



ARIZONA BUSINESS & EDUCATION COALITION

Monthly Meeting Fall Series
Thursday, August 27, 2020

10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

Questions and Answers

Q: What other measures of academic proficiency might Arizona consider so we don't rely on the limitations of AzMERIT? ~ Jennifer Johnson, Grand Canyon University

Ms. Norton: There is growing awareness and support for mastery-based assessment which is based on competency rather than relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.

Q: I appreciate the data Rodel provides in this report. **Toward the idea of providing a robust public education system, what would anyone indicate as Arizona's best recent investment in our public schools that was not won/settled through the courts or by educators and parents down at the capitol?**

~ Joe Thomas, Arizona Education Association

Ms. Norton: Project Rocket comes to mind as a successful program piloted by three school districts which showed dramatic academic improvement in low-income schools. It provided an additional \$150 per student and was supposed to be expanded statewide until derailed by the pandemic.

Q: I appreciate Rodel and ABEC sponsoring this event. But, this same discussion has been going on for decades. I appreciate the data that lends itself to clarifying the issues, but none of these data are particularly surprising or new. **What are we going to do differently to actually see some positive outcomes?** Those of us who have been around for a while get justifiably weary... ~ John Pedicone, Southern Arizona Leadership Council

Ms. Norton: With respect and trepidation will I attempt to respond to Dr. Pedicone given the breadth and depth of his experience but focusing on what works and doing more of it seems like a good place to start. In Dr. Pedicone's back yard, the extraordinary success of University High School is a model ready made for replication. Instead of solitary bright spots, why don't turn them into flood lights?

Q: Wouldn't it be fair to say that growth is a pathway to proficiency and that one is not exclusive to the other? Neither can tell the whole story. ~ Tom Tyree, Yuma County Schools

Dr. Kennedy: It is a pathway; but how long should the pathway extend if we are to be truly accountable? Accountability requires that ultimately proficiency be the appropriate measure of success.

Q: Do you have strategies and best practices shared by your teachers to work with students from lower income families?

Dr. Steve Poling, Assistant Superintendent, Dysart Unified School District:

- Build relationships with the students - They will not learn from someone they don't like or think does not care about them.
- Constantly assess throughout the lesson to check for understanding
- Pull small groups when there is a need to provide some additional teaching on a concept that the student is not understanding
- Build relationships with the families - They are partners in the child's education and they can become your strongest advocate and supporter.
- Communicate with your administration when there is a situation in which you need assistance - For example, one of our English language learners was not doing well in an online learning environment. Although his family received a special letter inviting them to the Onsite Learning Lab, the principal made a telephone call to individually invite him to the onsite space.
- Ask for help when you are not sure what to do. Your teacher team and other colleagues can provide other ideas and insight on how best to teach a concept or skill.
- Apply what was learned in professional development right away in your classroom. That is the best time to do it, when it is fresh in your mind.
- Take students through the classroom evaluation process if they truly have a need for additional intervention.
- Participate fully in your teaching team and in other learning opportunities. Learning is what you make it.
- Incorporate social-emotional learning into your content areas and don't teach it discretely. These are skills that students need all day, every day.
- Practice self-care and do your best to insulate yourself from taking on students' trauma. While you need to address it, you don't need to live it.
- Share your thought process when you are teaching students. 'Think alouds' allow children to see how they can learn the concept too.
- Be present (physically and mentally) for your students. They need you each and every single day.
- Start fresh with students each day as every day is a new day.