



Arizona State University | Arizona

SUMMARY

The Arizona Ready-for-Rigor (AZRfR) Project partners with Arizona State University (ASU), the Arizona Department of Education, and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET). AZRfR serves 60 schools located in the highest need urban and rural school districts. The participating schools use the TAP System to evaluate teacher and principal effectiveness. Teacher and administrator effectiveness is based on student achievement growth (i.e., value-added) observations of performance. Administrator effectiveness is based also on a survey of educational leadership via VAL-ED and implementation fidelity of the TAP model.

PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION

AZRfR’s project goals are to increase student achievement, prepare and retain skilled educators, and foster exemplary school culture in high-need schools across Arizona.

- 2013-14 academic year results:
 - 80 percent of schools (47 out of 59) maintained or increased their A-F Letter Grade from the previous year.
 - 80 percent of teachers identified as effective were retained in their school or district from 2013–14 to 2014–15.
 - 75 percent of teachers reported a positive attitude toward performance-based pay.
 - 78 percent of respondents in the grant agreed with the following statement: “Professional development has provided me with strategies that I have incorporated into my instructional delivery methods.”

State: Arizona

Location: Northern Arizona, Phoenix Metro Area, Southern Arizona

Award amount: \$43,052,093

TIF Cohort: 3

STEM Grantee: No

Number of districts participating: 10

Number of schools participating: 58

Number of teachers eligible: 2,109

Number of principals eligible: 101

Superintendent: N/A

Key program staff:

Virginia McElyea, Project Director

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Michael Mass, Budget Director

Ann Nielsen, TAP Director

Michael Hegarty, Marketing and Public Relations

Julius Koenigskecht, Director of Coaching Leaders

Pam Santesteban, Associate Director of Evaluations (Principals and Assistant Principals)

Melanie Baca, Assistant Director of Testing

John Schutter, Business Manager

Wendy Barnard, Director of Research

REWARD STRUCTURE

- **Teachers:** within TAP, the system for student and teacher advancement, teacher effectiveness is measured using the TAP instructional rubric and value-added calculations based on student achievement, aggregated to the classroom (for teachers of tested subjects) and/or school level.
- **Principals:** the scale is determined using: (1) leadership team meeting observation scores; (2) the VAL-ED survey of education leadership; (3) TAP Program Review results that indicate implementation fidelity to the TAP model; and, (4) schoolwide student achievement growth calculations.

YEARS 1-4 HIGHLIGHTS

- ASU has reported increases in educator effectiveness, student achievement, retention rates among hard-to-staff teachers, and educator support for the performance-based compensation system.
- ASU developed and shared district and school reports and plans with leadership teams during face-to-face meetings.
- ASU developed a data dashboard that teachers and districts used to make data-driven decisions.
- The grantee developed a website (azfr.com) and an accompanying print publication that provides information on the grant to the public.
- ASU established an Online Resource Center for partner districts to receive resources, news updates, technical assistance, online professional development, and access to the data dashboard.
- District leadership, teachers, and partner representatives formed an internal advisory board and have met quarterly since January 2012.
- The grantee conducted monthly video-conferencing with each participating district to ensure ongoing communication, review accomplishments, and analyze and reflect on data and implementation progress.

YEAR 5 OUTLOOK

- District and school reports and plans will be shared with leadership teams by grant directors during face-to-face meetings in the fall/winter.
- Grant staff is involved in beginning discussions about the transition plans of each district for the 2016–17 school year in terms of performance pay.
- In Year 5, we are estimating expenses to total \$11,971,723; of that amount, \$2,523,698 is payouts that will be paid in Year 6. These calculations are good estimates on what we think will be our spending for the time period of Oct. 1, 2014–Sept. 30, 2015.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Grant staff continues to work with districts on sustaining the program in the participating schools beyond the life of the project.
 - Four districts have fully transitioned their cost share percentage payment to be made solely from state and local funding sources.
 - Ten districts continue to use federal resources to fund their cost share, specifically Title I and Title II funds.
 - Plans are being made for at least three additional districts to transfer internal funding sources to the Classroom Site fund for 2014–15.
 - The grant staff continues to work with the remaining six districts to find a stable funding source.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION

In Year 4, the grant distributed \$5 million in performance-based compensation awards for 2013–14: \$4.7 million was awarded to the teachers; principals and assistant principals received \$300,000. The majority of the teachers earned between \$1,360–\$2,850 based on a combination of multiple observations and student and/or schoolwide testing results.