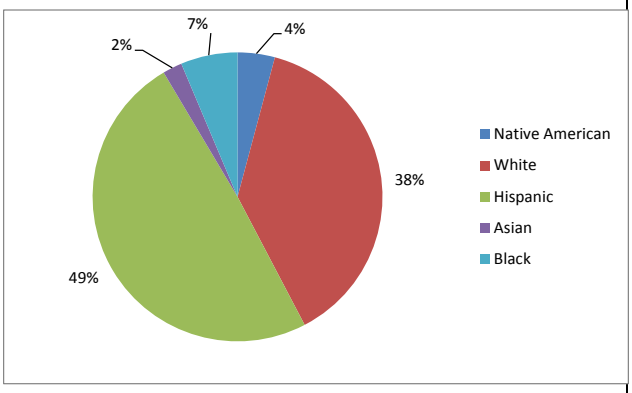
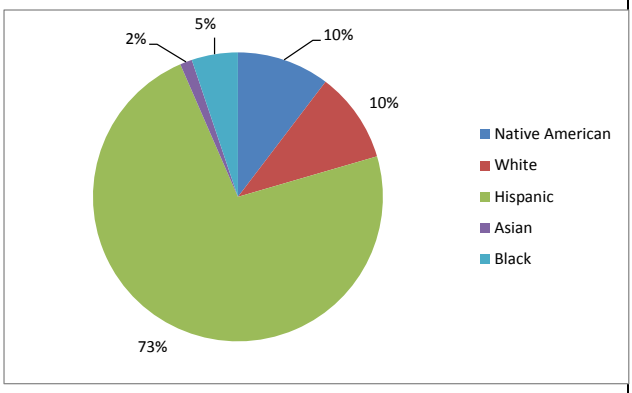
All Arizona by Quartile:

Table 2.1

Quartile 1 (Lowest Poverty Level)		Quartile 2	
			
Number of Students	276,378	Number of Students	287,822
Free & Reduced	15%	Free & Reduced	35%
Average Salary	$40,814	Average Salary	$41,609
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	1594 (12%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	846 (6%)
Inexperienced	2298 (17%)	Inexperienced	1697 (12%)
Absenteeism	3427 (26%)	Absenteeism	3161 (23%)
Ineffective	223	Ineffective	215
Developing	801	Developing	663
Effective	8298	Effective	8839
Highly Effective	5141	Highly Effective	4076
(Ineffective + Developing is 7% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 6% of total)	

[15] This calculation is derived from combining the "Out-of-field/Non HQ teachers" with "Inexperienced" in Quartile 4 and subtracting the same combined group from Quartile 1.

Table 2.2

Quartile 3		Quartile 4 (Highest Poverty Level)	
			
Number of Students	249,281	Number of Students	228,422
Free & Reduced	60%	Free & Reduced	87%
Average Salary	$39,502	Average Salary	$41,289
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	1031 (8%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	1050 (9%)
Inexperienced	1665 (14%)	Inexperienced	1915 (17%)
Absenteeism	2736 (22%)	Absenteeism	3314 (29%)
Ineffective	210	Ineffective	240
Developing	930	Developing	1267
Effective	7491	Effective	6386
Highly Effective	2895	Highly Effective	2576
(Ineffective + Developing is 10% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 14% of total)	

When the information is disaggregated to present traditional district schools apart from charter schools a different picture is painted. Tables 3.1 – 3.4 demonstrate that there is no gap (0%) when comparing out of field and inexperienced teachers at the district schools while there is an 8% gap when comparing the numbers of ineffective and developing teachers. As in the statewide distribution, there is also a slightly higher absentee rate among district teachers in Quartile 4.

Charter schools, however, have 22% more out of field and unqualified teachers in Quartile 1 than in Quartile 4 leading to a -22% gap. Yet, when looking at the numbers of ineffective and developing teachers, charter schools report a 10% gap with the greater number in Quartile 4. Absentee rates for charter teachers remained relatively constant across all four quartiles. This is not to say that charter schools are any better or worse than district schools for the number of out of field and unqualified teachers they may employ. The disparity could be

explained by the highly educated and skilled "non-traditional" teachers hired in many charters that come from business and industry and have a wealth of information and skills to share with students. Therefore, their effectiveness ratings are high but comparatively the defined statuses of unqualified or out of field are also high due to Arizona's charter certification laws.

Arizona Comparison of District LEAs and Charter LEAs by Quartile:

Table 3.1 Quartile 1

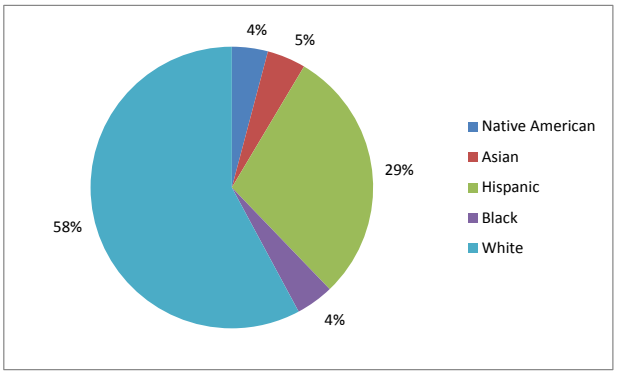
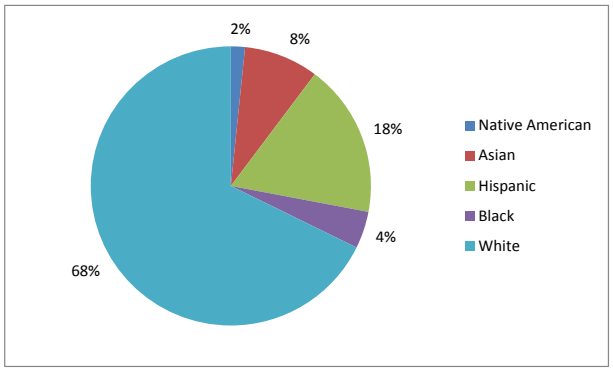
District (Q1)		Charter (Q1)	
			
Number of Students	239,388	Number of Students	32641
Free & Reduced	16%	Free & Reduced	7%
Average Salary	$41,954	Average Salary	$37,237
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	749 (7%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	844 (45%)
Inexperienced	1802 (16%)	Inexperienced	496 (26%)
Absenteeism	3329 (29%)	Absenteeism	98 (5%)
Ineffective	147	Ineffective	76
Developing	653	Developing	148
Effective	7575	Effective	723
Highly Effective	4260	Highly Effective	881
(Ineffective + Developing is 6% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 12% of total)	

Table 3.2 Quartile 2

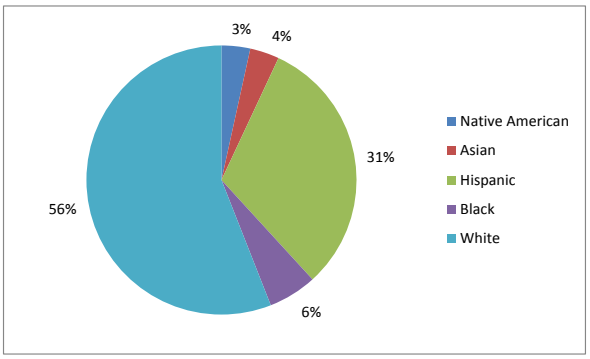
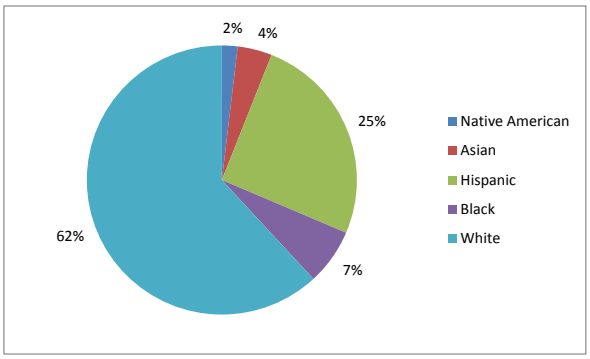
District (Q2)		Charter (Q2)	
			
Number of Students	256,336	Number of Students	35,680
Free & Reduced	36%	Free & Reduced	38%
Average Salary	$43,173	Average Salary	$35,680
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	524 (4%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	322 (24%)
Inexperienced	1366 (11%)	Inexperienced	331 (25%)
Absenteeism	3054 (3%)	Absenteeism	107 (8%)
Ineffective	160	Ineffective	55
Developing	546	Developing	117
Effective	8290	Effective	549
Highly Effective	3678	Highly Effective	398
(Ineffective + Developing is 6% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 15% of total)	

Table 3.3 Quartile 3

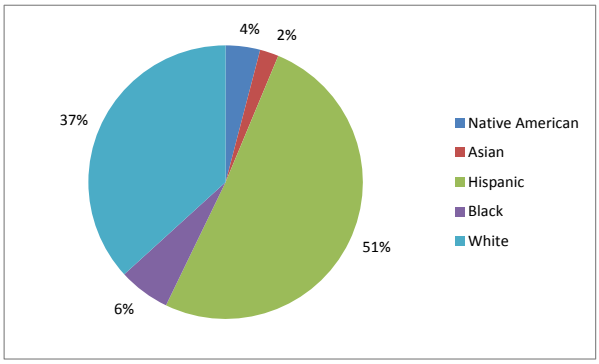
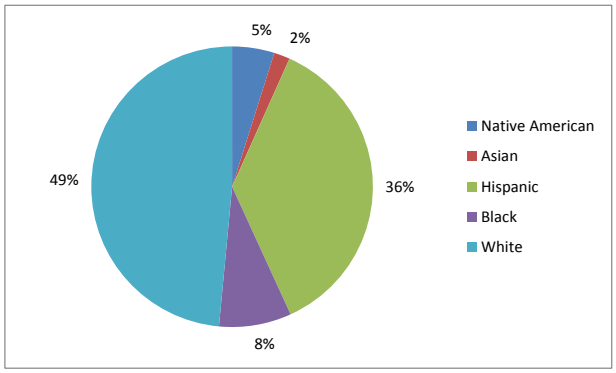
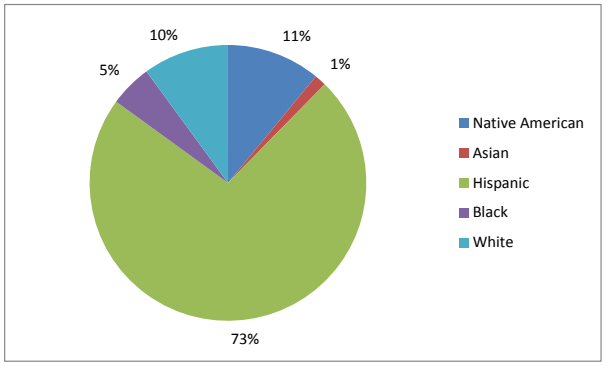
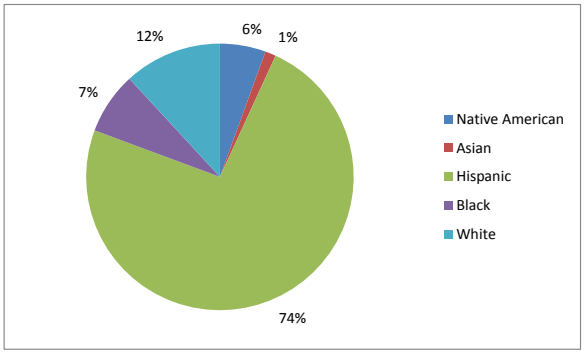
District (Q3)		Charter (Q3)	
			
Number of Students	215,419	Number of Students	29,294
Free & Reduced	64%	Free & Reduced	62%
Average Salary	$40,583	Average Salary	$35,468
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	709 (7%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	322 (22%)
Inexperienced	1385 (13%)	Inexperienced	280 (19%)
Absenteeism	2649 (25%)	Absenteeism	87 (6%)
Ineffective	168	Ineffective	42
Developing	743	Developing	187
Effective	6936	Effective	555
Highly Effective	2570	Highly Effective	325
(Ineffective + Developing is 9% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 21% of total)	

Table 3.4 Quartile 4

District (Q4)		Charter (Q4)	
			
Number of Students	202,478	Number of Students	21,957
Free & Reduced	90%	Free & Reduced	87%
Average Salary	$42,515	Average Salary	$37,305
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	726 (7%)	Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	324 (28%)
Inexperienced	1678 (16%)	Inexperienced	244 (21%)
Absenteeism	3243 (31%)	Absenteeism	72 (6%)
Ineffective	204	Ineffective	36
Developing	1142	Developing	123
Effective	5985	Effective	340
Highly Effective	2363	Highly Effective	210
(Ineffective + Developing is 14% of total)		(Ineffective + Developing is 22% of total)	

The following figures help to illustrate the distribution of students across minority and poverty status in comparison to teacher effectiveness ratings. Figure 2 demonstrates in a different way the ethnic breakdown of students across Arizona according to poverty quartile. Figure 3 shows the percentage of inexperienced teachers across quartiles while Figure 4 demonstrates the self-reported effectiveness ratings for teachers. Additional information on statewide poverty distribution in Arizona is available in Appendix D.

Figure 2

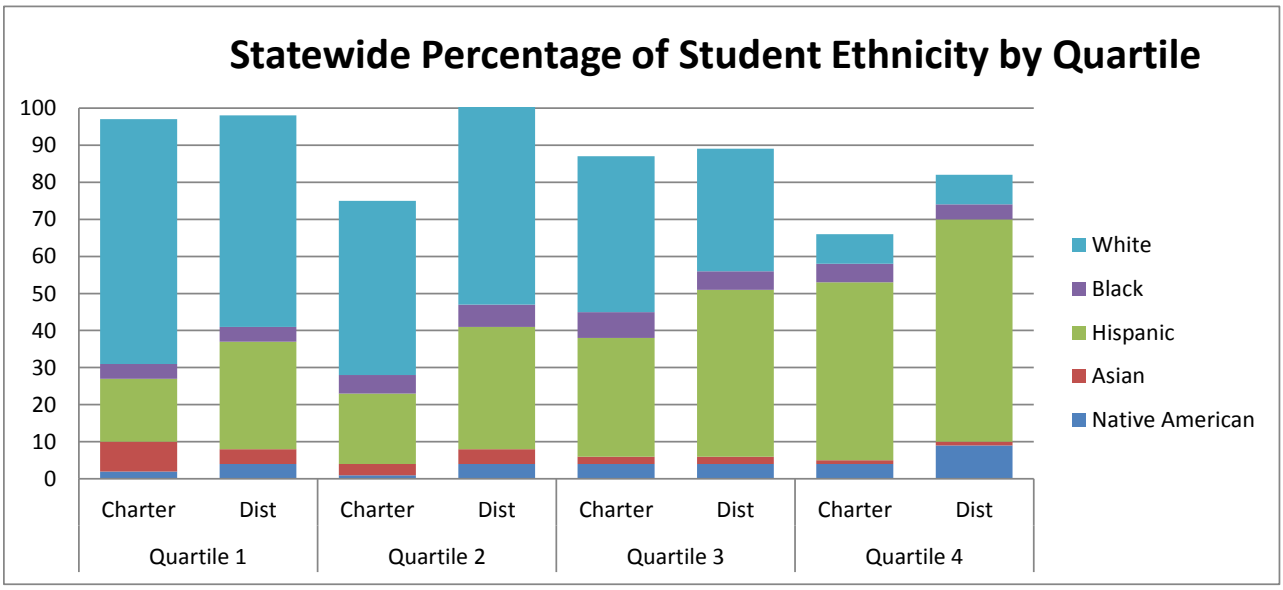


Figure 3

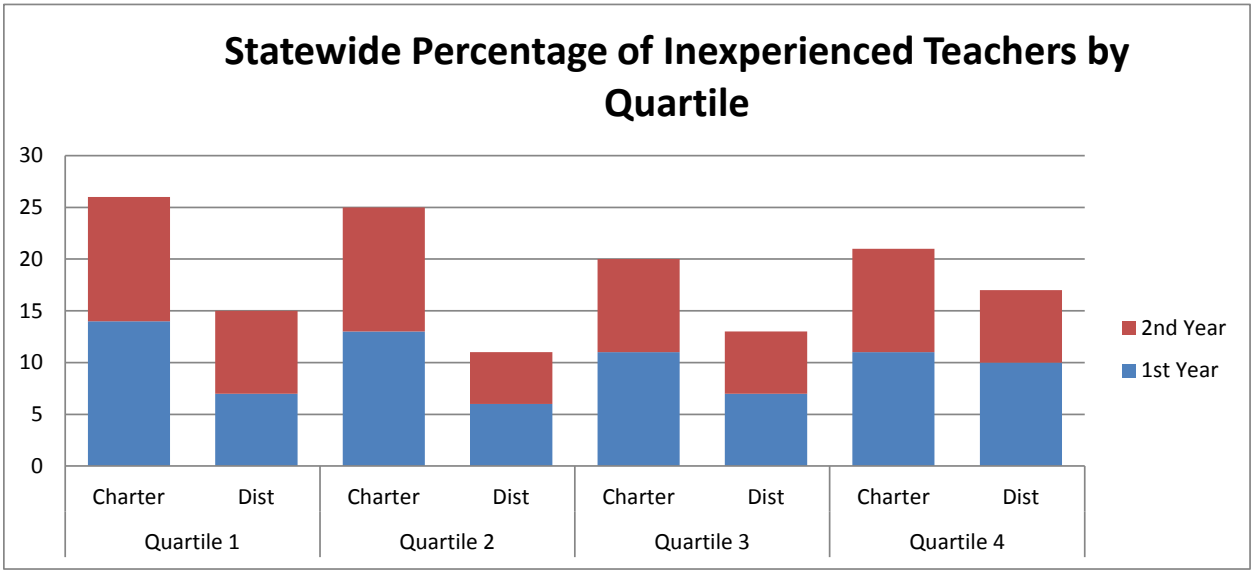
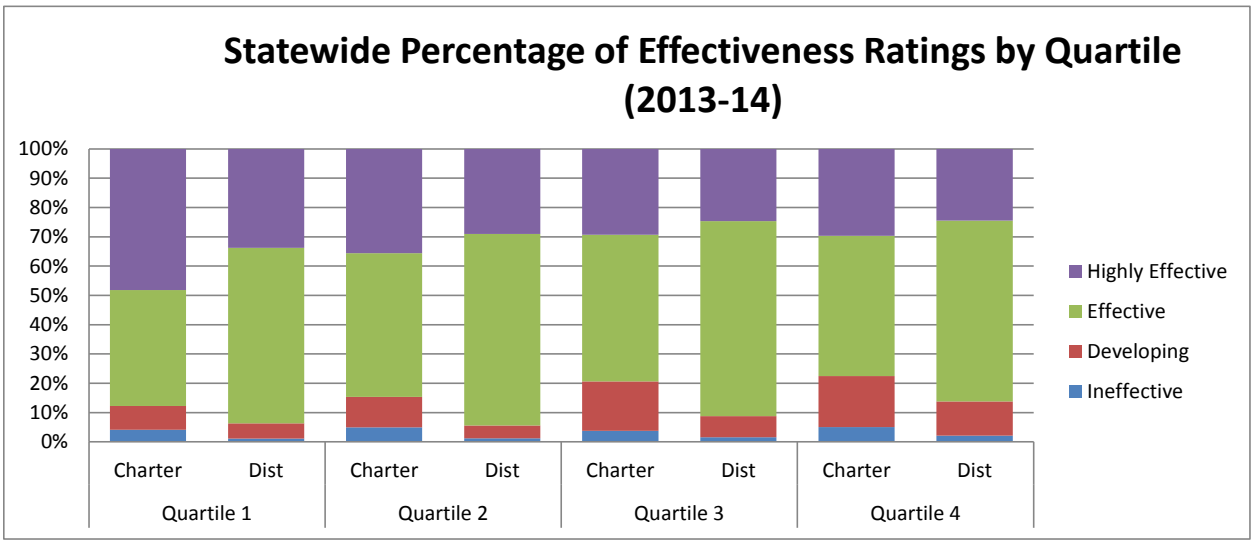


Figure 4



The data self-reported from LEAs regarding absenteeism and out of field teachers (see Figures 18 and 19 in Appendix D) does not correlate with the consistently high effectiveness ratings for teachers across the state and illustrate part of an issue examined in Key Concern 1 later in this plan. Even a three year comparison of our eleven sample districts show a consistent average of effective to highly effective teachers even when the school's report card label is a C or D rating. That data is represented after the sample school data in Figure 8.

To get a closer view of the distribution of teachers and students across Arizona's regions, ADE chose eleven sample districts that are not only representative of their region but also are districts that have worked closely with ADE in the past and, due to the relationship, are considered likely candidates for successful implementation of suggested strategies.

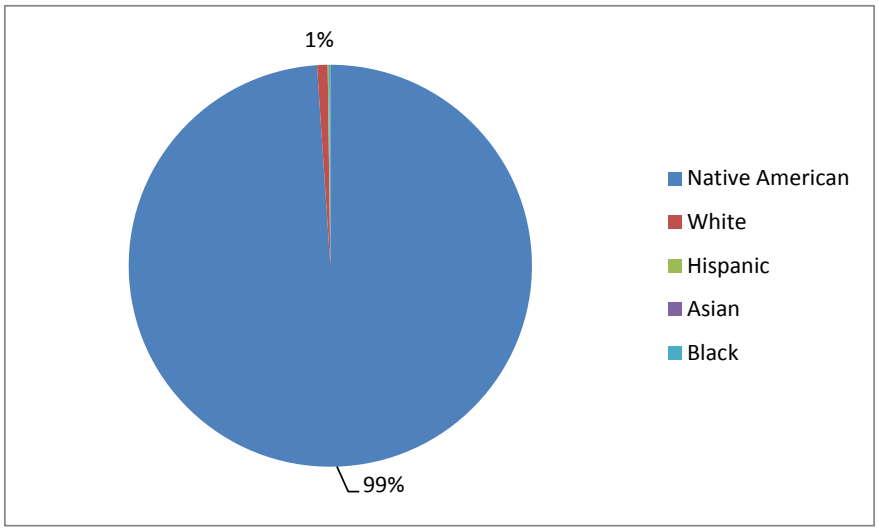
Region 1 – Native American lands:

District G[16]

This unified district is in a rural-remote[17] community in the northeast corner of the state approximately five miles from the Utah border and 50 miles from Four Corners National Monument. It is one of many communities in the Navajo Nation and its location represents one of the most remote areas in the state. The Quartile 4 district draws from the many nearby smaller communities and census districts in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. The median household income is $24,056, approximately 48% of the state average. The median age is 29 years old, 21% have a high school diploma, and 6% have a bachelor's degree. This district has five schools: two elementary, one junior high school and two high schools.

Table 4-- District G

District Report Card Grade	D
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	727
Free and Reduced Lunch	89%
Average Salary	$35,328
Absenteeism	1 (2%)
Inexperienced Teachers	10 (17%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	15 (25%)
Ineffective Teachers	3
Developing Teachers	2
Effective Teachers	54
Highly Effective Teachers	0



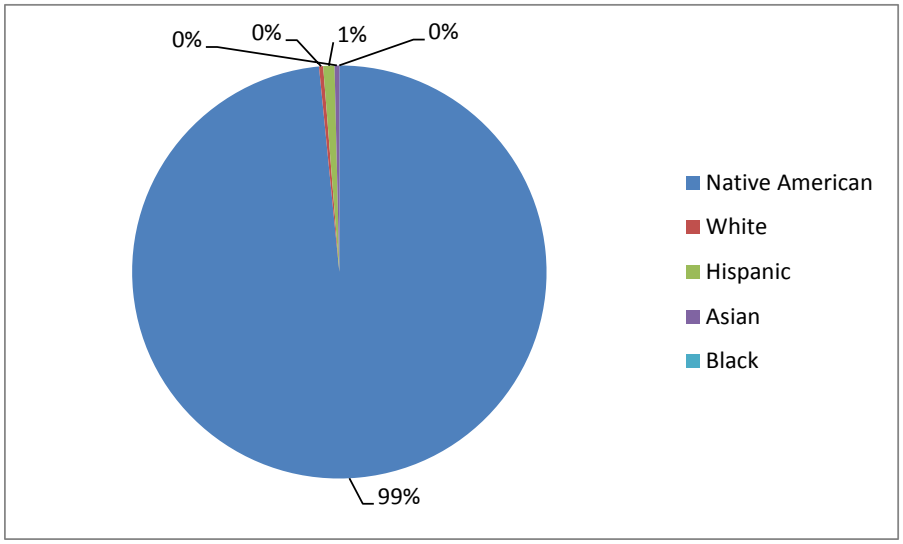
[16] For data collection and reporting purposes the eleven districts were sorted alphabetically then attached to their region. The districts are listed in this report as A through K. Each district description is in the order of their Region not in their A-K order.
[17] See the last section of Appendix D for definition of Census terms.

District F

This unified district is located in a town-remote community in eastern Arizona on the Fort Apache Native American Reservation, approximately 60 miles from the New Mexico border. This Quartile 4 district is one of many communities comprising the Apache Nations. Its closest urban city is Phoenix, 180 miles away. The current population is 3410, with a median household income of $38,074 (approximately 76% of the state average). Of this population, the median age is 25 years old, 14% have a high school diploma, and 9% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The district has five schools: three K-5, one 6-8 and one high school.

Table 5--District F

District Report Card Grade	D
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	2245
Free and Reduced Lunch	87%
Average Salary	$37,456
Absenteeism	28 (23%)
Inexperienced Teachers	17 (14%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	29 (24%)
Ineffective Teachers	0
Developing Teachers	6
Effective Teachers	91
Highly Effective Teachers	26



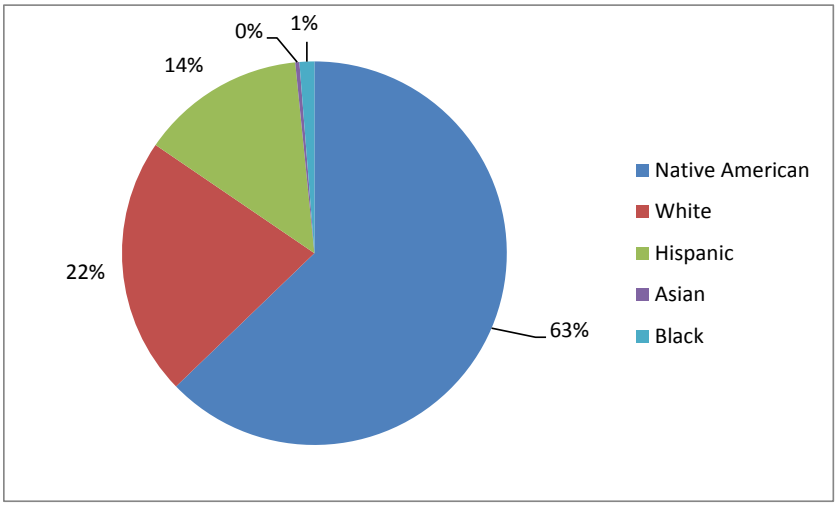
Region 2--Rural:

District A

This unified district is located in a town-remote community in northeast Arizona. Its closest medium to large city is Flagstaff, 90 miles away. The current population is 1346, with a median household income of $43,840 (approximately 88% of the state average). Of this population, the median age is 34 years old, 11% have a high school diploma, and 12% have a bachelor's degree or higher. This district has schools in both Quartile 3 and 4 and has five schools: three elementary, one junior high school and one high school.

Table 6--District A

District Report Card Grade	B
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	2225
Free and Reduced Lunch	74%
Average Salary	$49,706
Absenteeism	11 (8%)
Inexperienced Teachers	11 (8%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	9 (7%)
Ineffective Teachers	0
Developing Teachers	7
Effective Teachers	99
Highly Effective Teachers	27

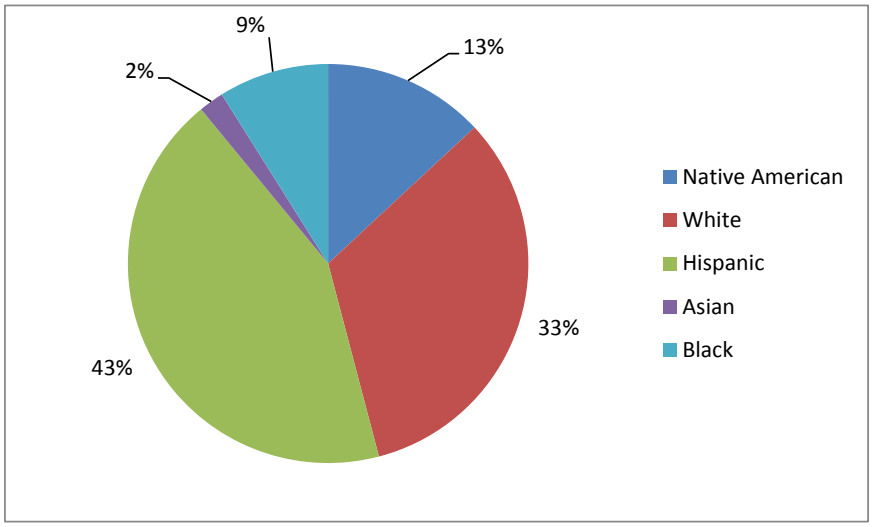


District B

This unified district spanning both Quartiles 3 and 4 is located in a suburb-large community in south-central Arizona approximately 57 miles from Phoenix. While it is close to the metropolitan Phoenix area, it shares many of the same issues as rural areas in the state. The current population is 12,942, with a median household income of $48,088. Of this population, the median age is 39 years old, 23% have a high school diploma, and 13% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The district has ten schools: a pre-K early childhood school, one 6-12 alternative school, four elementary, two middle and two high schools.

Table 7--District B

District Report Card Grade	D
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	3665
Free and Reduced Lunch	72%
Average Salary	$39,833
Absenteeism	35 (20%)
Inexperienced Teachers	37 (21%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	24 (14%)
Ineffective Teachers	12
Developing Teachers	53
Effective Teachers	99
Highly Effective Teachers	11

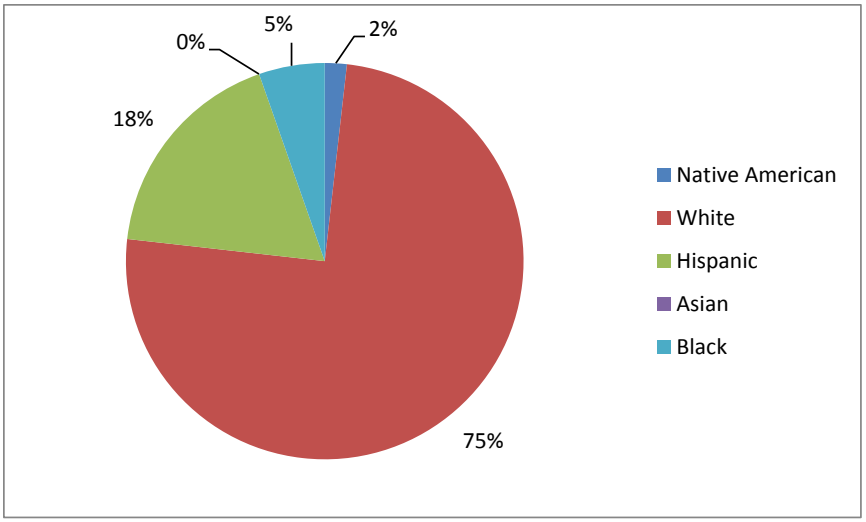


District C

This elementary district is one of many rural-remote communities in southern Arizona approximately 20 miles from the Mexican border. Its closest urban city is Tucson, 123 miles away. The current population is 238, with a median household income of $42,445. Of this population, the median age is 55 years old, 33% have a high school diploma, and 13% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The Quartile 3 district is comprised of one K-8 school.

Table 8--District C

District Report Card Grade	B
Grades Served	K-8
Number of Students	40
Free and Reduced Lunch	54%
Average Salary	$38,353
Absenteeism	0
Inexperienced Teachers	0
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	0
Ineffective Teachers	0
Developing Teachers	0
Effective Teachers	4
Highly Effective Teachers	0

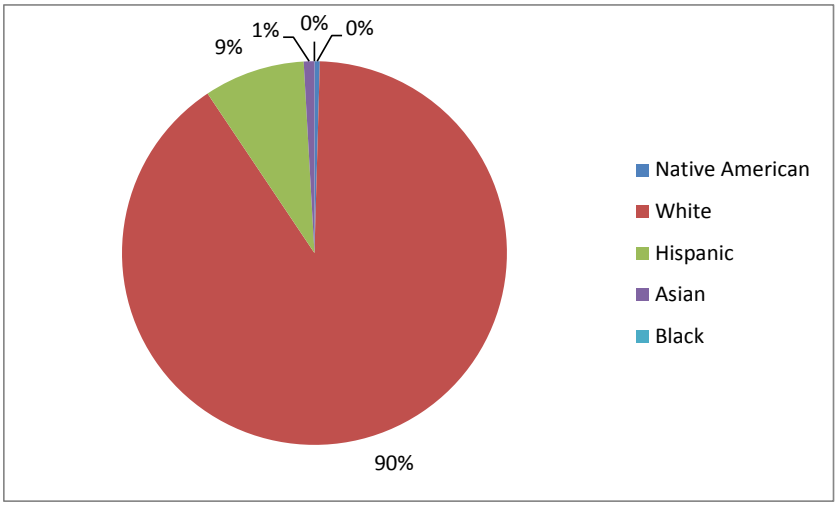


District D

This rural-distant community school district in southern Arizona lies approximately 50 miles from the Mexican border. Its closest urban city is Tucson, 55 miles away. The current population is 1699, with a median household income of $43,947. Of this population, the median age is 47 years old, 18% have a high school diploma, and 23% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The district is in Quartile 2 and has one K-8 school and one high school.

Table 9--District D

District Report Card Grade	A
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	429
Free and Reduced Lunch	67%
Average Salary	$36,702
Absenteeism	11 (37%)
Inexperienced Teachers	5 (17%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	9 (30%)
Ineffective Teachers	0
Developing Teachers	3
Effective Teachers	20
Highly Effective Teachers	7

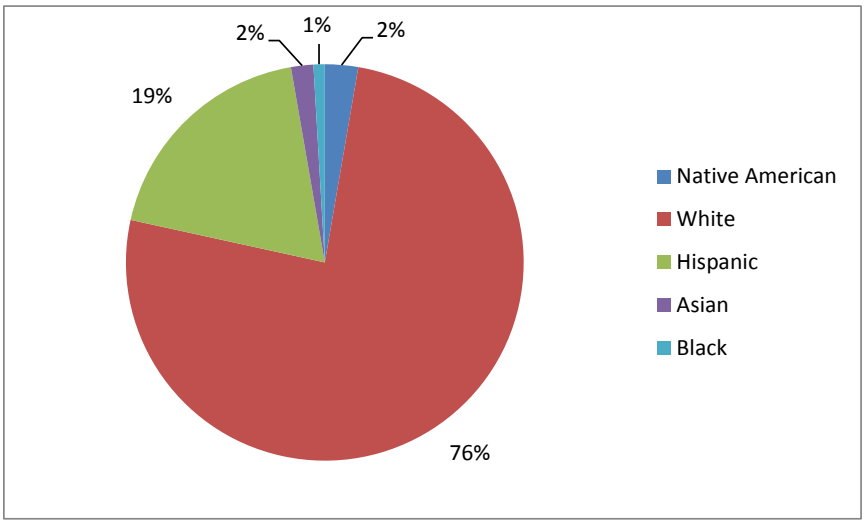


District E

Located in a town-remote community in northwest Arizona approximately 25 miles from the California/Nevada border, this district has Las Vegas, Nevada as its closest urban city, 103 miles away. The current population is 20,404, with a median household income of $52,283 which is approximately 104% of the state average. Of this population, the median age is 41 years old, 13% have a high school diploma, and 14% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The district has twelve schools: five K-5, one K-6, one K-7, one K-8, two 6-8 and two high schools and has representation in all four Quartiles.

Table 10 District E

District Report Card Grade	B
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	7089
Free and Reduced Lunch	66%
Average Salary	$35,727
Absenteeism	104 (30%)
Inexperienced Teachers	60 (16%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	35 (10%)
Ineffective Teachers	2
Developing Teachers	13
Effective Teachers	229
Highly Effective Teachers	97



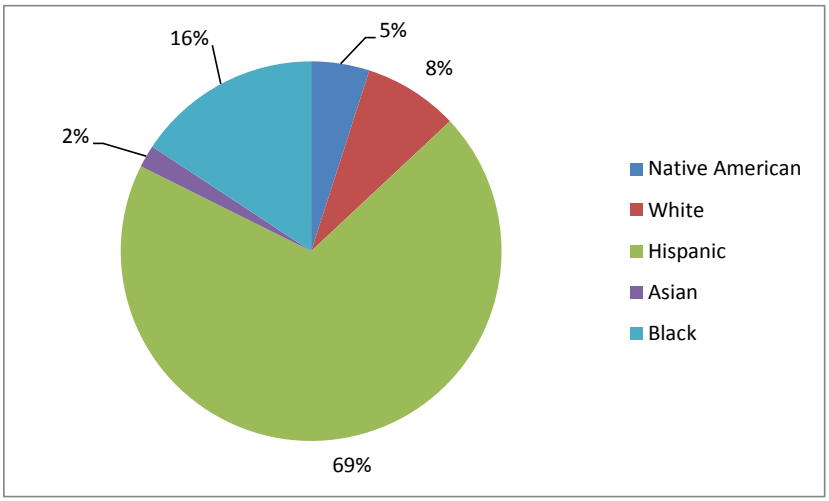
Region 3:

District H

This is an urban elementary district in Phoenix, Arizona and feeds into the Phoenix Union School High School District. Phoenix is the largest community in the state, and is located in central Arizona. The current population is 1,501,527, with a median household income of $64,137, approximately 128% of the state average. Of this population, the median age is 35 years old, 19% have a high school diploma, and 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The city-large district is one of many Quartile 4 elementary school districts in the City of Phoenix. It is near the urban core, adjacent to Sky Harbor International Airport, and is bisected by AZ-202, a major highway providing access from downtown Phoenix to the eastern edges of Maricopa County. The district has four elementary schools.

Table 11 District H

District Report Card Grade	C
Grades Served	K-8
Number of Students	2680
Free and Reduced Lunch	92%
Average Salary	$39,965
Absenteeism	29 (20%)
Inexperienced Teachers	38 (26%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	9 (6%)
Ineffective Teachers	4
Developing Teachers	55
Effective Teachers	71
Highly Effective Teachers	18

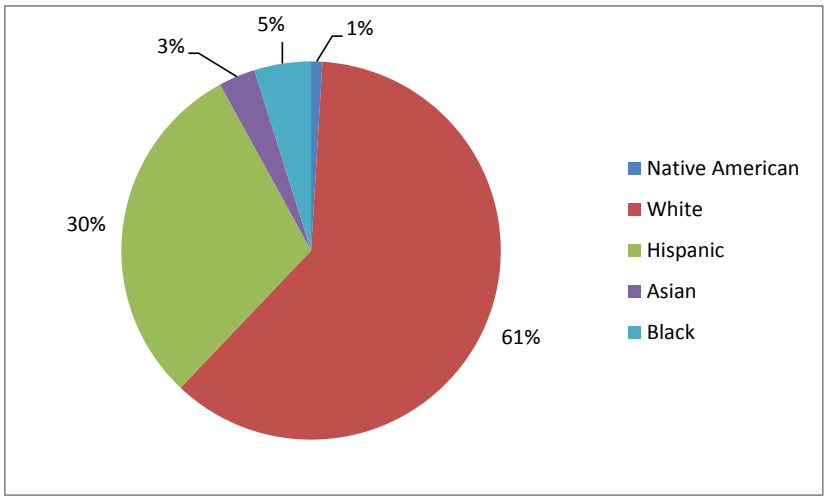


District I

This suburb-large unified district is located in Phoenix west of the urban core. The current population of the community is 153,886, with a median household income of $80,508, approximately 160% of the state average, although the entire community does not reflect such wealth. The city is bisected diagonally by US 60, a major thoroughfare known as Grand Avenue that connects Phoenix with Las Vegas, Nevada. This road also shares space with one of the main lines for the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad and residents living literally on the opposite sides of the tracks enjoy a different set of socio-economic statuses. The median age is 43, 17% have a high school diploma, and 26% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The district is represented in Quartiles 1, 2, and 3 and is comprised of forty elementary and high schools.

Table 12 District I

District Report Card Grade	A
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	36,987
Free and Reduced Lunch	41%
Average Salary	$44,597
Absenteeism	84 (5%)
Inexperienced Teachers	171 (10%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	45 (3%)
Ineffective Teachers	1
Developing Teachers	32
Effective Teachers	1115
Highly Effective Teachers	619

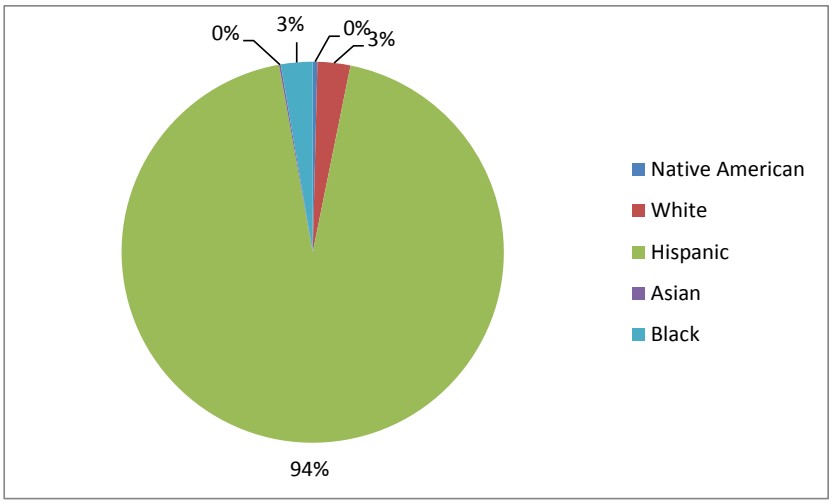


District J

This city-large elementary district in Phoenix also feeds into the Phoenix Union School High School District. The district has four elementary schools and is close to the urban core and state government complex. It is a very industrial neighborhood with many low-income housing units scattered among warehouses and automotive shops. This Quartile 4 district is bisected by Interstate 17.

Table 13 District J

District Report Card Grade	C
Grades Served	K-8
Number of Students	2177
Free and Reduced Lunch	86%
Average Salary	$38,734
Absenteeism	6 (6%)
Inexperienced Teachers	36 (39%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	9 (10%)
Ineffective Teachers	3
Developing Teachers	22
Effective Teachers	64
Highly Effective Teachers	4

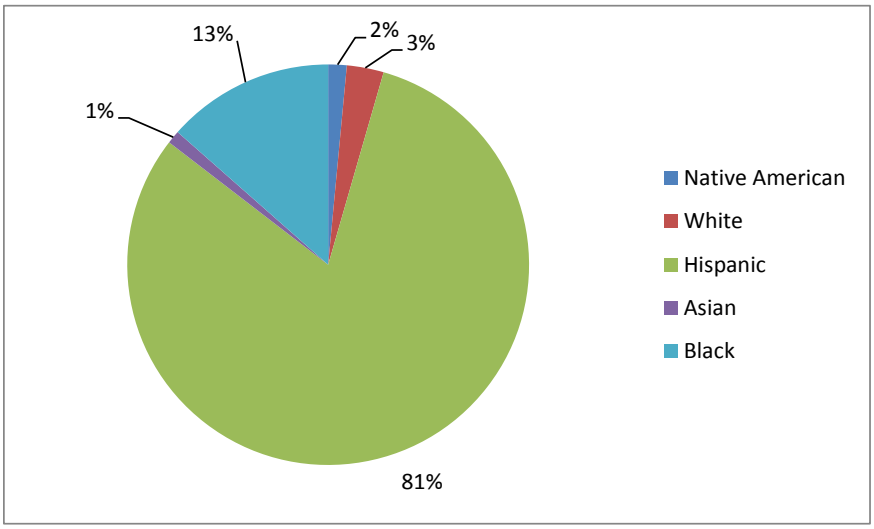


District K

This city-large elementary district in Quartile 4 is an urban district on the south side of Phoenix and feeds into the Phoenix Union School High School District. The district is adjacent to the urban core and Sky Harbor International Airport. It is bounded by South Mountain, the largest city park in the United States and Interstate 10. The district is bisected by the normally dry bed of the Rio Salado and enjoys a diverse mix of industry, mining, warehouses, and low to middle income housing communities. The district has struggled in past years, but through partnerships with ADE and other agencies its leadership feels it is moving in the right direction. The district supports nineteen K-8 schools including one early childhood center.

Table 14 District K

District Report Card Grade	C
Grades Served	K-8
Number of Students	9614
Free and Reduced Lunch	87%
Average Salary	$39,690
Absenteeism	225 (53%)
Inexperienced Teachers	76 (18%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	42 (10%)
Ineffective Teachers	35
Developing Teachers	218
Effective Teachers	129
Highly Effective Teachers	40



State Comparisons

Regions 1, 2, and 3 encompass approximately 65,000 students. This is roughly 6.25% of the population of all K-12 students in Arizona. The discussion of inequities begins to take shape with a closer look at students of poverty. The state average for students qualifying for free or reduced lunch is 48% with Regions 1, 2, and 3 as a whole averaging over 74%. The number would be much higher if not for the slightly higher socio-economic status in parts of District I which is at 41%. However, this does not subtract them from the overall difficulty of attracting and retaining highly effective teachers. Figures 5 and 6 show the varying levels of poverty across our Regions and sample districts.

Figure 5

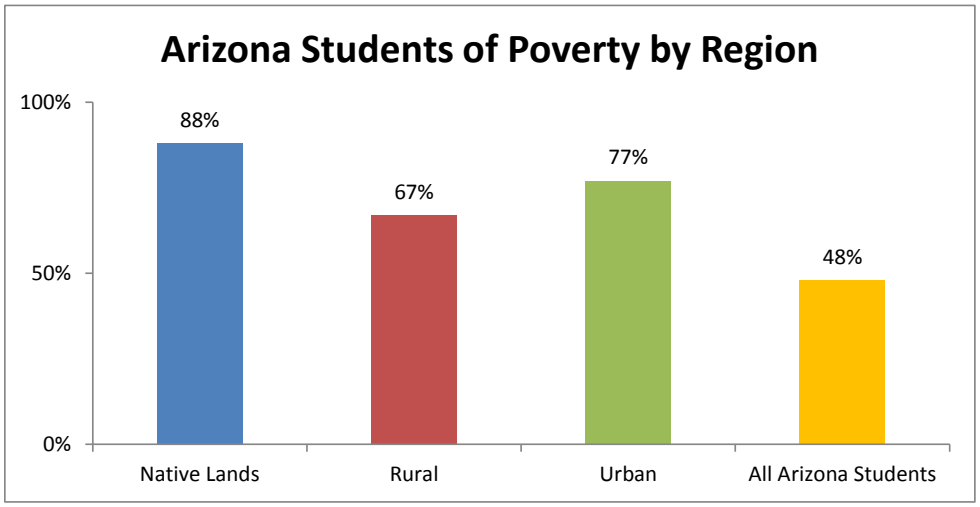
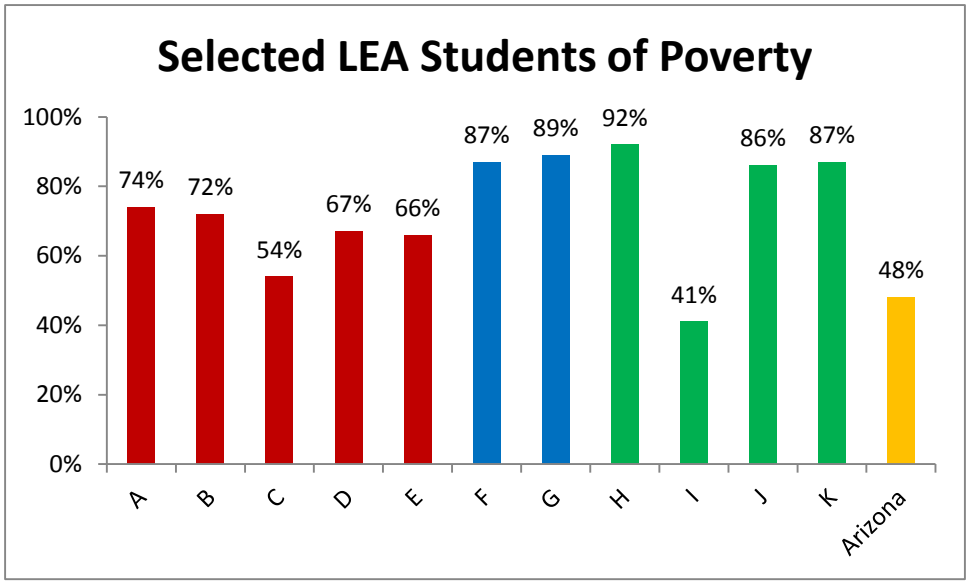


Figure 6



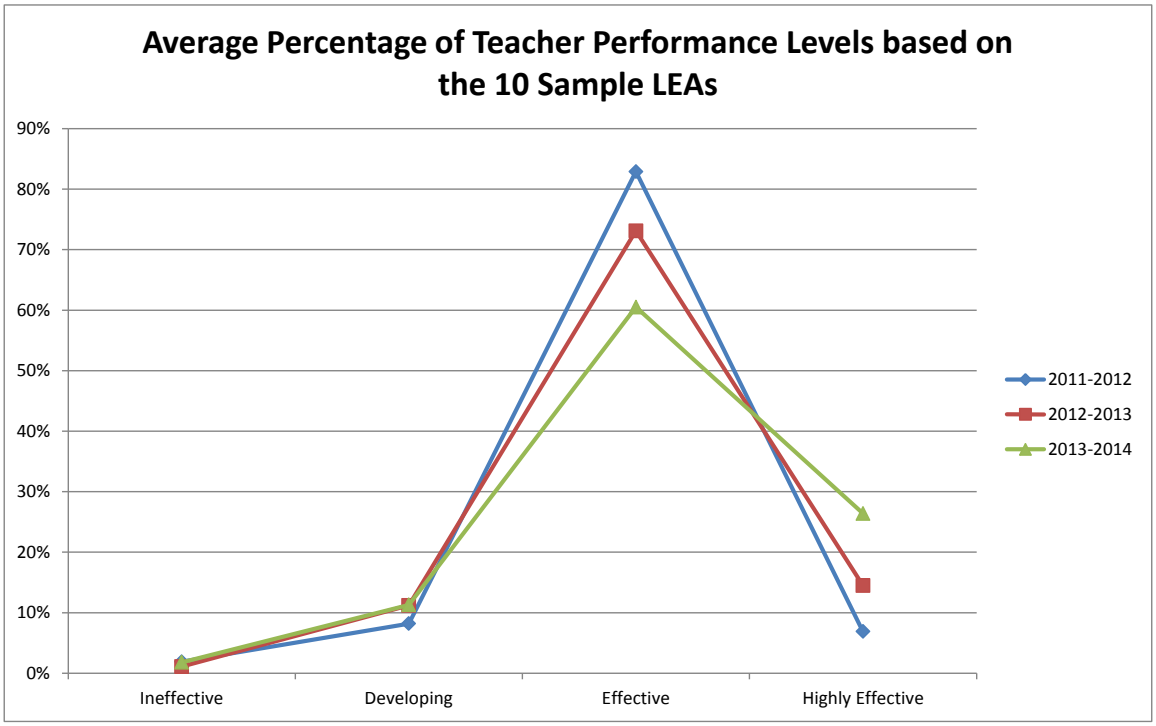
Arizona's distribution of students of color is also disproportionate across the state with students of color in the highest poverty quartile in some counties but not others. This is due to a variety of factors including the county's urban or rural (agricultural) setting, geographic location along the border with Mexico, number or size of the Native American lands within the county, or simply where travelers settled when the territory was first established in 1863. Table 15 demonstrates that percentage distribution across the fifteen counties in the state. Districts for this report come from Apache, Cochise, Mohave, Maricopa, Navajo, Maricopa, and Pinal Counties.

County	Total Number of Students	Number of Minority Students (% of Total Population)
Apache	12,234	7113 (58%)
Cochise	20,328	5013 (25%)
Coconino	17,858	2299 (19%)
Gila	7856	957 (12%)
Graham	6269	463 (7%)
Greenlee	1656	0 (0%)
La Paz	2523	1004 (40%)
Maricopa	674,631	141,309 (21%)
Mohave	25,076	2197 (8%)
Navajo	19,085	5990 (31%)
Pima	146,181	11,960 (8%)
Pinal	47,389	3675 (8%)
Santa Cruz	9935	4593 (46%)
Yavapai	26,277	655 (2%)
Yuma	37,521	20,531 (55%)
Total State	**1,116,143**	**207,759 (19%)**

Table 15--Distribution of Minority Students in the Highest Poverty Quartile by County

Another disconnect is the reliable rating of effective educators across the state's districts. The nearly 1700 total teachers in our three Regions represent roughly 3% of the total number of teachers in Arizona. Figure 7 shows an average three year trend of the reported performance levels of our eleven sample districts.

Figure 7



Key Concern Analysis

Key Concern 1: Evaluation Ratings May Not Accurately Reflect Actual Classroom Instruction.

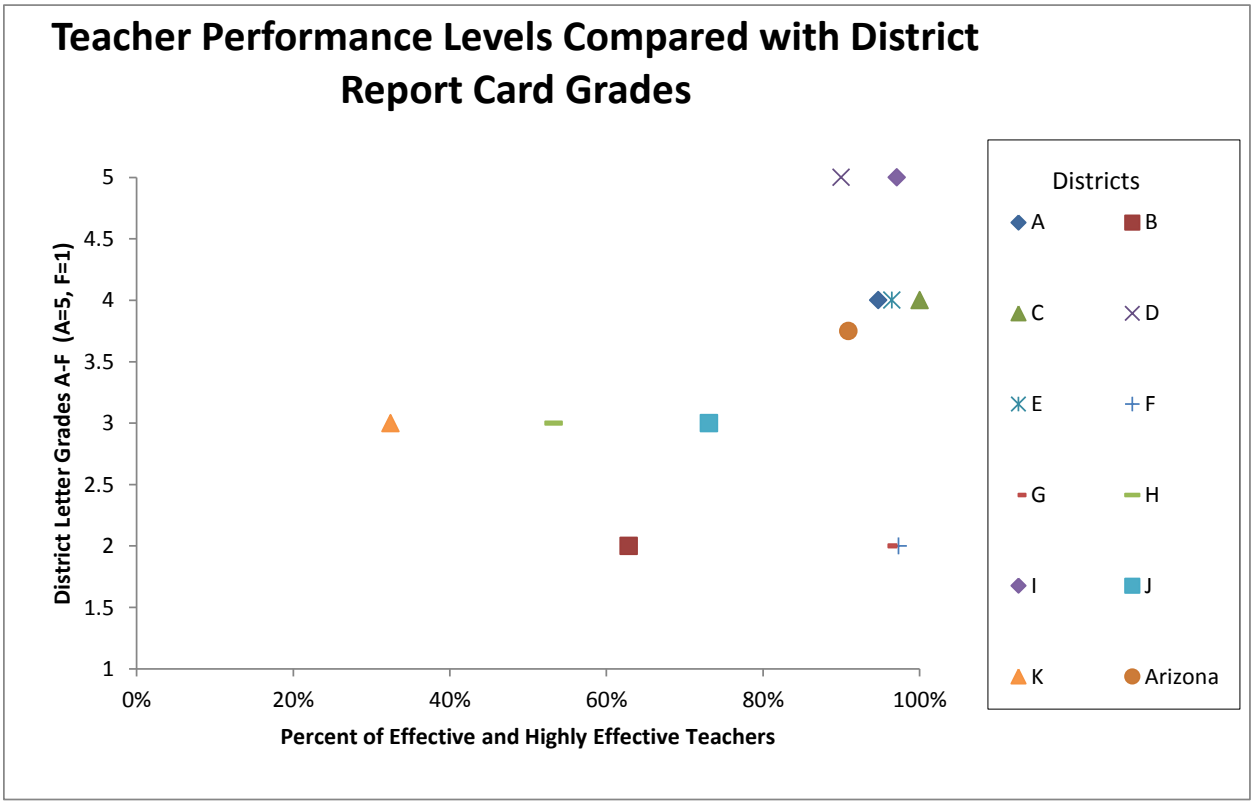
At first glance it appears that there really is not an issue with equitable access in Arizona as the various LEAs have almost all reported that most of their teachers are rated effective with the highly effective rating being the next largest reported group. But a comparison between the effective ratings and the district's report card grade, which is calculated based on a number of factors including student achievement, indicates a great disconnect.

Figure 8 indicates that the state's average report card grade for an LEA is roughly a B-, yet 91% of teachers are rated effective or highly effective.[18] Two of the districts in this report indicate more than 95% of teachers at effective or highly effective and have a grade of A. This, of course is to be celebrated. However, two schools also report 95-100% of teachers in the highest ratings yet have grades of D. Even the three schools that indicate have nearly 100% top tier teachers only have grades of B. Three districts demonstrate what is likely the most reasonable scores with grades of C and D and their percentages of the most effective teachers falling somewhere between 32% and 73%. It may be of some note that each of these is

[18] Translating an A=5 points, a B=4 points and so on, the state average is 3.754 of the 408 LEA is reportable grades in 2012-2013.

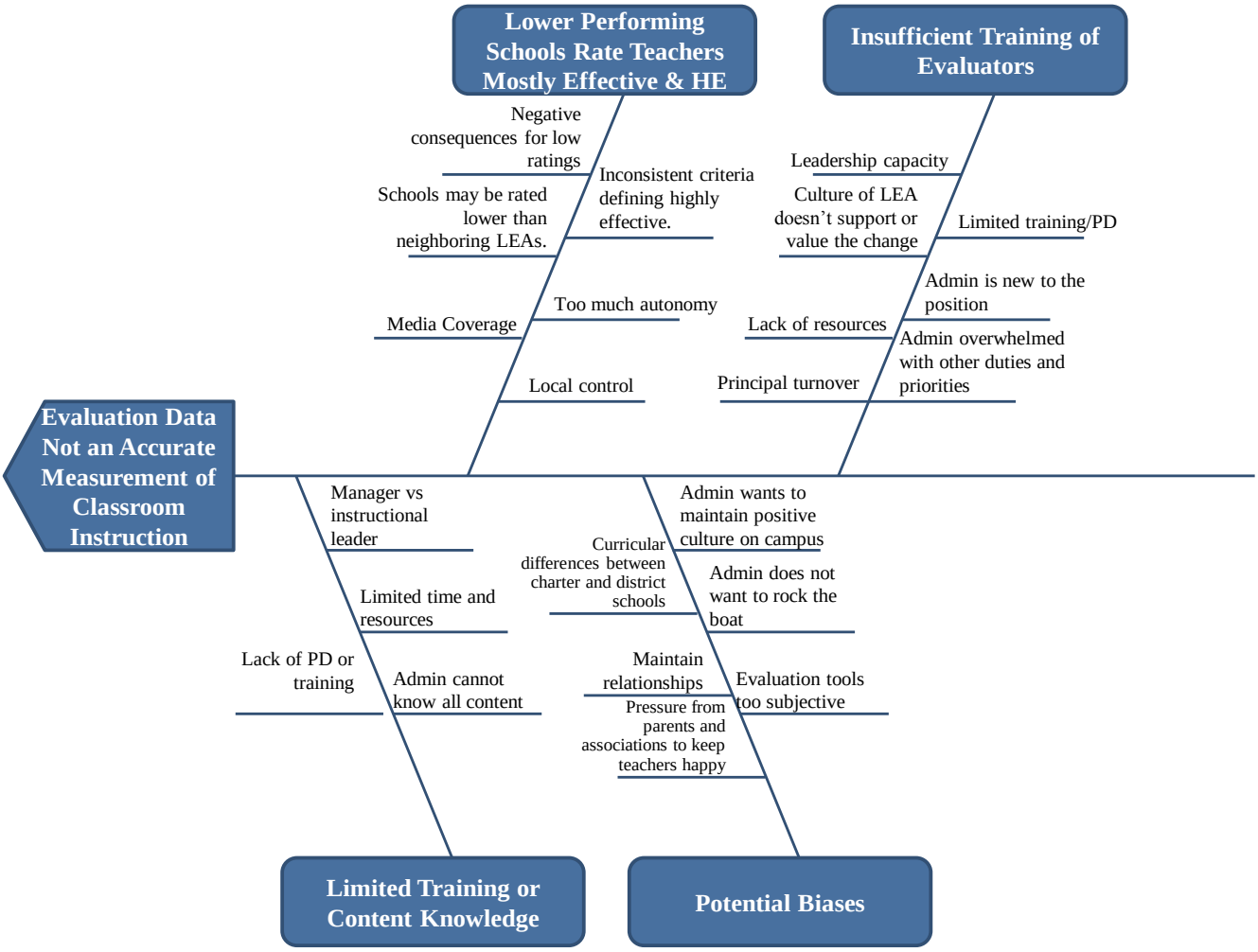
participating in one of the four Teacher Incentive Fund grants currently being administered in Arizona. That may or may not add some validity to their ratings.

Figure 8



Discussions surrounding the root causes of this Key Concern indicated the following possibilities illustrated in Figure 9:

Figure 9



Key Concern 2: Difficulty Retaining and Recruiting Highly Effective Teachers.

Part of the difficulty Arizona sees in connecting students to effective and highly effective teachers is the limited pipeline of teachers with that distinction. Arizona is currently in crisis mode where, unfortunately, the feeling among some stakeholders is that having anyone in the classroom is better than having no one in the classroom. As of 2014, Arizona's average starting salary was $31,874, far below the national starting average of $36,141.[19] Figure 10 displays a comparison between our Region 1, 2, and 3 schools starting salaries with those of the state and nation. In 2015 each of five states that border Arizona raised teacher salaries while, for the most part, Arizona salaries remained stagnant.

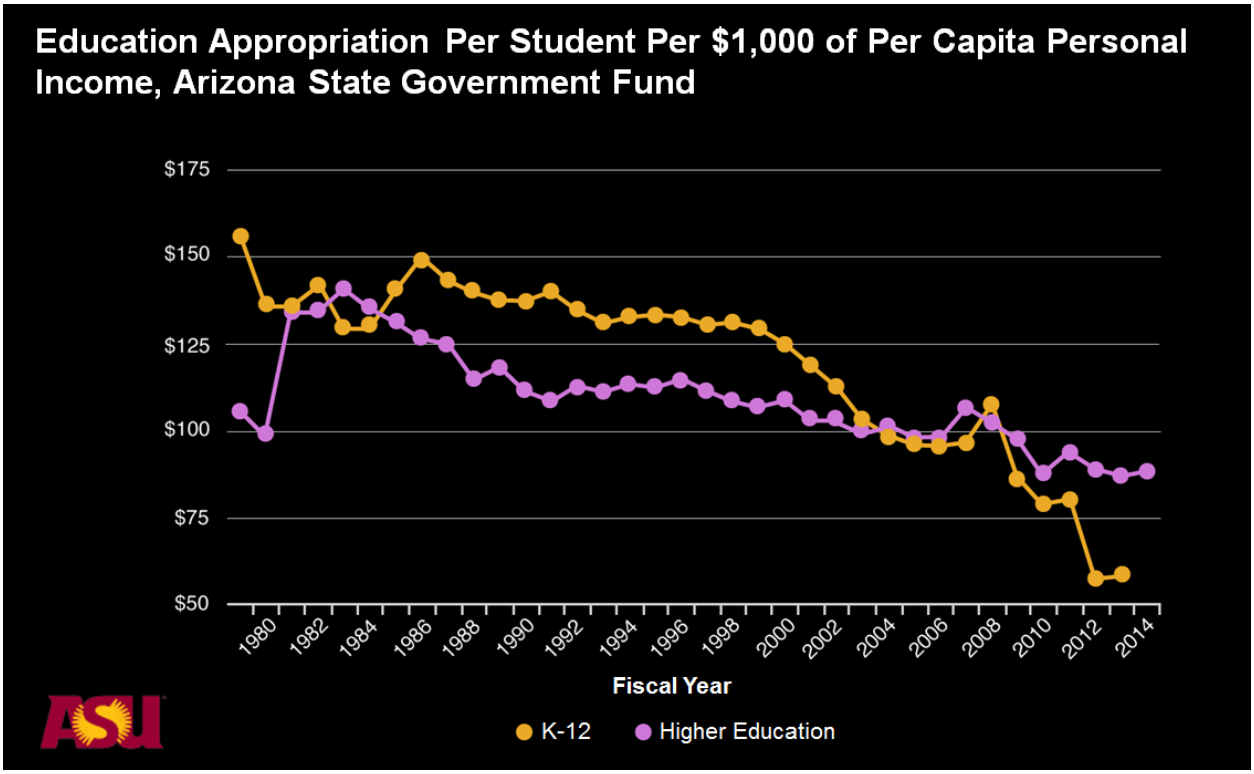
[19] National Education Association (NEA) Research Estimates Database 2013-2014

Figure 10

For many years Arizona has continued its trend of cutting education spending in response to calls from select groups of citizens seeking a reduction of government oversight and putting per pupil spending at $7,021, far lower than Vermont's $26,000 and the thirty-two other states that spend more than $10,000 per student. This amount moved Arizona's ranking to a solid 50th.[20] An April 2015 presentation by the President of Arizona State University highlighted the drastic state of more than thirty years of budget cuts to Arizona's universities and K-12 schools and is illustrated in Figure 11.[21]

[20] National Education Association (NEA), Ranking of the States and Estimates of School Statistic, 2013 www.nea.org/54597.htm
[21] Crow, M. (2015, April 30). Arizona's Economic Imperative: Leading the Nation in Latino Student Success. A Community Conversation.

Figure 11



Arizona Joint Legislative Budget Committee, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

In November of 2013, the Arizona School Administrators (ASA) conducted a survey regarding teaching vacancies. Of the seventy-nine districts who responded to the survey, 62% reported having open teaching positions within their schools with over 900 positions filled by substitute teachers. Additionally, 53% of districts and charters reported having up to five teachers break a contract or resign during the school year. Many reported as seeking higher pay in professions outside education as the reason for leaving the classroom.[22]

Arizona is also experiencing a decrease in the number of people entering the teaching profession with State Board approved educator preparation programs in 2013 reporting a 7% decrease in enrollment from the previous year. In Arizona, 29% of teachers had three or less years of experience as of the 2013-2014 school year. During this same school year, 24% of first year teachers and 20% of second year teachers left their positions and were not reported as teaching in Arizona.[23]

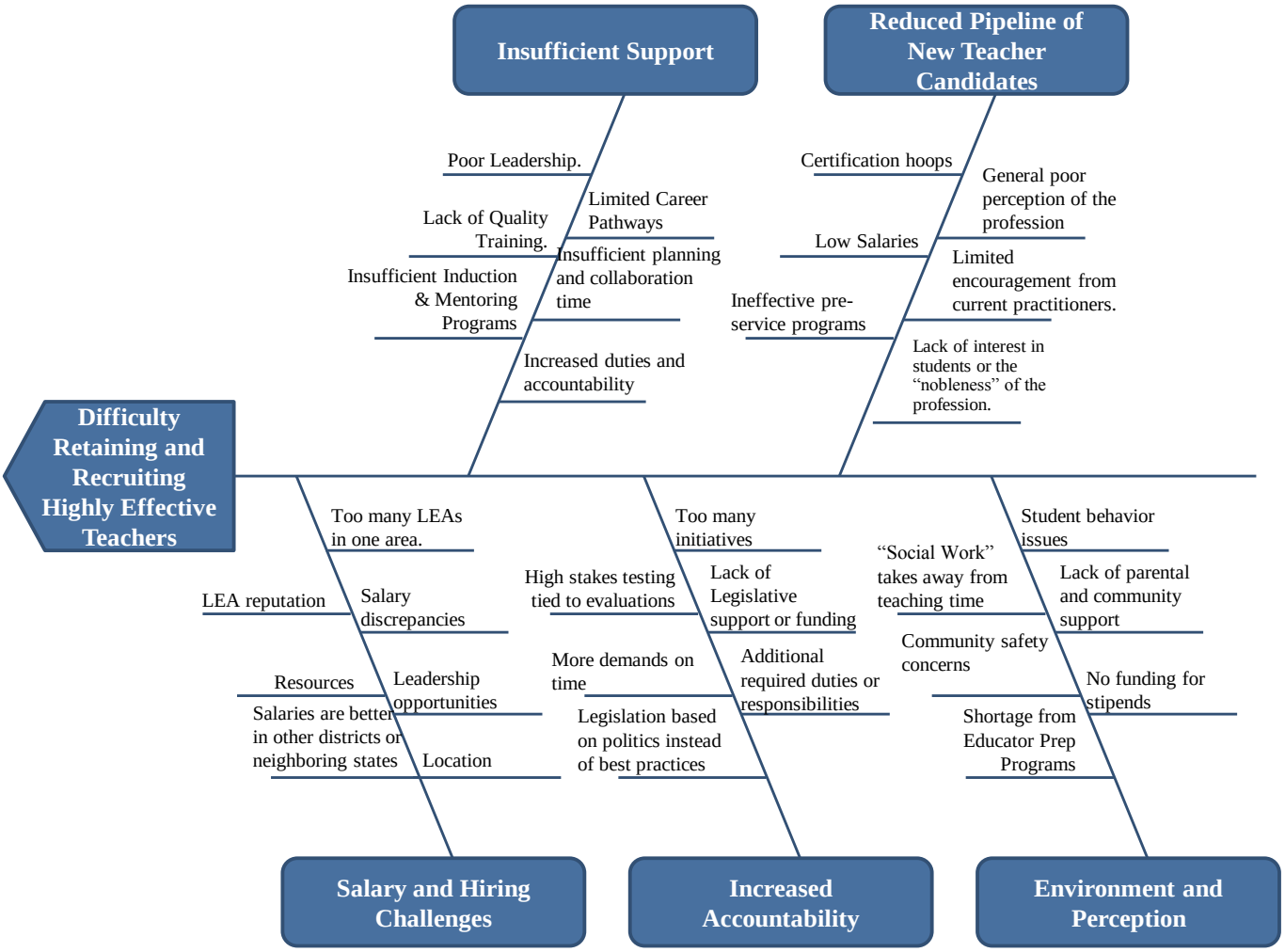
Salary concerns, coupled with school culture issues, limited leadership capacity, perceived certification difficulties, limited resources, limited or no support such as a mentoring program and the perception of the profession in general have all contributed to a reduction in the

[22] Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Educator Retention and Recruitment Task Force Report, January 2015.
[23] Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Educator Retention and Recruitment Task Force Report, January 2015.

number of people pursing teaching as a career, either through tradition university coursework or through alternative pathways.

Discussions surrounding the root causes of this Key Concern indicated the following possibilities illustrated in Figure 12:

Figure 12



Key Concern 3: Negative Perception of the Profession.

Education consultant Jamie Vollmer has referred to the current public perception of education, fueled by a variety of sources, as "the practice of bashing public schools as a blood sport." He says that the media does not publish the full story, statistics are skewed and used out

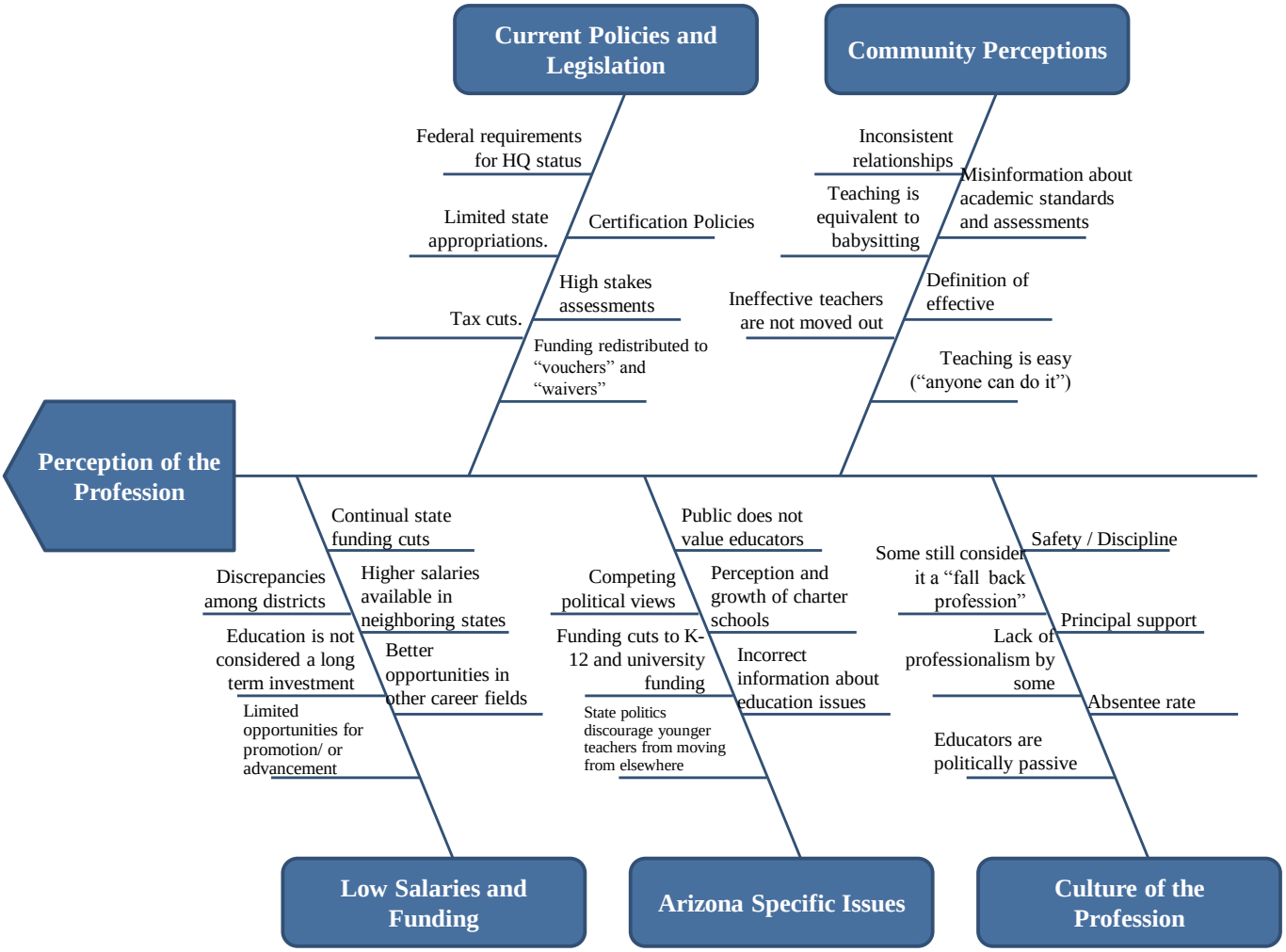
of context, and incorrect comparisons are made between the past and present.[24] Unfortunately, this public "bashing" and misinformation, often at the legislative and congressional policy levels, has caused many would be educators to shift their focus to other, lower profile professions. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that some current educators have tried to dissuade a student from becoming a teacher or, at the very least, have been less than enthusiastic in their support.

Some of the in-profession discouragement stems from low salaries and policy implications but there are other stressors as well. There is a high level of performance accountability based predominately on high stakes testing. The increase in the number of charter schools in Arizona has also placed a greater emphasis on quality instruction with district schools as more and more parents exercise their "school choice" rights. Teachers are also faced with highly stressed administrators who are not able to provide sufficient support and may not have the necessary training to coach and guide instructional practices. Finally, there is a subset of teachers, administrators and parents who still perceive the profession as a fallback career where "anyone can be a teacher and get their summers off." This general lack of professionalism, even from just a few, is very tiring for competent and effective educators and can have a devastating impact on morale.

Discussions surrounding the root causes of this Key Concern indicated the following possibilities illustrated in Figure 13:

[24] Jamie Vollmer, "Public School Bashing: A Dangerous Game", American Association of School Administrators, September 2010.

Figure 13



Section 4: Strategies for Addressing Equity Gaps

Arizona is committed to supporting the concept that all students have access to excellent teachers. The state's 2006 equity plan is part of this commitment, ensuring that all students are taught by a highly qualified teacher in every core content classroom. The 2006 plan resulted in 99% of core content classes in the state being taught by highly qualified teachers.[25]

Since 2006, the focus for how we define excellent teachers in the classroom and educators in schools has shifted from highly qualified to highly effective. The theory behind this

[25] Arizona Department of Education, *Highly Qualified Teachers Equity Plan 2006*

shift is top down and assumes that if we have highly effective leaders in our schools, then we will have the capacity to develop highly effective teachers in our schools. It follows that having highly effective teachers gives students access to more effective teaching which, in turn, will satisfy our ultimate goal of increased learning and improved achievement.

Theory of Action

> ***If*** *implementing a comprehensive yet individualized approach to educator retention and recruitment is supported at the state level and adjusted periodically as needed, and*
>
> ***If*** *educator performance evaluation systems are implemented with fidelity and a greater understanding of how scores are calculated and can be improved, and*
>
> ***If*** *the perception of the profession can be improved in such a way as to attract more traditional and nontraditional applicants to the workforce,*
>
> ***Then*** *Arizona school districts and charters will be better able to retain, recruit, and develop* excellent *educators so that all students have equitable access to* effective *instruction and leadership to help them achieve their highest potential in school and beyond.*

The state, through its partners and individual LEAs, has made progress in ensuring that teachers do not teach outside their area of certification and developed a variety of programs to increase teacher content knowledge and professional training including:

- online trainings and videos of effective instruction,
- professional development leadership academies,
- statewide initiatives surrounding pay for performance and career ladder,
- prioritized technical assistance from ADE,
- the establishment of master teacher mentor programs,
- standards and models for effective induction programs,
- the granting of an Associate of Arts in Elementary Education (AAEE) at the state's community colleges to help provide a pathway for future educators toward an Educator Preparation Program at the state's public universities,
- assistance and subsidies for teachers to complete National Board certification,
- recognition of excellent teaching through programs such as the Rodel Exemplary Teacher award, and
- The support of leaders in high poverty, high minority schools through collaborative programs designed to enhance leader effectiveness.

Following the 2006 submission of its Equity Plan to USED, ADE conducted an equity study with twenty-five districts and over eighteen months focused on four initiatives Arizona that included focusing statewide efforts on recruitment, preparation, and retention of HQ teachers, supporting leadership in high poverty and minority schools, providing for statewide HQT policy coherence, and technical assistance and monitoring. The state also set a goal to implement two new data systems to assist with monitoring and support. The first, Arizona LEA Tracker (ALEAT) is an electronic portal where districts can upload any necessary information the SEA may ask for including continuous improvement plans. The second data system is an improved web based application to gather and report information on the status of Highly Qualified Teachers. Both data systems were established and have been effective tools for ADE for years. The current equity team hopes to continue to leverage these tools moving forward.

A statewide task force was created to address the general teacher shortage in Arizona, which is now being felt in all areas of the state regardless of the root causes named above. One charge of the task force is to investigate strategies for filling the large number of teaching positions open in the state currently being filled by substitute teachers who may not be highly qualified or instructionally effective, or both. Another charge is to look at methods for retaining the numbers of highly effective teachers that currently exist. Members of the task force are hearing from stakeholders across the state that they need certified teachers to fill these positions, but they also need to look for effective teachers to fill these positions. The state is faced with the quandary of wanting highly effective teachers in each classroom balanced with the reality of not having sufficient numbers of teachers, regardless of quality, in the employment pipeline. For Arizona, this is a statewide problem that is felt most predominately in the areas outside of Maricopa County and is impacted often by the remote locations of schools rather than a poverty or ethnic makeup of the students.

Other strategies that have been examined, but are not finding much success in Arizona include establishing "grow your own" programs in rural, remote and reservation districts. There have also been considerable efforts put in to encouraging classroom aides or paraprofessionals to become teachers. Unfortunately there has been a very low success rate with this as many only have high school diplomas and often find it difficult to pass the basic skills tests necessary to get into the training program. Some like the flexibility of the hours and do not want to move beyond paraprofessional status. The state is still encouraging the use of an intern certificate where teachers without an education degree can be certified and begin teaching while taking the appropriate coursework for a standard certificate that indicates a highly qualified status.

In addition to the work conducted by ADE, Arizona's universities are building closer ties to the LEAs. Arizona State University instituted a yearlong student teaching schedule known as iTeachAZ which is wildly popular among districts around Arizona because they can easily identify and offer early contracts to promising teacher candidates. Grand Canyon University

offers to continue to support struggling new teachers with additional training and outreach if contacted by the teacher or their current principal or superintendent.

At the local level, flexibility in hiring practices for principals of high poverty and/or high minority schools (including priority in the selection of new hires), early access to candidates and postings of positions and use of Title II-A federal grant funds will be investigated. At the state level, current practices involving allowable use of Title II-A federal grant funds will be reviewed to create new funding sources for recruiting new teachers and principals.

The eleven districts in this report have also implemented some research based strategies to help alleviate the issue at their level. Table 16 illustrates how different the implementation of these strategies may be.

Table 16

	Recruitment Strategies					Retention Strategies				
District	Stipends	Job Fair	AZ Teaching Fellows	Teach for America	Hire an HQ Equity Analyst	New Teacher Induction	Academic Coaches	NBCT Stipends	Retention Stipends	Incentive Pay
A	♦	♦	♦			♦		♦		♦
G	♦								♦	
F	♦								♦	
B										
C										
D										
E	♦	♦				♦	♦			
H						♦	♦	♦		
J		♦					♦			
K			♦	♦		♦	♦			
I					♦		♦			

Key Concerns and Strategies

To achieve our state's teacher and leader equity objectives ADOE intends to initially pursue three key assumptions that correspond to the root causes behind the problem:

- Ongoing professional training for administrators and evaluators,
- Human capital management, and
- Opportunities to change the perception of the profession.

These strategies were identified based on the root-cause analysis and through discussions with stakeholders over multiple sessions. As the stakeholder process is still ongoing, we do not have strategies, substrategies and metrics as yet completely defined. Information below is thus far incomplete but we have multiple opportunities scheduled over the coming weeks to continue to engage LEAs and gather their ideas on what will be the most effective way to implement strategies and monitor this issue.

Details of the Key Concerns Strategies

1: Ongoing professional training for administrators and evaluators We believe that the current teacher and principal evaluation systems used across Arizona have not had sufficient time to mature with practice and that current self-reported scores may not necessarily be an accurate depiction of classroom instruction. Some schools in Arizona with C, D or F labels still report having a majority of effective and highly effective teachers. There should be a correlation between the two levels but that is not currently seen from all districts.
Root-Cause Analysis Findings
▪ **Lower Performing Schools Rate Teachers Mostly Effective and Highly Effective.** Schools and teachers may face negative consequences for low ratings, schools are competing with neighboring LEAs and cannot afford a lower rating, and negative coverage in the media, coupled with factors among the school culture may drive this data point.
▪ **Insufficient or inadequate training of evaluators.** Limited leadership capacity, limited training, lack of training resources and oversight, combined with a culture that may not support the changes called for in a new evaluation system may drive this data point.
▪ **Limited content training or knowledge of evaluators.** Most administrators are trained as managers, not instructional leaders, there is limited time and resources and the evaluator cannot be expected to know all contents at all grade levels, although they should be able to recognize good pedagogy regardless of the content or grade level.
▪ **Inconsistent definitions of "Highly Effective."** Even though they are guided by definitions in the state's framework for educator evaluations, Arizona districts are free to develop their own definition and measurement of effectiveness.
▪ **Varying use of instruments.** Districts are free to use the evaluation instrument of their choice. ADE believes that most districts are using the Danielson model but districts are not required to report the tool used so ADE does not have specific quantitative data to back up its assumption.

General Strategies Suggested by Stakeholders
1. Provide specific guidelines for defining teacher effectiveness. Such guidelines could include examples of instruction and student achievement at each effectiveness level, or a form of measurement to determine the overall effectiveness of an observation instrument.
2. Provide enhanced professional learning opportunities for administrators and evaluators with sufficient practice time prior to the start of the evaluation process.
3. Provide additional guidance and support in the choice and implementation of an effective observation tool and data collection instrument.
4. Implement a reporting tool to improve data reporting, analysis and validity.
Sub-strategies
1. Review the current definitions of educator effectiveness and compare with other states to provide LEAs a clearer understanding the correlation between student achievement and effective instruction.
2. Develop and present, either in districts as requested, in person at ADE, or via webinar, opportunities to learn the components of an effective evaluation tool and how to implement it with fidelity in the field.
3. Assist LEAs with information and guidance on evaluation instruments and data reporting systems. Encourage LEAs to participate with ADE in collaborative purchasing of Teachscape.
4. Develop a rubric to assist LEAs in measuring the effectiveness of their evaluation instrument.
5. Modify ALEAT to accept submission of teacher effectiveness ratings to streamline the reporting process and provide an opportunity for ADE to provide support where and how it is needed.
Measurement Tools
▪ Survey of states and LEAs for definitions of excellent, effective and highly effective.
▪ Attendance logs for ADE presented professional learning opportunities.
▪ Increased number of subscriptions to Teachscape.
▪ Effective evaluation instrument measuring tool –developed, implemented and LEAs participate in training.
▪ Development of Arizona LEA Tracking (ALEAT) to accept effectiveness ratings.

Performance Objectives
▪ By January 1, 2016, ADE will publish a calendar of professional learning opportunities to support administrators in effective implementation of their LEA's observation/evaluation instrument.
▪ By June 30, 2016, ADE will develop a plan to support LEAs in conducting a gap analysis to assist with the alignment of their educator evaluation instruments and evaluation training for administrators and teachers.
▪ By June 30, 2017, ADE will reconfigure ALEAT to accept teacher effectiveness ratings. LEAs will begin submission with SY 2016-17 ratings.
▪ By June 30, 2017, twenty-five percent (25%) of Arizona LEAs will have conducted district-level Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) policy scans and gap analyses to gauge the comprehensiveness and alignment of their educator effectiveness policies, with the assistance of an ADE team if needed.
▪ By June 30, 2018, seventy-five percent (75%) of Arizona LEAs will have conducted district-level Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) policy scans and gap analyses to gauge the comprehensiveness and alignment of their educator effectiveness policies, with the assistance of an ADE team if needed.

2: Human Capital Management Systems for Teacher Retention and Recruitment

We believe every student deserves a highly effective teacher and every school deserves an effective leader with systemic continuity. We believe that increasingly consistent and meaningful support for all educators will result in higher retention and recruiting results. We believe that systems need to be established to draw the right candidates into traditional and nontraditional career pathways, support the candidates through effective induction and mentoring programs, increase salaries, increase the opportunities and resources available for teachers to work in hard to fill subjects and hard to fill areas.

Root-Cause Analysis Findings
▪ **Insufficient Support.** Teachers report the impact of increased accountability with reduced support. Such support may include reduced funding for resources, reduced leadership capacity, lack of mentoring/coaching, and training or professional learning is not aligned to an individual teacher's actual needs.
▪ **Reduced pipeline of new teacher candidates.** The decrease in teachers in traditional educator preparation programs as well as non-traditional programs such as Teach for America or Troops to Teachers has put an additional burden on already crowded schools facing an increasing shortage of teachers as the current workforce reaches retirement age.

- **Working conditions.** Limited legislative financial support results in some cases in a decrease in maintenance and upkeep for schools causing blight and unsafe working conditions. Teachers also report being unprepared for and not supported with societal issues that students may bring from home and are out of the teacher's locus of control.

- **Salary increases in neighboring states, completion with neighboring districts and charter schools.** Each of the states bordering Arizona provided pay raises to teachers in 2015 while Arizona continues to reduce its education funding. Districts in Yuma, Bullhead City and Kingman report losing teachers to San Diego, Laughlin and Las Vegas as those communities pay considerably more. Schools in rural areas find it difficult to retain or recruit candidates and often lose their "home-grown" teachers to Tucson and Phoenix whose districts pay more and there are greater opportunities in the larger urban setting. Lower performing districts, with limited resources to improve, may lose highly effective teachers to a neighboring, higher performing charter school.

- **Limited incentive to serve in hard to fill content areas.** Through grant funding some districts are able to provide stipends or incentives for teachers to work in hard to fill content areas or at lower performing schools. However, those hard to fill areas also face other challenges and the support may not be available to completely incentive an effective teacher to move there.

- **Leadership pathways.** Limited pathways exist for professional advancement for those who desire to provide leadership yet want to remain in the classroom rather than take an administrative position or seek employment at a university, government agency or consulting firm.

- **Overall perception of the field.** The pipeline of effective teacher candidates is shrinking due to state and national perceptions of the profession. Teachers may not be politically active or savvy enough to help inform conversations. Some teachers may even discourage future candidates from joining the profession. Parents and legislative officials may not have a complete understanding of issues. Societal pressures and media scrutiny often paint the profession in a negative light causing some potential candidates to rethink their career path.

General Strategies Suggested by Stakeholders

1. Provide greater professional learning and support through mentoring/coaching for all leaders, including superintendents, principals, school level instructional coaches and classroom teacher-leaders.
2. Implement a new teacher/new leader induction and mentoring program that lasts the full year, has research-based, job-embedded learning opportunities, sufficient funding for stipends and sustainability and networking opportunities.
3. Continue to align purposeful professional learning opportunities. Give LEAs the tools to analyze their own effectiveness or partner with an outside agency for resources.
4. Develop a leadership alliance to model, network, support effective district and school systems.
5. Increase Pay – Make teaching a viable career to keep them in the classroom.
6. More collaboration between state universities/institutes and LEAs and other state education departments in terms of evaluation - measurement would be teacher evaluation.

7. New administrators and teacher-leaders participate in AZ LEADS leadership coursework or Teach to Lead initiative. Develop refresher course for current leaders.
8. Assist LEA leadership in creating a culture of support.
9. Advocate for increased school funding. Improve teacher understanding of the politics and processes surrounding school financing.
10. LEAs conduct a human capital management system (HCMS) self-assessment.
11. Schools use SAI and a specific protocol to respond to results.
12. Develop community opportunities for engagement outside of the classroom.

Measurement Tools
▪ SAI
▪ Leadership improvement plan with objectives, data and quantitative/qualitative measures. Use a 360° tool such as VAL-ED.
▪ HCMS self-assessment.
▪ Parent, student and staff surveys.
▪ Classroom observation/evaluation instrument.
▪ A reporting system that demonstrates the correlation between educator evaluations, student achievement and the overall school grade.
▪ Compensation analysis.

Performance Objectives
▪ By June 30, 2016, ADE Certification Unit will have online application services available for all new certification and re-certification applicants.
▪ By June 30, 2017, ADE will collaborate with Arizona higher education institutions, parent associations and community organizations to develop plans and incentives for promoting the profession and increasing the number of candidates seeking certification.
▪ By June 30, 2017, all districts will address professional learning with an emphasis on retention opportunities, support for improved climate and culture and individualized training based on need in the LEA and School Continuous Improvement Plans.
▪ By June 30, 2017, ADE will partner with LEAs , outside agencies, parent associations and community organizations to develop a legislative awareness program for implementation in SY 2017-18.

3: Change the perception of the profession

We believe that current legislative decisions, reduced funding with greater accountability, media scrutiny, and societal perceptions have produced a negative perception of the education profession causing additional challenges to retaining and recruiting highly effective educators and leaders.

Root-Cause Analysis Findings

- **Current policies and legislation.** Increased LEA oversight, opportunities for improved charter wait lists and school choice, and scrutiny of state government have led to misinformation, miscommunication and negative impressions of the teaching field both inside and outside the profession.
- **High stakes accountability.** Schools are increasingly held accountable for student learning with limited funding while outside societal influences on education remain beyond an educator's control.
- **Reduced school funding and salaries not competitive with private industry.** Arizona leads the nation in the rate of funding cuts to both K-12 and post-secondary institutions and salaries have not kept up with neighboring states even after the economic recovery. This leads to fewer people entering the field and more teachers and leaders choosing to leave the field in order to support their families or have greater opportunity for advancement.
- **Internal culture of the profession.** "Teachers are our own worst enemy," said one town hall participant. Teachers are not often not politically savvy or active, do not understand policy decisions and some may try to dissuade students and family members from entering the profession. Teachers are also held to higher standard by the community and media so when one chooses to make a poor decision, the news reflects badly on everyone.
- **External perceptions of Arizona.** The state is an attractive place for new teachers, particularly those from the Midwest and east coast, to seek jobs. Its climate, beautiful natural environment, abundance of sports and cultural opportunities and top quality institutions of higher learning make it an ideal place to start a new job. However, the state's unique politics, low pay, and lack of support systems cause many to leave after only two or three years and either return to their home states or seek jobs in states that pay more and provide the necessary professional supports.

General Strategies Suggested by Stakeholders

1. Cross-training between elementary and secondary levels to cultivate a continuum connection.
2. Business community fosters a need and passion for the profession through collaborative marketing.
3. Increase teacher salaries through a dedicated legislative appropriation in order to meet or exceed national averages within three years.
4. Increase per-pupil funding through the development of a new funding formula.

5. Develop and implement an effective one to two yearlong mentoring/coaching and induction program with sufficient funding for incentives, stipends and resources.
6. Improve university supported training of "Master Teachers" for student teachers/interns including a rigorous selection process and funding for stipends.
7. Legislative authorization and funding for career-ladder style opportunities to encourage teacher-leaders to remain in the classroom and increase overall awareness of effective, data-driven instructional best practices.
8. Legislative appropriations for National Board Certification and dedicated funding for professional learning.
Measurement Tools
▪ Survey of social, print and visual media to determine the messages currently being delivered.
▪ Audit of current "Master Teacher" training, professional learning opportunities and stipend amounts.
▪ Legislative appropriation trends and funding sources.
▪ District exit surveys.
▪ Public perception surveys conducted by third party research groups (IHEs, local research groups, WestED).
Performance Objectives
▪ By June 30, 2016, ADE will investigate ways to increase the positive perception of the education profession by working with parent groups, state business leaders, education groups, and other interested parties to create a marketing plan highlighting the positive characteristics of teaching and education in general in Arizona targeted toward high school students and the general public through social media.
▪ By November 1, 2016, ADE will seek sponsorship for legislation that creates a competitive market for teachers in Arizona by reviewing the current funding formula in order to increase teachers' salaries to the national average over a three year period. This bill will also support research-based professional learning and incentivize pursuing National Board Certification.
▪ By June 30, 2017, ADE will reduce by ten percent (10%) the number of teachers leaving the profession in their first two years by working collaboratively representative LEAs from large and small districts and charter schools to create a Beginning Teacher Mentoring Model that will be available to all LEAs in the state. This model will include recognized best practices in mentoring and funding options for mentor stipends.
▪ By July 1, 2017, ADE and institutes of higher education will develop a research based teacher leadership program.

Section 5: Ongoing Monitoring and Support

Arizona is committed to ensuring the long-term success of this initiative. ADE believes this should be more than just a compliance document but an opportunity to support individualized equity plans with research-based strategies without infringing upon local control. Doing this will create a collaborative environment that will help alleviate the current retention and recruitment crisis.

ADE will assist LEAs through the use of Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A funds for all schools but particularly those identified in the fourth quartile of poverty with the greatest need. In addition, ADE will continue to provide opportunities to help ineffective and developing teachers move upward on the effectiveness scale. Much of the responsibility from districts will be in the form of voluntarily submitted data that will assist ADE in providing targeted support. The incentive for this data will be the quick access to technical support, guidance and available funding for programming. One potential strategy for this that may be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval is to use ALEAT as a mechanism to receive evaluation ratings and other data to help ADE more easily gather and analyze the information to provide targeted support.

In the summer of 2015, following the submission of this report, ADE staff will reconvene to examine any feedback from USED and revise the plan if necessary. Staff will continue to gather data surrounding the issue of equitable access to excellent educators across Arizona and will continue to collaborate with colleagues in other State Education Agencies to determine best practices and workable solutions. This team will also review the stated performance objectives and suggested strategies to determine which ADE division, section or unit is best equipped to develop an action plan and implement the suggested strategy. The various Deputy Associate Superintendents overseeing these units will work collaboratively through ADE's Aligning Efforts Community of Practice to support staff in meeting the performance objectives. As stated by individual action plans, ADE staff will identify specific partners to assist with development and implementation of the strategies. Such partners may be parent and student organizations, teacher and leader associations, LEAs, colleges and universities, business and political leaders, community action groups, the media and staff from other government agencies in Arizona and in other states. The Deputy Associate Superintendents, via the Aligning Efforts COP will meet regularly to discuss and report progress toward the performance objectives. ADE's executive leadership will assist the process by providing the vision necessary to carry plans forward, provide leadership guidance as necessary to problem solve and assist with budgetary considerations as they arise.

While most of the performance objectives are realistically spread out over the next two school years and legislative sessions, it is important to note that it will take time for the data on the proposed programs to mature enough to show how effective a strategy may be. Not only will ADE staff monitor progress toward the realization of the performance objectives but will continue to examine measurements at regular intervals over the next three to five years. It may be necessary in the future to develop a working group to oversee equity issues, examine data, determine the need to revise goals, develop new strategies and keep the conversation focused on effective instruction that supports the achievement of all students.

Section 6: Conclusion

ADE supports the U.S. Department of Education's goal of ensuring that every student has equitable access to excellent educators and welcomes this challenge to present its plan for advancing the educational opportunities for students and teachers across the state. ADE recognizes that Arizona's educators are the most important component of success for Arizona's students and is committed to the goal that students of color, students in economically disadvantaged areas and students with special needs are not taught by inexperienced or ineffective educators at higher rates than students outside those demographics. ADE further recognizes that leadership is an equally important component of a quality education and also seeks to meet a goal that schools with students in the previously mentioned underserved populations are not led by unqualified or ineffective administrators.

Arizona's diverse demographics and composition of traditional district schools and charter schools create unique opportunities for success but can also be challenging to those unwilling or unable to commit 100% of resources and time to its 1,116,143 students. Following up on its 2006 Equity Plan for Highly Qualified Teachers, ADE submits this plan to continue to keep the conversation going about student achievement and educator effectiveness. This current plan reflects research and extensive outreach to the community and thoughtful deliberation about actions that most likely will enable our schools and districts to attain this important objective. Building upon its deep history of local control, Arizona schools receive support from ADE in developing and implementing educator evaluation tools that seek to rate teachers at the top tier of "highly effective."

It is important to note that by examining the need for equitable access to effective educators for students in underserved populations, ADE is actually looking at how to expand access to effective and highly effective instruction for all students. Through considerable research in to the issue at the local level as well as multiple town hall style meetings across the state, ADE determined that the equity issue for Arizona appears to be less than what is presented at the national level. While an equity gap does exist, particularly for Hispanic students in our

highest poverty schools, we see a greater number of inexperienced and out of field teachers at Quartile 1, the schools with lowest poverty status. This may be a result of Arizona's laws for its extensive charter system that allows the hiring of individuals who have not completed certification requirements, except for those in special education classrooms. An examination of the data contained in this report clearly demonstrates the variety of challenges facing the state's education system.

Recognizing that the state's vast geographic size coupled with its diverse demographics and politics would make it difficult to craft a "one-size fits all" plan. The agency also acknowledges that the ongoing teacher shortage has reached crisis levels and is really at the heart of connecting an effective educator with all students, not just those of color or high poverty status or with special needs. The agency seeks to stem the outflow of teachers from the profession and increase the number of effective candidates into the profession as its overarching goal to solve any perceived equity gaps. Summaries of town hall meetings with stakeholders are listed in Appendix B.

The ADE theory of action provides a clear goal for a supportive plan that will assist LEAs with the ongoing issues surrounding retention and recruitment of effective educators as well as the access students of color or of low economic status have to those effective teachers and leaders. ADE sees this as an opportunity to provide targeted assistance in such a way that will encourage LEAs to develop their own strategies unique to their own demographic and political needs. Arizona looks forward to proceeding with this plan.

Appendix A. Equitable Access Planning Team and Consultants

Name	Title	ADE Division, Section or Unit
Dr. Cecilia Johnson	Associate Superintendent	Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders Division
Angela Denning	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Exceptional Student Services
Sarah Galetti	Deputy Associate Superintendent	K-12 Academic Standards
Dr. Carrie Giovannone	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Research and Evaluation
Mark McCall	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Educator Excellence
Laura Toenjes	Deputy Associate Superintendent	School Improvement
Eric Brooks	Director of Professional Learning	Educator Excellence
Steve Larson	Director of Effective Teachers and Leaders	Educator Excellence
Raquel Alvara	Education Program Specialist	Professional Learning
Harold Frederick	Education Program Specialist	Professional Learning
David Gauch	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Susan Poole	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Virginia Stodola	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders

Additional Assistance:

Name	Title	Affiliation
Diane Douglas	Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction	Arizona Department of Education
Dr. Jennifer Johnson	Deputy Superintendent	Arizona Department of Education
Kelly Koenig	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Arizona Department of Education
Dr. Lisa Aaroe	Director of Recruitment & Retention	Arizona Department of Education
Dr. Nancy Perry	Assistant Dean	Arizona State University
Dr. Jeanne Powers	Professor	Arizona State University
Dr. Sarah Polasky	Lead Researcher	Arizona State University
Yvonne Gauch	Enrollment Advisor	Cochise College
Trudy Berry	Superintendent	Cochise County Superintended of Schools
Diane Smith	Executive Director	Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council (GPEMC)
Kristine Morris	Chief Deputy Superintendent	Maricopa County Education Service Agency
Terry Reyna	Superintendent/Principal	McNeal Elementary School District
Dr. Heather Cruz	Superintendent	Peoria Unified School District
Anne Babina	Director of Curriculum	Peoria Unified School District
Joe Farmer	Principal	Sierra Vista Public Schools
Kriss Hagerl	Superintendent	Sierra Vista Public Schools
Terri Romo	Curriculum Director	Sierra Vista Public Schools
Kelly Segal	HR Director	Sierra Vista Public Schools
Tim Carter	Superintendent	Yavapai County Superintendent of Schools
Tom Tyree	Superintendent	Yuma County Superintendent of Schools

Appendix B. Stakeholder Engagement

State of Arizona
Department of Education

May 4, 2015

The Arizona Department of Education is excited to announce additional Town Hall sessions to discuss an important issue facing today's schools. We invite education stakeholders like you to attend one of the sessions and help provide important feedback to guide the state's plan toward Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. Please note, these meetings will have a very specific topic of discussion and are separate from Superintendent Douglas' planned tour of the state.

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has tasked each state with providing a statewide equity plan that supports the idea of "equitable access to excellent educators." This plan will help us assist schools in Arizona with strategies to ensure all students, with special attention to students from low-income families and students of color, have access to our highest performing teachers.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the Town Halls listed below and encourage you to pass the invitation along to the students, parents, teachers, district personnel and community leaders in your network. As we expand our definition of stakeholder, we also ask that you assist us by inviting those community groups (e.g., local Boys and Girls clubs, chambers of commerce, local chapters of education associations, special interest groups, civic organizations, etc.) in your area who have always served as a valuable resource to your work. This will allow us to garner the most complete and meaningful picture of the equity challenges in our state.

We thank you in advance for joining us in this work and look forward to seeing you at one of the following meetings. Please feel free to contact me with any questions (mark.mccall@azed.gov or 602-364-2294).

- **Tucson -- Wednesday, April 29. 5-7pm.** Palo Verde High Magnet School, 1302 S. Avenida Vega
- **Sierra Vista -- Thursday, April 30. 5-7pm.** Buena High School Cafeteria, 5225 E. Buena School Blvd
- **Phoenix -- Monday, May 4. 10am-12pm.** Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 4041 N Central Ave, Suite 1100.
- **San Tan Valley -- Monday, May 4. 5-7pm.** Walker Butte Elementary, 29697 N Desert Willow Blvd
- **Safford—Wednesday, May 6. 5-7pm.** Graham County General Services Building, 921 West Thatcher Boulevard, Safford, AZ 85546
- **Tolleson--Thursday, May 7. 5-7pm.** Tolleson UHSD Board Room, 9801 West Van Buren St.
- **Flagstaff--Monday, May 11, 2015. 5-7pm.** Flagstaff Unified School District Board Room, 3285 E. Sparrow Ave., Flagstaff, AZ 86004
- **Ganado—Tuesday, May 12, 2015. 5-7pm**. Ganado Middle School, Room A113/A114 Ganado Unified School District, Ganado, AZ Highway 264 86505
- **Chandler--Tuesday, May 19. 5-7pm.** Primavera Blended Learning Center, 2451 N Arizona Avenue
- **Prescott--Wednesday, May 20. 5-7pm.** Yavapai County Education Service Agency, 2970 Centerpointe East Drive
- **Statewide Webinar—Wednesday, May 27. 4:00pm.**

1535 West Jefferson Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007 • (602) 542-4361 • www.azed.gov

ADE Organized Meetings—Locations and Information

Peoria Unified School District Office **Glendale, AZ**	**April 6**	**District and SEA leadership**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, Eric Brooks, Steve Larson, Susan Poole, Virginia Stodola**
Peoria kicked off the spring stakeholder meetings and taught the team a great deal about communicating the message. While not well attended, we were able to have a conversation with ADE's Deputy Superintendent as well as the superintendent of one of the larger districts in the metropolitan Phoenix area. We were able to discuss how to reach other stakeholders and how to involve them later in the implementation and support of strategies.			
Bullhead City Elementary School District Office **Bullhead City, AZ**	**April 9**	**District and SEA leadership**	**Facilitated by: Raquel Alvara, Eric Brooks, Susan Poole, Virginia Stodola**
Ten participants were present at Bullhead City. From our small group discussions, one of the biggest issues of concern was centered on salaries. They also shared personal concerns when teachers are informed that their positions had changed. One teacher anticipated teaching ELA, but upon her return to school was informed that she would be teaching science. Overall, participants were extremely pleased that ADE travelled all this way to gain input from this region.			
Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council **Phoenix, AZ**	**April 10**	**Curriculum Council members (a diverse group of education and business leaders)**	**Facilitated by: Dr. Cecilia Johnson**
This group of education leaders from across Maricopa County are extremely influential and provided considerable feedback on the equity gaps and the overall issue of retention and recruitment.			
Arizona Department of Education: **Educator Retention and Recruitment Taskforce Meeting**	**April 17**	**Various education and business leaders from around the state, including higher education officials.**	**Facilitated by: Dr. Cecilia Johnson, Mark McCall**
This group is comprised of education and business leaders from around the state and includes representation from the universities, community colleges and policy groups such as TNTP and Expect More Arizona. This group discussed the three main equity questions we were considering and helped pave the direction for the equity gap analysis and strategy planning sessions.			
Arizona Western College **Yuma, AZ**	**April 20**	**District Superintendents and government leaders from Yuma County, AZ and Imperial County, CA**	**Facilitated by: Dr. Cecilia Johnson**
Government officials, university and community leaders and business representatives from southwestern Arizona were present at this meeting to provide additional final feedback on the three main equity questions before we evolved the future stakeholder meetings to consider the equity gap analysis and strategy planning sessions.			

Tucson Unified School District Tucson	**April 29**	**District curriculum director, teachers, principals, charter owner/leader.**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, David Gauch**

The mix of administration and teachers representing charter and public schools provided similar issues. All groups were fully agreeing that salaries were the main reasoning for teachers leaving the profession as well as not entering the profession. They stated that teachers could make more money in other professions with less responsibility. The other cause for teachers leaving is the additional stress put on teachers. Teachers do not have the support or resources to deal with the students who have disabilities, emotional concerns, social issues and other impairments that hinder their learning. They feel if there was the necessary support to elevate the additional workload stress, then more teachers would be inclined to stay in the field. Another issue that was brought up was the discrepancies in funding between charters and public schools as well as the difference in the accountability for both systems.

Sierra Vista Buena High School Sierra Vista, AZ	**April 30**	**Parents, district leaders, community college staff and the Cochise County Superintendent of Schools.**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, David Gauch**

The group indicated that teachers do not want to go to rural areas because there is not enough of personal activities, such as shopping, dining, and other family entertainment nearby. They stated that most of their candidates and teachers are homegrown. When they hire teachers coming into the county, those teachers usually stay for less than 3 years then move to Tucson which has more to offer. The Cochise College representative stated that she has seen a decrease in students entering the teacher profession over the past few years. Sierra Vista is also competing with Fort Huachuca in salaries. Cochise County is also highly competitive among their LEAs. Buses travel from school district to school district picking up open enrollment students. It is normal for a school district to send a bus into another school district's boundaries for students.

Title I Committee of Practitioners Phoenix	**May 1**	**Teachers and school leaders**	**Facilitated by: Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

The Title I COP was attended by thirty-five educators. All of them are responsible for the Title I commitments in their LEA. The group is mostly comprised of Superintendents, District Office Personnel, and Principals. Through those lenses we discussed the three root causes that we have highlighted in our power point:

- Perception of the teaching profession
- Evaluation data is not an accurate measurement of classroom instruction
- Difficulty retaining and recruiting highly effective teachers

Each of the three root causes had its fair share of agreement. A highlight of that particular town hall was an administrator from our local region speaking to why he thinks we are struggling to retain highly effective teachers in the profession. "I went into teaching because I considered it an art form where I was allowed to create; now it's more like paint by numbers, that is fun the first time, but after a while it becomes boring."

Practitioners of English Language Learning Phoenix	**May 1**	**Teachers, business leaders, university officials**	**Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

The OELAS PELL was attended by approximately 225 educators. Similar to the Title I COP we had representation from District Leadership in a variety of different forms. Because there were people in the room who also participate in OELAS at the national level, we were able to hear things that are taking

place in other states regarding the recruitment and retention of teachers. A number of people spoke to the fact that in other states pay raises are being offered. Others gave anecdotes regarding their teachers being able to teach in other areas for greater financial reward. Another consistent theme was that rural districts felt they were a training ground for the valley area. "We work with our teachers for two or three years and then when they get acclimated to the area, they take a job transfer to Phoenix, and they always get our best teachers." One highlight was in a breakout session where a middle school principal in Yuma stood up to say that in Yuma it is very difficult to get teachers to come because Yuma is so rural. This principal soon met with a representative from Red Mesa, one of the many Navajo Nation schools who shared her own definition of rural. The label "rural school" gets thrown about, and like most words, is relative to one's experiences.

Maricopa County / TIF grantees **Maricopa County Education Service Agency** **Phoenix**	**May 4**	**Administrators, school officials, community group leaders, education advocates and classroom evaluators.**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, Raquel Alvara, Virginia Stodola**

The groups focused on accountability. It seemed as though the participants wanted ADE to enforce stricter guidelines when it came to teacher evaluation instruments, ensuring that ADE set up some guide or checklist to ensure that LEAs are consistent in their evaluation tools. The participants also shared the importance of leadership and the continuation of professional growth. This group presented some strategies that ADE can work on in the coming months.

Walker Butte Elementary **San Tan Valley**	**May 4**	**Administrators, school officials**	**Facilitated by: Susan Poole, Raquel Alvara**

Participants discussed the challenge of teacher salaries. One experienced teacher shared the frustration in working to assist new teachers knowing that the new teachers do not tend to last long. The group does want to see solutions; they strongly feel that raising taxes is going to be the only way to see change within education.

Graham County **Safford, AZ**	**May 6**	**School officials, county officials, parents**	**Facilitated by: Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

Safford had a diverse representation from the community including parents, several district administrators, several charter administrators, and the Graham County Superintendent of Schools. A highlight of this town hall meeting was the fact that each team of quickly delved into the fishbone exercise and came up with an expanded look at our root causes. This was also one of the first town hall meetings where the legislature was mentioned as a key player in the role of retaining and recruiting teachers. Lastly, they spoke of the importance of a partnership with the local community college (Eastern Arizona College) to assist them in growing their own teacher pool. But, not unlike our other groups, they also mentioned the fact that their national recruiting efforts were not as fruitful as they have been in the past, and that they served as a training ground for new teachers to get experience and then move to what could be considered greener pastures.

Tolleson Unified School District **Tolleson, AZ**	**May 7**	**School officials, member of a research and policy group**	**Facilitated by: Raquel Alvara, Virginia Stodola**

Participants were most concerned with retention and recruitment, which correlated to the funding issue. The group also voiced their concern around teacher preparation within higher education. This group seemed dismal and unsure if there were solutions to address these challenges. They were still appreciative

of ADE coming out to share and allow for input from them as stakeholders.

Flagstaff Unified School District Flagstaff, AZ	**May 11**	**School officials and parents.**	**Facilitated by: Susan Poole, Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

A diverse set of educators participated in the Flagstaff Equity Town Hall. Each brought a unique perspective. The charter schools felt the use of student academic progress data was a major obstacle to labeling effective teacher. The school district director of finance focused on charter schools taking high performing students out of the population and distorting the effective teacher data. A Native American parent shared that local politics may hinder efforts to raise standards and implement improvement expectations. All participants came with a passion for the students and community they serve.

Ganado Unified School District, Ganado, AZ	**May 12**	**School leaders, tribal leaders and parents**	**Facilitated by: Susan Poole, Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

Seventeen Ganado participants spoke with great pride about their community and was one of our most vocal Equity Town Halls. We were very pleased that along with educators we had parents, and a school board member and tribal leader. Most of the conversation focused on the barriers to retaining and recruiting teachers to their remote rural location that faced a large concentration of social and economic challenges. They emotionally expressed that federal and state educational bureaucracy hindered their improvement efforts.

Primavera Blended Learning Center Chandler, AZ	**May 19**	**Parents, community leaders, teachers and school administrators**	**Facilitated by: Eric Brooks, Steve Larson**

Fifteen participants, mostly representing the host school participated in a passionate discussion including the ideas that many of these issues are beyond our control, "despite school's best efforts," as one attendee stated. This meeting examined possible performance objectives and ways that those could be measured.

There were a couple of ideas that stood out as being unique to this town hall meeting. One participant suggested we look at the way we pay teachers differently. His suggestion was to reform the way teachers, particularly those new to the profession, pay into the state's retirement system in order to keep more money up front.

An additional idea around the concept of teacher salaries was the way an LEA might choose to handle employee benefits. A Tucson charter school representative discussed that his school offers excellent medical benefits, pays in to the retirement system, and provides a higher salary rate than their local competitors. And although it comes at an additional expense to them, they think it is worth it because it allows them to glean the best teacher candidates in that area.

Yavapai County Education Service Center, Prescott, AZ	**May 20**	**County officials, community and business leaders**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, David Gauch**

This conversation was very similar to previous Town Hall meetings and included participation by the county school superintendent and three community members representing nonprofit organizations that advocate for students and families. Once again, teacher salaries and the disparities between charters and traditional public schools were the main topics. The county superintendent noted that there has been thirty-eight teaching positions across the county that have not been filled since last summer. External factors such as housing and employment for spouses were also expressed as concerns from the group. A new cause was brought forth: too many school choices. Someone noted that communities have lost the

bond that brought them together and community schools do not exist anymore.

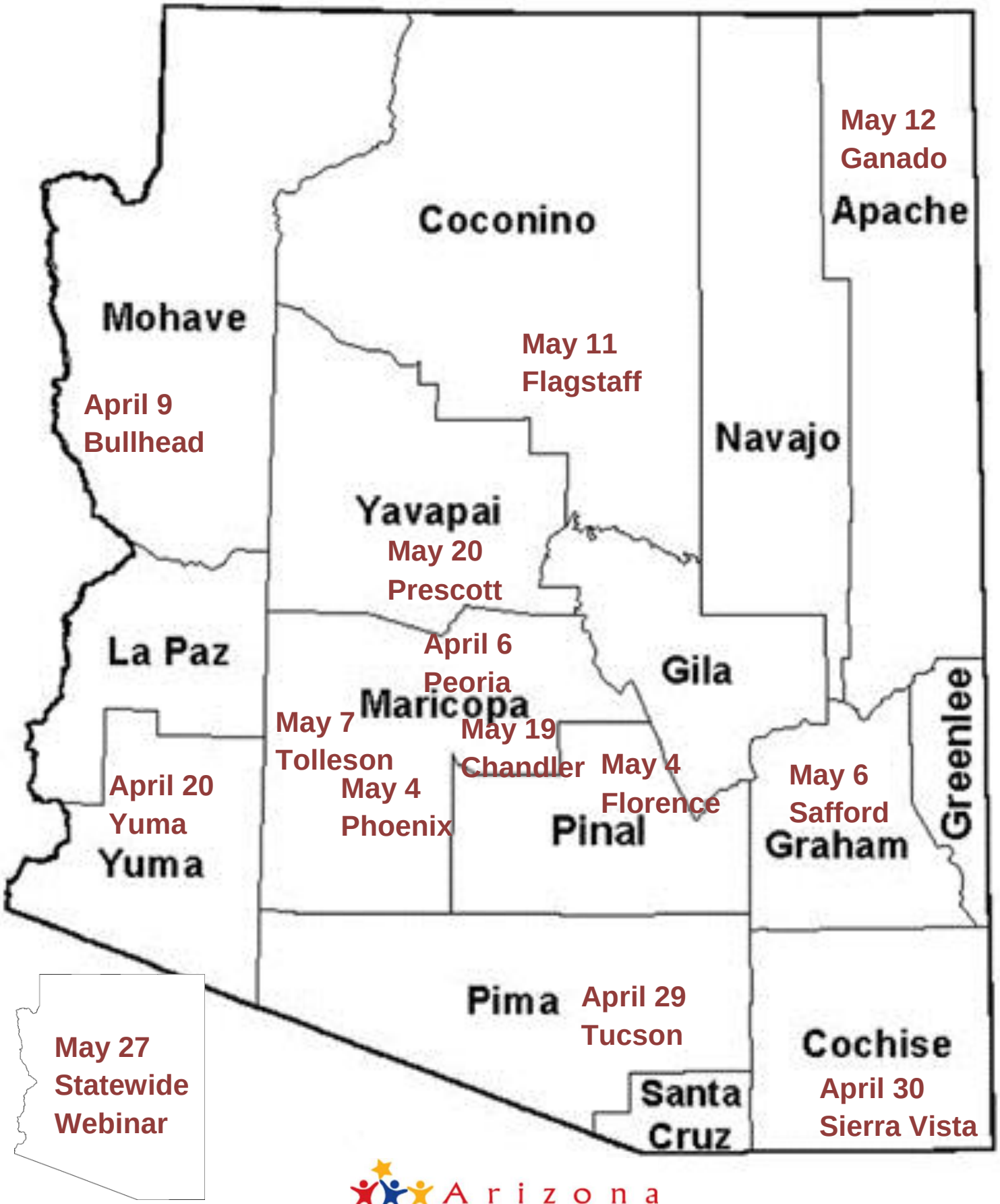
The conversations included the discussion of strategies including increasing voter participation and increasing funding and salaries.

Statewide Webinar	**May 27**	**Previous attendees at Town Hall sessions**	**Facilitated by: Mark McCall, Eric Brooks, Virginia Stodola, Susan Poole, David Gauch, Raquel Alvara.**

Presented from the ADE offices, this webinar was presented as an opportunity for Town Hall participants and other stakeholders to see the final data results that were collected as well as gain additional understanding of what ADE identified as Key Concerns and Root Causes, based on the stakeholder feedback. The webinar also gave participants the opportunity to provide feedback on the performance objectives and the likelihood of their success. Following the webinar, participants were sent a survey to rate the performance objectives and provide additional commentary. Those who completed the survey were awarded 1 professional development credit to use toward recertification. Most performance objectives received high ratings. The ADE team reviewed the two that received scores of "unlikely" by more than 50% of the respondents and discussed possible reasons for the dissatisfaction and then edited the POs.

Several themes have remained consistent throughout all of the educator equity town hall meetings. One of our gravest concerns in Arizona is our ability, or lack thereof, to attract teachers. Whether it is teacher candidates in our Institutions of Higher Education, or numbers at our annual teach-in being considerably lower than last year our LEAs around the state are feeling it and each are struggling with ways to accomplish the goal of equitable access to excellent educators.

Equity Town Hall Meetings 2015



Arizona

Initial Meeting Agenda

Equitable Access to Excellent Educators Town Hall
Monday, April 6, 2015, 5:00p.m.-7:00p.m.
Peoria Unified School District Office
6330 W. Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Purpose of the Town Hall Meeting: What do we mean by "Equitable Access to Excellent Educators"? What is the role of the Town Hall participants?

III. Organization and Planned Outcomes of Discussion Sessions

IV. Discussion Groups
1. What does educator equity mean to you?
2. What are the struggles related to equitable access to effective educators in your community?
3. What opportunities exist for implementing solutions?

V. Discussion Groups Report

VI. Next Steps and Questions

Thank you for your participation and input!

Future Meetings (times and locations to be determined):
Lake Havasu City (April 9)
Tucson -- Sierra Vista – Flagstaff -- Phoenix/Mesa -- Yuma

Appendix C. Definition of Key Terms

Student of color	Used interchangeably with "minority," students identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Two or More Races.
Economically Disadvantaged	Used interchangeably with "poverty," students eligible for free and reduced lunch.[26]
Teacher	An individual who provides instruction to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, grades 1 through 12, or ungraded classes; or who teaches in an environment other than a classroom setting and who maintains daily student attendance records. Recognizing that many classes do not meet every week day school is in session, "daily student attendance" means a teacher takes attendance each time the class meets.
Out of Field	Not appropriately certified for the area in which they teach. Arizona does not have this distinction and anyone considered "out of field" would likely be a substitute, teaching under a substitute certificate.
Unqualified	A teacher that has not met all state licensing or certification requirements, does not have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and/or cannot demonstrate core academic subject competence and knowledge.
Inexperienced	A teacher in their first or second years in the profession.
Veteran or Experienced	A teacher with three or more years of experience.
Absenteeism	A calculation based on the number of teachers absent from the classroom for more than ten days of the school year.
Excellent	Fully prepared to teach the specified content, demonstrates strong instructional practices and significant contributions to growth in student learning, and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession both within and outside of the classroom.
Highly Effective	Consistently exceeds expectations and has mastered the adopted professional teaching standards. Students with a highly effective teacher generally make exceptional levels of academic progress.
Effective	Consistently meets expectations and demonstrates competency with the adopted professional teaching standards. Students with an effective teacher

[26] USED Civil Rights Data Collection, Educator Equity Profile

	generally make satisfactory levels of academic progress.
Developing	Fails to consistently meet expectations and requires a change in performance due to insufficient level of competency with adopted professional teaching standards. Students with a developing teacher generally made unsatisfactory levels of academic progress. This classification may be assigned to a new or newly-reassigned teacher for more than two consecutive years.
Ineffective	Consistently fails to meet expectations and requires a change in performance due to minimal competency with adopted professional standards. Students with an ineffective teacher generally make unacceptable levels of academic progress.[27]

[27] Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness

Appendix D. Additional Arizona Poverty Data by Quartile and Urban-Centric Designation

Figure 14

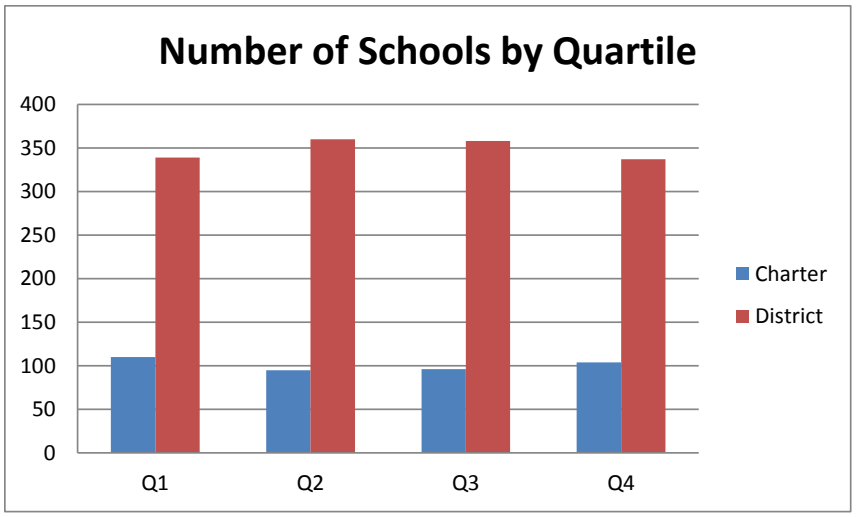


Figure 15

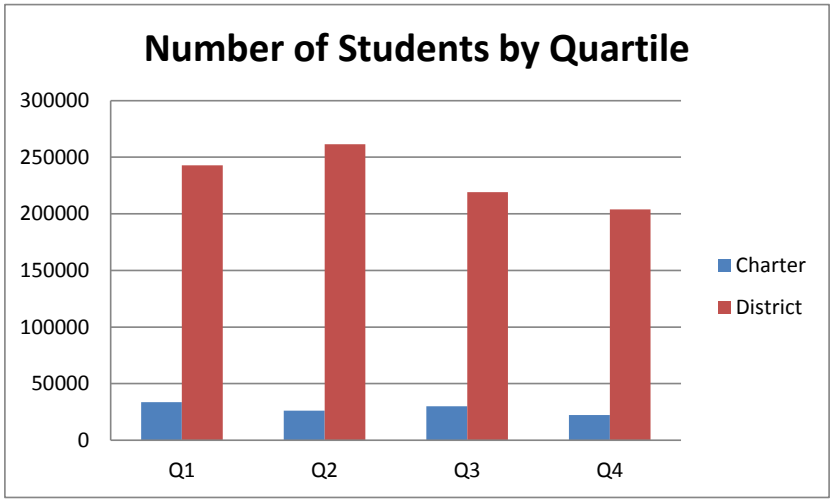


Figure 16

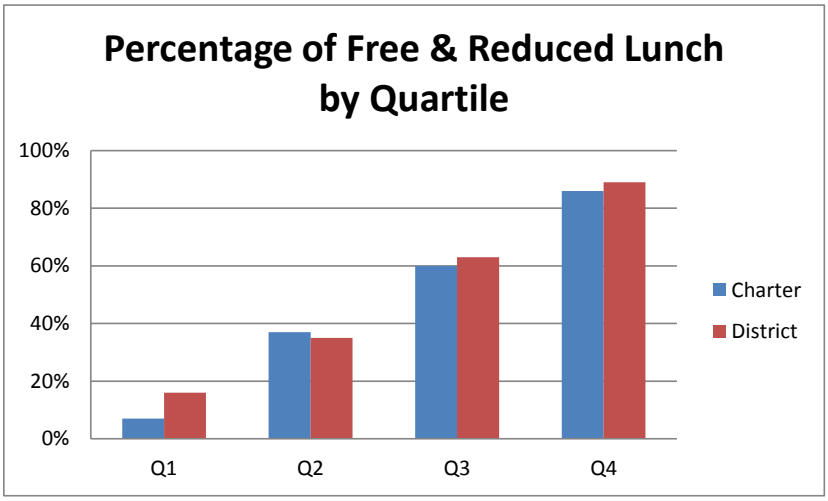


Figure 17

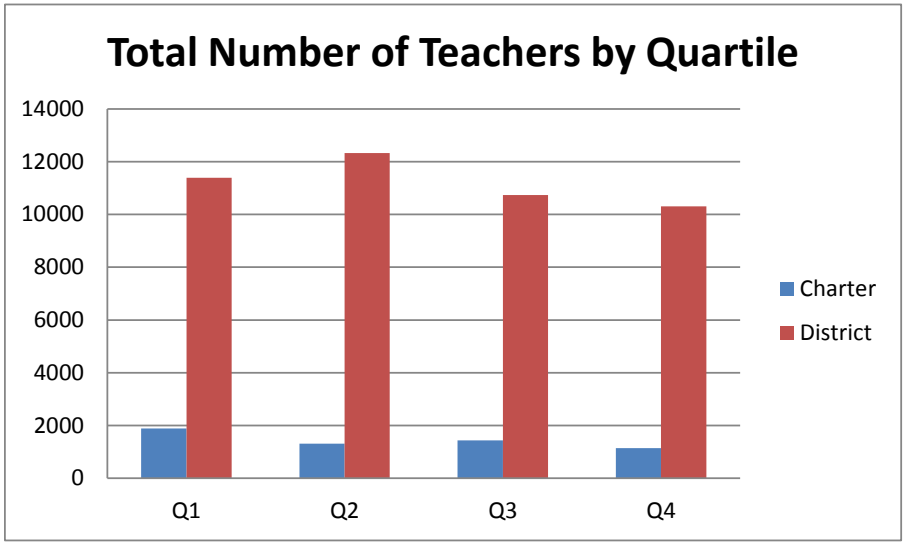


Figure 18

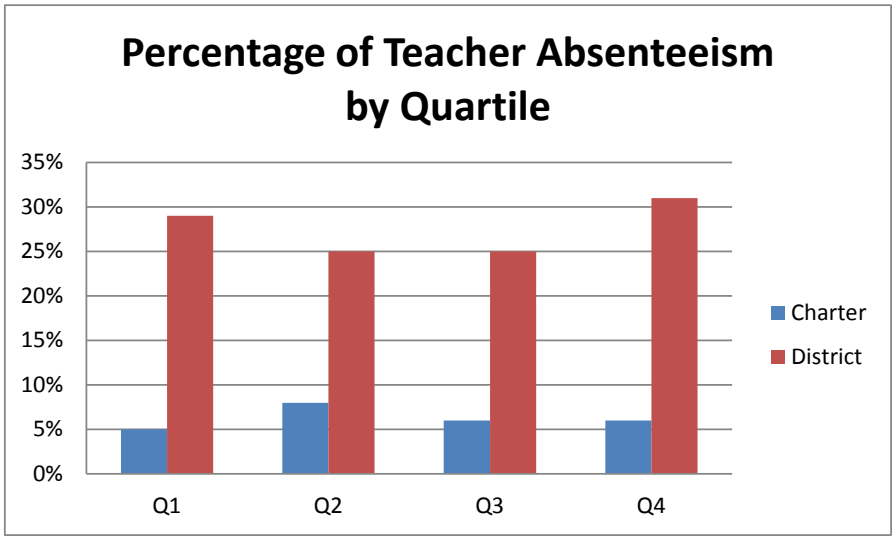
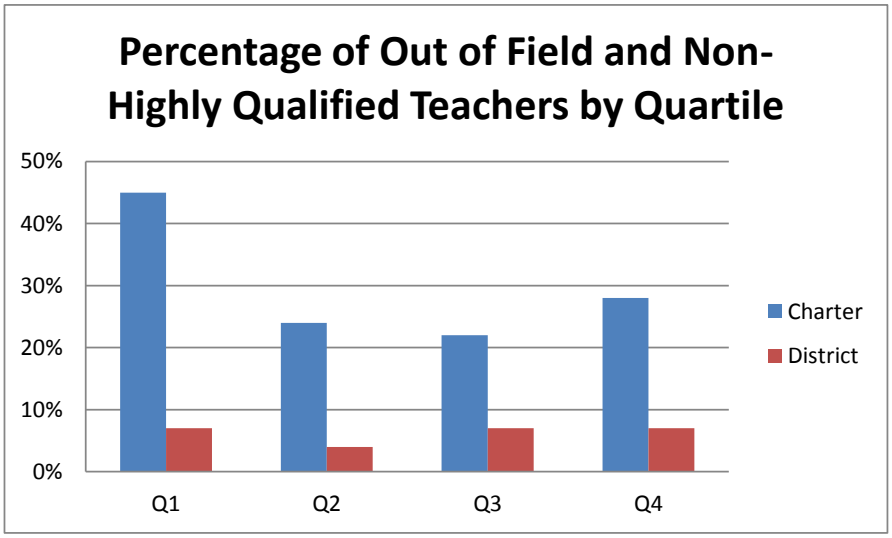
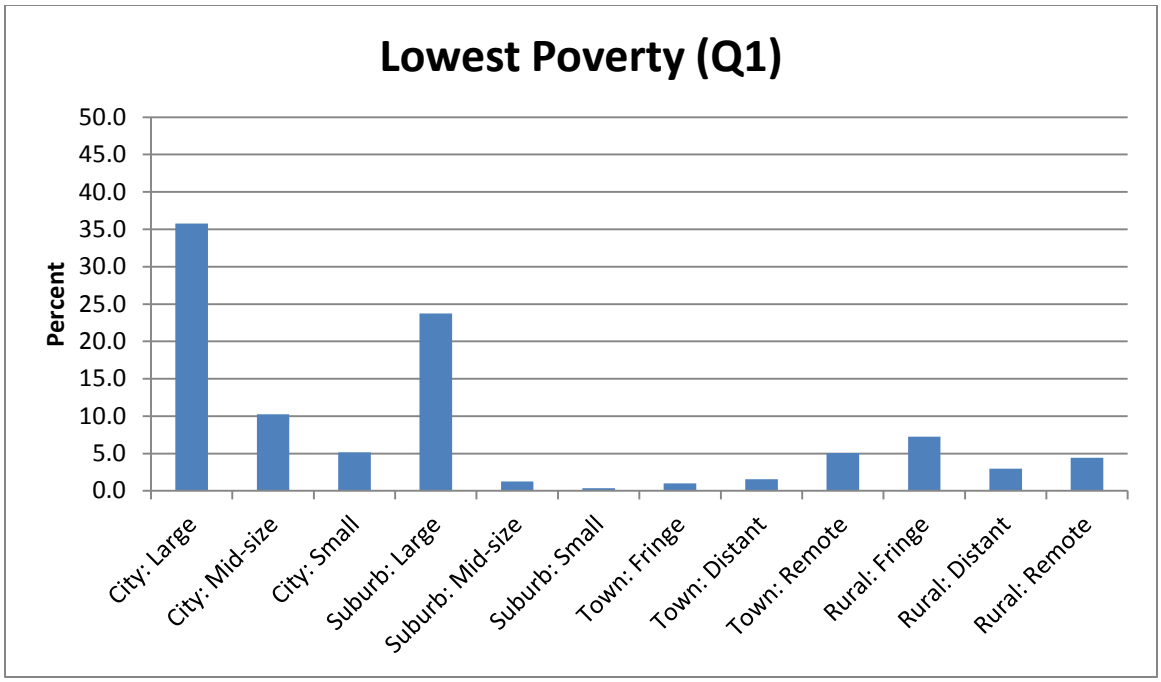
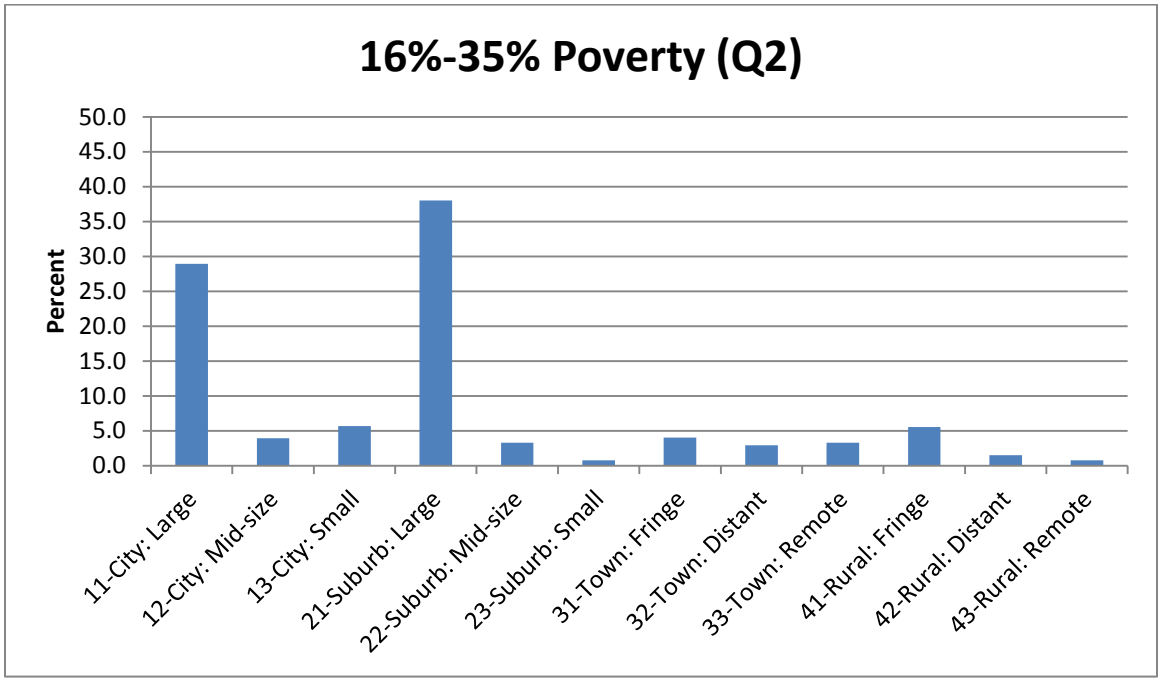


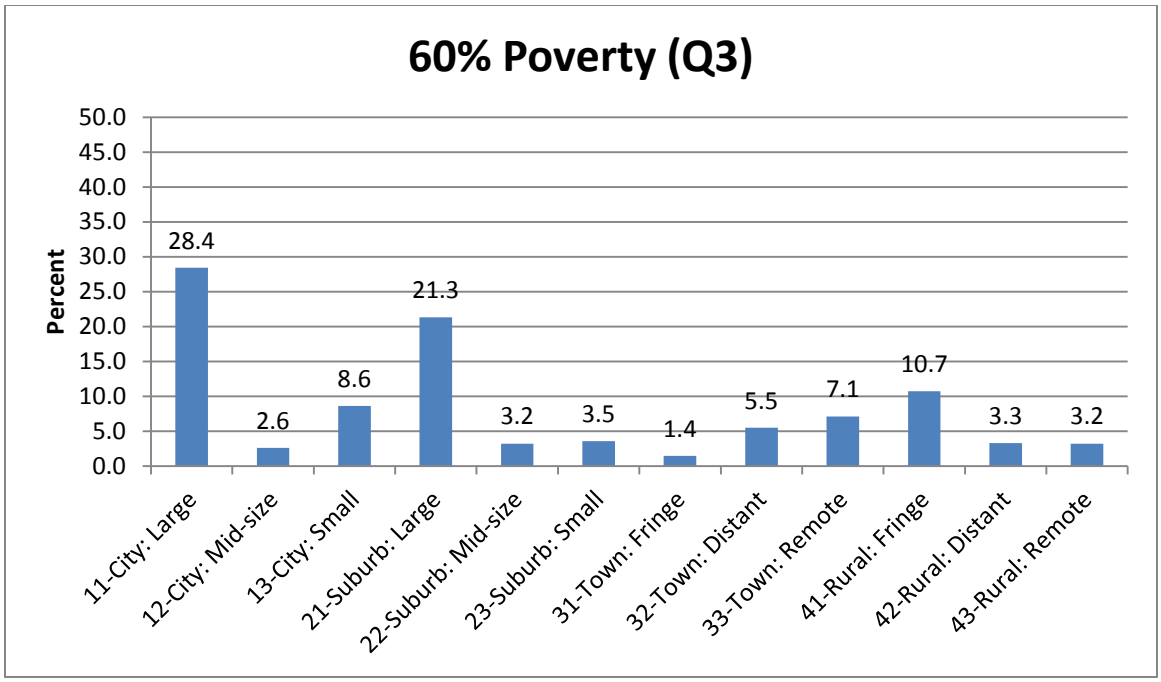
Figure 19

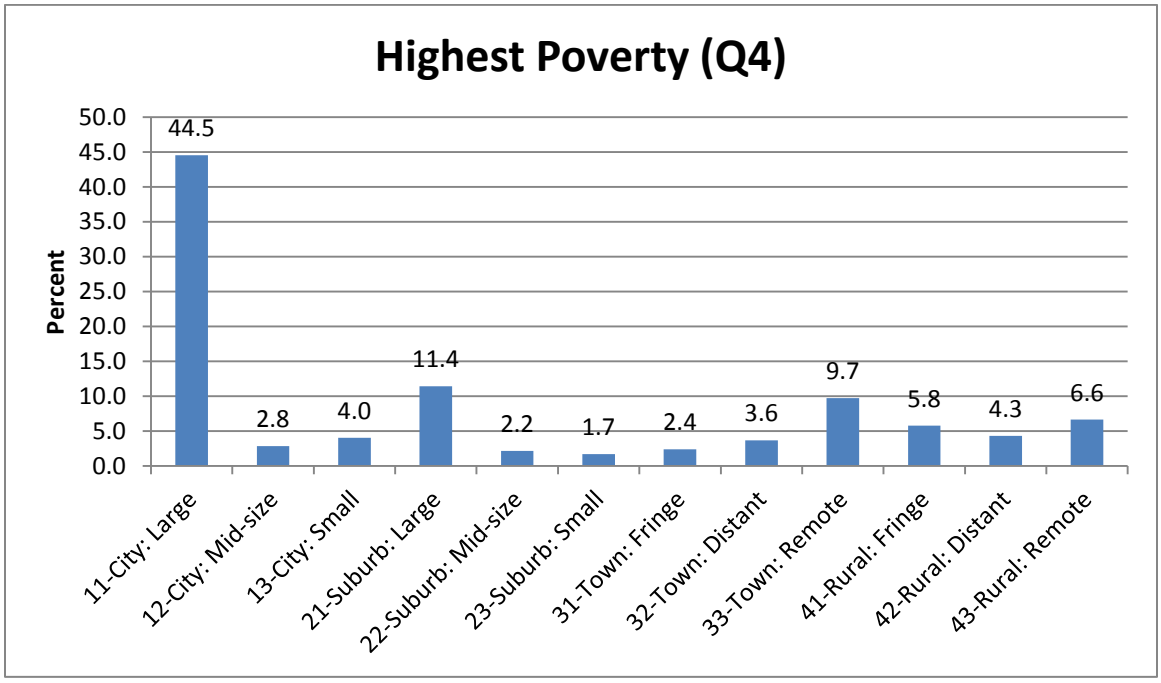


The following graphs show the percentage of schools listed by "Urban-Centric" by poverty quartile as defined by the Census Bureau. A table of definitions follows the four graphs.


Lowest Poverty (Q1)
Percent
50.0
45.0
40.0
35.0
30.0
25.0
20.0
15.0
10.0
5.0
0.0
City: Large
City: Mid-size
City: Small
Suburb: Large
Suburb: Mid-size
Suburb: Small
Town: Fringe
Town: Distant
Town: Remote
Rural: Fringe
Rural: Distant
Rural: Remote


16%-35% Poverty (Q2)
Percent
50.0
45.0
40.0
35.0
30.0
25.0
20.0
15.0
10.0
5.0
0.0
11-City: Large
12-City: Mid-size
13-City: Small
21-Suburb: Large
22-Suburb: Mid-size
23-Suburb: Small
31-Town: Fringe
32-Town: Distant
33-Town: Remote
41-Rural: Fringe
42-Rural: Distant
43-Rural: Remote


60% Poverty (Q3)
Percent
50.0
45.0
40.0
35.0
30.0
25.0
20.0
15.0
10.0
5.0
0.0
28.4
2.6
8.6
21.3
3.2
3.5
1.4
5.5
7.1
10.7
3.3
3.2
11-City: Large
12-City: Mid-size
13-City: Small
21-Suburb: Large
22-Suburb: Mid-size
23-Suburb: Small
31-Town: Fringe
32-Town: Distant
33-Town: Remote
41-Rural: Fringe
42-Rural: Distant
43-Rural: Remote


Highest Poverty (Q4)
Percent
50.0
45.0
40.0
35.0
30.0
25.0
20.0
15.0
10.0
5.0
0.0
44.5
2.8
4.0
11.4
2.2
1.7
2.4
3.6
9.7
5.8
4.3
6.6
11-City: Large
12-City: Mid-size
13-City: Small
21-Suburb: Large
22-Suburb: Mid-size
23-Suburb: Small
31-Town: Fringe
32-Town: Distant
33-Town: Remote
41-Rural: Fringe
42-Rural: Distant
43-Rural: Remote

City Location Code	Definition	Examples from Report
City: Large	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.	Districts H, J, K
City: Mid-Size	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	
City: Small	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000.	
Suburb: Large	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more	Districts B, I
Suburb: Mid-size	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.	
Suburb: Small	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 100,000.	
Town: Fringe	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.	
Town: Distant	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.	
Town: Remote	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area.	Districts A, E, F
Rural: Fringe	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.	
Rural: Distant	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.	District D
Rural: Remote	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.	Districts C, G

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