

Tough Choice or Tough Times: Arizona's Pathway to College and Career Success

Presentation to Arizona Business and Education Coalition

Dr. Sybil Francis • June 1, 2009



CENTER FOR THE
FUTURE OF ARIZONA

Educational Landscape



- High school graduation rate stalled at about 70% nationally for 40 years
- Foresee lower college-going and completion rates in future
- General-studies high school graduates unable to earn livable wage
- High school graduates unprepared for college-level studies
- Conclusion: Need system level change – anything less is not enough

Exciting Opportunity for Arizona



- Arizona leaders embraced need for comprehensive and transformational educational reform
- Joined consortium of Tough Choices or Tough Times states, March 10, 2009
- Commitment to major pilot of up to 50,000 students
- Center for the Future of Arizona asked to lead the private stakeholder group
- Partnership between CFA, ADE and NCEE is leading Arizona effort – ABEC, AEA and others also partners

Tough Choices or Tough Times



- Reform agenda based on 25 years of research by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)
- NCEE researched best practices of most successful educational systems in the world
- December 2006 *Tough Choices or Tough Times* report of the *Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* under auspices of NCEE

Features of TCTT Model – Standards and Assessments



- **Assessment system** – instructional system benchmarked to international standards and based on mastery of material
- **Move on when ready** – allows students to progress based on mastery of material
- **Transfer into college-level work** after 10th grade for students who pass board exam
- **Those who stay in high school for two more years** – can select multiple options based on their chosen career and educational pathway

Features of TCTT Model - Teachers



- **Top teacher** talent - competitive pay and professional compensation systems
- **Statewide teacher compensation system** – teacher salaries not dependent on local tax wealth
- **Public school performance contracts** - schools operated by independent contractors, especially partnerships of teachers, have discretion over all management and budget decisions and responsible for accountability
- **Changed responsibilities for school board and districts** – provision of professional services and oversight of performance contracts and data

Features of TCTT Model - continued



- **High quality early childhood education** – benefits from cost-savings at other end of pipeline
- **Pupil-weighted financing** – apportion state funding according to unique learning needs of individual students so schools have resources for services required by the student

Next Steps



- Planning year for pilot projects – determine best way for Arizona to proceed
- Seeking volunteer districts and schools to pilot Tough Choices model
- Involve up to 5% or 50,000 Arizona students in pilot projects
- NCEE will provide technical expertise, seek legislative action for pilot projects, and identify and pursue potential funding sources for pilot implementation

Questions? Comments?



**Looking forward to
working with ABEC and all of
you who are interested
Need your input**

Thank You

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