



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact: Deb Mitchell
602.989.3636
deb@deboramitchell.com

30 Arizona High Schools Implementing Move On When Ready Initiative *-- New Performance-Based Model Prepares Students for College and Careers --*

PHOENIX (September 17, 2012) -- Thirty Arizona high schools are implementing Move On When Ready, a performance-based education initiative to prepare students for college and career readiness, during the 2012-2013 school year. The number of participating schools has more than doubled since the initiative was launched in fall 2011.

The majority of schools, all participating voluntarily, are implementing a "whole school" Move On When Ready model which commits them to providing the high expectations performance-based educational system to all their students regardless of prior academic achievement.

The model is based on more than 20 years of research on the education systems of countries that consistently outperform the United States in student achievement. In a departure from tradition, in which students advance based on "seat time" or how much time they spend in a classroom, it offers students the opportunity to advance based on their mastery of the curriculum.

According to Dr. Sybil Francis, executive director of the Center for The Future of Arizona and leader of the Move On When Ready initiative, Move On When Ready personalizes the education experience for students, allowing them to move at their own pace while at the same time supporting all students in preparing for success in post-secondary education.

"Move On When Ready was created in response to K-12 readiness issues facing Arizona's students and the reality that students need an education beyond high school to succeed in today's global economy," she said.

"The majority of students who enter college have to take remedial courses -- courses that don't count for credit. Move On When Ready was developed with all students in mind to let them know what is required for them to be successful in their education beyond high school, and to provide a way for them to get there with less concern about how long it takes."

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Arizona leads the nation in pioneering this innovative model of high school education. It is the first and only state to have enacted legislation enabling schools to offer a performance-based diploma -- the Grand Canyon Diploma. Arizona has by far the greatest number of students and schools committed to a performance-based model of education than any other state.

To qualify for a Grand Canyon Diploma, students must perform at a college-ready level on one of two sets of internationally benchmarked exams provided by Cambridge International Board Examinations or ACT Quality Core. "By contrast, nearly 70 percent of today's high school graduates require remediation in math or English courses when they reach college," Francis said.

Move On When Ready's curriculum, instructional and assessments systems are in alignment with the new Arizona Common Core State Standards, putting schools in the statewide lead in implementing the new standards and positioning students to be competitive in the global job market.

Qualifying for a Grand Canyon High School Diploma provides students with multiple academic pathways. They may take the diploma and enroll in community college, increasing their potential to graduate in a timely fashion. They may choose to postpone graduation, remaining in high school to take advanced coursework in preparation for entry into selective universities. Others may choose to pursue their career and technical education on a full-time basis.

The opportunity to be among the first schools in the nation to participate in the initiative has been well received by Arizona high schools and several middle schools. Twelve schools participated last year. Eighteen new schools began implementation in fall 2012. Partner schools include district, charter and private schools that serve diverse populations in urban and rural areas across the state.

"We decided to implement Move On When Ready in order to increase academic rigor in our middle schools and at the high school level," Kingman Unified School District Superintendent Roger Jacks, who is a member of the State Board of Education, said. "The initiative has been very well received by our community, and our students are embracing the academic challenges. Participation at our new high school is three times the size of what we projected."

Sen. Rich Crandall, who chairs the Senate Education Committee and spearheaded Grand Canyon Diploma legislation, said, "I am excited about the number of educators and parents who have committed to a rigorous education for their children. Focusing on knowledge instead of seat time is a complete game changer as students excel at their own pace. I commend those school leaders who have chosen to be a part of the future."

"Arizona's Common Core Standards are designed to raise the bar on our state's education system. Move On When Ready, in alignment with the Common Core and our statewide education goals, isn't waiting to accelerate academic achievement -- participating

schools are doing it now," State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal said. "Students who are well-educated and ready for post-secondary educational options will better position our state to be nationally and globally competitive."

The Arizona Move On When Ready initiative is part of the National Center for Education and the Economy's Excellence for All program designed to utilize high-performance high school systems, while maintaining the American commitment of opportunity for everyone. In addition to Arizona, it currently includes Connecticut, Kentucky and Mississippi.

The Center for the Future of Arizona was selected by the State Board of Education to lead the Move On When Ready effort. With support from the Helios Education Foundation, the center, a non-profit organization combining public-policy research with collaborative partnerships to affect positive change in Arizona, works with all schools implementing the initiative.

"Helios Education Foundation is proud to partner with the Center for the Future of Arizona to improve college and career-readiness by making a rigorous, high expectations curriculum within a college-going environment available to all Arizona students," said Paul J. Luna, president and CEO. "Our interest is in creating a collaborative structure where teachers, counselors and administrators participating in the initiative can share their experiences, improve the education system overall, and most importantly, better prepare students for success beyond high school."

For additional information visit: www.arizonafuture.org/mowr

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