



**ARIZONA BUSINESS AND EDUCATION COALITION (ABEC)**

**ARIZONA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS INITIATIVE**

**TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE FUND (TRIF)**

**FINAL REPORT**

**August, 2009**

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**ARIZONA BUSINESS AND EDUCATION COALITION (ABEC)  
ARIZONA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS INITIATIVE**

**TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE FUND (TRIF)  
FY 2009 ACTUAL**

**FY2009 INITIATIVE OVERVIEW**

The goal of the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative is to build community-based partnerships around the goal of preparing our high school graduates for both careers and postsecondary training and education. The Arizona Business & Education Coalition (ABEC) just completed the third year of three-year funding from the Arizona Board of Regents TRIF grant to support the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative. The focus of activity for FY 2009 was to expand the Initiative beyond the current 16 school districts and their communities and to prepare for the sustainability of the partnerships as the ABOR grant money comes to an end.

In May 2007, the State Board of Education (SBE) passed a resolution to “support the Arizona Scholars Initiative as a means of encouraging students to engage in a rigorous course of study so that they are adequately prepared for work and post-secondary education in the 21st century”. In December 2007, the SBE approved increased high school graduation requirements effective in 2012 and 2013. These graduation requirements include increased math and science credits. The Scholars course of study is seen as an interim step toward the implementation of these more rigorous graduation requirements statewide.

Allowing each community to work together as business and education partners in support of encouraging a Scholars high school course of study with rigor in math and science, along with additional academic areas, allows for the flexibility to make each partnership successful. The downturn in the state and national economy was not anticipated at the time of the annual Initiative planning and, as might be expected, played a part in the outcome of the Initiative results. This economic influence was perhaps best seen in lower than anticipated new districts adopting Arizona Academic Scholars and, in part, may be responsible for less business activity surrounding Scholars’ presentations and on-going support.

**FY2009 GOALS / OBJECTIVES**

1. Continue to expand the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative beyond the 16 current districts.
2. Increase the number of high school students successfully completing an academically rigorous curriculum.
3. Continue to increase the number of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade students introduced to the Arizona Academic Scholars initiative and encourage them to take the Scholars course of study.
4. Complete the update of Scholars materials so it is easy to access, appealing to each audience and is current. Updating the Scholars website is part of this process.
5. Encourage districts to include their business partners in carrying out the Scholars initiative and to achieve greater support of all types.

## **FY2009 PERFORMANCE MEASURES / DELIVERABLES**

		<b>FY2009 ACTUAL</b>
1	Increase the number of Arizona Academic Scholars district statewide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple presentations were given to Superintendents, key educators, School Boards and business organizations including several meetings in Cochise County involving the community college and the school districts and business organizations in both large and smaller group settings.</li> <li>Three new Scholars districts were added, bringing the total number to 19 participating districts statewide.</li> </ul>
2	Increase the number of high school students graduating as Arizona State Scholars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 900 more Scholars medallions were ordered in 2009 as compared to 2008 for seniors graduating as Arizona Academic Scholars. These figures do not include Mesa Public Schools (have chosen not to use medallions) or Gilbert Public Schools (chose not to recognize seniors this year because they were just starting to implement Scholars).</li> <li>District final reports indicate a total of approximately 5500 students in the 19 districts graduated as Arizona Academic Scholars.</li> </ul>
3	Increase number of 8 <sup>th</sup> / 9 <sup>th</sup> graders receiving presentations regarding the Scholars course of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 826 Scholars presentations were given to 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade students in the 19 districts.</li> <li>An estimated total of just under 27,000 students received this Scholars' information statewide.</li> </ul>

## **FY2009 RESULTS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Three new districts and their business partners signed letters of commitment to become Arizona State Scholar partnerships in the year, bringing the total to 19 participating active Scholar districts.
2. In conjunction with representatives from ADE, ABOR, administrators, school counselors and ABEC, the Scholars course of study was revised for students graduating in 2013 and after. This revision reflects an increase in rigor greater than will be required by the state for high school graduation, and is primarily seen in the areas of math and science.
3. To go along with the new marketing materials developed in the previous year and to achieve optimum ease of use and outreach statewide, the Arizona Academic Scholars website was updated for content and appeal. The website, <http://www.azacademicscholars.org> is easy to use and includes an overview plus messaging targeted to the four audiences of students, parents, educators and business. Each of the target audience brochures is available on the website along with the Scholars course of study, next steps and contact information. A student and counselor testimonial along with interesting facts and figures are scattered throughout the site.
4. Each district Superintendent was asked to identify a district coordinator for the Scholars program. Both the coordinator and the Superintendent were advised of their responsibility to complete a simple final report at year-end in order to more accurately track the success and measurable outcomes of each district. A summary of this report is attached at the end of this report. In order to compensate for the time required for this additional work, a one

thousand dollar (\$1000.00) stipend was offered to the district coordinator (if approved by their Superintendent). A total of 12 coordinators received this stipend and they all understand it will not be available in future years.

5. The number of medallions ordered by the districts to recognize seniors graduating as Arizona Academic Scholars increased by almost 900 from the prior year. Mesa Public Schools and Gilbert Public Schools did not present medallions as a form of recognition to their graduating Scholars Seniors.
6. The cost of medallions was covered through the ABOR grant and for Pima County, through a UnitedHealthcare grant. Each district Superintendent and Coordinator has been advised that this funding will not be available in future years, requiring the need for school districts to plan for this expense accordingly. The hope is districts will work with their business partners to help consider ways to support this cost. It has been shown through student and coordinator response that the medallions are a powerful incentive for students to remain on the Scholars course of study.
7. According to the final reports from each district, the total number of seniors graduating as Arizona Academic Scholars in 2009 is estimated to be 5595 statewide (excluding Gilbert Public Schools). This represents 31% of the total number of anticipated seniors graduating from these districts statewide.
8. Approximately 26,691 students primarily in 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade received the Arizona Academic Scholars presentation. Though Arizona Academic Scholars is directed to the middle fifty percent (50%) student, it is open to all students with the belief that all students need to better understand the realities of the global economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
9. It may be accurate to assume several districts and business organizations which had shown interest in adopting the Arizona Academic Scholars initiative may have determined not to move forward due to the economy and doubt as to the time and expense such an initiative might require.
10. Early in the year, the Scholars Initiative was undertaken by a group of three “feeder” districts (two elementary and one high school), but they later determined they were not ready to move forward. In this case, we strongly suspect that had these districts been unified, rather than independent, this may not have been the ultimate outcome. This does point out some of the difficulty in working vertically within districts that may not have the political structure of a unified district.
11. Though each Scholars partnership includes at least one business or business organization which has committed to the initiative, the reality is educators are often hesitant to invite these business leaders in to give the presentations to their 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> graders. This may be due in part to time constraints, but allowing business partners to participate more personally in presentations, mentoring or other “hands-on” activities appears to be problematic.
12. One of this year’s new districts, Gilbert Public Schools, devised a very ingenious way in which to educate their middle and high school students about the Arizona Academic Scholars. They created a short video which was shown at least two times via video announcements to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in their seven junior high schools (approximately 3200 students) and in all four of their high schools (approximately 3000 additional students). In addition, all parents of these students were emailed an invitation to attend one of three informational meetings (18,000 emails sent with approximately an 80% delivery rate). As a

result, approximately 200 parents and 100 students attended one of these presentations. This certainly demonstrates the use of technology and creativity in devising new ways to educate and motivate students and parents about the issue of rigor and academic success and its relationship to future success in the workplace.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is evident that three years of ABOR funding through the TRIF grant has had enormous impact on the entire state of Arizona. The Arizona Business & Education Coalition was successful in identifying Arizona as being ready and able to participate in the first group of states to receive federal funding for the State Scholars Initiative. However, this funding and support would not have been adequate to sustain a statewide initiative had it not been for the solid support and financial commitment of the TRIF grant. Though the business and education community could identify the need for such partnerships, sustainability and long-term efforts take time to develop.

The Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative raised the awareness of the need for additional academic rigor in our schools. With the support and encouragement of ABEC and the Scholars Initiative, the State Board of Education made the commitment to increase the high school graduation requirements for Arizona students starting in 2012 and 2013. In order for our students to be more successful in post-secondary education, reduce the amount of remediation taking place in our colleges and universities, and to keep our Arizona economy strong and vibrant and maintain a qualified workforce, it is imperative we demand the rigor necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century success. The TRIF grant funding has allowed the Arizona Academic Scholars to be a key factor in moving Arizona ahead.

## **PROPOSAL FOR REMAINING TRIF FUNDS**

The Arizona Business & Education Coalition (ABEC) has received a three year Arizona Board of Regents TRIF grant for support of the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative. This grant was due to end on June 30, 2009. At the close of the grant period, there is a remaining balance of approximately \$58,000. ABEC requests that these remaining funds be carried over until no later than June 30, 2010 in order to most effectively assure the intent and purpose of the initiative can be sustained.

## **BACKGROUND**

The goal of the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative has always been to encourage high school students, particularly the middle 50%, to take a rigorous course of study to more adequately prepare for success in both post-secondary education and future careers. A large measure of the Initiative's success can now be seen in the adoption of increased high school graduation requirements for Arizona which take effect in 2012 and 2013. In May 2007, the State Board of Education passed a resolution to "support the Arizona Scholars Initiative as a means of encouraging students to engage in a rigorous course of study so that they are adequately prepared for work and post-secondary education in the 21st Century". As a result, the Scholars course of study is viewed as an interim step toward the implementation of these more rigorous graduation requirements which include an increase in the number of math and science credits.

## **USE OF REMAINING FUNDS**

ABEC believes that by using the estimated remaining funds of approximately \$58,000, we can positively transition the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative into a business-education partnership model foundational to the ECAP (Education and Career Action Plan) process under development now by the Arizona Department of Education. The model would be highlighted

and included within ABEC's Best Practices in Business-Education Partnerships resources. Local business partners will continue to deliver the Scholars message of "**more academic rigor and university preparedness**" to middle school students prior to them creating their ECAP. This includes encouraging students to take more math and science and thus improving the pipeline into postsecondary education.

### **GOALS OF THE PROJECT**

The goals of the project are:

1. To increase the number of middle school students introduced to the Scholars message encouraging them to commit to a more rigorous course of study as well as being able to understand the relevancy of more academic rigor.
2. Provide the training and tools for business partners to effectively deliver the message of rigor and postsecondary and career readiness to middle school students.
3. To expand the existing Scholars website ([www.azacademicscholars.org](http://www.azacademicscholars.org)) as a tool for career exploration and connect it to the resources for the ECAP. This interactive and technically advanced site might include:
  - a. Resources for school districts wanting to launch local Arizona Academic Scholars Initiatives;
  - b. Resources for students to explore careers and complete their high school ECAP;
  - c. Links to post-secondary opportunities and information throughout the state;
  - d. Resources and links for educators seeking intervention strategies;
  - e. Resources for parents to support student success; and
  - f. Resources for businesses seeking effective business-education partnership opportunities.
4. To create strong business and education partnerships that promote academic rigor.

### **SUMMARY**

The use of the remaining funds would enable the hiring of a project manager, cover the cost of materials and training, and further develop the Scholars website. This work may also attract federal stimulus funds to the project, thus increasing the likelihood of sustainability. In any case, it will serve as a model business-education partnership with emphasis on student academic rigor, business input and participation, and improving the pipeline for postsecondary and career preparedness.

## Arizona Academic Scholars

### Statewide Summary

**2009**

<b>Total number Scholar District/Community Partnerships:</b>	<b>19</b>
Amphitheater Apache Junction Bisbee Chandler Flagstaff Flowing Wells Gilbert Higley Marana Mesa	Payson Peoria Sahuarita San Manuel Snowflake Sunnyside Tanque Verde Tucson Vail
<b>Total number of new district Scholar partnerships this year</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total number 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade Scholar presentations given</b>	<b>826</b>
<b>Total number 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade students receiving Scholar presentations</b>	<b>26,691</b>
<b>Total number Scholars presentations given by educators</b>	<b>809</b>
<b>Total number Scholars presentations given by business / community members</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>% of 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade Scholar presentations given by business / community members</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
<b>Number of Scholar districts using business partners</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total number of graduating seniors in Scholar districts*</b>	<b>17,976</b>
<b>Total number of graduating seniors identified as Arizona Academic Scholars*</b>	<b>5595</b>
<b>% of seniors graduating as Scholars in Scholar districts*</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Approximate % of minority students graduating as Scholars</b>	<b>31.6%</b>
<b>Number of Scholar districts reporting this figure</b>	<b>14</b>

*\*excludes Gilbert*

## FY2009 Budget & Actuals

	FY 2007 ACTUAL	FY 2008 BUDGET	FY 2008 ACTUAL	FY 2009 BUDGET	FY 2009 ACTUAL
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Carry over from prior year		71,484		57,542	
TRIF Grant	75,000	75,000		75,000	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$146,484</b>	<b>\$146,484</b>	<b>\$132,542</b>	<b>\$132,542</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
<b>SALARY</b>					
Project Manager					
Support Staff		5,000	5,289	7,000	
<b>OPERATING</b>					
Grant Administration Fee					17211
Meeting Expenses			34	300	
Postage & Delivery	22	1,500	32	300	49
Printing & Reproduction	12	1,500	1,988	2,500	2687
Scholar Recognition		14,000	11,413	18,000	16231
Stipends		15,000	10,000	15,000	12000
Supplies	20	1,000	206	800	55
<b>TRAVEL</b>					
Airfare	507	2,500		1,500	
Auto/Mileage	237	2,500	728	2,500	932
Event Registration		2,000	125	800	
Lodging		2,500	118	800	121
Meals		1,500	76	800	19
<b>CONTRACTUAL</b>					
Accounting					
Intern(s)		8,000		500	
Marketing/Communications		12,000	20,576	25,300	2768
State Program Director	2,625	30,000	37,941	45,000	19468
Temp Services	83	1,000	416	500	
Web Services & Support	10	1,000		2,500	250
Web/Graphic Design		15,000		7,942	2235
Other Contracted Services		3,000		500	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$3,516</b>	<b>\$119,000</b>	<b>\$88,942</b>	<b>\$132,542</b>	<b>\$74,026</b>

**FY 2009 Budget Narrative:**

Scholar Recognition: Includes medallions for seniors graduating as Scholars.

Stipends: Provides \$1,000 to each participating school district's primary coordinator if approved by district superintendent.

**FY 2009 Actuals Narrative:**

Estimated balance after remaining June expenses

\$58,000

**FY2010 Budget**

	<b>FY 2010 BUDGET</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>	
TRIF Carry over from prior year	\$58,000
Grants	
Sponsorships	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$58,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
<b>OPERATING</b>	
Grant Administration Fee	
Meeting Expenses	300
Postage & Delivery	50
Printing & Reproduction	3,000
Supplies	100
<b>TRAVEL</b>	
Airfare	
Auto/Mileage	2,000
Event Registration	
Lodging	
Meals	
<b>CONTRACTUAL</b>	
Marketing/Communications	7,350
State Program Director	35,000
Web Services & Support	200
Web/Graphic Design	10,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$58,000</b>