



Arizona Educational Foundation

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDELINES
For 2010-2011 A+ Schools of Excellence
APPLICATION



A+ Schools of Excellence

Sponsored by:



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A+ SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Arizona Educational Foundation created the A+ Schools of Excellence Program in 1983 as a comprehensive school assessment tool 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** with additional support from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona. 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 teaching and 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 the norm in providing services to children, families, and the local community.

Schools selected as winners must demonstrate high or improving 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's programs, and engage all stakeholders 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 retain the status for three years; they receive **\$500 and A+ signage or a banner**. All staff and faculty at A+ Schools receive a **scholarship from Argosy University/Phoenix** as follows: 20% for Master's degree; 15% for baccalaureate degree or Doctoral degree. Schools may order promotional materials with the A+ logo through AEF's website.



EVIDENCE DOCUMENTATION

BE SPECIFIC; SUPPORT YOUR CLAIMS. In the process of writing an A+ application, evidence of success is a key component required in **ALL** sections in Part IV. Evidence must be included as part of the application narrative, not as an addendum or attachment. To receive a rating of *exemplary*, schools must provide substantive evidence that supports claims made in Part IV of the application. For example, in making the claim, “the Annual Fall Potluck was fantastic and attended by everyone,” document *fantastic* with anecdotes, statistics, survey results, media quotes, etc., and *everyone* with evidence such as, “100% of staff members attended;” or “85% of our families participated and each class sponsored an activity with prizes;” or “13 local Kiwanis Club members attended with their families and served dinner,” etc. In addition to hard data, some examples of evidence include:

ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES/SCHOOL-WIDE FUNCTIONS

- Purpose
- Outcome(s)
- Evidence of effectiveness and success
- Participation rates (raw numbers or percentages) compared to class size, grade level, overall student population, etc. disaggregated by grade levels, gender, other

AWARDS/HONORS

- Date received, by whom, and community members affected
- Significance and relevance

CLASS PROJECTS

- Participation rates
- Objectives
- Outcomes; summary of comments, anecdotes from participants
- Evaluation surveys

MEETINGS

- Purpose of groups/committees
- Make-up of groups/committees and how that is determined
- Meeting frequency and attendance
- Decisions made, what transpired, outcomes

ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

- Participation rates
- Purpose, goals, outcomes, evaluation
- Teacher/staff notes on class-by-class participation
- Student/parent participation in planning
- Calendar of Activities
- Satisfaction surveys, participant 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



EVALUATION PROCESS

- The following 11 portions of the A+ application will be reviewed and evaluated with equal weight for completeness and accuracy: Part II; Part III; Sections A through I of Part IV.
- The **Selection Panel** will read and score all applications. In order to qualify for a site visit schools must receive at least five *exemplary* ratings, and NO *inadequate* ratings from the **Selection Panel**. Based on scores, the **Selection Panel** will determine which applicant schools will receive a site visit. Schools that do not qualify for a visit will receive specific feedback from the **Selection Panel**, which, if implemented by a school, will serve to improve the quality of an application.
- The **Site Visit Committee** is a larger panel comprised of experts that may include district administrators, principals of A+ Schools, university faculty, business leaders, and other expert consultants. Individual **Evaluator Teams** of two to five members depending on the size of the school to be visited will be formed from the **Site Visit Committee** to conduct site visits. The main purpose of a site visit is to validate, observe and affirm the contents of the application.
- Site visits conducted by the **Evaluator Teams** will: observe in classrooms; meet with students, staff, parents, and community members; interview individuals as needed; meet with school leadership; and conduct an exit interview with the Principal and Assistant Principal(s) of the school.
- Final A+ School selections will be made by the entire **Site Visit Committee**. Schools will be notified of the results; if not selected to receive the A+ award, schools will be given specific feedback.

EACH SECTION WILL BE GIVEN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SCORES:

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 of Excellence, 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 or by not addressing the prompts in each section.



PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

See Application for template. Contact bobbie@azedfoundation.org if you would like to receive this section in MS Word format.

PART II: VISION/MISSION STATEMENTS

Parts II and III may be combined for a total of no more than two (2) single-spaced pages

Successful organizations have a clearly articulated and commonly understood vision and mission. Provide your school's mission, vision and brief statements (a) of the school's philosophy; (b) of the school's goals that reflect your vision and mission; and (c) describing your process for reaching full consensus on the vision and mission.

PART III: SCHOOL SUMMARY

Parts II and III may be combined for a total of no more than two (2) single-spaced pages

Provide a brief, coherent snapshot of your school. It is likely that your summary statement will be made available to the media if your school is recognized. Please include your school name and city 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 and 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 from other schools and communities. Tell *your* story. Show how you have built on your school and community strengths and created exemplary programs to meet the needs of your particular population.

Throughout the application, BRAG a bit. For example, 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 award, honor or recognition. Tell how each energized and propelled your school to do more and to do it better. Describe exemplary programs and practices that demonstrate you are an A+ School. Provide evidence of success, innovation and sustainability of these outstanding programs and practices in classrooms, at grade levels, and throughout the school and community.



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. 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.

21st Century Skills: A key characteristic of excellent schools is an understanding of 21st century skills required for success. These skills are an essential part of preparing children and young adults to become college and career ready and to address profound global, interdependent issues; these skills 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 guidelines 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 link 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:** The focus is on results rather than on specific means or procedures. A+ Schools of Excellence criteria and process may be used as a blueprint to help schools be more focused and more committed to specific school improvement strategies.
- **A basis for collaborative self assessment:** 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 in Part IV are:

- A. School Organization and Culture
- B. Student Focus and Support
- C. Professional Learning Communities
- D. Active Teaching and Learning
- 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 an opportunity to describe the feel of your school. These sections should reflect that the school is a positive, nurturing place for all stakeholders: staff; faculty; parents; and students. Identifying and meeting the specific needs of all stakeholders is critical. Components A, B and C should show that everyone feels like a part of the whole school. 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 one's natural bent toward learning. One can love a child, and yet have no idea how to engage a student in learning, or how to establish meaningful standards that reinforce individual motivation. So, how we instruct students and adults with their diverse learning needs and the standards we apply are especially critical to our success.

Components F and G emphasize the leadership style(s) 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? Providing an inclusive, collaborative and transparent process is critical.

Component H provides multiple outcome measures appropriate for assessing 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 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. Talk about future challenges and your plans for addressing them.

The order of Components A through I is intended to help you tell a story starting with the school's organization, its philosophy and sense of self to how this culture drives relationships among all stakeholders. All schools must adhere to prescribed norms and standards; explain and document how your school goes **above and beyond** those norms and standards to ensure that everyone feels valued, nurtured, and supported so that they learn to the maximum of their capabilities. These are not easy things to do, but all are critical for an A+ School of Excellence.



A. School Organization and Culture

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

A1. What are the 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 practiced to build positive relations among students, staff, parents and the community?
- What artifacts and symbols are displayed throughout the school that reflect the culture and values of the school?
- How do the behavior and actions of all stakeholders reflect a positive climate at the school?

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

- How are students encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with teachers and other adults?
- What attention is given to students who may feel left out of 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?
- How are students prepared for a culturally and socially diverse environment?
- How are all stakeholders engaged in making a positive impact on the school environment?
- How do non-teaching staff members (counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, transportation, maintenance, support, cafeteria, nurse, crossing guards) support and affect the school culture?

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

- How is the plan developed, reviewed and revised?
- How are incidents managed, ranging from minor to serious, to maintain a sense of safety, consistency, equity and fairness?
- What are some short- and long-term results of the school's action (e.g. decreased referrals, less serious incidents, increased parental responsibility, etc.)?
- How does school safety and discipline fit into the school's focus on success for all students?
- What community partnerships have been developed to provide ongoing support in any of these areas?
- What has the school done or what does it plan to do to improve safety (pick-up and drop-off areas, proximity to public parks, etc.)?



B. Student Focus and Support

Describe your student population and their needs: academic; nonacademic; and 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 as defined by the population?
- How does the school assess the academic and nonacademic needs of its students?

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

- What extended learning activities – both academic and nonacademic – are available for students and how do those activities integrate with the academic curriculum? Examples might include:
 - co-curricular clubs, athletics, cultural activities
 - tutoring, mentoring
 - before and/or after school groups
- How do these activities support student learning, involvement, engagement and academic achievement?
- How do these activities relate to the school's mission and vision?

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 student needs and school goals? Example might include counseling, character education, health services, student intervention assessments, and other initiatives.
- What strategies are used to ease transitions for students such as transfer students, first-year students, family moves and the like?
- 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?

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



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. Describe your coherent approach to professional development that ensures 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 include all stakeholders – teachers, support staff, parents, community, administrators, others – in a collective approach to provide professional growth and learning opportunities?
- How does the school assure significant on-site and off-site training for all staff: teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, and 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?

C2. What opportunities do teachers and other staff members have to participate in professional learning communities that enhance their ability to support student learning?

- How do these communities work together and solve problems, seek out information and provide a context for reflection, and build a sense of collective responsibility for student learning?
- Describe the system(s) that is (are) 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

C3. How has teacher professional development improved teaching, school culture, and student achievement and 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?
- What do staff members do to support each other personally as individuals and as a group?



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 and 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 are teachers assigned to most effectively match student needs?
- How do teachers assure students' deep understanding of content and context, rather than simply coverage of materials?
- 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 members involved in consistently supporting student learning in the classroom, on the playground, in the lunchroom, during before and after school activities?
- How are students involved in making decisions about use of class time, planning specific learning experiences and projects, and evaluating success?

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

- What strategies (provide specific examples and outcomes) are used to address different learning styles and needs, i.e., expansion and modification of instructional time, double blocking, regrouping, co-teaching, flexible grouping, diverse instructional practices, etc.?
- How is data used to improve instruction for these students?

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

- What discipline policies are in place and reinforced in classrooms 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 and other circumstances into account?



D4. What opportunities (provide specific examples and outcomes) 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 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 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?
- What additional 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?

- How does the school ensure equitable access to and utilization of technology for students, teachers and all staff?
- 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. How is the curriculum developed, monitored, evaluated and improved at your school?

- Who is involved in curriculum development and in what ways? How does this process fit within the leadership and professional development structure of the school?
- How does the school assure clear articulation as well as teacher collaboration across and within grade levels and to/from feeder schools?

E2. Provide a brief description of the curriculum across all grade levels for the following core content areas (address the two bulleted prompts below when summarizing each area):

**English*

** Reading, Language Arts*

**Science*

**Mathematics*

**Foreign Languages (if applicable)*

**Social Studies*

**The Arts (Music, Art, Drama)*

**Physical Education*

- Give examples of ways in which 21st century content skills outlined on page 7 are incorporated.
- Describe some unique, exemplary and innovative features that are particularly effective. Tell how you measure their effectiveness.

E3. Select two of the content areas in E2 (OR select one content area in E2 and one other unique program or curricular area) to discuss in greater depth. Choose these two areas or programs because of their central importance to the school's vision and mission, and their special significance to the school.

- Describe the high quality, uniqueness or special significance of the offering in terms of:
 - Scope and sequence
 - Integration of content areas
 - Impact across grade and skill levels
- How does the rigorous curriculum in these areas go beyond standards, maximize student achievement, meet particular school/student needs, exemplify high expectations, and ensure positive outcomes?

E4. How does the school ensure that all students, including learners with unique needs (see second bullet below), have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels?

- How is the school organized to provide for differing student academic needs (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 programs for these groups relate to the overall curriculum, and how students are integrated into the mainstream classes and activities of the school when appropriate.
- How are students assessed and placed in such programs?

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. HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY: What curricular offerings provide rigorous educational opportunities that transition students to post-secondary education and/or careers?

Describe outside and honors curricular offerings: International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit, virtual learning, CTE, and 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 (a) how the leadership centers the operation of the school on teaching, learning and working with stakeholders to improve all aspects of education at your school and (b) how the school's mission and vision propel the school to excellence.

F1. Describe the leadership structure, roles and functions that are important at the school and tell why.

- What is the role of the principal as instructional leader and lead learner?
- What are other leadership roles and positions at the school, including site councils? Describe how they are formed and selected, what their roles are and their interaction with and responsiveness to all stakeholders.
- How does the school leadership ensure that policies, programs, relations, and resources focus on promoting teaching and learning and on meeting students' needs?

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?
- What kind of participatory school improvement process is in place?

F3. How does leadership engage staff, teachers, students, parents, and community in decision making?

- 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, teacher leaders and staff leaders?

- How has the school integrated technology to improve management and program efficiency and effectiveness?
- 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?
- Describe the school's website. Is it user-friendly? Up-to-date? Interactive? Used for communication?
- How has technology enabled the school to develop and analyze data about the school and student success?
- How is data used as a basis for improvement, thoughtful change and 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 are data analysis and interpretation used in developing and implementing the Strategic Plan?
- Have the goals and objectives resulted in consistent and improved changes in school practices? In what ways?
- How are the goals of the Strategic Plan supported through professional development?



G. School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Describe actions that demonstrate the school's commitment to and recognition of the important role 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 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 with community institutions, agencies, businesses and groups? Describe an effort that best exemplifies the partnerships and demonstrates positive effects on relationships, student learning and improved student performance.
- What evidence demonstrates the positive outcomes of these alliances and partnerships?

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?
- How does the school facilitate and assure family involvement, i.e., transportation to and from school activities, scheduling convenient times for parent meetings and conferences, 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 in a way that respects diverse backgrounds and challenging needs of the families?
- What are some ways in which you involve all families in school initiatives and build a shared commitment to student success?
- How does your school demonstrate involvement by families from all segments of the school community (e.g. ELL, Special Education, remedial, lower socio-economic population)?

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 outside entities such as museums, public libraries, community enrichment programs, performing arts institutions, and internship programs?
- Does the school provide use of its facilities such as the media center, classrooms, gym, playground, and computer labs beyond regular school hours?
- What services, if any, are provided in the areas of health and social services, adult education, or referrals to community agencies?



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 your most current one-page Arizona School Report Card to the end of the application.

H1. Describe your school's balanced assessment system and 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?

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

- Describe the data do you collect (e.g. test data; rates of participation in school activities by students, parents, and staff; satisfaction surveys of stakeholders), why you collect it, how it is analyzed, and how you use it.
- What required and alternative assessments (i.e., portfolios, performance-based projects, unique classroom assessments, etc.) do you use and why? How do you interpret and use these results? If you use assessments that may not be familiar to others, include a brief description of the assessment(s).
- 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?
- 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 excluded 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 gaps.

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



H4. Data Collection

Criteria	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Average daily student attendance rate*					
Average daily teacher attendance rate					
Teacher turnover rate					
Promotion rate					
Graduation rate (high schools)					

***as reported to the Arizona Department of Education**

- 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

- 11. 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?**
- 12. 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.**