



COMPREHENSIVE GUIDELINES

For 2009-2010 A+ Application



A+ Schools of Excellence

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A+ Schools of Excellence

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Arizona Educational Foundation created the A+ Schools of Excellence Program in 1983 to identify, celebrate and recognize overall educational excellence in schools throughout Arizona. The A+ Program is sponsored by **The Arizona Republic/Season for Sharing, APS, Desert Schools Federal Credit Union, and Safeway.** The A+ Program's purpose is threefold:

- To identify and give public recognition to outstanding public schools in Arizona;
- To make available a comprehensive framework of key criteria for school effectiveness that can serve as a basis for participatory school self-assessment and planning;
- To facilitate communication and sharing of best practices within and among schools based on common criteria related to success

A+ Schools model quality and equity in a 21st Century context. They have a strong commitment to academic excellence, meet rigorous learning standards, and demonstrate strong student achievement results. A+ Schools cultivate learning-centered school environments, and are supportive of the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of the whole child. They focus on the individual needs of every child and are recognized for their superior ability to go above and beyond in providing services to children, families, and the local community.

Schools selected as winners must demonstrate high levels of student achievement, innovation in classroom instruction and programs, implementation of goals through extensive collaborative involvement of parents and community, and evidence of high levels of satisfaction and consensus. A+ Schools unify all stakeholders – students, parents, staff, and the broader community – in assuring quality and equity in all aspects of the school programs, and engage them in strategic thinking and planning toward continuous improvement.

The A+ Award is a powerful energizer for increasing public confidence in recognized schools, possibly generating higher local funding and creating greater parent and community involvement. Schools selected for the A+ Award receive: **\$500, A+ signage or banner, and other promotional materials.** They retain their A+ status for three years.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible to participate in the A+ Schools of Excellence program, a school must:

1. Be a public, or public charter school (elementary or secondary) with some combination of grades PreK-12.
2. Have met the criteria as a 'Performing' or better school under Arizona Department of Education's AZ LEARNS.
3. Be in its sixth full year of operation in its current grade configuration when the application is submitted.
4. Have met all areas of federal and state compliance, and have no unresolved complaint issues specific to OCR violations or the Constitution's equal protection clause; or be part of a district in current violation of, or corrective actions in, said statutes.
5. Not have been recognized as an A+ school in the past three years. Previously recognized schools are eligible to reapply after their three-year status is complete.
6. ****NOTE (NEW):** Principals must have completed at least one full year as principal of the applicant school.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Parts I, II, III and IV of the A+ application will be reviewed/evaluated for completeness and accuracy:

- The **Selection Committee** will read and score all applications. Schools must receive at least five 'exemplary' ratings, and NO 'inadequate' ratings from the **Selection Committee** in order to qualify for a site visit. Parts II, III and all Sections of Part IV will be scored. Based on scores, the **Selection Committee** will determine whether applicant schools will receive a site visit. Schools that do not qualify for a visit will receive specific feedback from the **Selection Committee**.
- The **Site Visit Committee** is a larger panel comprised of educational experts that may include superintendents, principals of A+ Schools, university faculty, and other expert consultants. **Evaluator Teams** will be formed from the **Site Visit Committee** to visit each school to verify documentation.
- The **Evaluator Teams** will: observe in classrooms; meet with students, staff, parents, and community members; interview individuals as needed; meet with school leadership and other relevant groups; and conduct an exit interview with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s) of the school.

Final A+ selections will be made by the **Site Visit Committee**. Schools will be notified of the results; if not selected as an A+ School, schools will be given specific feedback.



RECOMMENDED EVIDENCE DOCUMENTATION

Evidence of success is a critical part of the A+ application, and is required for all criteria in Part IV. To receive an 'exemplary' rating, schools must provide substantive evidence that supports claims made in the application. In addition to test data, *examples* of evidence include:

PARTICIPATION RATES

- Raw numbers or percentages
- Participation numbers compared to class lists, overall student population, etc.
- Disaggregated by grade levels, gender, other

AWARDS GIVEN

- Date, by whom, grade levels affected
- Project Portfolio/Presentation materials

PORTFOLIOS/CLASS PROJECTS

- Award Certificate
- News articles, project samples, pictures
- Summary of comments, anecdotes from participants
- Evaluation surveys (written, phone follow-up, etc.)

MEETINGS

- Purpose of groups/committees
- Make-up of groups/committees and how that is determined
- Organizational Chart
- Meeting calendar, agendas, attendance
- Group membership, others involved
- Minutes, decisions made, what transpired

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

- Participation rates/percentages
- Purpose, evaluation of goals met
- Teacher/staff notes on class-by-class participation
- Student/parent participation in planning
- Calendar of Activities
- Staff satisfaction surveys, student/other feedback

REFERENCES (to be cited in application and possibly viewed at site visit)

- Handbooks – student, faculty, parent, district, other
- District initiatives/requirements
- ADE requirements and guidelines
- Website content



BE SPECIFIC. SUPPORT YOUR CLAIMS. For example, if your Annual Fall Potluck was 'fantastic' and attended by 'everyone,' document 'fantastic' (anecdotes, pictures, verbal/written surveys, news articles, etc.) and 'everyone' (teachers record their students' attendance, each class sponsored an activity w/prizes, 13 Kiwanis Club members brought the name tags, and 1,321 tokens were used to play games, etc.).

RATINGS WILL BE BASED ON:

EXEMPLARY: 3 points

Stakeholders clearly go above and beyond the expected norms of practice, and the exemplary school practices can serve as benchmarks for excellence in schools.

Response contains outstanding innovative and creative *lighthouse* initiatives that go above and beyond the expected norm. Schools may have outstanding programs in specific grade levels or content areas that are unique, coordinated among multiple grade levels, and multi-disciplinary. These practices may be totally unique to the school and should provide a much deeper and broader understanding of the content area, diversity/inclusion practices, and/or community involvement.

ADEQUATE: 2 points

Programs and practices are sound, but lack distinction from the expected norms for schools.

The public's expectations are high for all schools; many creative practices have been adopted by individual schools to strengthen their programs. Schools that have good programs for parent involvement, co-curricular activities, community partnerships, and high achievement for students are to be commended, but to qualify as an A+ School, there must be clear evidence of extraordinary efforts and results related to these programs.

INADEQUATE: 1 point

Response is incomplete, lacks sufficient evidence or is deficient in detail to meet acceptable standards or to make determination of merit.

An 'inadequate' response most often occurs as a result of not having sufficient documentation to substantiate or determine the merit of claims made in the application. Evidence is extremely important.



PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

See Application.

PART II: VISION/MISSION STATEMENTS

one single-spaced page

Successful organizations have a clearly articulated and commonly understood vision and mission. Provide a brief statement of your school's philosophy, state the school's goals that reflect your vision and mission, and describe your process for reaching full consensus on your vision, mission and goals.

PART III: SCHOOL SUMMARY

one single-spaced page

Provide a brief, coherent snapshot of your school. Your summary statement may be made available to the press if your school is recognized. Please include your school name, city, and state in the first sentence. Also include:

- Nature of the community and students served
- School's traditions and milestones
- School's strengths, key initiatives and accomplishments
- School's facilities
- Recognitions/awards received by your school, staff members and/or students that are evidence of your successes
- What makes your school a unique and successful place worthy of A+ status

Your school is unique, and your school and community are different than other schools and communities. Tell your story, not a duplicate of someone else's story. Show how you've built on your school and community strengths and created exemplary programs to meet the needs of your unique population that are evident throughout the school.

BRAG a bit. Let us know who, what, when, where and how you received an honor, award, or other recognition from local, state, and/or national sources. Describe your experience in opting-for, and receiving each honor, award or recognition. Tell us how each energized and propelled your school to do more and better.



PART IV: LEARNING CENTERED SCHOOLS CRITERIA

25 single-spaced pages

The criteria used for the Arizona A+ Schools of Excellence Program are derived from several decades of reliable research about the efficacy of results-focused, effective schools, whether public, charter, or private. They have been modified to address technological progress, and the growing evidence of a global and multi-racial/ethnic/lingual society. The needs of diverse societies require the inter-weaving of basic humanness with a unique understanding of what is required for all of us to survive and prosper.

One key characteristic of excellent schools is their understanding of 21st Century skills required for success. 21st Century skills are an essential part of preparing children and young adults to address profound global, interdependent issues, and include:

- Media literacy, information and communication skills
- Critical thinking, systems thinking, problem-solving
- Creating and innovating based on higher-level thinking
- Interpersonal skills and collaboration
- Self-direction, Adaptability, Social/personal accountability
- Personal and professional leadership, ethics/character development
- Workplace productivity – interpersonal, project planning and development

Keep in mind that the criteria in Part IV are:

- **Comprehensive:** They are intended to address all important internal and external aspects of school operations, yet be broad enough to suit diverse school contexts and to accommodate new or changing goals and strategies within any particular school.
- **Interrelated:** There is a dynamic linkage among the criteria. They address the multiple, embedded, and interacting contexts of school life. The systematic use of a broad composite of criteria helps to ensure that school improvement goals and strategies are balanced.
- **Non-prescriptive:** An annual Field Day is not required, for example. The focus is on results rather than on specific means or procedures. A+ Schools of Excellence criteria and process (or any other process based on effective schools) may be used as a blueprint to help you be more focused and more committed to specific school improvement strategies.
- **A basis for collaborative self-assessment:** School responses to the overall framework should provide a profile of school strengths and areas for improvement. The criteria are a useful tool for self-assessment, strategic planning, and involvement of all relevant stakeholders in a common school improvement initiative. Self assessment is an effective school improvement strategy. Research and experience suggest that self-assessment benefits schools and fosters improvements in practice. Successful schools have a process for planning and reflection. Thus, the A+ Schools of Excellence criteria are valuable to schools assessing their current programs and practices in relation to those outlined in the program application.



The nine components used for school self-assessment are:

- A. School Organization and Culture
- B. Student Focus and Support
- C. Professional Learning Communities
- D. Engaging Instruction
- E. Challenging Curriculum Standards
- F. Leadership and Educational Vitality
- G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships
- H. Indicators of Success
- I. Challenges

Components A, B, and C focus on elements of the school environment and context that provide the successful framework for learning: organization; culture; and interpersonal relationships. This is the feel of your school. Is it a positive, nurturing place for all stakeholders – staff, faculty, parents and students? Accommodating the special needs that all stakeholders have is critical. Does everyone feel part of the whole school? How do you know? Student learning and achievement are not the end result of a well-oiled machine; they are the result of trust, respect, and caring exhibited by everyone.

Components D and E address the dynamic of student/teacher/content interaction that is the central core of the educational process. A challenging curriculum is valuable only insofar as students are engaged in learning. Using tools such as technology is essential for capturing and building on our natural bent toward learning. One can love a child, and yet have no idea how to engage them in learning, or how to establish meaningful standards that reinforce, rather than obliterate, individual motivation. So, how we instruct students (and adults) with their diverse learning needs, and the standards we apply is especially critical to our success.

Components F and G emphasize the leadership styles of the administrative staff and faculty, and the critical interface between 'how things are done around here' and the school's relationships with significant external stakeholders. Does everyone respect and value the expertise of others, including parents? How do we know this? Many of us have been in token meetings designed to simply get everyone to sign-off on a plan designed by someone else; this is NOT excellence. Providing an inclusive and transparent process is critical.

Component H provides multiple outcome measures appropriate for measuring school results. To qualify as an A+ School of Excellence, the positive integration of all these components is essential for student success. The leadership of the school – administrators, teachers, staff, volunteers, others – and the relationships among those in leadership positions make a difference; the impact of those relationships will ultimately show up in test scores.

Finally, all schools face many challenges over which they have limited or no control. In Component I, describe the challenges you have faced, how you have managed them, and what you have learned. And then talk about future challenges, and your plans for addressing them.

The order of Sections A through I is intended to help you tell a story from how the school is organized, its philosophy and sense of self to how this drives relationships with each other, and with students, parents and all stakeholders. All schools must adhere to basic norms and standards; explain and document how your school goes above and beyond those standards to make sure literally everyone feels valued, nurtured, and supported so that they learn to the maximum of their capabilities. This is not an easy thing to do, but one that is critical for an A+ School of Excellence.



A. School Organization and Culture

Describe how the culture of the school provides opportunities for students to build sustained and caring relationships with adults and enjoy a healthy peer climate among students.

A1. What are the school's underlying values, beliefs, and traditions that have built up over time as people work together, solve problems and confront challenges?

- What activities or celebrations are routinely practices to build positive relations between/among students, staff, parents and the community?
- How are students encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with teachers and other adults?

A2. How does the school foster positive interactions and respect between students and adults, and promote a healthy peer climate among students?

- What attention is given to students who may feel left out in group activities?
- What systems are in place to help students learn to handle frustration, anger, teasing, bullying, and other negative interactions?
- How do students learn responsible behaviors toward themselves and others?

A3. What is the school's plan for school-wide safety, discipline and drug prevention?

- How is the plan developed, reviewed and revised as a daily priority?
- How are incidents managed, ranging from minor to serious, to maintain a sense of safety, consistency, equity and fairness?
- What results can be seen for 3-5 school years? Decreased referrals? Less serious incidents? Increased parental responsibility?
- What community partnerships have been developed to provide ongoing support?

A4. How does your school foster a sense of cooperation and collaboration among adults and students?

- How are all stakeholders engaged in collective inquiry, reflection and responsible decision-making about learning and the school environment?
- How do non-teaching staff (counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, transportation, maintenance, support, cafeteria, nurse, crossing guards) support achievement of the school's vision, mission and goals?
- How are students prepared for a culturally and socially diverse environment?
- What activities/projects are in place to create a learning-centered culture within the school?



B. Student Focus and Support

Describe your student population and their needs – academic, nonacademic, cultural. Provide evidence of a cohesive and integrated network of programs and services.

B1. How is the school's population best described?

- What are the specific needs of your students?
- How does the school ensure that all students receive the academic and nonacademic support that they need to achieve?

B2. How is your school structured to meet the varied needs of your student population?

- What extended learning activities are available for students and how do those activities integrate with the academic curriculum?
 - co-curricular clubs, athletics, cultural activities
 - tutoring aligned with state standards
 - mentoring, before/after school groups
- How do these programs support student learning, involvement, and academic achievement?
- What approaches are used to address learning styles and needs; i.e., flexible grouping, diverse instructional practices, group-to-group transitions?
- How are teachers assigned to most effectively match student needs?

B3. How does the school address students' physical, social and emotional needs, and intervene when student personal needs are preventing academic success?

- What nonacademic services and programs are available to support students, and how do they relate to the student needs and school goals identified; such as:
 - counseling, character education, health services, safety programs
 - student intervention assessments/process, other initiatives
- What strategies are used to ease transitions for students – transfers, first-year students, family moves, etc.

B4. How has your school demonstrated a commitment to addressing the accessibility of its facilities and programs to students with disabilities?

- How does school safety and discipline fit into the school's focus on academic success for all students?
- How does the school address the accessibility of its facilities and campus to students and others with disabilities?
- What has the school done (or plans to do) to improve safety – pick-up and drop-off areas, proximity to public parks, etc.



C. Professional Learning Communities

Describe your Professional Development Plan, implementation and assessment to demonstrate how the school recognizes and values its vital role in achieving the school's vision and mission of success for all students.

C1. What opportunities do teachers/other staff have to participate in professional learning communities that enhances their ability to support student learning?

- How does the school include all stakeholders – teachers, support staff, parents, community, administrations, others – in a collective approach to provide professional growth and learning opportunities?
- How do these communities:
 - Work together and solve problems
 - Seek out information and provide a context for reflection
 - Build a sense of collective responsibility
- What system(s) is in place that enables teachers to:
 - plan lesson delivery based on assessment data
 - share educational research
 - reflect on classroom practices
 - confer about specific student challenges

C2. How does a coherent approach to professional development ensure ongoing learning for staff?

- How do organizational arrangements, such as time and teaching assignments, and school norms and culture, make professional development a priority?
- How does the school tailor professional development and support to address the differences in career experience or professional responsibility in the following areas:
 - support for beginning teachers and newly hired teachers
 - teachers experiencing unusual challenges in their current assignment
 - teachers undertaking a significant change in responsibilities
 - opportunities for teachers/staff to share expertise
- How does the school assure significant on-site and off-site training for all staff – teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, other support staff?
 - in curriculum, instruction, and content areas
 - mentoring, participation in professional networks
 - research, coursework, degree programs
 - attendance at professional conferences
- How does the school ensure adequate financial and time resources for ongoing professional development?

C3. How has teacher professional development improved teaching, school culture, and student achievement/success?

- How does the school use the processes and results of student assessment, staff evaluation, and school review to support professional growth?
- How do teachers and staff obtain feedback on their own professional performance (include informal means as well as evaluation processes)
- How are staff members recognized for their achievements, participation, expertise, and accomplishments?



D. Active Teaching and Learning

Describe your teaching practices. Provide evidence that there is a purposeful research-based decision-making process that governs all aspects of teaching and learning, and that there is a discernible link between instructional strategies and student achievement.

D1. How are teaching practices and learning experiences consistent with current knowledge/research about successful teaching and learning?

- How do teachers develop curriculum units and lesson planning across grades and levels to engage students, reduce duplication, and assure consistency with state standards?
- How do teaching practices, both in and out of classroom, demonstrate that all teachers and staff have high expectations for all students?
- What strategies are used to ensure that core literacy skills and critical thinking are an integral part of instruction across all grades and subjects?
- How are all staff involved in consistently supporting student learning in the classroom, on the playground, in the lunchroom, before/after school activities?

D2. What does the school do to accelerate the learning of students who fall below basic standards, and/or mastery?

- How do teachers assure students' deep understanding of content and context, rather than simply coverage of materials?
- What strategies are used to address different learning styles and needs (i.e., expansion and modification of instructional time, double blocking, regrouping, co-teaching, other)?

D3. What processes, strategies and management systems are used to assure a safe and orderly school/classroom environment?

- How are students involved in making decisions about use of class time, planning specific learning experiences/projects, and evaluating success?
- What discipline policies are in place, and reinforced throughout the school day?
- What management routines assure a safe and orderly environment, and develop learners who are adaptable, self-directed and responsible?
- How does the school make sure the policies are equitable, fair, and consistently applied across all grade levels; taking special needs/other circumstances into account?

D4. What opportunities do students have to apply learning to real world situations?

- What opportunities are provided through the classroom instructional process, as part of school-wide activities and/or as a part of out-of-school initiatives?
- What opportunities do students have to integrate quality work-based and/or experiential learning experiences (e.g., contextual learning, project based learning, student leadership and service activities, work based experiences, internships)?



- How do teaching practices provide for hands-on, investigative activities; including independent projects, collaborative group projects, and real-life problem solving experiences?
- What student service-learning strategies and volunteer activities enhance the curriculum with real-world experiences, and provide connections to careers and the community?

D5. How are resources made available to teachers and students for instruction, gathering information and sharing the results of their efforts?

- How much access is provided to library and other media resources, and how is it equitably scheduled among all grade levels?
- What media services and equipment are available, and how are they allocated?

D6. What technology applications is the school using? How do they relate to the curricular goals, and how do they support teaching and learning?

- School Website: What is included, and is it user-friendly? How is it used for communication? Is it kept up-to-date?
- How does the school ensure equitable access to and utilization of technology for students and teachers?
- What resources are available every day to teachers and students for gathering information and sharing results (library, media services, technology products) and how do these services support classroom instruction?
- How is technology integrated to enhance teaching and learning throughout the curriculum?
- How do you ensure that both students and staff have the technical skills, available resources and accessibility to use technology in content areas?



E. Challenging Curriculum Standards

Describe the core curriculum and how each subject area reflects current research and best practices across all grade levels. Demonstrate the depth and breadth of the curriculum.

E1. Describe the core content curriculum for each of the following areas; describe the scope and sequence, high-quality, integration of content areas, and how skills are integrated across grades.

English

Reading, Language Arts

Science

Mathematics

Foreign Languages(if applicable) Social Studies

The Arts (Music, Art, Drama)

Physical Education

E2. Select two of the above content areas (OR one of the above and one other unique curricular area) that should be highlighted because of their central importance to the school's vision/mission, and the special significance to the school.

Describe the high quality, uniqueness or special significance of the offering:

- Scope and sequence
- Integration of content areas
- How skills including reading, writing, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are integrated across grades

How does this curriculum go beyond state/minimum standards to ensure that students achieve at high levels and establish rigorous curriculum standards and high expectations for all students?

E3. How does your curriculum address 21st century content; including civic literacy, financial, economic and business literacy; global awareness; health/wellness?

How do you incorporate critical thinking skills into the curriculum?

How do you integrate practical skills into history, finance, science, other areas?

What opportunities do you provide to all students for understanding and practicing practical personal, health/wellness, fiscal and cultural skills?

E4. How is the curriculum in each content area and grade level developed, monitored, evaluated and improved at your school?

How does the school assure clear articulation, teacher collaboration across and within grade levels, and to/from feeder schools?

What are some unique, exemplary and/or innovative features of the curriculum, programs and services that are unusually effective?

Who is involved in curriculum development and in what ways? How does this fit within the leadership and professional development structure of the school?



E5. What requirements must be satisfied before a student is promoted to the next grade or level of schooling?

- What are the policies and practices related to promotions, and eligibility for accelerated course work?
- How do these practices ensure mastery, enhance student development, and challenge students beyond minimum standards?
- How are these policies integrated across all grade levels, and with transition requirements for middle school and high school?

E6. How does the school ensure that all students, including learners with unique needs (e.g., students with disabilities, students identified as gifted and talented, students with limited English proficiency, students placed at risk, etc.) have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

- How is the school organized to provide for differing student academic needs; i.e., daily schedules, decisions about student grouping and re-grouping, etc.
- Describe any special programs or curricular offerings available for:
 - Gifted, highly-intellectual
 - ELL, ethnic/diverse students
 - Remedial
 - Special Education
 - Other special populations
- Explain how these relate to the overall curriculum, and how students are integrated into the mainstream of the school (classes, activities, etc.)
- How are students assessed and placed in such programs; and, how are these programs ultimately integrated into the mainstream?
- How do you assure that special needs students ultimately return to the mainstream when appropriate?

E7. FOR HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY: What curricular offerings provide rigorous educational opportunities that transition students to post-secondary education and/or careers? Describe curricular offerings such as honors: International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit, virtual learning, and/or college courses. Describe any special programs or curricular offerings available for particular types of students. Explain how these relate to the overall curriculum. Provide examples of the programs' success.



F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

Describe how the leadership centers the operation of the school on teaching and learning, working with stakeholders to improve curriculum, instruction, and student engagement. Describe how the school's mission and vision propel the school to excellence.

F1. What leadership roles and functions are important in the school?

- What is the role of the principal as instructional leader and lead learner?
- How does the school leadership ensure that policies, programs, relations, and resources focus on promoting teaching and learning?
- How is the school organized to involve stakeholders in making important decisions?

F2. How is the school improvement process organized and managed to ensure the school is always moving forward?

- How has the use of research findings and analysis of data informed policies and practices, programs, relationships, and use of resources in establishing priorities and prompting school improvements?
- What specific improvements have been implemented as a result?

F3. How does the school engage its staff, teachers, students, parents, and the wider community in formulating the school's vision/mission, goals, and priorities?

- What kind of participatory school improvement process is in place?
- How are key stakeholders involved in discussing, planning and implementing school improvement efforts?
- How do key stakeholders within the school have a voice in everyday decisions of critical importance to the school and to themselves?

F4. How does school leadership model the use of 21st century tools and applications in the roles of principal/manager, and teacher/staff leaders?

- How has the school integrated technology to improve management and program efficiency and effectiveness?
- Are both staff and students trained in the use/uses of technology, and is there ample opportunity to use those resources effectively?
- What are some of the ways in which technology applications are used to communicate with staff, parents and the community, and to provide professional development?
- How has technology enabled the school to develop and analyze data about the school and student success, and use it as a basis for decision making?



F5. How is a long-range Strategic Plan developed and how does it drive and target school improvement efforts?

- What is the school's collaborative strategic planning process and how are all staff and major stakeholders involved in school-wide and classroom improvement initiatives?
- How is data analysis/interpretation used in developing/implementing the Strategic Plan?
- Have the goals and objectives resulted in consistent and improved changes in school practices? In what ways?
- How are these goals supported through professional development and staff evaluation processes?

G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Describe actions taken by the school to demonstrate your commitment to and recognition of the important roles that families, partnerships and community play in supporting learning.

G1. What community collaborative alliances and partnerships are in place at your school? How do these relationships result in the school being a respected and valued partner?

- What are the goals and priorities of the school, family, and community partnerships? How are they articulated and aligned with school priorities?
- How were these goals collaboratively developed with all stakeholders, and what strategies were used to involve people from all segments of the community in supporting education?
- What are some examples of activities or projects conducted in collaboration community institutions, agencies, businesses and groups? Describe an effort that best exemplifies the partnerships, and demonstrates positive impacts on relationships, student learning and improved student performance.

G2. How does your school involve all families in their children's education and student support programs?

- How does the school support and enhance the parenting role, ensure two-way communication, and involve families in decision-making?
- How are volunteers recruited, trained, and made to feel an integral part of the school, whether stuffing envelopes or serving as a resource person?
- What services are provided in health and social services, adult education, referrals to community agencies?
- How does the school assure family involvement – i.e., transportation to/from school activities, convenient times for parent meetings and conferences, before/after school etc.



G3. How does your school welcome and respect families from all walks of life, solicit and value their input, and find multiple ways to invite and involve them in school initiatives to build a shared commitment to student success?

- How do you establish effective two-way communication and meaningful involvement of parents that respects the diverse background and challenging needs of families.
- What are some ways in which you involve all families in school initiatives and build a shared commitment to student success?
- How do you know that families are involved from all segments of the school community: i.e., ELL, Special Education, Remedial, low SES, etc.?

G4. How are educational resources in the school and the community used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families?

- How does the school partner with museums, public libraries, community enrichment programs, performing arts institutions, and internship programs?
- Does the school provide reciprocal use of its own facilities, such as the media center, classrooms, gymnasium, playground and computer labs?

H. Indicators of Success

*Provide evidence and examples of a coherent school-wide assessment program tied to the school's mission. The school must show through multiple measures that high levels of learning are achieved, or that there is significant student progress over time. Identify current issues and future directions. **Attach and submit one copy of your most recent Arizona School Report Card to the original application only.***

H1. Describe your school's balanced assessment system/approach that includes high quality summative, benchmark and formative classroom assessments used to improve teaching and learning.

- What is the school's overall approach to assessment, and how do the methods align with the mission and curriculum?
- How does the school assure the use of timely and ongoing information to teachers and other decision-makers for individualizing student programs?
- How has the school addressed and minimized the effects of special or negative factors on school climate and achievement, i.e., absenteeism, serious discipline problems, high turnover of students and staff, other challenges?

H2. What evidence do you regularly collect and analyze to judge the effectiveness of your school?

- What types of data do you collect – i.e., test data (required, as well as teacher-made assessments), participation of students/parents/staff (#, %, demographic and gender data), satisfaction surveys (staff, parents, community).



- What alternative assessments do you use (i.e., portfolios, performance-based projects, unique classroom assessments, etc.), and why? How do you interpret and use these results in concert with basic assessments?
 - include a brief description of assessments used, which may not be familiar to others
 - alternative assessments may include such indicators as a significant increase in the number of minority students taking and passing higher level courses, portfolios and performance-based assessments
- How does the data make issues of quality and equity part of the everyday conversation at your school, and how is this data used to influence decisions?

H3. What are the data for the past five years that serve as quantitative indicators of improved school climate and engagement?

- Show how all subgroups of students achieve at high levels or have improved significantly in achievement. Specify which groups, if any, are excluded from a test, the reasons for the exclusion, as well as the number and percentage of students excluded. Describe how these students are assessed.
- Explain any patterns of increase or decline in test scores. Also, discuss the implications of any special circumstances that may affect student outcomes, and what the school is doing to close the gaps.

H4. Data Collection

Criteria	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance					
Daily teacher attendance					
Teacher turnover rate					
Promotion rate					
Graduation rate (high schools)					

- Report in percentages
- Explain special circumstances affecting these indicators
- In computing student attendance, both excused and unexcused absences should be tallied as absent.
- For teacher attendance, include personal/business leave as well as sick leave.



I. Challenges

- I1. Reflecting on the last five years, what major challenges have been addressed? How have they been resolved? What subsequent changes have contributed most to the overall success of the school?**

- I2. What are the major educational challenges the school must face over the next five years, and how does the school plan to address them? Outline how you will develop an Agenda for Action based on relevant information and data.**