

NEWS RELEASE

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ABEC Launches Statewide Community Forums On High School Reform

First of Eleven Forums To Be Held In Sedona

PHOENIX – Arizonans will have the chance to share their thoughts and concerns about the important issue of high school reform during a series of community forums sponsored by the Arizona Business and Education Coalition (ABEC). The first of eleven forums titled “High School Reform: What’s a Community To Do?,” will be held in Sedona from 4:00-6:00 pm on Wednesday, March 23 at Yavapai College’s Sedona Center for Arts & Technology, 4215 Arts Village Drive. The forum is free and open to the public. Attendees are asked to RSVP by calling 928-634-7131.

Additional forums will be held this spring in Phoenix, Tucson, Mesa, Glendale, Yuma, Safford, Prescott, Flagstaff and Kayenta. Bilingual forums will also be held in Phoenix and Tucson.

ABEC, in partnership with the Arizona Community College Association (ACCA), will host the community forums to engage business, education and community leaders in discussions about Arizona’s high schools and how they can be improved.

“High school reform is a top priority for ABEC,” said Susan Carlson, executive director of ABEC. “It is imperative that our students graduate with the skills they need to be successful in post-secondary educational opportunities, the workplace and society. The long-term success of those students, our communities and our economy is dependent on that.”

The purpose of the forums, which are funded by a grant from the Arizona Community Foundation, is to:

- Generate public awareness about the challenges Arizona high schools face
- Clarify participants’ thoughts and values regarding high school
- Identify how the community can work together to support areas for improvement
- Move communities closer to readiness for high school reform

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Months of preparation have gone into the forums. The Center for Civic Participation, on behalf of the Arizona Community College Association, developed the “high school reform discussion guide” to frame important issues for discussion at the forums. The guide was developed through an extensive process of interviewing key stakeholders and researching relevant education and public policy studies.

The results of the community forums will be compiled into a report for the local communities, the Department of Education and state policymakers to provide valuable local input on high school reform initiatives.

The schedule for upcoming forums is as follows:

- **Phoenix** Mon., March 28 *(Bilingual Forum)*
- **Tucson** Wed., March 30 *(Bilingual Forum)*
- **Tucson** Thurs., March 30
- **Mesa** Wed., April 6
- **Glendale** Tues., April 12
- **Yuma** Wed., April 20

The forums in Safford, Prescott, Flagstaff and Kayenta are still being scheduled.

About ABEC

ABEC is the only statewide organization that brings business and education leaders together to share information and influence the future of education in Arizona. As a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, ABEC is dedicated to a superior education and future for Arizona K-12 students. Visit ABEC on the web at www.azbec.org.

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