

Arizona Action Plan for IMPROVING EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Developed following the 2016 Southwest Pathways Conference

The Southwest Pathways Conference brought 500 people to Scottsdale to examine the most promising ways for preparing young people for successful careers. The conference featured 144 speakers from 20 states, including national leaders on education and workforce development.

Members of the “Arizona Team,” representing some of the State’s leading education and business organizations, met to draft an Arizona Action Plan. The goal was to focus on initiatives that were especially promising for improving education and workforce development in Arizona in the near future. The Plan has since been refined based on input received from other State leaders. Five priority areas for action have been identified.

PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

1. Promote career literacy for ALL students and young adults while making Arizona a national leader in career development.

Description: Career literacy is the foundation for a successful pathways system. Career literacy results from providing students with the information, tools and support they need to choose a career, and to then find the most effective pathway toward that career. Career development should become a central focus of education in Arizona. Achieving this goal would lead to significant improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of our education and workforce development system. Arizona has an opportunity to become a national leader in career development by engaging business more deeply in this work, improving professional development for counselors and teachers, and placing more emphasis on the State’s Education and Career Action Plan process (ECAP).

Proposed Action Steps:

- (1) Encourage the Arizona business community to expand opportunities for mentoring, internships and other forms of work-based learning.
- (2) Explore development/adoption of an improved technology tool/platform that would assist students, teachers, counselors and parents in developing career plans and pursuing career pathways.
- (3) Develop a campaign to increase awareness of the value of career development among parents, the business community and the broader community.
- (4) Work with the State Board of Education to make career development a higher priority, including exploring increased funding and increased level of staffing.
- (5) Insure Arizona is actively engaged in the national movement led by the Global Pathways Institute to promote career development.
- (6) Emphasize and create more resources on workplace employability skills.

2. Develop tax incentives to encourage business to become more engaged in career development.

Description: Business must be more involved in preparing more young adults for career success. Offer tax incentives for companies and industry associations that provide internships and other forms of work-based learning, create externships for counselors and teachers, enable employees to become directly engaged in mentoring, etc.

Proposed Action Steps:

- (1) Work with business leaders and tax policy experts to craft a tax proposal for consideration by the State Legislature in 2017.
- (2) Consult with national organizations to examine what has worked well elsewhere.
- (3) Develop a campaign to communicate the opportunities provided by the incentives.

3. Expand school choice in Arizona by creating an additional pathway to high school graduation, and creating a program to address the shortage of CTE teachers.

Description: Arizona has become a national leader in school choice. We can further expand choice by offering more students the option of enrolling in a different *program of study*, one aimed at preparing them for career success. Arizona's CTE system, including the JTEDs, already provide the foundation for this approach. The Arizona team identified two promising action steps. The first would create the "Arizona Career and College Pathway" that would allow Arizona high school students to focus on preparation for in-demand careers while insuring they acquire the academic skills needed to do college-level work without remediation. This pathway has already been designed and would be an optional pathway that districts could choose to offer.

The second action step would address the critical shortage of CTE teachers, which currently limits Arizona's efforts to offer high-quality career pathway programs. Meeting the shortage will require working with industry to identify and recruit promising candidates, and then working with new teachers to reduce a high rate of turnover.

Proposed Action Steps:

- (1) Work with the State Board of Education to create an additional pathway to the high school diploma, the Arizona Career and College Pathway:
 - Support the Career and College Task Force to insure that it develops a workable plan for providing the technical assistance that will be needed to help districts launch such a pathway.
 - Work with the State Board to get this pathway approved by year-end 2016.
 - Identify districts that can demonstrate the power of this option, and insure they receive the assistance necessary to launch quality programs.

(2) Address the shortage of CTE Teachers:

- Work with Arizona companies that have a direct stake in CTE to help recruit potential teachers. This effort is now being piloted with Intel, and needs to be expanded to other industries and companies.
- Conduct research to learn more about the shortage, the programs and locations with the greatest needs, and promising solutions.
- Collaborate with national organizations, such as ACTE, to learn more about the innovative solutions they've developed for dealing with this problem.

4. Incorporate career readiness into Arizona's school accountability system.

Description: Incorporating career readiness into Arizona's A-F Accountability System would be one of the most effective means of changing the culture of education by placing more emphasis on insuring our students are "career ready," and not just "college ready". What gets measured is what gets done.

Proposed Action Steps:

- (1) Identify the metrics that will be used to define career readiness in Arizona. Work with the Council of Chief State School Officers to learn what has worked well in other states.
- (2) Convene meetings with major stakeholders to discuss and refine these proposed metrics.
- (3) Present the proposal to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval.
- (4) Launch a campaign to inform districts, school boards, superintendents and parents about the new system.

5. Develop a messaging campaign to promote multiple pathways to success and the importance of career literacy.

Description: An effective communications/messaging campaign will help revive economic opportunity by raising awareness of the multiple pathways to career success, the critical importance of career literacy, and the idea that the fundamental purpose of education is to prepare students for economic independence.

Proposed Action Steps:

- (1) Work with leading media and communication experts to craft a messaging campaign.
- (2) Enlist the Governor's office in this campaign.
- (3) Work with industry to identify stories that illustrate the core message, "There is a pathway to success for every student."

CALL TO ACTION

We are actively seeking the support of business, education, and other organizations for this action plan. Please contact the Global Pathways Institute if you are interested in joining this coalition of supporters. We believe adoption of this agenda would put Arizona on the road to a more prosperous future, in which far more of our young people are equipped with the skills to achieve economic independence, even as our businesses are able to readily hire the skilled workforce they need.

This plan was developed with the assistance of many organizations. They include the Arizona Business & Education Coalition, the Arizona Department of Education, the West Comprehensive Center, and Greater Phoenix Leadership. Global Pathways Institute has assumed responsibility for coordinating this work.

Since the plan was developed, a growing number of organizations have decided to support it. They include Greater Phoenix Economic Council; the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce; and the Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. We urge you to join us in this effort to improve education and workforce development in Arizona.

ABOUT GLOBAL PATHWAYS INSTITUTE

Global Pathways Institute at Arizona State University is committed to creating an America in which all young people are prepared to lead productive and successful lives. We believe that providing young people with high-quality multiple pathways and career development is the best way to help them discover and develop their potential and achieve economic independence.

CONTACT INFORMATION



William Symonds

Director

william.symonds@asu.edu

(781) 910-3161

Elle Gemma Gruver

Program Coordinator

ellegemma.gruver@asu.edu

(480) 884-1518

www.globalpathwaysinstitute.org