



## MESA ACHIEVES HIGHER EDUCATION TASK FORCE

May 14, 2019

The Mesa Achieves Higher Education Taskforce Advisory Committee of the City of Mesa met in the Mesa Counts on College Access Center, 635 E. Broadway Road on May 14, 2019 at 10:36 a.m.

### COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councilmember Duff, Co-Chair  
Councilmember Heredia, Co-Chair  
Ember Conley  
Richard Haney  
Elaine Miner  
Jaye O'Donnell  
Jon Schmitt  
Deanna Villanueva-Saucedo

### COMMITTEE ABSENT

Mike Hutchinson  
Shane McCord  
Vince Yanez

### STAFF PRESENT

Jared Archambault  
Jessica Gerspach  
Dee Ann Mickelsen  
Jessica Potter  
Alfred Smith  
Amy Trethaway

#### 1. Call to Order by Task Force Co-Chair.

Co-Chairman Duff called the Mesa Achieves Higher Education Task Force meeting to order.

#### 2. Opening Remarks and Welcome to the Task Force by Mayor John Giles.

Mayor Giles thanked the taskforce for attending the meeting and stated it was a critical effort. He expressed appreciation to Co-Chair Duff and Co-Chair Heredia for serving as leaders of this taskforce and looks forward to what can be accomplished to make a difference in Mesa's higher education for the community. He mentioned he would like to see a promise program adopted for any student who graduates from a Mesa high school at a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) or higher, be accepted at Mesa Community College (MCC), so students can receive a quality education to succeed in the future.

#### 3. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

4. Address any questions regarding Open Meeting Law by Alfred J. Smith, Mesa Deputy City Attorney.

Deputy City Attorney Alfred Smith briefly discussed the Open Meeting Law (OML) with the taskforce. **(See Attachment 1)** He stated Mesa Achieves Higher Education Task Force is a public board so there cannot be any free-flowing discussions off topic or off-site. He noted there must be six members for a quorum and if a member must call in, that is acceptable. He spoke about Call to the Public which gives the public opportunity to come and speak about issues to the task force. He mentioned there are certain circumstances when you can and cannot speak about issues being brought to attention, but if further discussion is needed it can be added to a future agenda. He stated that only one-way communication is allowed but no decisions can be made. He advised all communication should go through Mesa Counts on College Director Amy Trethaway.

5. Discussion of the purpose of the Task Force by the Task Force Co-Chairs, Councilmember's Duff and Heredia.

Co-Chair Duff asked all members to introduce themselves.

Co-Chair Heredia outlined the purpose of the taskforce which is to look at the issue of higher education in the community. He stated as a City there are potential workforce options and Mesa's education is at the forefront of how communities are built. He believes the development of the taskforce is needed to envision work that blends the need for the City, but also to take partnerships to the next level to ensure the future is bright for today's youth. He stated communities are built on schools, residents and other networks in neighborhoods.

Co-Chair Duff commented the City of Mesa has the lowest income levels compared to other cities, but the school system is great. She mentioned a challenge the City sees is the best and brightest leave for other opportunities, and what we can do to ensure they stay in Mesa is to prepare the workforce to grow with Mesa. She pointed out the City started Mesa K-Ready to recognize the importance of early education and thinks this is the perfect time to continue with that goal. She noted that she attended a forum on how to improve the economic output of our state by 2030 and is excited to use the knowledge she learned and implement those ideas into making Mesa's higher education system better.

6. Hear a presentation by Rachel Yanoff, Executive Director of Achieve60AZ, and discuss post-secondary attainment challenges in Arizona.

Rachel Yanoff, Executive Director of Achieve60AZ displayed a Power Point presentation. **(See Attachment 2)** She commented that a goal was set in 2016 to have 60% of Mesa residents between the ages of 25-64 graduate with a license, degree or post-secondary credential. She stated a measure of success is by creating a community that is a thriving place for all people, where people have choices, and economic opportunity for themselves and their families. (See Page 2 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff stated Arizona has been making progress, but it will take one million more adults with a license, degree or credentials to make the 60% goal by 2030. She stated having meetings and conversations about this topic are important because it is a big goal to reach but it is not insurmountable. (See Page 3 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff started by saying if the state were to increase attainment levels with Latinos to be on parity with caucasians, there would be an annual \$2.3 billion boom to the economy. She stated if the state hit a perfect 60% of adults with post-secondary license, degree or credentials matching the job of attainment level it would be a \$7.6 billion economic and social gain. She pointed out the Return on Investment (ROI) of a new graduate in the state is \$660,000. (See Page 4 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff presented moral imperatives and said that students are human beings with dreams, aspirations and parents who want the best for their kids. She stated 54% of Arizonans currently are attaining a degree, license or credential and 26% of Latino adults are attaining them as well. She continued by saying there is a 28% gap of attainment between the two and that people need to think about the moral imperative for all kids and adults and how that gap can be closed. (See Page 5 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff explained that Achieve60AZ believes in vision, alliance and the organization. She stated Arizona has a diverse, well-educated, highly skilled workforce participating in a thriving economy. She emphasized that she wants to commit to keeping everyone's eyes on this goal until 2030. She listed the goals of Achieve60AZ:

1. Educate and Empower
2. Inform and Report
3. Increase Public Support
4. Build Awareness and Support Actions

She stated she wants to bring National attention to the group in hopes of getting funding and spreading the word to other cities and states to guide them through the process of reaching higher education goals to help their communities succeed. (See Page 6 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff asked committeemembers to read through the pillars and strategies and noted that not one pillar is more important than the other. She stated these all need to move forward together to achieve the 60% goal by 2030. She asked committeemembers to acknowledge that work beginning in Pre-K through grade 12 is critically important, but with Achieve60AZ the high school level is shown more attention. (See Page 7 of Attachment 2)

Ms. Yanoff stated that many adults start college degrees but never finish for various reasons. She asked how can we as a community address this and serve those who have not finished post-secondary education or want to continue their education. (See Page 8 of Attachment 2)

In response to multiple questions from Committeemember Schmitt, Ms. Yanoff pointed out that Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma have education groups, but Tempe and Mesa are the most focused on higher education. She mentioned Tempe's attainment goal is set for 65%, which they believed would be a good challenge for their community. She stated that Achieve60AZ is communicating with other cities and towns to brainstorm on how to reach these goals.

In response to a question from Committeemember Haney, Ms. Yanoff stated there is a self-report survey system that the American Community of Surveys is completing where they ask if a person has a post high school certificate, and if the answer is yes, it is counted as a post-secondary credential. She mentioned there is a large variation in the quality of certificates.

Sheila Arredondo, Facilitator with West Education, asked the committee to comment on what stood out in Ms. Yanoff's presentation and asked for ideas that have implications moving forward.

Committeemembers provided the following comments:

- What is the highest converting group that is being discussed such as; adults with no certifications or degrees, what is their likelihood to graduate vs high school graduates going straight into post-secondary education.
- Data on what organizations already provide tuition reimbursement to their employees.
- Since there is no true support from the legislature on pre-school, there needs to be alignment around the data.
- What research has been done on barriers to post-secondary credentials.
- What is the graduation rate for Latinos, why is it so low, and how can that be changed.
- Mesa has a 75% graduation rate for four-year students, and graduation rates are very good for five-year students because many students are electing to take other classes and taking time to complete their education.
- What is the perception of why students are not moving on to a higher education. Are students aware of what it can do for their career paths.
- What is the disaggregated data since everyone is impacted differently.
- The importance in gathering data on high school students' incentives to go on to higher education.
- The education attainment rate has always been low and can we find a way to create urgency to push for post-secondary education for youths and adults.

Ms. Arredondo stated she will see what data she has and will report back at the next meeting in June.

7. Hear a presentation by Dr. Joe O'Reilly, ASU Decision Center for Excellence, and discuss the post-secondary attainment rates among students in Mesa.

Dr. Joe O'Reilly, Director of ASU Decision Center for Educational Excellence displayed a Power Point presentation. **(See Attachment 3)** He commented 85% of Mesa Public School (MPS) students consistently say they want to attend college right after graduation. He stated low income parents were more supportive when it came to their children's education.

Mr. O'Reilly announced that Decision Center for Excellence is a new initiative and focuses on how to improve education for students. He stated Arizona State University (ASU) has gathered data in researching for better outcomes for students, communities and the State. (See Page 2 of Attachment 3)

Mr. O'Reilly reported on the education attainment in Mesa which showed the number of employed and unemployed residents that range from no high school diploma to a bachelor's degree or higher and how it affects the household income. (See Page 3 of Attachment 3)

Mr. O'Reilly stated that educational attainment in Mesa has changed over time from 1990 to 2016. He stated in 26 years the graduation rate and those who have professional degrees in

Mesa, went from 8.4% to 10.6%, which is moving in the right direction, but not fast enough if the City wants to attain the 60% goal by 2030. He mentioned that ASU students who worked for Starbucks had a higher graduation rate because the company gave them an incentive, which is to pay for employee's education so long as they stayed employed at Starbucks until they graduated. (See Page 4 of Attachment 3)

Mr. O'Reilly spoke about Mesa's attainment pipeline which is the data collected on students who graduate high school and attend college. He stated Arizona has a 90% annual graduation rate, and 70% of those students go to college. He pointed out the online charter school Pimavera was bringing down City graduation rates, so a new category for online schools was created. He mentioned the best access to college scholarships are directly out of high school. (See Page 5 of Attachment 3)

Mr. O'Reilly stated the goals he has for Mesa are to increase post-secondary attainment, have more students go to college right out of high school, and find creative ways to get adults interested in completing post-secondary education. He noted the post-secondary enrollment rate in Mesa after high school is 47% and the national average is 70%. He pointed out 27% of Mesa adults have some college, but no degree, and one in every five students do not graduate or graduate on time. (See Page 7 of Attachment 3)

In response to a question from Ms. Trethaway, Mr. O'Reilly responded by saying it takes an average of six years to obtain a degree.

Mr. O'Reilly stated the goal is to get communities together to brainstorm ways to make education a priority.

8. Discuss and determine any action items necessary from the presentations.

Ms. Arredondo asked the committee their thoughts and ideas on Mr. O'Reilly's presentation.

In response to a question from Committeemember Schmitt, Committeemember Conley stated there was a 20% increase in students who graduated and planned on attending Mesa Community College (MCC). She noted there was an 84% increase in students who received the President's scholarship. She mentioned the partnership with MCC College Advisors, which is where this data came from. She pointed out that MCC College Advisors also help with Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion.

Committeemember Haney commented the college advisors are employed by MCC but spend 90% of their time in a high school setting to ensure students have help filling out the FAFSA forms.

In response to a question from Co-Chair Heredia, Committeemember Haney responded by stating that there is both enrollment and retention data on students. He mentioned students from Mesa Public Schools (MPS) are being attained at a higher rate.

Committeemember Schmitt reported 90% of students who complete FAFSA go on to college.

Committeemember Villanueva-Saucedo requested geographic data regarding the graduation and post-secondary attainment rate in order to compare different areas of the City and

neighborhoods. She also asked about an audit to see what is currently in place and working, and what can the City do better.

Committeemember Conley stated she is working with groups and gathering data to analyze and build a profile of a graduate the taskforce is wanting to support.

Co-Chair Duff requested that the taskforce gather and analyze all data to put together a list to compare what gaps we have in common.

Ms. Trethaway reported that she has information on educational strategies, cost analysis and investments for the organization and she can gather the information for the next meeting.

Committeemember Haney questioned if the credentials we provide lead to livable wages. He encouraged the taskforce to focus on the quality of credentials and the economic impact for the City and families.

Co-Chair Heredia requested the taskforce look at what workforce the City has, the business community, and shortages of workforce that the City could have in 20 years. He also would like to look at trends as a City to help develop strategies for future opportunities.

Ms. Arredondo mentioned the healthcare industry is the most likely to grow over the next decade and create many jobs in every state. She thanked the taskforce for their feedback and noted today provided a good outlook for how the future meetings will flow. She also went over future meeting dates, and probable agenda topics with the expected outcomes. She hoped to look at an inventory audit and do a gap analysis at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued relative to tuition reimbursement programs and what the City of Mesa offers to its employees.

Committeemember O'Donnell suggested gathering data on the top 10 employers in Mesa to see what tuition incentives they offer employees.

Ms. Trethaway stated she will add workforce presentation and tuition reimbursement to the list of information needed at the next meeting.

9. Discuss and act, authorizing Co-Chairs, Councilmember Heredia and Councilmember Duff, to review and approve the minutes from today's meeting and forward to the City Council for acknowledgement.

It was moved by Committeemember Villanueva-Saucedo, seconded by Committeemember Schmitt, that Co-Chairs Heredia and Duff, be authorized to review and approve the minutes from today's meeting and forward to the City Council for acknowledgement.

Upon Tabulation of votes, it shows:

AYES – Duff-Heredia-Conley-Haney-Miner-O'Donnell-Schmitt-Villanueva-Saucedo

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Hutchinson-McCord-Yanez

Co-Chair Heredia declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

10. Approve the next meeting date: June 18, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

It was moved by Committeemember Villanueva-Saucedo, seconded by Committeemember O'Donnell that the next meeting date for Mesa Achieves Higher Education Taskforce on June 18, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. be approved.

AYES – Duff-Heredia-Conley-Haney-Miner-O'Donnell-Schmitt-Villanueva-Saucedo

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Hutchinson-McCord-Yanez

Co-Chair Heredia declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

11. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Mesa Achieves Higher Education Taskforce Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Mesa Achieves Higher Education Taskforce Advisory Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May 2019. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

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(Attachments – 3)