21st Century Readiness in Arizona
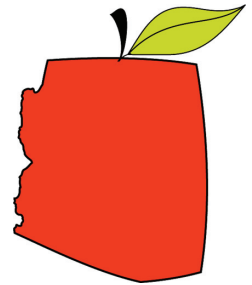
Introduction

Arizona's 21st Century Readiness Initiative builds on a number of key education plans and projects launched in 2005. The goals are to improve and align education systems in Arizona, and ensure every graduating student is prepared for work and postsecondary education. The Arizona Department of Education and State Board of Education are leading this effort.

Educational Technology Plan

In 2009 the State Board of Education approved Arizona's strategic long-range educational technology plan titled *Transforming Education: Enabling Learning for All Arizona Students*. The plan incorporates goals and recommendations that address technology infrastructure and support aimed at enhancing student achievement, educator preparation and leadership.

http://www.ade.az.gov/technology/downloads/2009-2013_state_edtech_plan.pdf.

Education Technology Standards

The Arizona State Board of Education approved new research-based Educational Technology Standards, which incorporate the Framework for 21st Century Learning. Developed by the state Education Technology Standards committee, the standards are defined by grade level, concept and performance objectives for kindergarten through high school. These standards recognize that the use of technology is altering the way teachers are teaching and students are learning. Through the new standards, Arizona hopes to create regular opportunities for students to develop skills that encourage creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, research and information fluency, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making, digital citizenship, and personal productivity.

The Educational Technology Standards can be found at http://www.azed.gov/standards/technology/Articulated_Grade_Level/.

International Programs

Under the leadership of Superintendent Tom Horne, Arizona created a new focus on global awareness and international education. The Department of Education launched a pilot program to create schools of international studies throughout the K-12 pipeline. Other partners include all three state universities, the Apollo Group and Thunderbird Graduate

School. In the Arizona international schools, students will learn a new language starting during the elementary grades, a second new language in middle school, and a third new language in high school. In high school, students will also focus on international studies, world cultures and exchange programs.

To better support this initiative, the Department is building new professional development opportunities and foreign language teaching certificates around international education. In 2009, International Education's first Inaugural Global Teacher's Summit for teachers, principals, superintendents and university level educators from around the state was held at the Thunderbird School of Global Management. The process to help teachers of foreign language obtain their certification is being developed for approval by the state board of education.

Student Education and Career Action Plans

In February 2008, the Arizona State Board of Education approved a board rule that requires Education and Career Action Plans (ECAP) be created for all students in grades 9-12. This board rule will go into effect for the graduating class of 2013. An ECAP reflects a student's current plan of coursework, career aspirations and extended learning opportunities in order to develop the student's individual academic and career goals. Integrating an ECAP process into all facets of the school experience creates a lifelong love of learning and joy in problem solving by requiring students to develop and apply necessary skills to life experiences as students, workers, consumers and responsible citizens. With the ability to identify skills and interests and to apply that knowledge to create their own ECAP, students will develop needed competencies to transition more fluidly and seamlessly into postsecondary education and the workforce.

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS