Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators in Arizona

(Revised)

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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 school-related 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

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[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] 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. Districts and charters were to have these definitions in place by school year 2013-14.

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. These 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 connecting 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:

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

1. Brainstormed the actions needed to review and document this process.
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 initially chosen that would not only be an effective representative sample of the region but were also LEAs 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.

The Remote Region is Arizona's vast Native American population. While 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, Arizona is home to twenty-

two sovereign nations whose members make up approximately 6% of the state's population.[8] Arizona ranks third behind Oklahoma and California in tribal population but more than 16% of the nation's Native American students are enrolled in Arizona schools.[9] This report identifies one Navajo Nation district as an example of the unique needs of the very remote areas of the state.

The Rural Region examines the rural areas that make up the majority of the state's land mass. For this area we compare four districts: one in central Arizona near metropolitan Phoenix, two in northern Arizona, and one 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.

The Urban Region focuses on the challenges of some of the state's urban districts. Our four selected districts appear similar at first glance, but upon closer examination each present their own special set of challenges and celebrations.

Data for this process were 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.

[8] American Indian Tribes and Communities in Arizona.
[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 contribute to two large urban counties: Maricopa and Pima. While the rest of the state has urban pockets (Flagstaff, Prescott, and Yuma, 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. The larger of the two urban counties generally drives most of the economic and political decisions for Arizona, causing some in rural areas to not so fondly 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 racial and ethnic classifications, as well as every level of socio-economic status. Each of these classifications is distributed across age groups and education levels. Arizona's climate, both environmental and political, attracts residents from across the United States and the world leading to diversity in its opinions, communities, and legislation.

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, provide constructive feedback on the overall plan, and foster ongoing communication throughout its implementation. ADE also believes that this plan should not just be a document to comply with federal requirements but one that will 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.

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. Eighteen sessions were held across the state with particular attention paid to ensure participation from each of the three studied Regions (see Appendix B). ADE staff members 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.

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. 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.[11]

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

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

effective educators, especially for the three geographic regions profiled in this plan. 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 report 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. 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 as a follow up to their participation.

In order to share this information quickly and easily with the general public, ADE will add a page to its agency web site that presents the data and specifically outlines the equity gaps with regard to economically disadvantaged students and students of color. The page will contain links to this plan as well as the relevant data and stakeholder feedback collected that help us determine the overall gaps. Important data to present on the page will include the gap calculations in Tables 3 & 4 which appear later in this plan as well as the overall goals for improvement listed in Table 15 later in this plan. The page will also be used to help monitor progress and goals and data will be updated at least annually as we demonstrate progress. A member of the Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders Division staff will regularly update the information as we receive continual stakeholder feedback as strategies are piloted.

Additional stakeholder involvement will take the form of biannual conference calls or interactive webinars during which stakeholders are updated on the plan's progress as well as the latest equity gap data. ADE could also use this forum to solicit feedback on how to continue to address equitable access to experienced & effective teachers in the nine profiled districts as well as across the state.

The nine identified districts within the three geographic regions provided valuable resources such as demographic data and anecdotal information gathered through in person interviews. ADE will 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. ADE will also reassemble the initial planning team into an ongoing working 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. We will develop specific action steps and planning guides in order to establish periodic stakeholder involvement opportunities and avenues to disseminate information.

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. 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 purposes of much of the data reporting and subsequent analysis in this report, it is important to reiterate Arizona's commitment to local control which occasionally hinders ADE's ability to gather sufficient information or provided targeted support. Due to local control, LEAs self-report their information to ADE, leading to some gaps or inequalities in the data, including that of the effectiveness ratings of teachers. 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. 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 this agency 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.[12]

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. As stated before, the team explored three regions and particular school districts within each region to provide a snapshot of the larger set of issues. In addition, data was gathered from a variety of sources including the Office of Civil Rights demographic data supplied by USED. This 2011 data is the most recent information available for measuring the poverty and minority quartiles. Data elements that were examined include:

- The district's report card grade (2013-14);
- Student achievement data trend data for math and reading (2011-2014);
- Percentage of free and reduced lunch students as a measure of poverty (2011 OCR data);
- Ethnic and racial groups as a measure of minority status (2011 OCR data);
- Number of inexperienced teachers (2013-14);
- Combined number of non-highly qualified and out of field teachers (2013-14); and
- LEA self-reported numbers of teacher effectiveness ratings (2013-14).

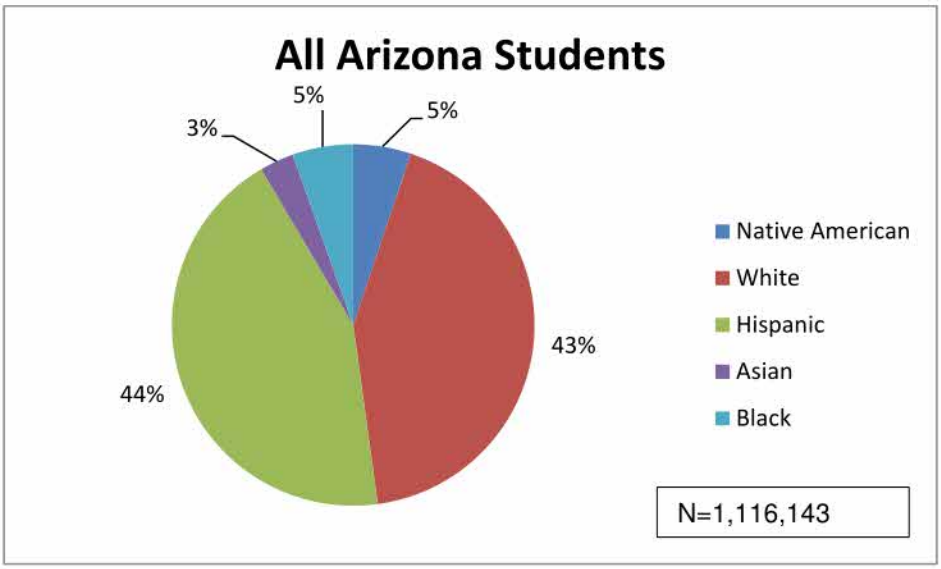
The ADE team discussed the importance of the data elements for out of field and inexperienced teachers. There is national research that supports a positive correlation to student achievement regardless of certification status, assuming the teacher was teaching in their specifically trained content area while those teaching out of field had a negative effect on student achievement.[13] 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 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.

[12] TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement
[13] Darling-Hammond, et al., 2001; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000.

The Equity Gap in Arizona

The following tables and figures present the data for all Arizona students and schools, statewide poverty and minority quartiles, and then a profile description of the nine districts ADE examined to support the equity gap and root causes analysis.

Figure 1



Statewide school data, based on 2011 OCR information, was sorted twice to identify the quartiles for poverty and those of high minority status. It is important to note that 941 schools (roughly 50%) had identical quartile rankings in both poverty and minority but the other fifty percent shows the striking differences among LEAs throughout Arizona. Some of the difference in numbers of schools for each quartile, when tallying the totals of both Tables 1 and 2, is due to how data were reported. Some schools did not report their free and reduced status while others may not have accurately reported their student ethnicity. Those schools were removed from their respective tables but do not represent a wide enough disparity to impact the overall data analysis.

Table 1--All Arizona Poverty Quartiles

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Schools	**464** (25%)	**466** (25%)	**467** (25.4%)	**436** (24.6%)	**1,833**
Students	**280,369** (26.6%)	**290,518** (27.5%)	**253,074** (24%)	**230,878** (21.9%)	**1,054,839**[14]
Students w/ Free & Reduced (% of Quartile)	**41,261** (14.7%)	**102,004** (35.1%)	**157,791** (62.3%)	**205,546** (89%)	**506,602** (48%)
Teachers	**14,676**	**13,879**	**11,650**	**10,535**	**50,740**[15]
Out of Field / Not Qualified (% of Quartile)	**1,609** (11%)	**846** (6.1%)	**1,031** (8.8%)	**1,086** (10.3%)	**4,572** (9%)
Inexperienced (% of Quartile)	**2433** (16.6%)	**2453** (17.7%)	**2426** (20.8%)	**2862** (27.2%)	**10,174** (20.1%)
Ineffective (% of Quartile, % of State)	**224** (1.5%) (.4%)	**218** (1.6%) (.4%)	**220** (1.9%) (.4%)	**244** (2.3%) (.5%)	**906** (1.8%)
Developing	**814** (5.5%) (1.6%)	**667** (4.8%) (1.3%)	**949** (8.1%) (1.9%)	**1,278** (12.1%) (2.5%)	**3,708** (7.3%)
Effective	**8,447** (57.6%) (16.6%)	**8,923** (64.3%) (17.6%)	**7,528** (64.6%) (14.8%)	**6,433** (61.1%) (12.7%)	**31,331** (61.7%)
Highly Effective	**5,191** (35.4%) (10.2%)	**4,071** (29.3%) (8.0%)	**2,953** (25.3%) (5.8%)	**2,580** (24.5%) (5.1%)	**14,795** (29.2%)

[14] According to 2011 OCR data. Estimates for School Year 2014-15 were in excess of 1.1 million students across the state.
[15] Based on 2013-14 LEA submitted teacher effectiveness ratings.

Figure 2

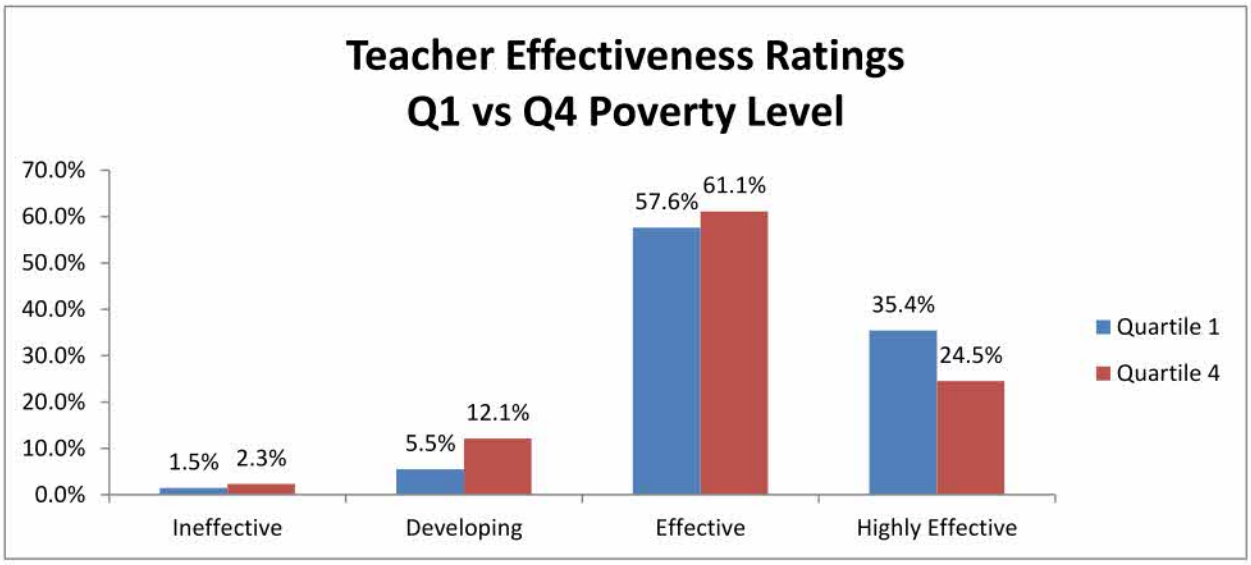


Figure 3

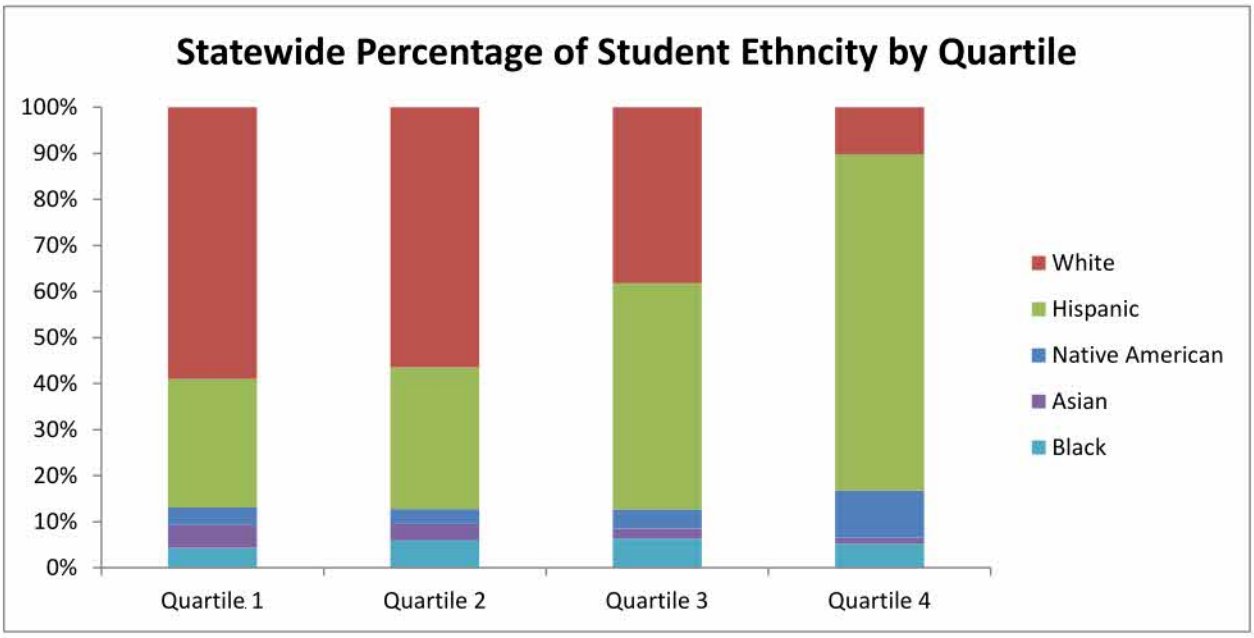


Table 2—All Arizona Minority Quartiles

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Schools	**482** (25.9%)	**479** (25.8%)	**481** (25.9%)	**417** (22.4%)	**1,859**
Students	**288,532** (27.4%)	**278,650** (26.4%)	**263,841** (25%)	**223,678** (21.2%)	**1,054,701**[16]
Minority Percentage	**24.13**	**45.7**	**75.53**	**96.51**	**60.5**
Teachers	**13,996**	**13,626**	**12,592**	**10,513**	**50,727**
Out of Field / Not Qualified (% of Quartile)	**1,254** (9%)	**982** (7.2%)	**978** (7.8%)	**1,319** (12.5%)	**4,533** (9%)
Inexperienced (% of Quartile)	**2260** (16.1%)	**2472** (18.1%)	**2742** (21.8%)	**2931** (27.9%)	**10,405** (20.5%)
Ineffective (% of Quartile, % of State)	**199** (1.4%) (.4%)	**250** (1.8%) (.5%)	**235** (1.9%) (.5%)	**221** (2.1) (.4%)	**905** (1.8%)
Developing	**783** (5.6%) (1.5%)	**813** (6.0%) (1.6%)	**926** (7.4%) (1.8%)	**1,182** (11.2%) (2.3%)	**3,704** (7.3%)
Effective	**7,852** (56.1%) (15.5%)	**8,590** (63%) (16.9%)	**7,988** (63.4%) (15.7%)	**6,893** (65.6%) (13.6%)	**31,323** (61.7%)
Highly Effective	**5,162** (36.9%) (10.2%)	**3,973** (29.2%) (7.8%)	**3,443** (27.3%) (6.8%)	**2,217** (21.1%) (4.4%)	**14,795** (29.2%)

[16] See the description above Table 2 for an explanation on the population variances.

Figure 4

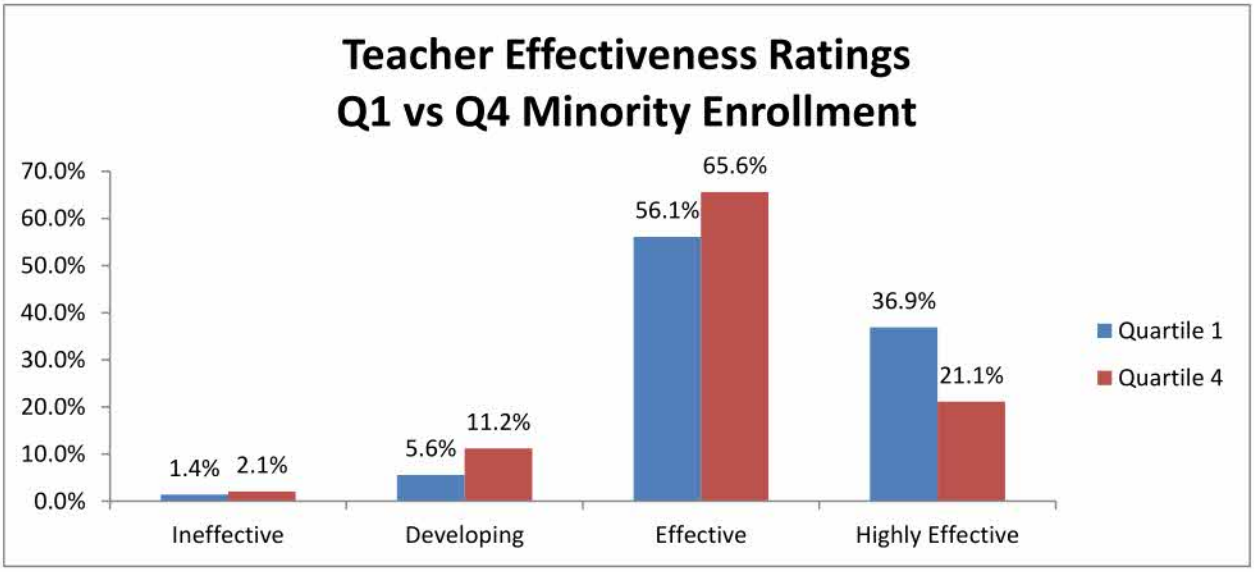


Table 3--Data Analysis Summary

	Quartile 1			Quartile 4		
	Out of Field	**Inexperienced**	**Developing / Ineffective**	**Out of Field**	**Inexperienced**	**Developing / Ineffective**
Poverty	11%	16.6%	7%	10.3%	27.2%	14.4%
Minority	9%	16.1%	7%	12.5%	27.9%	13.3%

Table 4—Equitable Access Gap Summary

	Economically Disadvantaged	Students of Color
Inexperienced Teachers	10.6% more in Q4 than Q1	11.8% more in Q4 than Q1
Teachers Rated as Developing or Ineffective	11% more in Q4 than Q1	6.3% more in Q4 than Q1
Out of Field / Unqualified Teachers	.7% less in Q4 than Q1	3.5% more in Q4 than Q1

It is apparent from Tables 1 and 2, that equity gaps exist in calculations of both minority and poverty schools. We see that students in both poverty and minority Quartile 4 are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers. This is consistent with national research that indicates when data is sorted to show differences among achievement, racial, and socio-economic composition of classrooms, the highest-need students are most likely to have the least experienced teachers.[17]

When teacher effectiveness ratings are included, students in poverty and minority Quartile 4 respectively have 11% and 6.3% more Developing teachers than their counterparts in Quartile 1. It is when we compare the number of Developing and Ineffective teachers in a given LEA with its overall report card rating that we see a larger concern that is raised later in this report.

Ratings for out of field or non-highly qualified teachers were computed but significant disparities, as evident in Tables 1 and 2, were not found.

To get a closer view of the distribution of teachers and students across Arizona's regions, ADE chose nine 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 that relationship, are considered likely candidates for successful implementation of suggested strategies. Permission was given from each district to present their profiles in this report.

Region 1 – Remote:

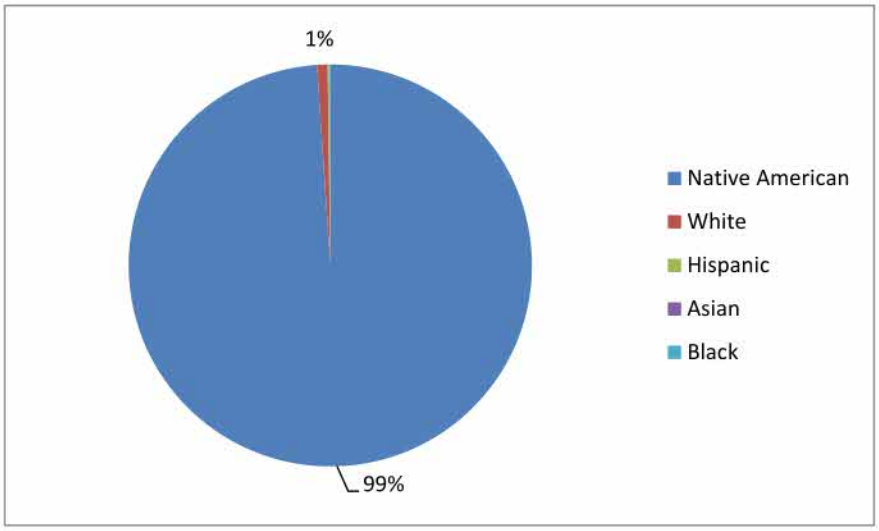
Red Mesa Unified School District

This unified district is located 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.

[17] Kalogrides and Loeb (2013).

Table 5--Red Mesa Unified School District

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



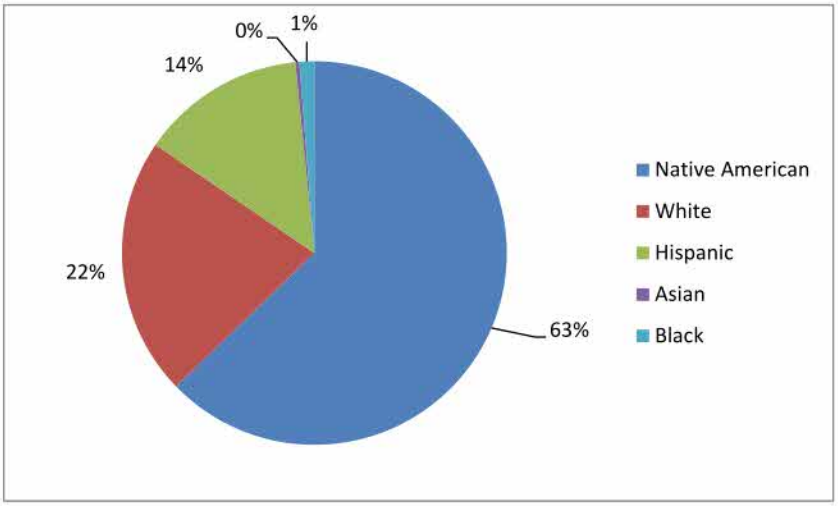
Region 2--Rural:

Holbrook Unified School District

This unified district is located 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 five schools in both Quartile 3 and 4: three elementary, one junior high school, and one high school.

Table 6—Holbrook Unified School District

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

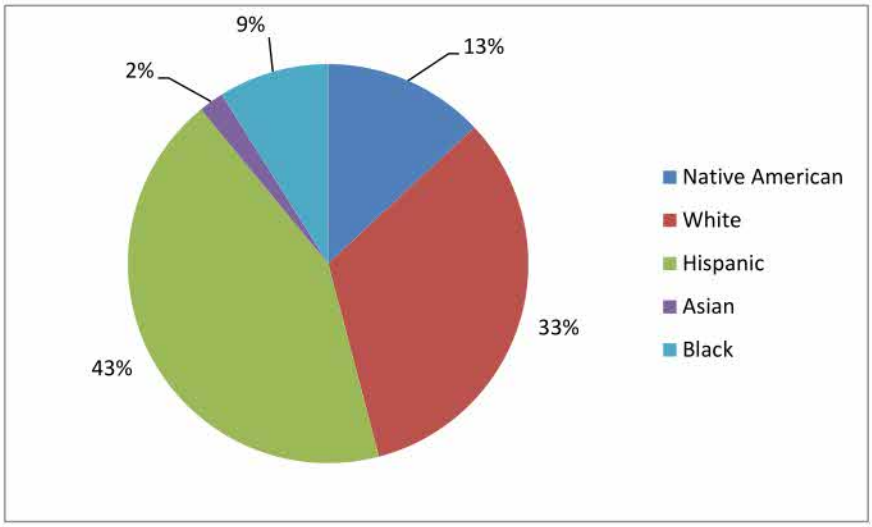


Coolidge Unified School District

This unified district spanning both Quartiles 3 and 4 is located 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—Coolidge Unified School District

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

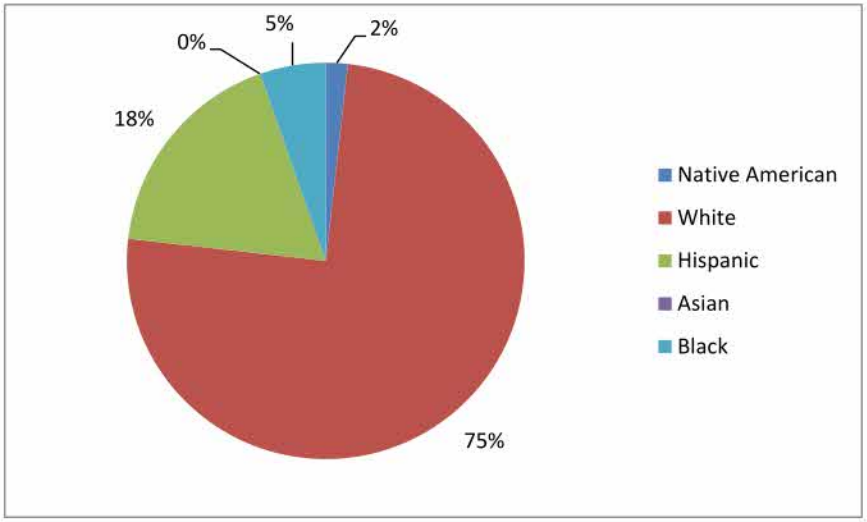


McNeal Elementary School District

This elementary district is one of many rural communities in southern Arizona and is 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—McNeal Elementary School District

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

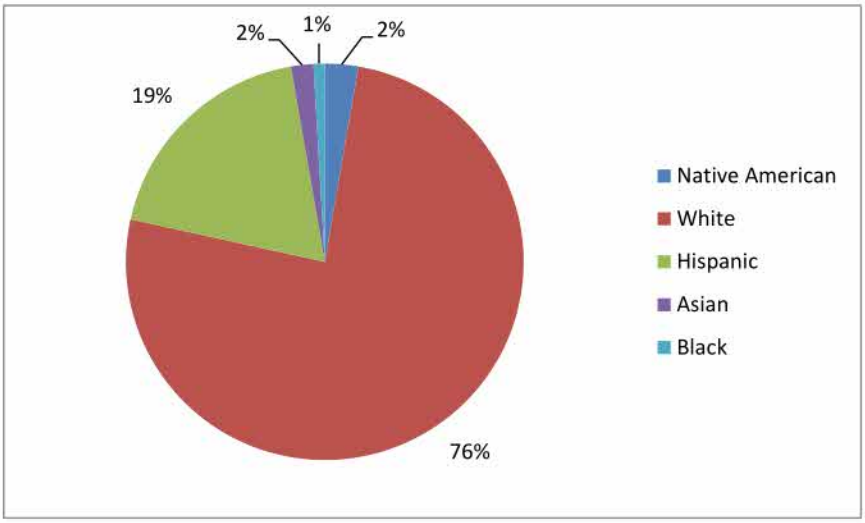


Kingman Unified School District

Located 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 9—Kingman Unified School District

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



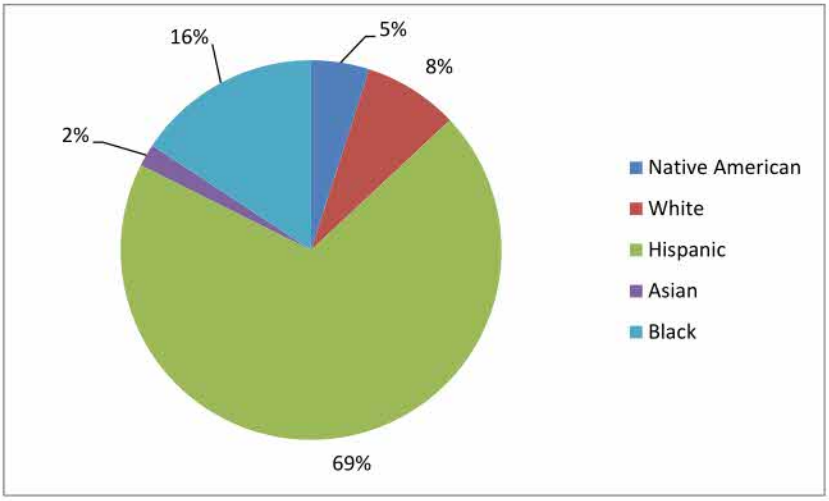
Region 3 -- Urban

Balsz Elementary School District

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. This 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 10 – Balsz Elementary School District

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

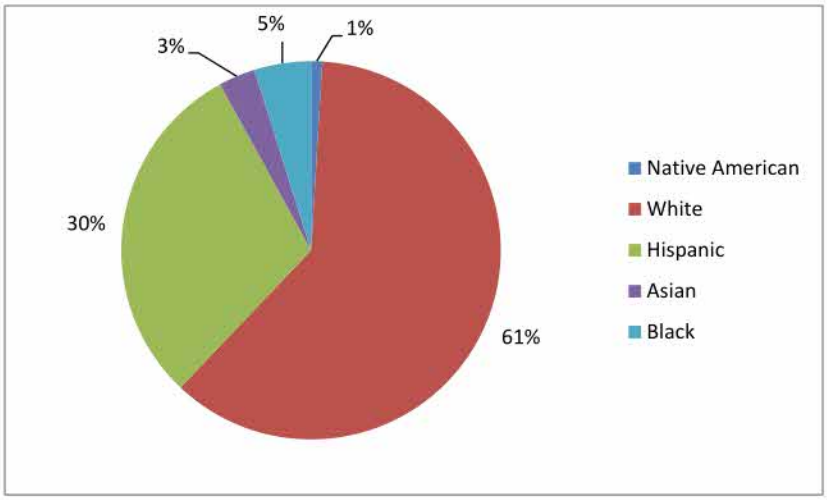


Peoria Unified School District

This unified district is located in Phoenix, west of the urban core. The current population of the community is 162,592, with a median household income of $57,424, approximately 125% of the state average. 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. The median age is 43, 90% of the population over the age of twenty-five has 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 11 – Peoria Unified School District

District Report Card Grade	A
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	36,987
Free and Reduced Lunch	41%
Average Salary	$43,000
Absenteeism	84 (5%)
Inexperienced Teachers	249 (14%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	45 (3%)
Ineffective Teachers	1
Developing Teachers	32
Effective Teachers	1115
Highly Effective Teachers	629

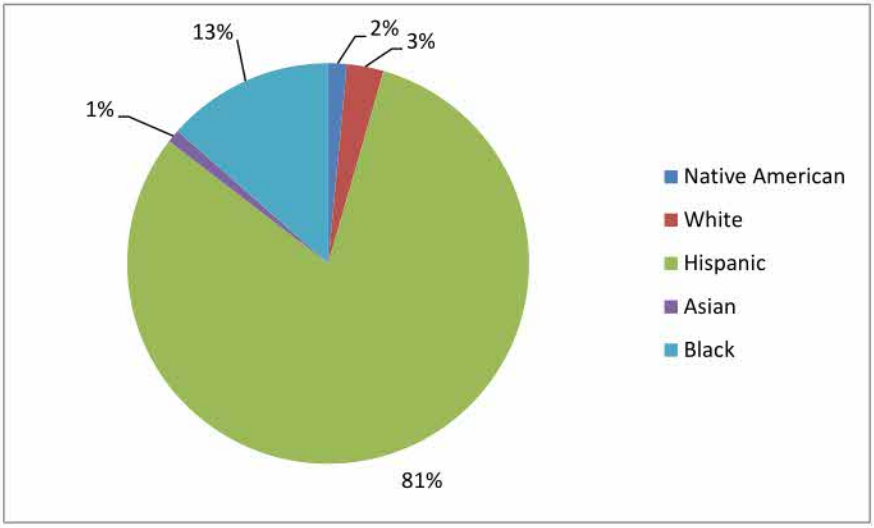


Roosevelt Elementary School District

This 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 is comprised of a diverse mix of industry, mining, warehouses, and low to middle income housing communities. The district supports nineteen K-8 schools including one early childhood center.

Table 12 – Roosevelt Elementary School District

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

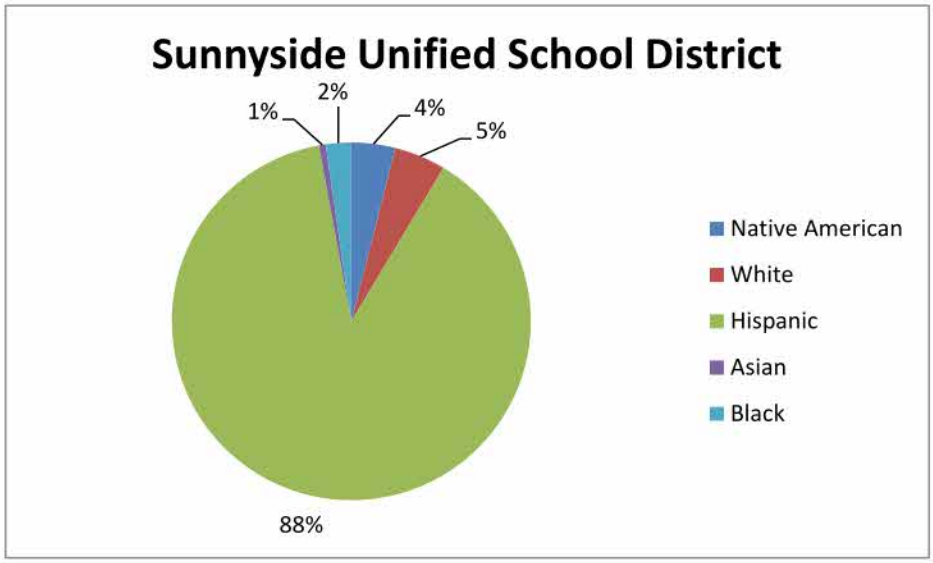


Sunnyside Unified School District

This unified district in Quartile 3 is located on the south side of Tucson. The district is near the city's urban core, Tucson International Airport and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The district has worked to develop multiple partnerships with the community as well as grants and technology support from the University of Arizona and Arizona State University. The district supports twelve elementary schools, six middle and intermediate schools, and two high schools.

Table 13 – Sunnyside Unified School District

District Report Card Grade	C
Grades Served	K-12
Number of Students	17613
Free and Reduced Lunch	61%
Average Salary	$42,133
Absenteeism	434 (49%)
Inexperienced Teachers	187 (21%)
Out of Field/Non-HQ Teachers	38 (4%)
Ineffective Teachers	14
Developing Teachers	109
Effective Teachers	406
Highly Effective Teachers	263



State Comparisons

The sample LEAs located in Arizona's Remote, Rural and Urban Regions encompass approximately 71,000 students. This is roughly 6.5% 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 and minority. The state average for students qualifying for free or reduced lunch is 48% with the Remote, Rural and Urban Regions as a whole averaging over 75%. Figures 5 and 6 show the varying levels of poverty across our Regions and sample districts.

Figure 5

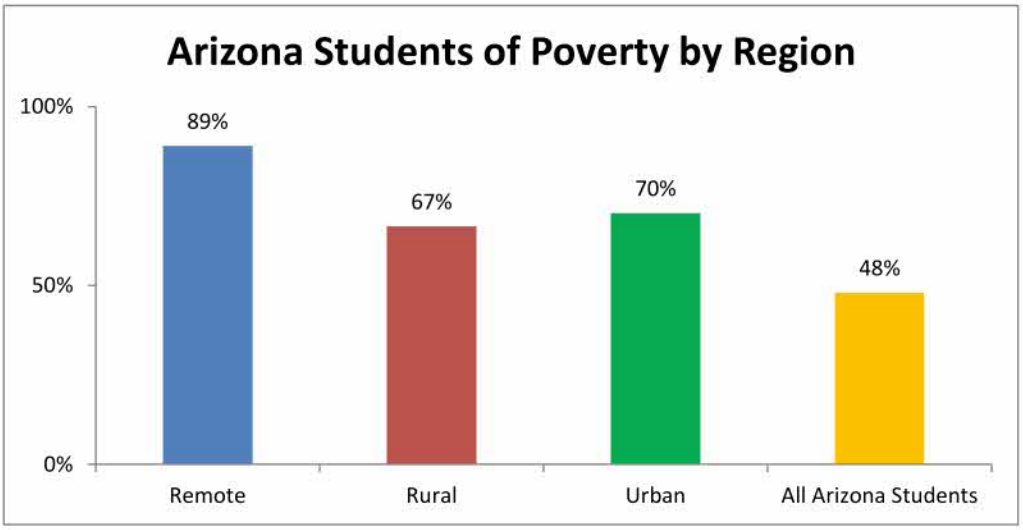
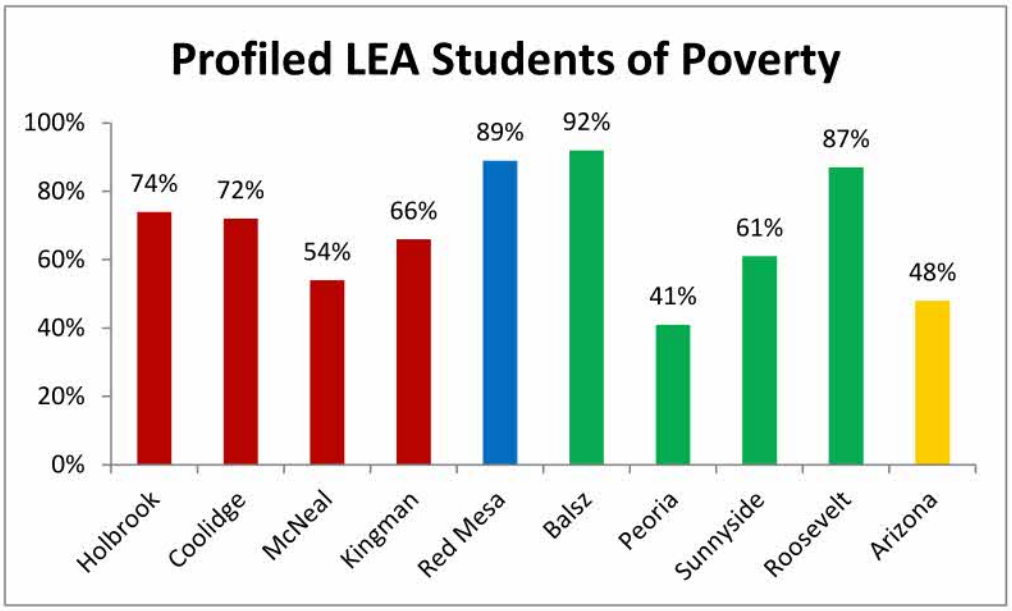


Figure 6



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 14

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.

Table 14—Distribution of Minority Students in the Highest Poverty Quartile by County

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%)**

Key Concern Analysis

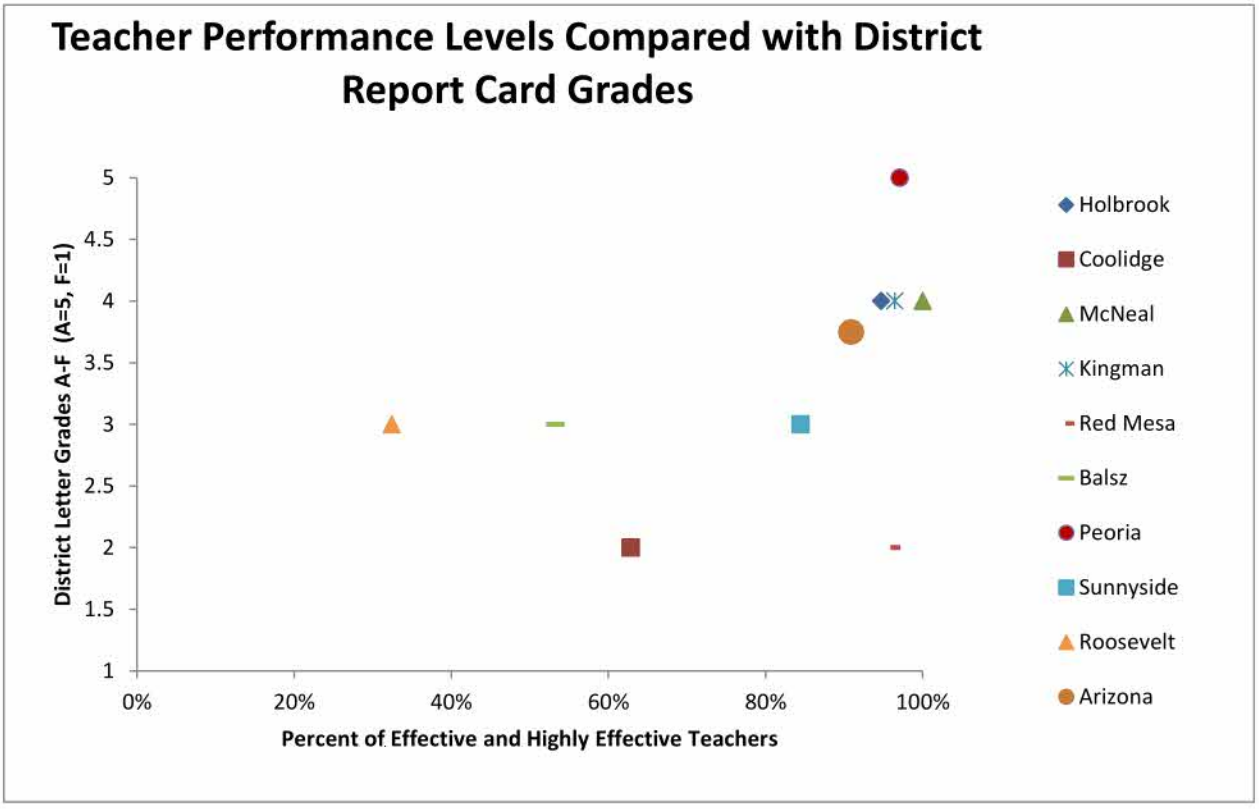
1: Disconnect Between Educator Evaluation Ratings And Student Achievement Prevents Equitable Access.

As the equity gap summary (Table 4) shows, Arizona's highest need students may not necessarily be receiving instruction from the most effective educators. However, that does not necessarily mean these students are not able to have access to more effective educators once a more thorough and unbiased analysis of the ratings system is applied. The self-reported educator

effectiveness ratings from Arizona's LEAs indicate 90.3% of educators are effective or highly effective.[18] But a comparison between the effective ratings and a district's report card grade, which is calculated based on a number of factors including student achievement, indicates the disconnect we know exists but that the data as reported may not support.

An examination of the sample LEAs illustrates this confusion surrounding the current reporting of effectiveness ratings and therefore potentially skews the analysis of how well connected our highest needs students truly are to the most effective instructors (Figure 7). Peoria Unified reports more than 95% of teachers are effective or highly effective and has an overall report card grade of A. This, of course, is to be celebrated. However, Red Mesa Unified also reports 95-100% of teachers in the highest ratings yet has a grade of D. Even the three schools that indicate having nearly 100% top tier teachers only have grades of B (Holbrook Unified, Kingman Unified, and McNeal Elementary). Three districts (Roosevelt Elementary, Balsz Elementary, and Coolidge Unified) 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%.

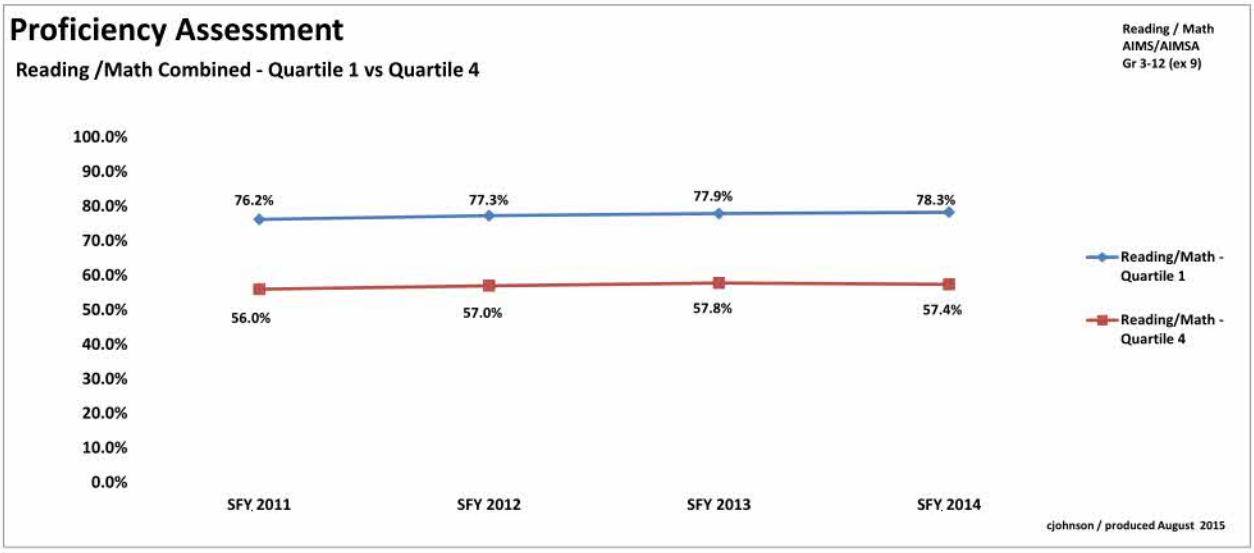
Figure 7



[18] 2013-14 LEA reported teacher effectiveness ratings

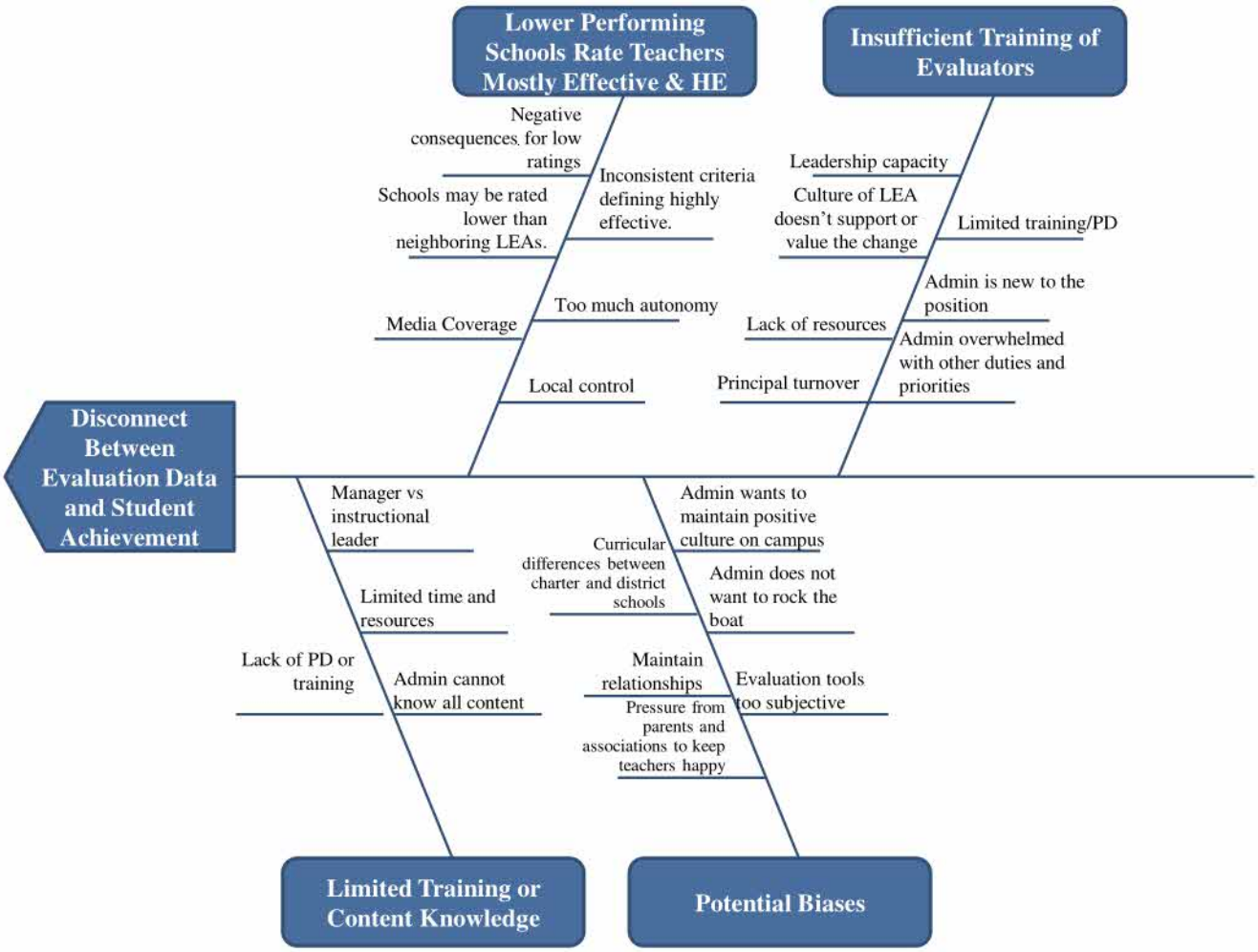
Student achievement data from the state's annual summative assessment further illustrates the confusion. Figure 8 demonstrates four years of math and reading scores for combined grades 3-12. These data are from Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) for 2011-2014. In 2015, Arizona adopted a new statewide summative assessment known as AzMERIT. This assessment is aligned to the state's adoption of College and Career Ready Standards and scores are available to LEAs in the Fall of 2015.

Figure 8



Given the structure of Arizona's *Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness*, there should be a greater correlation between the effectiveness ratings and student achievement scores, regardless of quartile. This is not the case. Stakeholder discussions surrounding the root causes of this Key Concern indicated the following possibilities illustrated in Figure 9:

Figure 9—Fishbone Analysis of Key Concern 1



Additional discussion from the field further illustrates the problem. A recently commissioned and as yet unpublished study conducted by ADE surveyed five districts separately from the nine LEAs mentioned thus far in this report. In those five districts, less than 46 percent of the surveyed teachers agreed that the new evaluation process has benefitted students although 60 percent of the surveyed principals believe that students have indeed benefitted. However, when it comes to using evaluation data to inform human capital decisions, as it is intended, the districts each indicated that teaching assignments are not consistently based on evaluation data but use more informal assignment decisions by school leaders.[19] In addition, less than 50% of administrators in these districts use evaluation data to determine or target professional learning

[19] Cross-case analysis of teacher evaluation data use in Arizona (Unpublished report).

opportunities. These revelations support anecdotal assumptions that the evaluation systems are not used effectively in ways that reflect actual classroom instruction and may not support teacher professional growth which prevents the identification of truly effective teachers who may be able to assist the highest need students. This connects to a possible cause of the equity gaps because LEAs may not be accurately compiling their evaluation results or fully utilizing their resources based on those results. ADE will continue to work with LEAs to gather feedback and reliable data where possible to support human capital decision making.

Furthermore, in order to reduce the opportunity to inflate evaluation ratings, ADE will pursue strategies designed to help school leaders more accurately evaluate their teachers. One such opportunity might be to work directly with districts like Balsz or Roosevelt who appear to have consistent ratings and support their teachers' professional learning in order to improve the skills of those teachers rated as ineffective and developing. Over time, those teachers will rise in their ratings to effective or highly effective and, with a direct correlation to student achievement, will assist their school districts in improving their report card ratings from a C or D to at least a B grade. Students of color or economic disadvantage in these high need districts will then have greater access to effective educators and ADE would then know how to shift such support to other, similar high need areas.

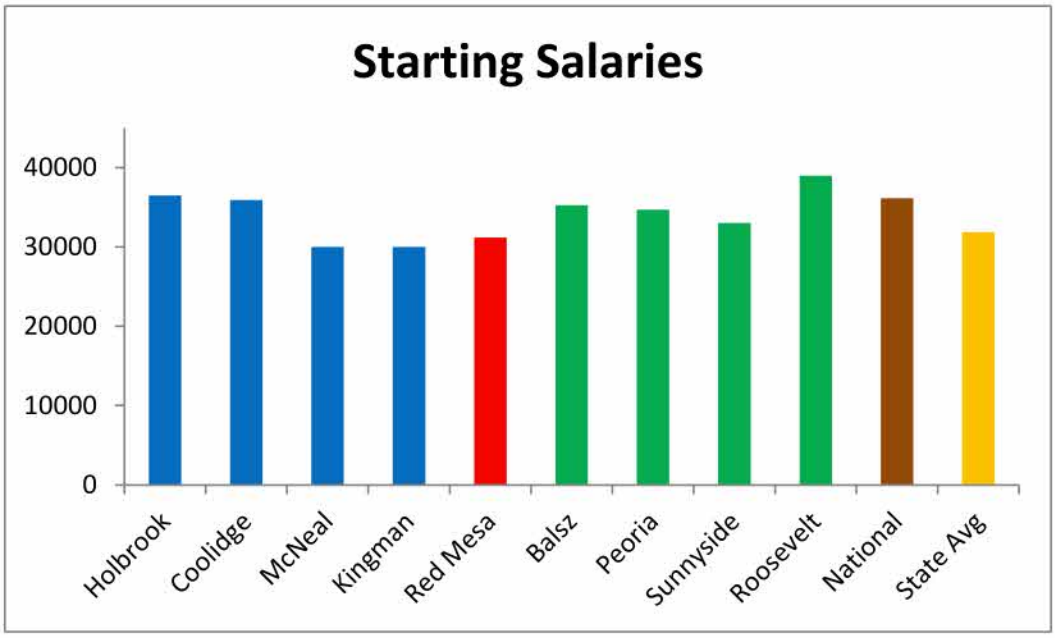
One important finding of the unpublished report does hold a ray of hope and supports one of the proposed solutions to this concern. Officials from all five surveyed districts emphasized the importance of monitoring inter-rater reliability. They indicated principals need additional training to fully understand the observation systems and then be expected to rate teaching practices consistently.[20]

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. As of 2014, Arizona's average starting salary was $31,874, far below the national starting average of $36,141.[21] Figure 5 displays a comparison between our sample schools' starting salaries with those of the state and nation. In 2015 each of the five states that border Arizona raised teacher salaries while, for the most part, Arizona salaries remained stagnant.

[20] Cross-case analysis of teacher evaluation data use in Arizona (Unpublished report).
[21] National Education Association (NEA) Research Estimates Database 2013-2014

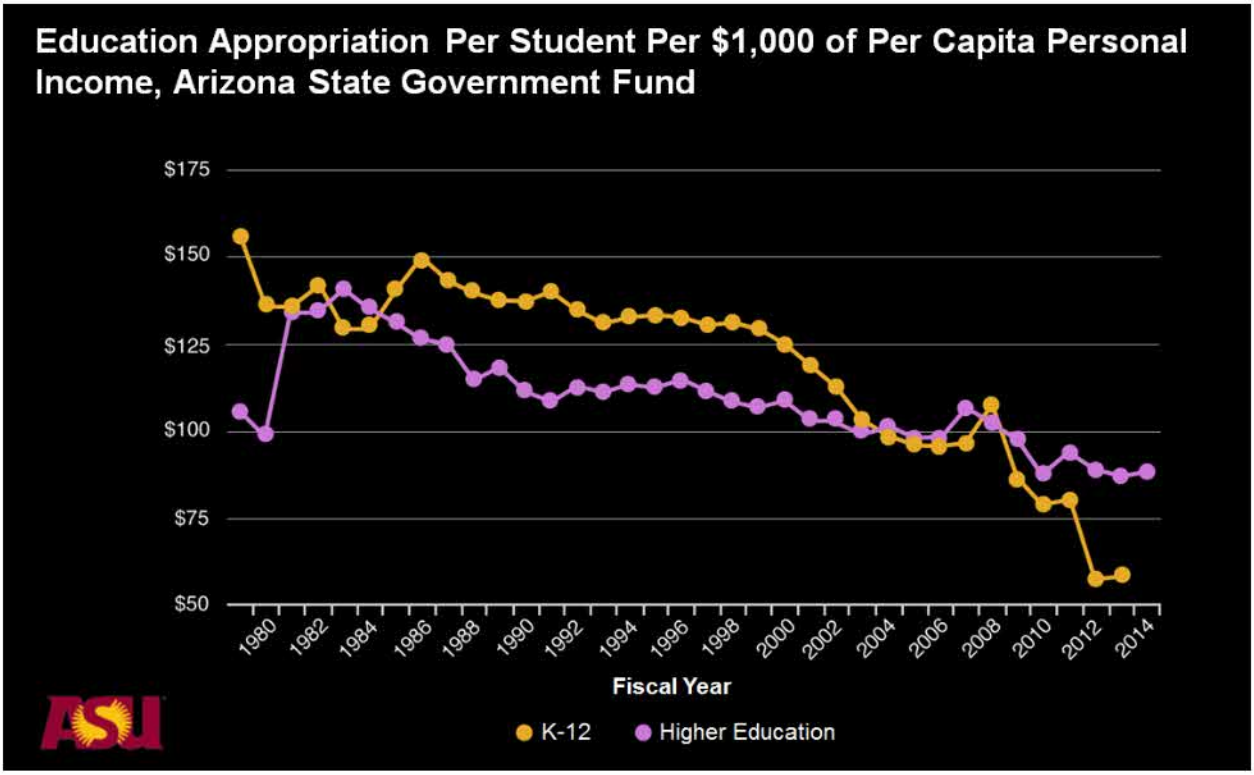
Figure 10



For many years Arizona has continued its trend of cutting education spending, 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.[22] 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.[23]

[22] National Education Association (NEA), Ranking of the States and Estimates of School Statistic, 2013 www.nea.org/54597.htm.
[23] 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 and over 900 positions filled by substitute teachers. Additionally, 53% reported having up to five teachers break a contract or resign during the school year. Many of these reported seeking higher pay in professions outside education as the reason for leaving the classroom.[24]

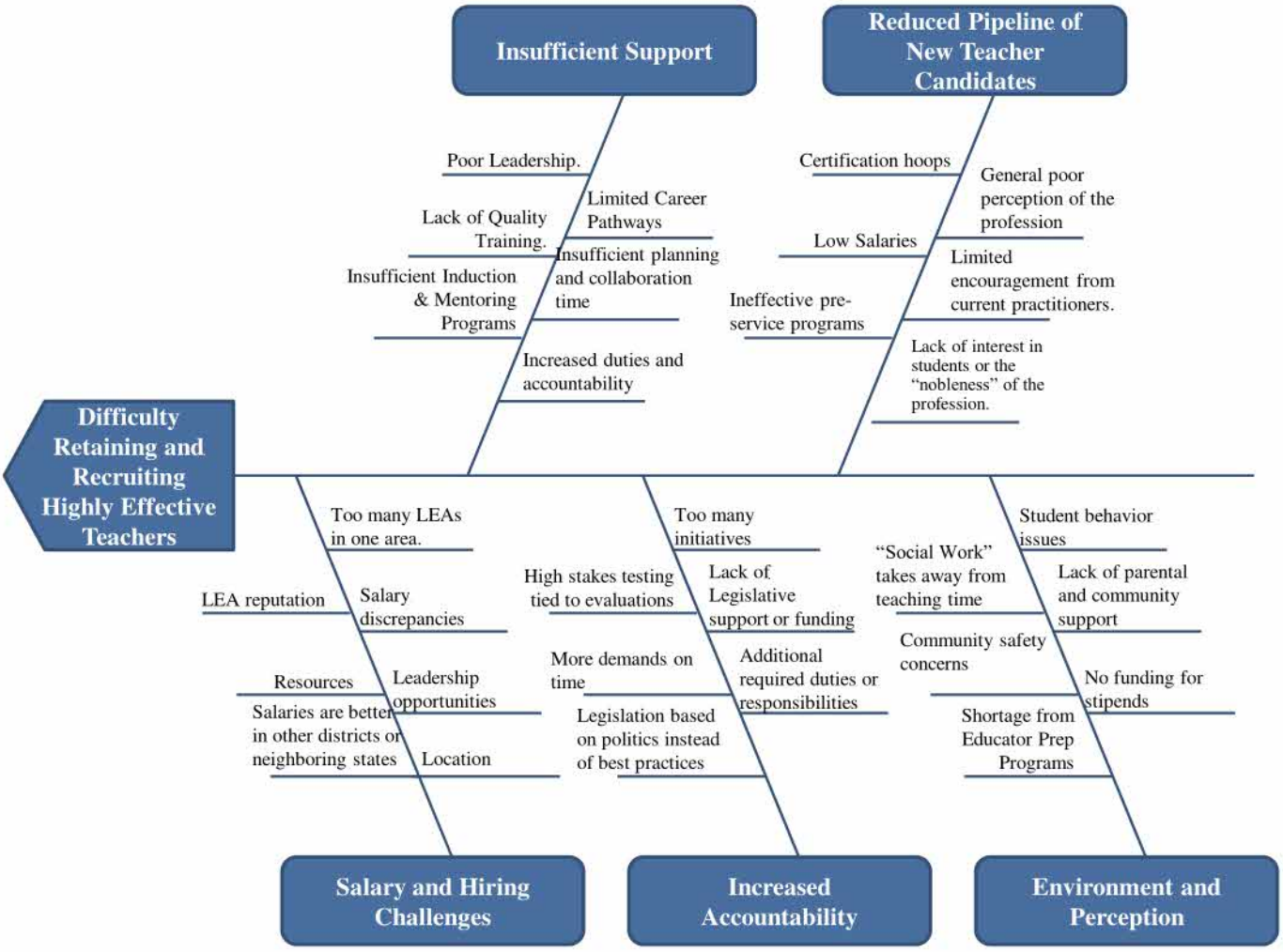
Arizona is also experiencing a decrease in the number of people entering the teaching profession with State Board approved educator preparation programs in 2013 reporting a 7% decrease in enrollment from the previous year. In Arizona, 29% of teachers had three or less years of experience as of the 2013-2014 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.[25]

Salary concerns, coupled with school culture issues, limited leadership capacity, perceived certification difficulties, limited resources, limited or no support such as a mentoring

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

program and the perception of the profession in general have all contributed to a reduction in the number of people pursing teaching as a career, either through traditional university coursework or through alternative pathways. Schools in Quartile 4 of both the poverty and minority categories are finding it particularly difficult to retain and recruit highly effective educators. Discussions surrounding the root causes of this Key Concern indicated the following possibilities illustrated in Figure 12:

Figure 12--Fishbone Analysis of Key Concern 2



Clearly, the difficulty of retaining and recruiting highly effective teachers to all schools, much less the state's highest need schools, is a cause connected to the calculated gaps as LEAs struggle to find candidates even when searching for those that may be the most effective. Often schools end up filling their empty classrooms with long-term substitutes or, in some cases, do not fill the space at all which results in higher class sizes.

3: Negative Perception of the Profession.

There has been much discussion surrounding the professional of education. In particular, editorial commentaries and research have focused on the professionalism and training of teachers, the lack of respect current society now pays toward education in general, and the lack of appropriate funding to guarantee today's students are prepared for the future with a high quality level of education as compared to other countries. 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.[26] 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. Continual budget cuts from the state have prevented districts from providing salary increases. This is something Yuma Union High School District Superintendent Toni Badone said in 2014 was, "a morale buster. The disregard for teachers has been demoralizing. The continued de-valuing of the education profession through lack of funding translates into our finding fewer teachers. We struggle to find teachers in science, mathematics, English and special education."[27]

Cave Creek Unified School District responded to the deep budget cuts by cutting 24% of its administrative team, implementing furlough days for district office staff, and closing a middle school.[28] The district implemented many other drastic cuts as well in attempts to maintain academic service and teacher salaries.

In July 2014, the Arizona Legislature was ordered by the state's Supreme Court to raise the K-12 per pupil base level funding to reflect inflationary increases and pay back LEAs for what they should have received over the years that the Arizona Legislature did not fund inflation. This is roughly $1.6 billion over five years. The state appealed the ruling. Dr. Frank Davidson, superintendent of the Casa Grande Elementary School District, said the funding cuts contribute to a teacher shortage: "The greatest impact of the Legislature's decision to not provide the statutory base support level has been to reduce our ability to attract and retain instructional staff."[29]

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[26] Jamie Vollmer, "Public School Bashing: A Dangerous Game", American Association of School Administrators, September 2010.
[27] Superintendents describe funding failure's impact on students. July 23, 2014.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

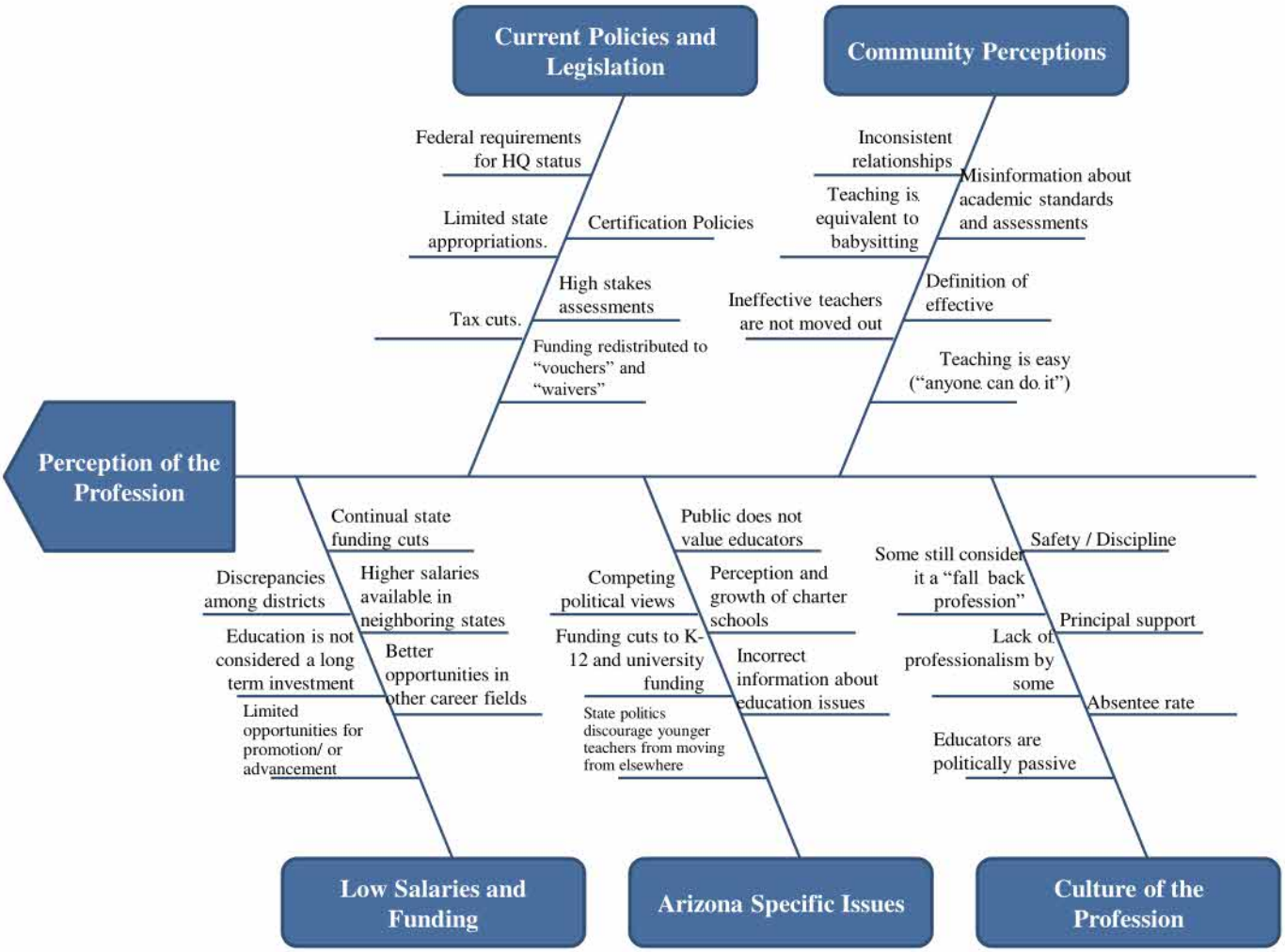
It has become increasingly difficult to retain or recruit effective teachers across the state, but particularly in the highest need schools. The state's public universities report as much as a 26% decline in enrollment in their colleges of education while some districts, including those in southern Arizona, are reporting as much as a 19% annual turnover.[30] One reason for this high turnover, according to a teacher in Sunnyside Unified is a lack of respect for the teaching profession. A spring 2015 survey conducted by Tucson Values Teachers listed respect as a key issue for teachers who felt the public respects their profession less than virtually every other profession and occupation with the exception of five: travel agent, child-care worker, stay-at-home parent, retail sales clerk and driver.[31] Asked whether they would recommend the profession to their children, 56% of teachers in the survey said no and 67% of those respondents cited lack of community respect as the biggest reason to dissuade children from becoming teachers.[32]

There are internal stressors as well including a high level of performance accountability based predominately on high stakes testing. The increase in the number of charter schools in Arizona has increased the emphasis on quality instruction with district schools as more and more parents exercise their school choice rights. Teachers are also faced with overwhelmed 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:

[30] Shortage puts uncertified teachers in Arizona classrooms. August 1, 2015.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

Figure 13--Fishbone Analysis of Key Concern 3



Similarly to concern #1, the issue of the perception of the profession causes administrators to fill classrooms with, at best, long-term substitutes or move teachers to areas where they are not highly qualified. The worst case scenario is not having an applicant to fill the vacancy at all resulting in higher class sizes and greater stress on the remaining staff. Each of these solutions is detrimental to the education of all students, notwithstanding the impact on our highest need populations.

The next step in this process is to define and prioritize strategies that ADE believes will close the calculated equity gaps. Outlined in Section 4 is a series of performance objectives and proposals guided by three overall goals that will be the data-driven benchmark for progress

(Table 15). The strategies are prioritized to address the areas that we believe will have the greatest impact on the equitable access issue for both high poverty and high minority students:

1. Strengthen the rating reporting system to provide more reliable data surrounding teacher effectiveness and train administrators on the use of such data. This will allow administrators and teacher leaders to target professional learning opportunities as well as review systems in order to assign the most effective educators in ways that provide the greatest access to the highest need students.

2. Reduce the number of inexperienced teachers by employing effective retention and recruitment strategies. By introducing research-based mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers, targeted professional learning, and incentives for improved practice, opportunities for students to access effective instruction will increase.

3. Provide incentives for teaching in high need areas. Such incentives could include salary increases, social support programs, housing allowances, teacher-leadership opportunities, improved administrative/leadership support, and assistance to schools to develop a collaborative community of learning. These incentives will draw the most effective teachers who still have a passion for the profession and who are willing to do the extra work or to drive the extra miles necessary to connect with our highest need students in our most remote or challenging schools.

Section 4: Strategies for Addressing Equity Gaps

Arizona is committed to the ideal 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.[33]

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. We accept that all teachers should be well prepared and qualified to serve in the classroom. Highly effective teachers provide students access to more effective and individualized instruction which promotes the ultimate goal of increased learning and improved achievement. By ensuring equitable access to effective instruction we can actually improve the quality of education for all students.

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

Table 15--Goals

	Economically Disadvantaged	Students of Color	By 2018	By 2020
Inexperienced Teachers	10.6%	11.8%	Reduce by 50% the number of students with access only to Inexperienced teachers.	Reduce by 100% the number of students with access only to Inexperienced teachers.
Teachers Rated as Developing or Ineffective	7.4%	6.3%	Reduce by 50% the number of students taught by only developing or ineffective teachers.	Reduce by 100% the number of students taught by only developing or ineffective teachers.
Out of Field / Unqualified Teachers	-.7%	3.5%	Reduce by 50% the amount of students of color receiving instruction from an out of field or unqualified teacher.	

Table 15 illustrates long-term goals to eliminate equity gaps and interim targets towards that goal.

Based on the data presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, ADE verifies that Arizona students in poverty and students of color have more limited access to effective teachers than the counterparts in a higher socio-economic quartile. We predict those students will continue to have inequitable access to effective instruction. The following theory of action will guide the strategies to mitigate this problem.

Theory of Action

If *educator performance evaluation systems are implemented with fidelity and a greater understanding of how scores are calculated and can be improved, and*

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 *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, especially students of color and economic disadvantage, 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,
- promotion of a teaching intern certificate,
- 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 statewide efforts on recruitment, preparation, and retention of Highly Qualified (HQ) teachers, supporting leadership in high poverty and minority schools, providing for statewide HQ 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.

A statewide task force was created in 2014 to address the general teacher shortage in Arizona. 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.

Other strategies that have been examined 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. The state is encouraging the use of an intern certificate where teachers without an education degree can be provisionally certified and begin teaching while taking the appropriate coursework for a standard certificate that indicates a highly qualified status.

In October 2015, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas unveiled her plan to provide quality education to all students. With over forty proposed solutions, her plan addresses a wide variety of issues facing education in Arizona. Three proposals, however, tie directly to the work listed in this plan:

1. Funding: Immediately allocate $400 million dollars from the state's general fund this fiscal year, and every year thereafter, to support higher teacher salaries and the hiring of additional teachers.
2. Induction and Mentoring: Encourage all Arizona LEAs to adopt support programs that give new teachers the help they need to grow, succeed and stay in the classroom.
3. Professional Learning: Design a series of trainings in multiple formats designed to provide teachers with information they need.[34]

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 residency known as iTeachAZ which is wildly popular among districts around the state because they can easily identify and offer early contracts to promising teacher candidates. Grand Canyon University provides support to 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 promoted. 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.

[34] AZ Kids Can't Afford to Wait! (2015)

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. Such a correlation will help LEAs make better staffing decisions and provide targeted professional learning opportunities in order to close the equity gaps.

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.

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, 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.**

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.
5. 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.
6. Assist LEAs with information and guidance on evaluation instruments and data reporting systems. Encourage LEAs to participate with ADE in collaborative purchasing of Teachscape.
7. Develop a rubric to assist LEAs in measuring the effectiveness of their evaluation instrument.

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.

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 incentivize 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.

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.**

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 Salaries – 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.

Measurement Tools
▪ 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.

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.

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, 2017, 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 with 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.**

General Strategies Suggested by Stakeholders

1. Foster a collaborative environment with local business community leaders.
2. Increase teacher salaries through a dedicated legislative appropriation in order to meet or exceed national averages within three years.
3. Increase per-pupil funding through the development of a new funding formula.
4. Develop and implement an effective one to two yearlong mentoring/coaching and induction program with sufficient funding for incentives, stipends, and resources.
5. Improve university supported training of "Master Teachers" for student teachers/interns including a rigorous selection process and funding for stipends.
6. 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.
7. 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).

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.

Supporting individualized equity plans will afford ADE the opportunity to provide guidance and professional development to help LEAs shift from a "compliance culture" to an "equity culture" which establishes policies, practices, systems that enable all stakeholders to view staffing decisions through the lens of equitable access to experienced and effective teachers for all children every day in every classroom. This "equity culture" will guide principals in their teacher recruitment, induction, development, retention policies/practices and support LEA governing board members in making the difficult, but necessary decision to reallocate resources to directly address and maintain equitable access for students of color and economic disadvantage.

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 benefit to a timely submission of data will be the quick access to technical support, guidance and available funding for programming. One potential strategy is to use the current online school improvement tracking tool known as 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 to the strategies outlined above.

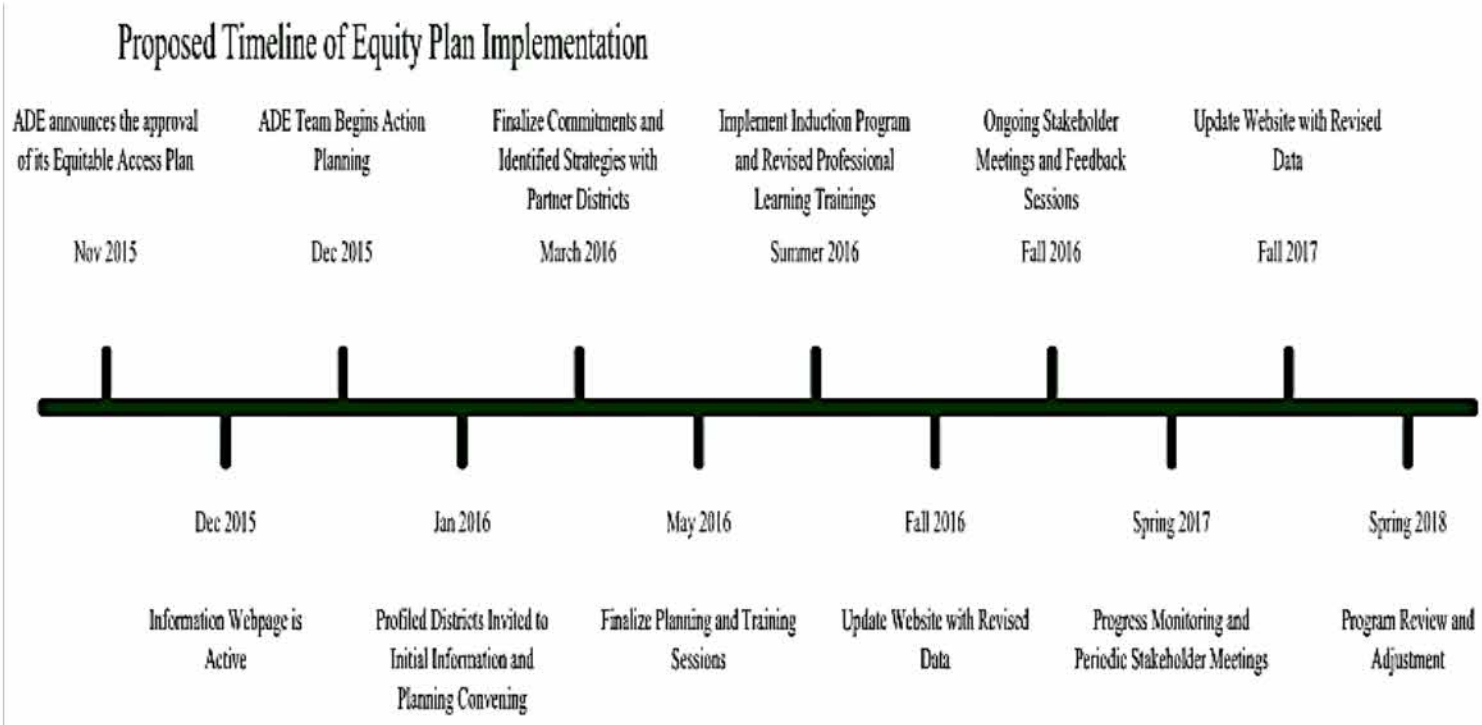
ADE is also committed to the leadership development of highly effective principals, assistant principals, district office administrators, and superintendents coupled with support for LEA research-based new teacher induction and development programs grounded in best practices.

Public reporting of this project will consist initially of information posted on the agency's website. The ADE team meets regularly with various Communities of Practice who are made up of various community leaders, experts, and practitioners. The small group structure of these communities allows for quick dissemination of information and interactive opportunities to respond to questions and concerns. The team will continue to use these communities to update district leaders and the community on its progress.

Following the submission of this report in the summer of 2015, ADE staff will reconvene to examine any feedback from USED and continue to develop a thorough program evaluation that includes objectives, measures, and metrics to evaluate the outcomes. Staff will continue to collaborate with colleagues in other State Education Agencies to determine best practices and workable solution and work collaboratively through the network of Integrated Support Teams.

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. ADE's executive leadership will assist the process by providing the vision necessary to carry plans forward and 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 is proud to present this plan for advancing the educational opportunities for students 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.

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, extensive outreach to the community, and thoughtful deliberation about actions that most likely will enable our schools and districts to chart a course toward success.

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. An examination of the data contained in this report clearly demonstrates the variety of challenges facing the state's education system including an ongoing teacher shortage that 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. ADE Research and Support Team

Name	Title	ADE Division or Section
Dr. Cecilia Johnson	Associate Superintendent	Highly Effective Teachers and Leaders Division
Dr. James Buchanan	Deputy Associate Superintendent	ECAP and Leadership Development
Angela Denning	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Exceptional Student Services
Dr. Mark Francis	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Arizona Charter School Program
Dr. Carrie Giovannone	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Research and Evaluation
Mark McCall	Deputy Associate Superintendent	Educator Excellence
Eric Brooks	Director of Professional Learning	Educator Excellence
Steve Larson	Director of Effective Teachers and Leaders	Educator Excellence
Raquel Alvara	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Harold Frederick	Education Program Specialist	Professional Learning
David Gauch	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Charles Johnson	Education Program Specialist	Exceptional Student Services
Susan Poole	Education Program Specialist	Effective Teachers and Leaders
Jane Smoudi	Education Program Specialist	Professional Learning
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. 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 Superintendent of Schools
Diane Smith	Executive Director	Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council (GPEMC)
Dr. Janice Johnson	Project Director	Maricopa County Education Service Agency
Ann Huber	Field Specialist	Maricopa County Education Service Agency
Richard Eagan	Business Systems Finance Administrator	Maricopa County Education Service Agency
Bruce DuPlanty	Peer Evaluator	Maricopa County Education Service Agency
Terry Reyna	Superintendent/Principal	McNeal Elementary School District
Dr. Heather Cruz	Deputy Superintendent	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
Dr. Jennifer Johnson	Executive Director	Support our Schools Arizona
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 small group 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.

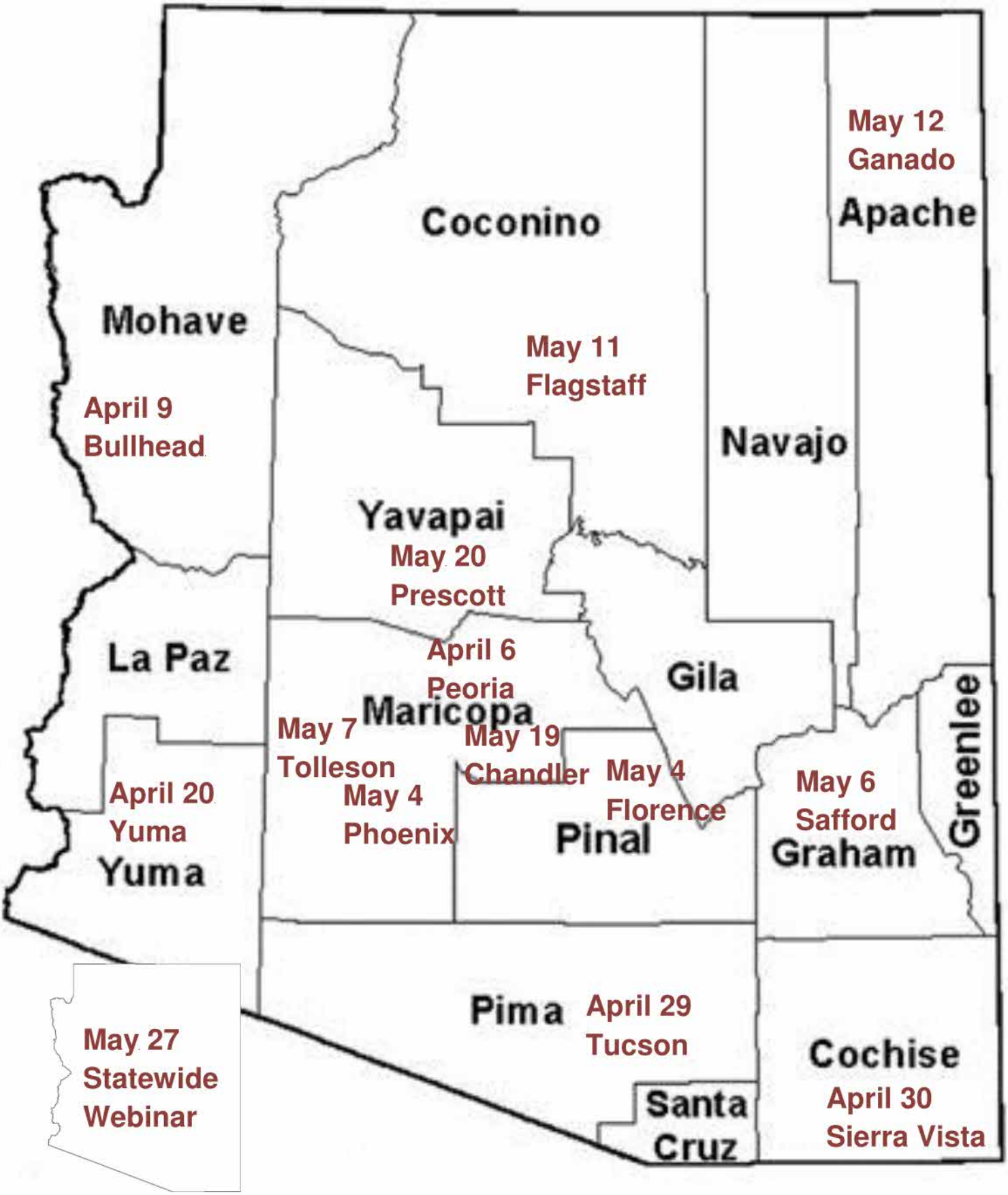
The conversations included the discussion of strategies including increasing voter participation and increasing funding and salaries.

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



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.[35]
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 generally make satisfactory levels of academic progress.

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

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.[36]

[36] Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness

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