



---

---

## Spring Convening

# SUMMARY NOTES

9 March 2023 | 11:30 AM–1:00 PM

---

---

2023 Theme: Education & Workforce Development

### ***Participants***

Casa Grande – Mayor Craig McFarland, Adam Leckie, Joel Villegas

Flagstaff – Mayor Becky Daggett, John Saltonstall

Mesa – Lisa Cartwright-Harris, Sarah Tolar

Superior – Mayor Mila Besich, Arlynn Godinez, Hank Gutierrez

Tempe – Mayor Corey Woods, Marie Raymond

Arizona Community Foundation – Lorenzo Chavez

Arizona State Board of Education – Sean Ross

ASU Helios Decision Center for Educational Excellence – Joe O'Reilly

WestEd – Sheila Arredondo, Paul Koehler

### ***Discussion: How Municipalities Support Education***

Mayors, staff members, and education leaders shared what their cities and towns do to encourage, promote, and support high-quality learning and workforce development opportunities.

Marie Raymond, Manager, [Office of Education, Career and Family Services, City of Tempe](#)

- While the office and focus are new, the work existed previously under the Human Services Department.
- Council created an education coordinator position in 2015 to serve as a connector with districts and higher education.
- Convened quarterly meetings with City Manager and superintendents to listen and learn about the challenges and how the City could be most helpful.
- [College Connect Program](#) – support for high school students to access postsecondary opportunities; dedicated City staff support the program; FAFSA Winter Call Campaign to connect with students who had not yet completed the FAFSA; another campaign planned for this Spring.
- [Kids Zone Enrichment Program](#) – City funded for the past 30 years; 50-60% of students receive scholarships; before and afterschool time with academic supports.

- Literacy – For the past 17 years the [Experience Corps Program](#) has been in operation; today 111 volunteer adult tutors work with K-3 students in 15 schools.
- [Tempe PRE](#) – Also City funded and identified as critical need by superintendents to increase kindergarten readiness and make preschool affordable; 85% attend at no cost, sliding scale
- [Positive Parenting Program](#) – free services and supports for families
- TAP – program for parenting and pregnant teens; helped 28 teen parents to improve family functioning
- Funding – several programs started with grant funding; dedicated City staff for College Connect and additional advisors hired through ESSER grant; Experience Corps also was fully grant funded for almost 14 of the 17 years with some City funded positions now
- FERPA – The City has an IGA with school districts, part of which is a data share, specifically concerning College Connect and FAFSA support. This is how they are able to share student information. Tucson Unified also has agreements for the Steps to Success program. WestEd to secure example IGAs and MOUs.

Sarah Tolar, Education and Workforce Administrator, [Education and Workforce Strategies Office, City of Mesa](#)

- Office evolved from [Mesa Counts on College](#), an access center that provided GED classes, ACT/SAT prep, and FAFSA support, due to the need for additional support.
- [Mesa Education and Workforce Development Roundtable](#) – Created several years ago by Mayor Giles to advise City Council, brings together key education (e.g., superintendents, school board, higher education), workforce, and community leaders to identify needs and help shape supports.
- [Mesa K-Ready](#) – a free supplemental program which uses a combination of academic lessons, fun learning activities and family support to help Mesa parents and their 3- and 4-year-olds prepare for kindergarten.
- Read on Mesa – relaunched to support literacy; also exploring bringing in Experience Corps.
- [Mesa College Promise](#) – Dr. Jill Biden visited MCC to learn about partnership between the City and MCC to make college affordable. Applications now open for third cohort; enrollment doubled in size from year 1 to year 2.
- [Workforce Center at Mesa](#) – partnership between City and Arizona@Work Maricopa County; physical space to provide services and connect people to employers and jobs.

Mayor Craig McFarland, City of Casa Grande

- Smaller cities operate differently – Mayor is the connector.
- AARP Experience Corps Program launched two years ago; extremely successful, 1 year improvement for students; privately funded.
- Boys and Girls Club – serves 600 kids per day for afterschool programming.
- [Promise for the Future](#) – Central Arizona College, serves all of Pinal County, funded privately, two years of college for students with a C average.
- [Strategic Plan](#) – six focus areas include education and workforce development, to be added to AzMayors.org.

- [STEM Career Workshop](#) – Lucid Motors recently hosted a workshop for Pinal County educators aimed at developing a Middle School STEM curriculum that can be implemented at local schools to expose Casa Grande middle school students to careers at Lucid and within the STEM/STEAM field. The teacher workshop had five rotations for the teachers. Four contained hands-on activities where teachers learned about engineering and production careers at Lucid. The fifth rotation was a ride-along for teachers in one of the Lucid Air vehicles. The full-day workshop was a collaborative effort among ABEC, Center for the Future of Arizona, City of Casa Grande, Pinal County Education Service Agency, and Casa Grande Elementary School District.

Sean Ross, Arizona State Board of Education

- March 20 Board Meeting – ADE and ABOR to present on [AZ FAFSA initiatives](#), including statewide goal, kick off, Cactus League Initiative, [Ask Benji](#), [FAFSA dashboard](#), [College Knowing and Going](#), etc.
- Sean will bring information to Roundtable and share our interests with the Board.

John Saltonstall, Business Retention and Expansion Manager, City of Flagstaff

- Looking at education from economic development standpoint, John serves on additional boards including STEM and Workforce Development, also involved with early childhood education.
- System workforce analysis underway with district and higher education (CCC and NAU) to understand assets and gaps across the workforce continuum.
- Rebuilding infrastructure through Workforce Development Board including in-school youth programs, career exploration, college and career readiness.

Next Step: Roundtable members review and provide any updates to the local initiatives listed on AzMayors.org. Sheila will send reminders and links to the city/town pages next week.

### ***2023 Roundtable Calendar***

- Draft calendar shared; Sheila to add to Google folder and send to Roundtable members.
- May data sessions at Helios on May 8 and 11 – please select one session to attend and RSVP; Sheila to send calendar invitation and email about these sessions. Joe will share three postsecondary projects: personalized admissions (14 districts participating), postsecondary feedback to districts, and the updated high school graduation module which was designed to foster community conversations about improving high school graduation and postsecondary attainment rates. Additionally, a new visualization will be featured that looks at education and workforce at the county level, including projections and outputs. The Roundtable will be one of the first groups to see this new visualization. Teams should include mayors, superintendents, school board members, and economic development advisors.
- July 6 will be the date for the Early Childhood Session with the National League of Cities.

- Sheila to confirm October 5 Casa Grande visit with PACE High School staff and ADE and determine whether their conference room is available or we may use the school board meeting space.
- Sheila to reach out to JAG staff for December 7 meeting via Zoom.
- Sheila will send calendar so that members may hold dates. Calendar invitations and emails will also be sent for all the events.

### ***Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Resolution***

The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable will draft a resolution regarding FAFSA completion for high school seniors. Sheila will work with Julie Sainz to draft it and then send to Roundtable members for comment. State policy examples are in the [meeting subfolder of the Roundtable Google Folder](#).

#### Talking Points:

- FAFSA completion correlates strongly with positive postsecondary student outcomes. Research reveals 92% of students who complete their FAFSA before graduating high school enroll in college the following fall, compared to 51% of non-completers.
- Students who are eligible for aid but do not complete the FAFSA each year, leave money on the table that could be used toward furthering their education.
- By adopting a "universal" FAFSA completion policy – making the financial aid form a requirement for graduation and supporting students through the process – states can promote one of the important indicators of postsecondary enrollment among their high school seniors.

Innovative FAFSA Work in Tempe — The Arizona FAFSA Challenge awarded the January 2023 Most Innovative FAFSA Recognition to Tempe High School for creative efforts that encourage seniors to complete the FAFSA. For the past 10 years, the **City of Tempe and its College Connect Tempe program** have been partnering with Tempe High School to support FAFSA completion. The effort produced double digit increases in all six Tempe high schools. Counselors, teachers, and volunteers go above and beyond to assist students and families with the FAFSA and other college-going support.

**NOTE: Recognition of Mayor John Giles, Chair 2020-2022, is postponed until May as he is traveling.**

### ***Chat***

12:05:17 From Sean Ross - State Board of Education : Read On Arizona - <https://readonarizona.org/>

12:21:44 From John Saltonstall : Is there a web page or a collateral piece you can share on the Lucid career exploration activity?

12:22:45 From Sheila Arredondo : Roundtable Website is AzMayors.org and AZ Mayors Education Roundtable Google Folder with materials from all convenings [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1\\_vTA0s5X8u1-NCyVexuM-b0C5Kywkrfg?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_vTA0s5X8u1-NCyVexuM-b0C5Kywkrfg?usp=sharing)

12:32:14 From Lisa Cartwright-Harris- City of Mesa : 13th

12:39:01 From Sean Ross - State Board of Education : ABOR FAFSA Challenge Page:  
<https://www.azregents.edu/programs/fafsa-challenges>  
12:41:05 From Sean Ross - State Board of Education : Arizona Education Career  
Action Plan Page (ADE): <https://www.azed.gov/ecap>  
12:41:25 From Adam Leckie : I apologize I have to get to another meeting. Great  
discussion and thank you all for supporting education.