

**Memorandum of Agreement  
Between the Metropolitan Education Commission and  
the School Districts in Pima County**

**A Statement in Support of Postsecondary Access and Success and Career Readiness**

The Metropolitan Education Commission and the school districts of Pima County believe in the inherent value of a postsecondary education, which takes many forms: technical training, vocational or professional education, community college, college, or university. In today's competitive economy, education beyond high school is an important foundation for career success. Moreover, a national study has shown that higher education attainment in a community is associated strongly with higher income and lower unemployment; more civic engagement and volunteerism; healthier lifestyles; more job satisfaction; and lower rates of dependence on government programs (College Board, *Education Pays 2010*, pp. 4-5, available online at <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2010-full-report.pdf>). Thus to improve the quality of life in Pima County, MEC and the school districts undertake to work together on creating a culture supportive of postsecondary education in the districts and in the community as a whole.

A culture supportive of postsecondary education is an environment in which students and families have information about careers and the educational pathways to reach them; an environment that supports the attitude among students, parents, and teachers that the students will pursue and succeed in postsecondary education; and an environment in which informational, material, and logistical support or assistance is provided to students who otherwise might not have the means to pursue postsecondary education. In this culture, postsecondary access and success and career readiness are achieved.

As a city/county commission advocating for educational excellence in Pima County, the Metropolitan Education Commission invites all school districts in the county to join together in a network or "collaborative" promoting a postsecondary-focused culture. The collaborative members will rely on the Common Measures, developed by the National College Access Network (NCAN) and the forthcoming Arizona College Access Network (AzCAN) Standards for Student Success as guidelines for defining and organizing their work in postsecondary access/success/career readiness. Both the Common Measures and the AzCAN Standards for Student Success are based on research into educational best practices.

The purpose of the collaborative will be to align Pima County school districts on postsecondary access/success and career readiness and to increase effective delivery of individual district programs through collaboration among the districts. To bring about this alignment, the collaborative agrees to use the Regional College Access Center (RCAC) as a key tool in promoting postsecondary access/success/career readiness. The collaborative will seek funding to support use of the RCAC as well as strategies that complement this tool. The overarching goal of the collaborative members is to ensure that all of their students are prepared for postsecondary education and know how this education relates to the world of work.

The collaborative members believe in the need to start focusing on the importance of postsecondary education in elementary and middle school with age-appropriate introductions to careers and the educational foundation needed for work. The collaborative commits to engaging students' parents and family members, thus extending the postsecondary focus to the community. The collaborative sees its work as supporting adoption of the Common Core state standards by Pima County schools. To measure students' progress and to guide the postsecondary preparation process, the collaborative encourages the use of placement tests in middle school and high school. In addition, the school districts will collect and share in aggregate their data on the NCAN Common Measures.

The member school districts and the MEC agree to the following:

- MEC and the school districts will use the RCAC as a key tool to achieve postsecondary access/success/career readiness for their students.
- MEC will investigate how the RCAC can support and complement existing postsecondary initiatives in the member districts; MEC will add these ideas to its RCAC training for counselors and youth ambassadors.
- During the 2013-2014 school year, MEC will provide training on the RCAC to counselors and student services personnel from all the high schools and middle schools in the school districts. The training will consist of a multi-hour session that may take place individually or in small groups.
- The school districts will designate at least one counselor (or student services staff member) at each middle school and high school to attend the MEC training session and will make time available to these employees to attend the training.
- Each district will provide use of a conference room equipped with projector and Internet access for the training.
- MEC will prepare web page(s) introducing the School Districts' Collaborative, with links to research-based definitions and strategies for postsecondary access/success/career readiness. The school districts will add links to these pages on their district websites.
- During the 2013-2014 school year, the Collaborative will meet bi-monthly to discuss and pursue opportunities to extend the group's work on postsecondary access/success/career readiness. MEC will convene and coordinate the bimonthly meetings.

Signatures added in support of this memorandum:

DISTRICT NAME

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Superintendent

Date

METROPOLITAN EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Chair

Date