



State of Arizona
Department of Education
Office of John Huppenthal
Superintendent of Public Instruction

January 23, 2012

Dr. Chuck Essigs, Interim Executive Director
Arizona School Boards Association
2100 N Central Avenue, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Dear Chuck:

A recent article distributed by ASU's Cronkite News Service regarding the recently released Quality Counts Report inaccurately represented my beliefs about locally elected school boards. I would like to take this opportunity to provide clarity, particularly to the leadership and members of the Arizona School Boards Association who have expressed concerns.

I have been a champion of local control of our educational system during my time in the legislature and now in my state-wide role as chief of Arizona's school system. In fact, one of my first acts as chairman of the Senate Education Committee was to remove dozens of mandates on local schools from the education code to ensure that decisions are being made at the most local level possible whenever possible. Further, I view local school board members as active and integral partners in Arizona's efforts to improve our educational system for all students.

We have contacted the reporter to help her gain a better understanding of the Quality Counts results and the inability of school boards or state departments of education to impact a significant number of the components that contribute to the final score. A copy of that email is attached for your reference.

I look forward to continuing my long-standing, positive relationship with the Arizona School Boards Association and many of its members, and the excellent working relationship between ASBA and Arizona Department of Education staff members.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Huppenthal".

John Huppenthal
Superintendent of Public Instruction

CC: Michael Hughes, President



LeFevre, Andrew

From: LeFevre, Andrew
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 12:07 PM
To: 'stephanielynn Snyder@gmail.com'
Subject: Follow up to your Story on Quality Counts Report

Stephanie:

I wanted to reach out to you regarding our discussion and the subsequent article you wrote on the recent Quality Counts Report and provide some clarifying information to you in case you cover education in Arizona again in the future.

During our conversation we discussed Arizona being a local control state and how that impacts our policy making and the impact that had on the grading of certain components of the Quality Counts Report.

Arizona, as a state, has long taken the position that it did not want to dictate education policy from the state down to the local level whenever possible – a position that Superintendent Huppenthal fully supports. This differs from most states. The people that compiled the Quality Counts Report like top down control as a policy, therefore Arizona got dingd with lower grades on many of the factors in their report.

As we also discussed, the bigger issue that the Arizona Department of Education has with the Quality Counts Report is the fact that it rates states on many non-education factors that are very qualitative and non-scientific as part of determining their ranking – factors that are not in any way in the control of the Arizona Department of Education. I'm not sure how such factors as family income, parent education, parental employment or linguistic integration are in the state's control, but nevertheless, we are graded on them.

Superintendent Huppenthal has been a champion of local control of our educational system during his time in the legislature and now in his state-wide role as chief of Arizona's school system. In fact, one of his first acts as chairman of the Senate Education Committee was to remove dozens of mandates on local schools from the education code to ensure that decisions are being made at the most local level possible whenever possible. He views local school board members as active and integral partners in Arizona's efforts to improve our educational system for all students.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please let me know.

Sincerely,

Andy

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A r i z o n a
Department of Education

Our mission is "To serve Arizona's education community, ensuring every student has access to an excellent education."