



Arizona State Board of Education
A-F School Accountability Committee

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the A-F School Accountability Committee and to the general public, that the Committee will hold a meeting open to the public as specified below. The Committee reserves the right to change the order of items on the agenda, with the exception of public hearings. One or more members of the Committee may participate telephonically.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02 (H), the Committee may discuss and take action concerning any matter listed on the agenda.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A) (3), the Committee may vote to convene in executive session for discussion or consultation for legal advice from the Committee's attorneys concerning any items on this agenda.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting the State Board Office at (602) 542-5057. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

DATED AND POSTED this 9th day of December, 2015.

By: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karol Schmidt", written over a horizontal line.

Karol Schmidt
Executive Director
(602) 542-5057

AGENDA

ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
A-F SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 10, 2015

1:00 PM

Arizona Department of Education

1535 W. Jefferson

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Conference Room 122

AGENDA
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1:00 p.m. CALL TO ORDER

1. GENERAL SESSION

- A. Presentation, discussion and consideration to recommend the A.R.S. § 15-241 A-F draft legislation to the State Board of Education
- B. Presentation, discussion and review of the White Paper *"Rebuilding Arizona's School & District Accountability System"* from the Arizona Department of Education
- C. Discussion of next steps, direction by this committee, future meeting dates and direction to staff to place matters on a future agenda.

2. Call to the Public

3. ADJOURN

15-241. School and school district accountability; failing schools tutoring fund; classification label for school districts and charter school operators

A. The department of education shall compile an annual achievement profile for each public school, ~~and school district~~ AND CHARTER HOLDER.

B. Each school, ~~and school district~~ AND CHARTER HOLDER shall submit to the department any data that is required and requested and that is necessary to compile the achievement profile. A school, ~~or school district~~ OR CHARTER HOLDER that fails to submit the information that is necessary is not eligible to receive monies from the classroom site fund established by section 15-977.

C. The ANNUAL achievement profile COMPILED BY THE DEPARTMENT shall be used to determine a standard measurement of acceptable academic progress for each school, ~~and school district~~ AND CHARTER HOLDER and a school, ~~and school district~~ AND CHARTER HOLDER classification pursuant to subsection ~~H~~ F of this section. Any disclosure of educational records compiled by the department of education pursuant to this section shall comply with the family educational rights and privacy act of 1974 (20 United States Code section 1232g).

D. THE ACHIEVEMENT PROFILE FOR SCHOOLS, SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTER HOLDERS SHALL INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

1. MULTIPLE MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OR OTHER ACADEMICALLY RELEVANT INDICATORS OF SCHOOL QUALITY APPROPRIATE TO ASSESS THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF A SCHOOL, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR, AS DETERMINED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

2. ACADEMIC PROGRESS-ON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-741 IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS.

3. ACADEMIC PROGRESS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ASSESSMENTS ADMINISTERED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-756, SUBSECTION B, SECTION 15-756.05 AND SECTION 15-756.06.

4. PROGRESS TOWARD COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS FOR ALL SCHOOLS, INCLUDING GRADUATION RATES FOR SCHOOLS, SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS THAT OFFER INSTRUCTION IN ANY OF GRADES NINE THROUGH TWELVE.

~~.The achievement profile for schools and school districts that offer instruction in kindergarten programs and grades one through eight, or any combination of those programs or grades, shall include the following school academic performance indicators:~~

~~1. The Arizona measure of academic progress. The department shall compute the extent of academic progress made by the pupils in each school and school district during the course of each year.~~

~~2. The Arizona instrument to measure standards test. The department shall compute the percentage of pupils who meet or exceed the standard on the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, as prescribed by the state board of education. The superintendent of public instruction and the department may calculate academic gain on the Arizona instrument to measure standards test according to each of the school classifications prescribed in subsection G of this section on a statewide basis, for each school district in this state and for each school by determining the average scale scores for students in the current academic year as compared to the average scale scores for the previous academic year for the same students.~~

~~3. Academic performance and academic gain on the science portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test.~~

~~4. The results of English language learners tests administered pursuant to section 15-756, subsection B, section 15-756.05 and section 15-756.06.~~

E. The achievement profile for schools and school districts that offer instruction in grades nine through twelve, or any combination of those grades, shall include the following school academic performance indicators:

~~1. The Arizona measure of academic progress. The department shall compute the extent of academic progress made by the pupils at each school.~~

~~2. The Arizona instrument to measure standards test. The department shall compute the percentage of pupils pursuant to subsection G of this section who meet or exceed the standard on the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, as prescribed by the state board of education. The superintendent of public instruction and the department may calculate academic gain on the Arizona instrument to measure standards test according to each of the school classifications prescribed in subsection G of this section on a statewide basis, for each school district in this state and for each school by determining the average scale scores for students in the current academic year as compared to the average scale scores for the previous academic year for the same students.~~

~~3. Academic performance and academic gain on the science portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test.~~

~~4. The annual dropout rate.~~

~~5. The annual graduation rate.~~

~~6. The results of English language learners tests administered pursuant to section 15-756, subsection B, section 15-756.05 and section 15-756.06.~~

F. Schools and school districts that offer instruction in all or a combination of the grades specified in subsections D and E of this section shall include a single achievement profile for that

~~school and school district that includes the school academic performance indicators specified in subsections D and E of this section.~~

~~G. E. Subject to final adoption by the state board of education, the department shall determine the criteria for each school and school district classification LABEL using a research based methodology DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH A COALITION OF QUALIFIED TECHNICAL AND POLICY STAKEHOLDERS. The methodology shall include AT A MINIMUM the performance of pupils at all achievement levels, account for pupil mobility, account for the distribution of pupil achievement at each school and school district and include longitudinal indicators of academic performance. The methodology may include a measure of the perception of educational quality at the school or school district by parents, pupils, staff and community stakeholders. Fifty per cent of the school and school district classification determination shall consist of academic performance measurements. Fifty per cent of the academic performance measurement shall consist of a measurement of academic gain for all pupils enrolled at the school or school district and fifty per cent of the academic performance measurements shall consist of a measurement of the twenty five per cent of pupils with the lowest academic performance measurement enrolled at the school or school district. For the purposes of this subsection, "research based methodology" means the systematic and objective application of statistical and quantitative research principles TO CALCULATE THE INDICATORS USED TO DETERMINE A THROUGH F LETTER GRADES. to determine a standard measurement of acceptable academic progress for each school and school district.~~

~~H. F. Except as provided in subsection EE M of this section, The achievement profile shall be used to determine a school, school district AND CHARTER HOLDER classification LABEL ANNUALLY, BASED ON that uses a AN A THROUGH F letter grade system ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION as follows:~~

~~1. A school or school district assigned a letter grade of A shall demonstrate an excellent level of performance.~~

~~2. A school or school district assigned a letter grade of B shall demonstrate an above average level of performance.~~

~~3. A school or school district assigned a letter grade of C shall demonstrate an average level of performance.~~

~~4. A school or school district assigned a letter grade of D shall demonstrate a below average level of performance.~~

~~5. A school or school district assigned a letter grade of F shall demonstrate a failing level of performance. IN WHICH A LETTER GRADE OF A DEMONSTRATES AN EXCELLENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE AND A LETTER GRADE OF F DEMONSTRATES A FAILING LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE. THE A-F LETTER GRADE SYSTEM SHALL INDICATE EXPECTED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE FOR ALL SCHOOLS AND WAYS IN WHICH SCHOOLS CAN RISE ABOVE OR FALL BELOW THOSE EXPECTED STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE The state board of education may also assign a school a~~

~~letter grade of F if the state board of education determines that the school is among the "persistently lowest achieving schools" in the state under the federal school accountability requirements pursuant to section 1003(g) of the elementary and secondary education act (20 United States Code section 6303).~~

I. G. The classification LABEL for each school and the criteria used to determine classification pursuant to subsection ~~G~~ E of this section shall be included on the school report card prescribed in section 15-746.

J. H. Subject to final adoption by the state board of education, the department of education shall UTILIZE ~~develop a parallel~~ achievement profile PROFILES APPROPRIATE TO ASSESS THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF ~~for~~ accommodation schools, alternative schools, as defined by the state board of education and extremely small schools, AND MAY DEVELOP PROFILES FOR SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE BOARD EXAMINATION SYSTEM PRESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 7, ARTICLE 6 OF THIS TITLE, SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATE IN ARIZONA ONLINE INSTRUCTION, AND OTHER EXCEPTIONS as defined by the state board of education for the purposes of this section.

~~K. If a school is assigned a letter grade of D, within ninety days after receiving notice of the designation, the governing board shall develop an improvement plan for the school, submit a copy of the plan to the superintendent of public instruction and the county educational service agency and supervise the implementation of the plan. The plan shall include necessary components as identified by the state board of education. Within thirty days after submitting the improvement plan to the superintendent of public instruction and the county educational service agency, the governing board shall hold a special public meeting in each school that has been assigned a letter grade of D and shall present the respective improvement plans that have been developed for each school. The school district governing board, within thirty days of receiving notice of the designation, shall provide written notification of the classification to each residence within the attendance area of the school. The notice shall explain the improvement plan process and provide information regarding the public meeting required by this subsection.~~

~~L. A school that has not submitted an improvement plan pursuant to subsection K of this section is not eligible to receive monies from the classroom site fund established by section 15-977 for every day that a plan has not been received by the superintendent of public instruction within the time specified in subsection K of this section plus an additional ninety days. The state board of education shall require the superintendent of the school district to testify before the board and explain the reasons that an improvement plan for that school has not been submitted.~~

~~M. If a charter school is assigned a letter grade of D, within thirty days the school shall notify the parents of the students attending the school of the classification. The notice shall explain the improvement plan process and provide information regarding the public meeting required by this subsection. Within ninety days of receiving the classification, the charter holder shall present an improvement plan to the charter sponsor at a public meeting and submit a copy of the plan to the superintendent of public instruction. The improvement plan shall include necessary components as identified by the state board of education. For every day that an~~

~~improvement plan is not received by the superintendent of public instruction and the county educational service agency, the school is not eligible to receive monies from the classroom site fund established by section 15-977 for every day that a plan has not been received by the superintendent of public instruction within the time specified in subsection K of this section plus an additional ninety days. The charter holder shall appear before the sponsoring board and explain why the improvement plan has not been submitted.~~

~~N. I. The department of education shall establish an appeals A process, to be approved by the state board of education, for a school to appeal CORRECT STUDENT DATA USED TO DETERMINE THE ACHIEVEMENT PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ESTABLISH AN APPEALS PROCESS TO ALLOW A SCHOOL TO APPEAL THE SCHOOL'S FINAL A THROUGH F LETTER GRADE, BASED ON MITIGATING FACTORS IDENTIFIED BY THE BOARD. THE BOARD MAY DELEGATE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROCESS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. data used to determine the achievement profile of the school. The criteria established shall be based on mitigating factors and may include a visit to the school site by the department of education.~~

J. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, "ACADEMIC PROGRESS" MEANS MEASURES OF BOTH PROFICIENCY AND ACADEMIC GAIN.

~~Ø. If a school is assigned a letter grade of D for a third consecutive year, the department of education shall visit the school site to confirm the classification data and to review the implementation of the school's improvement plan. The school shall be assigned a letter grade of F unless an alternate letter grade is assigned after an appeal pursuant to subsection N of this section. A school that is assigned a letter grade of D for less than three consecutive years may also be assigned a letter grade of F if the state board of education determines that there is no reasonable likelihood that the school will achieve an average level of performance within the next two years.~~

~~P. The school district governing board, within thirty days of receiving notice of the school being assigned a letter grade of F, shall provide written notification of the classification to each residence in the attendance area of the school. The notice shall explain the improvement plan process and provide information regarding the public meeting required by subsection S of this section.~~

~~Q. The superintendent of public instruction in collaboration with the county educational service agency, based on need, shall assign a solutions team to a school assigned a letter grade of D, a school assigned a letter grade of F or any other school pursuant to a mutual agreement between the department of education and the school composed of master teachers, fiscal analysts and curriculum assessment experts who are certified by the state board of education as Arizona academic standards technicians. The department of education or the county educational service agency may hire or contract with administrators, principals and teachers who have demonstrated experience with the characteristics and situations in a school assigned a letter grade of D or F and may use these personnel as part of the solutions team. The department of education shall work~~

with staff at the school to assist in curricula alignment and shall instruct teachers on how to increase pupil academic progress, considering the school's achievement profile. The solutions team shall consider the existing improvement plan to assess the need for changes to curriculum, professional development and resource allocation and shall present a statement of its findings to the school administrator and district superintendent. Within forty five days after the presentation of the solutions team's statement of findings, the school district governing board, in cooperation with each school within the school district that is assigned a letter grade of D and its assigned solutions team representative, shall develop and submit to the department of education and the county educational service agency an action plan that details the manner in which the school district will assist the school as the school incorporates the findings of the solutions team into the improvement plan. The department of education shall review the action plan and shall either accept the action plan or return the action plan to the school district for modification. If the school district does not submit an approved action plan within forty five days, the state board of education may direct the superintendent of public instruction to withhold up to ten per cent of state monies that the school district would otherwise be entitled to receive each month until the plan is submitted to the department of education and the county educational service agency, at which time those monies shall be returned to the school district.

R. The parent or the guardian of the pupil may apply to the department of education, in a manner determined by the department of education, for a certificate of supplemental instruction from the failing schools tutoring fund established by this section. Pupils attending a school assigned a letter grade of D or F or a pupil who has failed to pass one or more portions of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test in grades eight through twelve in order to graduate from high school may select an alternative tutoring program in academic standards from a provider that is certified by the state board of education. To qualify, the provider must state in writing a level of academic improvement for the pupil that includes a timeline for improvement that is agreed to by the parent or guardian of the pupil. The state board of education shall annually review academic performance levels for providers certified pursuant to this subsection and may remove a provider at a public hearing from an approved list of providers if that provider fails to meet its stated level of academic improvement. The state board of education shall determine the application guidelines and the maximum value for each certificate of supplemental instruction. The state board of education shall annually complete a market survey in order to determine the maximum value for each certificate of supplemental instruction. This subsection shall not be construed to require the state to provide additional monies beyond the monies provided pursuant to section 42-5029, subsection E, paragraph 7.

S. Within sixty days of receiving notification of a school being assigned a letter grade of F, the school district governing board shall evaluate needed changes to the existing improvement plan for the school, consider recommendations from the solutions team, submit a copy of the plan to the superintendent of public instruction and the county educational service agency and supervise the implementation of the plan. Within thirty days after submitting the improvement plan to the superintendent of public instruction, the governing board shall hold a public meeting in each school that has been assigned a letter grade of F and shall present the respective improvement plans that have been developed for each school.

~~T. A school that has not submitted an improvement plan pursuant to subsection S of this section is not eligible to receive monies from the classroom site fund established by section 15-977 for every day that a plan has not been received by the superintendent of public instruction within the time specified in subsection S of this section plus an additional ninety days. The state board of education shall require the superintendent of the school district to testify before the board and explain the reasons that an improvement plan for that school has not been submitted.~~

~~U. If a charter school is assigned a letter grade of F, the department of education shall immediately notify the charter school's sponsor. The charter school's sponsor shall either take action to restore the charter school to acceptable performance or revoke the charter school's charter. Within thirty days the school shall notify the parents of the students attending the school of the classification and of any pending public meetings to review the issue.~~

~~V. A school that has been assigned a letter grade of F shall be evaluated by the department of education to determine if the school failed to properly implement its school improvement plan, align the curriculum with academic standards, provide teacher training, prioritize the budget or implement other proven strategies to improve academic performance. After visiting the school site pursuant to subsection O of this section, the department of education shall submit to the state board of education a recommendation to proceed pursuant to subsections Q, R and S of this section or that the school be subject to a public hearing to determine if the school failed to properly implement its improvement plan and the reasons for the department's recommendation.~~

~~W. If the department does recommend a public hearing, the state board of education shall meet and may provide by a majority vote at the public hearing for the continued operation of the school as allowed by this subsection. The state board of education shall determine whether governmental, nonprofit and private organizations may submit applications to the state board to fully or partially manage the school. The state board's determination shall include:~~

~~1. If and to what extent the local governing board may participate in the operation of the school including personnel matters.~~

~~2. If and to what extent the state board of education shall participate in the operation of the school.~~

~~3. Resource allocation pursuant to subsection Y of this section.~~

~~4. Provisions for the development and submittal of a school improvement plan to be presented in a public meeting at the school.~~

~~5. A suggested time frame for the alternative operation of the school.~~

~~X. The state board shall periodically review the status of a school that is operated by an organization other than the school district governing board to determine whether the operation of the school should be returned to the school district governing board. Before the state board makes a determination, the state board or its designee shall meet with the school district governing board or its designee to determine the time frame, operational considerations and the~~

~~appropriate continuation of existing improvements that are necessary to assure a smooth transition of authority from the other organization back to the school district governing board.~~

~~Y. If an alternative operation plan is provided pursuant to subsection W of this section, the state board of education shall pay for the operation of the school and shall adjust the school district's district additional assistance pursuant to section 15-961, base support level pursuant to section 15-943, monies distributed from the classroom site fund established by section 15-977 and transportation support level pursuant to section 15-945 to accurately reflect any reduction in district services that are no longer provided to that school by the district. The state board of education may modify the school district's revenue control limit, the district support level and the general budget limit calculated pursuant to section 15-947 by an amount that corresponds to this reduction in services. The state board of education shall retain the portion of state aid that would otherwise be due the school district for the school and shall distribute that portion of state aid directly to the organization that contracts with the state board of education to operate the school.~~

~~Z. If the state board of education determines that a charter school failed to properly implement its improvement plan, the sponsor of the charter school shall revoke the charter school's charter.~~

~~AA. If there are more than two schools in a district and more than one-half, or in any case more than five, of the schools in the district are assigned a letter grade of F for more than two consecutive years, in the next election of members of the governing board the election ballot shall contain the following statement immediately above the listing of governing board candidates:~~

~~Within the last five years, (number of schools) schools in the _____ school district have been assigned a letter grade of F or designated as "schools failing to meet academic standards" by the superintendent of public instruction.~~

~~BB. At least twice each year the department of education shall publish in a newspaper of general circulation in each county of this state a list of schools that are assigned a letter grade of F.~~

~~CC I. The failing schools tutoring fund is established consisting of monies collected pursuant to section 42-5029, subsection E as designated for this purpose. The department of education shall administer the fund. The department of education may use monies from the fund to purchase materials designed to assist students to meet the Arizona academic standards and to achieve a passing score on the Arizona instrument to measure standards test in order to graduate from high school.~~

~~DD. J. The department of education may develop a classification label for school districts and charter school operators. If the department of education develops a classification label for school districts and charter school operators, the classification label may be developed from the following components:~~

~~1. Measures of academic progress.~~

2. Pupil assessment data.

3. The attendance rates and graduation rates of pupils who are educated in that charter school operator's charter schools or in that school district's schools.

4. The percentage of the parents of pupils enrolled in that charter school operator's charter schools or in that school district's schools that categorizes the quality of their child's education as excellent on a parental rating of school quality.

~~EE. The state board of education shall determine appropriate modifications to the criteria used to calculate achievement profiles for schools that participate in the board examination system prescribed in chapter 7, article 6 of this title.~~

~~FF. The state board of education shall adopt guidelines to include supplementary training in reading instruction for teachers who provide instruction to pupils in a kindergarten program or grade one, two or three in an improvement plan pursuant to subsection K of this section.~~

~~GG. In addition to any other corrective procedures prescribed in this section and section 15-241.01, a school that has been assigned a letter grade of D or F for two consecutive years shall implement a science, technology, engineering and mathematics intervention strategy under the supervision of the state board of education.~~

~~HH. In addition to any other corrective procedures prescribed in this section a school district that has been assigned a letter grade of D or F for two consecutive years shall implement a parent involvement strategy. The parent involvement strategy shall be included in the school improvement plan for each applicable school within the district, as prescribed in subsection K of this section.~~

~~I. The department of education shall publish criteria for a school or school district's exit status from a previous assignment of a letter grade of F in accordance with this section. The criteria shall prescribe the actions and results necessary to be deemed to have complied with this section regarding school improvement, including the proper implementation of a school improvement plan pursuant to subsection V of this section. These criteria shall be provided to a school or school district if it is assigned a letter grade of F pursuant to this section.~~

15-241.02. School improvement plans; solutions teams; withholding of state monies; failing schools; tutoring fund

A. IF A SCHOOL IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, WITHIN NINETY DAYS AFTER RECEIVING NOTICE OF THE DESIGNATION, THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD SHALL DEVELOP AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THE SCHOOL, SUBMIT A COPY OF THE PLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY AND SUPERVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. THE GOVERNING BOARD SHALL INCLUDE IN THE PLAN NECESSARY COMPONENTS AS IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER SUBMITTING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY, THE GOVERNING BOARD SHALL HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING IN EACH SCHOOL THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D AND SHALL PRESENT THE RESPECTIVE IMPROVEMENT PLANS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR EACH SCHOOL. THE GOVERNING BOARD, WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF RECEIVING NOTICE OF THE DESIGNATION, SHALL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO EACH RESIDENCE WITHIN THE ATTENDANCE AREA OF THE SCHOOL. THE NOTICE SHALL EXPLAIN THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROCESS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PUBLIC MEETING REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION.

B. A SCHOOL THAT HAS NOT SUBMITTED AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MONIES FROM THE CLASSROOM SITE FUND ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 15-977 FOR EVERY DAY THAT A PLAN HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE TIME SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION PLUS AN ADDITIONAL NINETY DAYS. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL REQUIRE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE BOARD AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS THAT AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THAT SCHOOL HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED.

C. IF A CHARTER SCHOOL IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, WITHIN THIRTY DAYS THE SCHOOL SHALL NOTIFY THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SCHOOL OF THE CLASSIFICATION. THE NOTICE SHALL EXPLAIN THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROCESS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PUBLIC MEETING REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION. WITHIN NINETY DAYS OF RECEIVING THE CLASSIFICATION, THE CHARTER HOLDER SHALL PRESENT AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO THE CHARTER SPONSOR AT A PUBLIC MEETING AND SUBMIT A COPY OF THE PLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION. THE CHARTER HOLDER SHALL INCLUDE IN THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN NECESSARY COMPONENTS AS IDENTIFIED

BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. FOR EVERY DAY THAT AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN IS NOT RECEIVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, THE SCHOOL IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MONIES FROM THE CLASSROOM SITE FUND ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 15-977 FOR EVERY DAY THAT A PLAN HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE TIME SPECIFIED IN THIS PLUS AN ADDITIONAL NINETY DAYS. THE CHARTER HOLDER SHALL APPEAR BEFORE THE SPONSORING BOARD AND EXPLAIN WHY THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED.

D. IF A SCHOOL IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241 FOR A THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL ~~VISIT THE SCHOOL SITE TO CONFIRM~~ THE CLASSIFICATION DATA AND TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN. THE SCHOOL SHALL BE ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F UNLESS AN ALTERNATE LETTER GRADE IS ASSIGNED AFTER AN APPEAL PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, SUBSECTION I. A SCHOOL THAT IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D FOR FEWER THAN THREE CONSECUTIVE YEARS MAY ALSO BE ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F IF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DETERMINES THAT THERE IS NO REASONABLE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SCHOOL WILL ACHIEVE AN AVERAGE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

E. THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY, BASED ON NEED, SHALL ASSIGN A SOLUTIONS TEAM TO A SCHOOL ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, A SCHOOL ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241 OR ANY OTHER SCHOOL PURSUANT TO A MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL. THE SOLUTIONS TEAM SHALL BE COMPOSED OF MASTER TEACHERS, FISCAL ANALYSTS AND CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT EXPERTS WHO ARE CERTIFIED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS ARIZONA ACADEMIC STANDARDS TECHNICIANS. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OR THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY MAY HIRE OR CONTRACT WITH ADMINISTRATORS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED EXPERIENCE WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS AND SITUATIONS IN A SCHOOL ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D OR F AND MAY USE THESE PERSONNEL AS PART OF THE SOLUTIONS TEAM. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL WORK WITH STAFF AT THE SCHOOL TO ASSIST IN CURRICULA ALIGNMENT AND SHALL INSTRUCT TEACHERS ON HOW TO INCREASE PUPIL ACADEMIC PROGRESS, CONSIDERING THE SCHOOL'S ACHIEVEMENT PROFILE. THE SOLUTIONS TEAM SHALL CONSIDER THE EXISTING IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO ASSESS THE NEED FOR CHANGES TO CURRICULUM, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND SHALL PRESENT A STATEMENT OF ITS FINDINGS TO THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AND DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT. WITHIN FORTY-FIVE DAYS AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF THE SOLUTIONS TEAM'S STATEMENT OF

FINDINGS, THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD, IN COOPERATION WITH EACH SCHOOL WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D AND ITS ASSIGNED SOLUTIONS TEAM REPRESENTATIVE, SHALL DEVELOP AND SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY AN ACTION PLAN THAT DETAILS THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL ASSIST THE SCHOOL AS THE SCHOOL INCORPORATES THE FINDINGS OF THE SOLUTIONS TEAM INTO THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL REVIEW THE ACTION PLAN AND SHALL EITHER ACCEPT THE ACTION PLAN OR RETURN THE ACTION PLAN TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR MODIFICATION. IF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT DOES NOT SUBMIT AN APPROVED ACTION PLAN WITHIN FORTY-FIVE DAYS, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MAY DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO WITHHOLD UP TO TEN PER CENT OF STATE MONIES THAT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WOULD OTHERWISE BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE EACH MONTH UNTIL THE PLAN IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY, AT WHICH TIME THOSE MONIES SHALL BE RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

F. THE PARENT OR THE GUARDIAN OF A PUPIL MAY APPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN A MANNER DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, FOR A CERTIFICATE OF SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION FROM THE FAILING SCHOOLS TUTORING FUND ESTABLISHED BY ~~THIS~~ SECTION 15-241. PUPILS ATTENDING A SCHOOL ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D OR F MAY SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE TUTORING PROGRAM IN ACADEMIC STANDARDS FROM A PROVIDER THAT IS CERTIFIED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. TO QUALIFY, THE PROVIDER MUST STATE IN WRITING A LEVEL OF ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT FOR THE PUPIL THAT INCLUDES A TIMELINE FOR IMPROVEMENT THAT IS AGREED TO BY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF THE PUPIL. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ANNUALLY REVIEW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR CERTIFIED AND MAY REMOVE A PROVIDER AT A PUBLIC HEARING FROM AN APPROVED LIST OF PROVIDERS IF THAT PROVIDER FAILS TO MEET ITS STATED LEVEL OF ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL DETERMINE THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND THE MAXIMUM VALUE FOR EACH CERTIFICATE OF SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ANNUALLY COMPLETE A MARKET SURVEY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE MAXIMUM VALUE FOR EACH CERTIFICATE OF SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION. THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT REQUIRE THIS STATE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MONIES BEYOND THE MONIES PROVIDED PURSUANT TO SECTION 42-5029, SUBSECTION E, PARAGRAPH 7.

G. WITHIN SIXTY DAYS OF RECEIVING NOTIFICATION OF A SCHOOL BEING ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F, THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD SHALL EVALUATE NEEDED CHANGES TO THE EXISTING IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THE SCHOOL, CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SOLUTIONS TEAM,

SUBMIT A COPY OF THE PLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY AND SUPERVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER SUBMITTING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND THE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY, THE GOVERNING BOARD SHALL HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING IN EACH SCHOOL THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F AND SHALL PRESENT THE RESPECTIVE IMPROVEMENT PLANS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FOR EACH SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD, WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER RECEIVING NOTICE OF THE SCHOOL BEING ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, SHALL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO EACH RESIDENCE IN THE ATTENDANCE AREA OF THE SCHOOL. THE NOTICE SHALL EXPLAIN THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROCESS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PUBLIC MEETING REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION.

H. A SCHOOL THAT HAS NOT SUBMITTED AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION G OF THIS SECTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MONIES FROM THE CLASSROOM SITE FUND ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 15-977 FOR EVERY DAY THAT A PLAN HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE TIME SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION G OF THIS SECTION PLUS AN ADDITIONAL NINETY DAYS. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL REQUIRE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE BOARD AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS THAT AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THAT SCHOOL HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED.

I. IF A CHARTER SCHOOL IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S SPONSOR. THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S SPONSOR SHALL EITHER TAKE ACTION TO RESTORE THE CHARTER SCHOOL TO ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE OR REVOKE THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHARTER. WITHIN THIRTY DAYS, THE CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL NOTIFY THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SCHOOL OF THE CLASSIFICATION AND OF ANY PENDING PUBLIC MEETINGS TO REVIEW THE ISSUE.

J. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL EVALUATE A SCHOOL THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241 TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SCHOOL FAILED TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT ITS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN, ALIGN THE CURRICULUM WITH ACADEMIC STANDARDS, PROVIDE TEACHER TRAINING, PRIORITIZE THE BUDGET OR IMPLEMENT OTHER PROVEN STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. AFTER VISITING THE SCHOOL SITE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION D OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION A RECOMMENDATION EITHER TO PROCEED

PURSUANT TO SUBSECTIONS E, F AND G OF THIS SECTION OR THAT THE SCHOOL BE SUBJECT TO A PUBLIC HEARING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE SCHOOL FAILED TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT ITS IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND THE REASONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION.

K. IF THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS A PUBLIC HEARING, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL MEET AND MAY PROVIDE BY A MAJORITY VOTE AT THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL AS ALLOWED BY THIS SUBSECTION. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL DETERMINE WHETHER GOVERNMENTAL, NONPROFIT AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS MAY SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO THE STATE BOARD TO FULLY OR PARTIALLY MANAGE THE SCHOOL. THE STATE BOARD'S DETERMINATION SHALL INCLUDE:

1. IF AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDING PERSONNEL MATTERS.
2. IF AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL PARTICIPATE IN THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL.
3. RESOURCE ALLOCATION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION M OF THIS SECTION.
4. PROVISIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMITTAL OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN TO BE PRESENTED IN A PUBLIC MEETING AT THE SCHOOL.
5. A SUGGESTED TIME FRAME FOR THE ALTERNATIVE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL.

L. THE STATE BOARD SHALL PERIODICALLY REVIEW THE STATUS OF A SCHOOL THAT IS OPERATED BY AN ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD. BEFORE THE STATE BOARD MAKES A DETERMINATION, THE STATE BOARD OR ITS DESIGNEE SHALL MEET WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD OR ITS DESIGNEE TO DETERMINE THE TIME FRAME, OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE APPROPRIATE CONTINUATION OF EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO ASSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION OF AUTHORITY FROM THE OTHER ORGANIZATION BACK TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD.

M. IF AN ALTERNATIVE OPERATION PLAN IS PROVIDED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION L OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL PAY FOR THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL AND SHALL ADJUST THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DISTRICT ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-961,

BASE SUPPORT LEVEL PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-943, MONIES DISTRIBUTED FROM THE CLASSROOM SITE FUND ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 15-977 AND TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT LEVEL PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-945 TO ACCURATELY REFLECT ANY REDUCTION IN DISTRICT SERVICES THAT ARE NO LONGER PROVIDED TO THAT SCHOOL BY THE DISTRICT. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MAY MODIFY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S REVENUE CONTROL LIMIT, THE DISTRICT SUPPORT LEVEL AND THE GENERAL BUDGET LIMIT CALCULATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-947 BY AN AMOUNT THAT CORRESPONDS TO THIS REDUCTION IN SERVICES. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL RETAIN THE PORTION OF STATE AID THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE DUE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE SCHOOL AND SHALL DISTRIBUTE THAT PORTION OF STATE AID DIRECTLY TO THE ORGANIZATION THAT CONTRACTS WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL.

N. IF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DETERMINES THAT A CHARTER SCHOOL FAILED TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT ITS IMPROVEMENT PLAN, THE SPONSOR OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL SHALL REVOKE THE CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHARTER.

O. IF THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO SCHOOLS IN A DISTRICT AND MORE THAN ONE-HALF, OR IN ANY CASE MORE THAN FIVE, OF THE SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT ARE ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241 FOR MORE THAN TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS, IN THE NEXT ELECTION OF GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS THE ELECTION BALLOT SHALL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE LISTING OF GOVERNING BOARD CANDIDATES:

WITHIN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, (NUMBER OF SCHOOLS) SCHOOLS IN THE _____ SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F OR DESIGNATED AS "SCHOOLS FAILING TO MEET ACADEMIC STANDARDS" BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

P. AT LEAST TWICE EACH YEAR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PUBLISH IN A NEWSPAPER OF GENERAL CIRCULATION IN EACH COUNTY OF THIS STATE A LIST OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241.

~~Q. THE FAILING SCHOOLS TUTORING FUND IS ESTABLISHED CONSISTING OF MONIES COLLECTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 42-5029, SUBSECTION E AS DESIGNATED FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAY USE MONIES FROM THE FUND TO PURCHASE MATERIALS DESIGNED TO ASSIST STUDENTS TO MEET THE ARIZONA ACADEMIC STANDARDS.~~

R. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ADOPT GUIDELINES TO INCLUDE SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING IN READING INSTRUCTION FOR TEACHERS

WHO PROVIDE INSTRUCTION TO PUPILS IN A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM OR GRADE ONE, TWO OR THREE IN AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION.

S. IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES PRESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION AND SECTIONS 15-241 AND 15-241.01, A SCHOOL THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D OR F FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS SHALL IMPLEMENT A SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS INTERVENTION STRATEGY UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

T. IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES PRESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION, A SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF D OR F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241 FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS SHALL IMPLEMENT A PARENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY. THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR EACH APPLICABLE SCHOOL WITHIN THE DISTRICT, AS PRESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION A OF THIS SECTION.

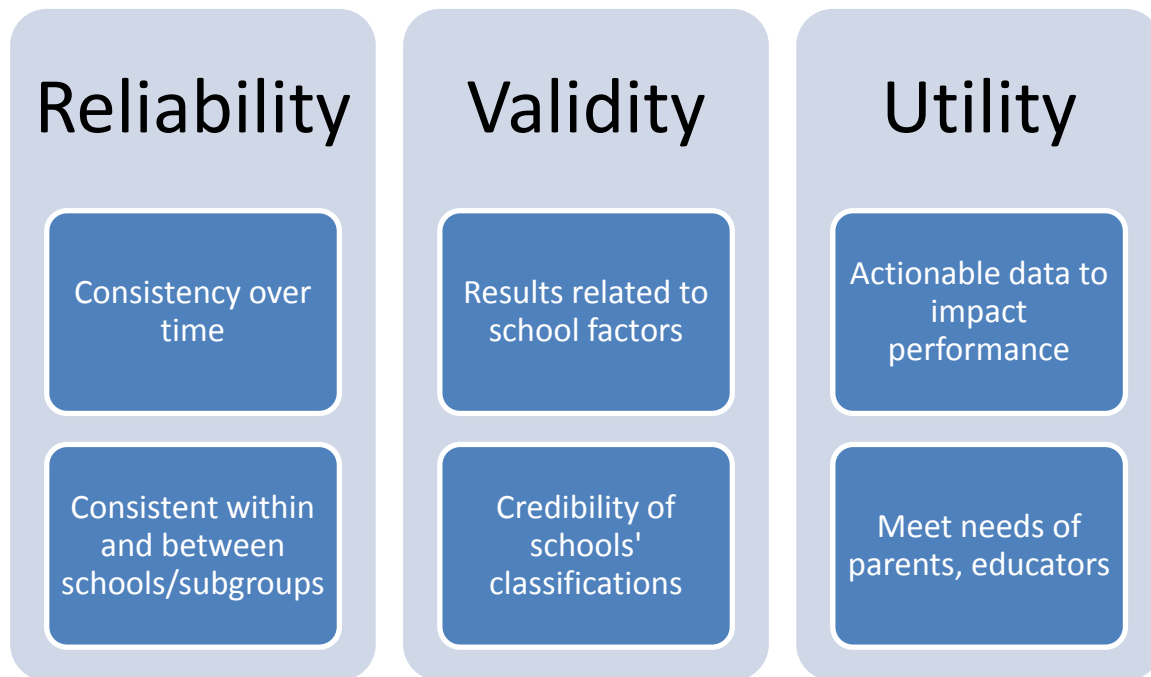
U. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PUBLISH CRITERIA FOR A SCHOOL'S OR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EXIT STATUS FROM A PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT OF A LETTER GRADE OF F IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION. THE CRITERIA SHALL PRESCRIBE THE ACTIONS AND RESULTS NECESSARY TO BE DEEMED TO HAVE COMPLIED WITH THIS SECTION REGARDING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, INCLUDING THE PROPER IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION J OF THIS SECTION. THESE CRITERIA SHALL BE PROVIDED TO A SCHOOL OR SCHOOL DISTRICT IF IT IS ASSIGNED A LETTER GRADE OF F PURSUANT TO SECTION 15-241.

Rebuilding Arizona’s School & District Accountability System

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE), the State Board of Education (SBE), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) share the ultimate responsibility of ensuring all students — regardless of race, ethnicity, income, language or special needs — receive an education that prepares them for the opportunities and demands of college, the workplace, and life beyond high school. Senate Bill (SB) 1289 establishes a transition process and prohibits ADE and the SBE from assigning schools and LEAs letter grade classifications during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years (transition period) as prescribed in A.R.S §15-241. The high stakes of letter grades has only increased as these labels incentivize high performing schools and sanction schools in need of improvement. In order to address these dual purposes, A.R.S. §15-241 requires a list of all “F” rated schools to be published in a newspaper of “general circulation” at least twice annually. During the summer of 2014, the SBE’s A-F subcommittee passed guiding principles to guide the development and implementation of any accountability system used for high stakes. Similarly, Superintendent Diane Douglas recently published “AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait” also calling for multiple measures and more transparency in the grading system. This specific report outlines how Arizona can hold schools accountable in a manner as robust as Arizona’s school choice system.

Framework for Building a New A-F System

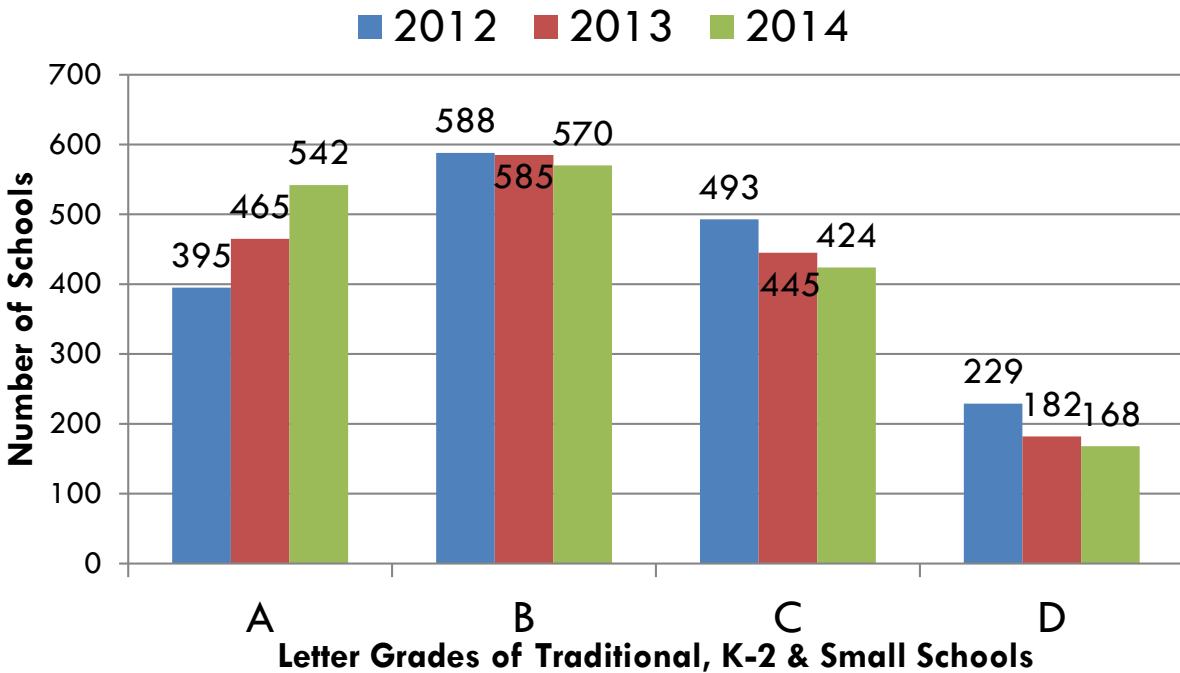
Regardless of labeling conventions, any accountability system used for high stakes purposes will utilize best practices in order to apply the most balanced measurement principles. Based on stakeholder feedback from school administrators, experienced educators as well as policy and technical experts, the newly built accountability system should incorporate the following design principles:



Using parameters prescribed in A.R.S. §15-241, Arizona piloted its first A-F Letter Grade Accountability System in the 2010-2011 school year and began applying high stakes consequences to A-F letter grades given to schools and districts during the 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 school years. With the exception of the 2014-2015 school year, ADE

has produced more than 2000 A-F letter grades each school year using distinct methodology adopted by the SBE.

Figure 1. Letter Grade Distribution Over Three Years



Unfortunately, student achievement in Arizona has not increased at the same rate as “above average” and “excellent” school labels have increased over the past three years. Two-thirds of Arizona schools received an “A” or “B” letter grade in the 2013-2014 school year although statute assigns “average” schools in Arizona the “C” letter grade. Based on parameters required by statute, letter grades were previously assigned based almost entirely on results of Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) Mathematics and Reading assessments; based on the new proficiency rates on Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT) English/Language Arts and Mathematics assessments, schools would decrease an average of 35 A-F points. The introduction of new standards and an assessment offers a unique opportunity to rebase the state’s accountability system in order to reflect more defined goals and expectations for Arizona schools.

Multiple Measures

Statute identifies specific measures which can be included in school letter grades, but omits other measures which may also impact the quality of an academic program. Although the ADE and SBE have taken steps to include other measures in schools’ A-F letter grades, statute requires the majority of a school’s letter grade to come from results of student proficiency and student growth as measured by the statewide standardized assessment. Each year, ADE has recommended refinements to accountability measures in order to address feedback from stakeholders, mitigate unintended consequences, and align with the state’s shifting priorities.

During Superintendent Diane Douglas’ “We Are Listening” tour, parents and educators throughout Arizona expressed the need to include more than just standardized tests in the A-F accountability system. Based on the current statutory requirements to grade schools, a lower rated school can have multiple programs in place to prevent bullying, provide

transportation, and engage parents while schools which invest solely in test preparation may receive higher letter grades. Diversifying the measures within the state's accountability system will also reduce the emphasis on standardized testing, but maintain high academic standards for all students.

Factors unrelated to a school or educator's inputs could impact each of the measures within the existing A-F Letter Grade Accountability System. Factors such as whether a student drops out of school or achieves a scale score higher than their peer compounds these non-school factors when aggregated to the school level. The existing system operationalized multiple measures of student performance by using a test score to denote both proficiency and growth; however, each of these depends on a single test event in order to produce the student-level data used to hold schools accountable.

Although high school graduation rates are included in the accountability model for all high schools, a single test event can directly impact students' ability to graduate from high school in addition to proficiency and growth scores for a school. These statewide standardized assessments serve as an integral barometer of instructional effectiveness as well as academic progress from year to year; however, an accountability model restricted to aggregation of student-level assessments does not provide the comprehensiveness of a truly multi-level, multiple measure model which could also include school-level measures such as increased teacher retention or participation rates in Arts, Music, and Physical Education programs.

Statewide standardized assessments alone fail to capture the innovative practices used to prepare diverse groups of students for postsecondary readiness. Arizona's accountability system must capture more comprehensive indicators in order to minimize stakes associated with a statewide standardized assessment and impact of school demographics on overall accountability determinations. For example, student proficiency on AzMERIT does not directly capture or measure the extent to which schools prioritize highly qualified and/or effective educators. Furthermore, the overall percentage of students which meet high school graduation requirements within four years does not capture the percentage of students which leave high school with industry certification or prepared for postsecondary education.

Inform Improvement, Maintain Standards

A-F letter grades ensure continued parsimony and utility of the state accountability system, but transparency of the underlying components can inform performance improvement. Public reporting of A-F letter grades serve as a tool for many stakeholders – especially those concerned with school choice. For many schools, especially those with non-traditional academic programs, the letter grade label holds less value than a more direct assessment of school improvement and performance. A comprehensive system will provide feedback for purposes of improvement and accountability rather than forcing assignment of value-laden labels easily taken out of the context. Many states, including Arizona, recognize the unintended consequences of assigning A-F labels to schools where a letter grade may be less appropriate than more nuanced identification. In these instances, the state may utilize other mechanisms to differentiate and support schools which serve divergent populations such as Arizona's more than 100 alternative schools. Even with different methodology and designations such as alternative (-ALT) and Arizona Online Instruction (-DL) models, the easily recognized A-F labels imply some level of comparability among very different schools.

Arizona's 2012, 2013, and 2014 A-F Letter Grade Accountability System lacked any mechanism to identify failing levels of performance among schools. In fact, the scale used to

assign letter grades only accounted for “excellent” through “below average” levels of performance or “A” through “D” letter grades. Without an operational definition of a failing school, schools performed “below average” for several years before the “F” letter grade was assigned per A.R.S. §15-241.

This approach to high stakes accountability biases one side of the performance spectrum and withholds information necessary to drive improvement in schools which need feedback most. In its third year of full implementation, the number of Arizona schools which received the “F” label tripled. Although more than a dozen states utilize the A-F grading system for its schools, Arizona relies exclusively on state statute to diagnose failing performance after designating schools “below average” for three years regardless of any improvement made.

Figure 2. Three Scenarios - “A” Letter Grade Schools

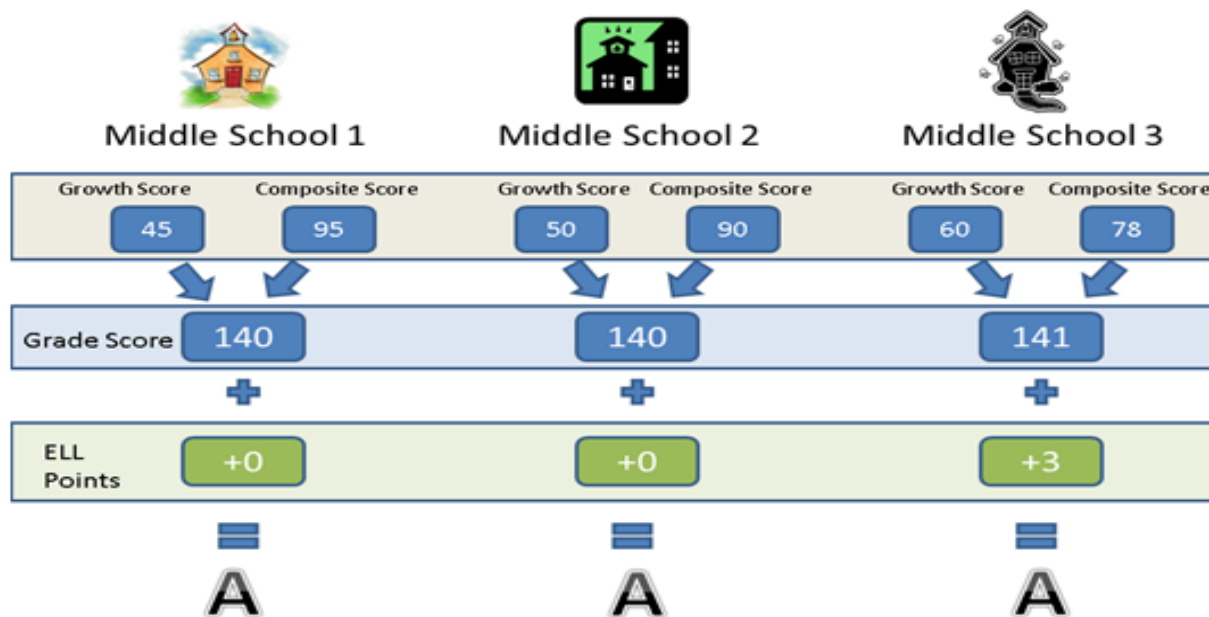


Figure 2 illustrates how three different schools could earn an “A” in the former A-F system; however, this single letter grade may not adequately identify shortcomings in specific areas – nor does a significantly lower letter grade convey strengths within a school. While letter grade inflation is a significant concern, the lower end of the A-F spectrum may discount a school’s academic growth and exacerbate factors like poverty which impact student achievement. An unacceptable letter grade can also deter selective families and effective educators; furthermore, a low letter grade also triggers consequences intended to improve the school in areas of deficiency which can be predicated to some extent on the socioeconomic conditions surrounding the school.

Unlike other states which utilize an A-F grading system for schools, there is no provision which exists to ensure the robustness of the letter grading scale on a regular basis. Implications include the inflation of school letter grades when measures allow easier access to A-F points or when measures such as statewide standardized assessment drives down proficiency rates. For example, despite an increase in the number of high schools rated “A” or “B” from 2013 to 2014, neither proficiency nor graduation rates in high schools increased.

Summary

In order to observe the principles of agreement adopted by the SBE and realize Superintendent Diane Douglas' vision for a new A-F accountability system, ADE will collaborate with internal and external stakeholders. ADE has long used technical and policy stakeholders to evaluate proposed models for fairness, validity, and reliability. Any recommendation to the SBE will continue to undergo thorough review by lay, technical as well as policy stakeholders. In order to better serve schools and the public, the ADE will streamline reporting of school performance data whenever possible. ADE actively collaborates with national measurement and policy experts and other state education agencies to utilize best practices within Arizona. More flexible state and/or federal laws outlining accountability for K-12 education warrant increased checks and balances especially as more diverse measures are incorporated into a high stakes system.

Regardless of the stakeholder collaboration, technical assistance, or measurement innovation, Arizona's next accountability model will first observe the parameters outlined by A.R.S. §15-241. Potential legislation which only references statewide standardized assessments may discourage inclusion of non-statewide standardized assessments such as industry credentials, assessments for college credit, etc.

Maximum flexibility of a revised state system will ensure alignment with schools' other accountability requirements. With potential Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, it is important to develop a system with the most agility and sensitivity to policy change. Prescriptive rules for school accountability diminish the state's ability to bring data-driven decisions and policy recommendations to the SBE. Also, a state accountability system built in a silo fails to take into account duplicative mandates on schools by other regulatory bodies. Arizona parents and educators are primed for a more comprehensive, collaborative, and innovative system of holding its schools accountable. Lessons learned as well as on-going demand for a more holistic profile of school performance will drive the development of a new accountability system presented to the SBE for adoption during the summer of 2016.