

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Arizona Activation Initiative is to create specific targets for increased high school graduation rates in at least 16 communities across the state—and then support efforts to reach those targets. Beyond the local work in these 16 communities, the Initiative will work across the state to ensure that Arizona hits the graduation target set in the *Grad Nation* report.

The Initiative is structured around a series of mutually reinforcing collaborations with various statewide partners to support progress primarily in system and policy objectives. Ultimately, the objective of all efforts is to increase the learning of students, the productivity of young people, and high school graduation rates across the state.

The theory of action of the Arizona Activation Initiative is to develop and leverage collaborative partnerships to develop growing circles of influence—within individual Mayors Roundtable cities, across the network of those 16 cities statewide, through statewide partners, and nationally. The Initiative will work with various statewide partners to structure meaningful local and statewide dialogues that bend toward action plan and progression; identification of strategies and activities taking place in cities outside the Roundtable membership that can be tapped into or learned from; development and sharing of tools and resources that support strategic efforts to increase high school graduation rates. Beyond the work done in Arizona, the Initiative will also be focused on using lessons and examples from other state and national efforts—and to apply lessons from Arizona nationally. The Initiative will use continue to update and disseminate data reports from individual communities and across the state as mode of reinforcing continual improvement across the state.

Collaboration will occur at local, state and national levels, including with:

- *Local Partners* to influence practice in Mayors Roundtable communities
- *Two Primary Statewide Partners*—Arizona School Boards Association and Expect More Arizona—to amplify local efforts and to influence other communities and organizations statewide
- *Three Statewide Support Partners*—The Arizona Business and Education Coalition; Center for the Future of Arizona and College Success Arizona—to leverage existing resources and expertise
- *National Partners*, identified through America’s Promise and other relationships, to amplify and replicate strategies and lessons beyond the state

Capacity To Serve

The Arizona Activation Initiative is built around the 16 community members of the **Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable**, which is uniquely positioned to a statewide convener. The Roundtable facilitates member cities’ work to establish an agenda for strategic policy action, build partnerships with civic and business leaders, and shares data, research, evidence-based and promising practices, and programmatic strategies that can help them address challenges affecting students’ educational and career success.

The Roundtable is coordinated by **WestEd**, a distinguished educational research, development and service organization with deep relationships and a solid reputation across the state. For three years, WestEd has convened mayors of Arizona’s larger cities to facilitate collaborative work toward effective, community-based approaches to education to improve graduation rates, and develop common ground for collective work on statewide policy issues. WestEd is supported by **Collaborative Communications**, the nation’s premier communications firm focused solely on education and learning. Collaborative has partnered with WestEd to support the Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable since its inception.