

Date: January 30, 2020

To: Mayor John Giles

Through: Councilmember Heredia and Councilmember Duff

From: Amy Trethaway, Mesa Achieves Higher Education Staffer

RE: Final Report and Recommendations

Arizona is currently amid an educational crisis. Nationally Arizona ranks among the lowest for post high school educational attainment, currently at 45%. This means **only** 45% of adults ages 25-64 in the state of Arizona have an education beyond a high school diploma.

On a local level in Mesa, the largest school district in Arizona, 65% of their graduates enroll in a post-secondary program, however only 35% complete a degree, certification or license. At this rate, Mesa will not meet the statewide goal of 60% completion by 2030. Currently the state sits at 45% completion overall. In addition, Arizona has one million adults with some education but no degree and in Mesa, 35% of the adults have some college and no degree.

As the second largest City in the State, Mesa has 21,599 adults who need to obtain a GED, 45,000 adults who need to enroll into a post-secondary education (they have graduated high school but no college) and 75,000 adults who have SOME college but no degree or certification.

Mesa must intentionally engage in workforce development right now for the future of Mesa's economy because the lack of a skilled workforce will impact the City and its services heavily. Right now, on average, Mesa's workforce will see a reduction in qualified workers as early as 2025. The total economic loss to Mesa, from residents currently disconnected from their educational pathway is approximately \$800,000, per resident, for total loss of over 8.6 billion dollars lost earnings over the lifetime to the City and State. Staggering statistics call for swift action.

To meet the Statewide attainment goals Mesa must reach and educate 100,000 residents, ages 18-25 youth who are employed but without a credential. (our disconnected population)

By supporting and actively participating in Achieve60AZ we ensure Mesa will have the workforce it needs in the future. Attainment of a post-high school education is critical to ensuring economic mobility of our residents. Furthermore, shifts in workforce demographics mean workers increasingly need, now more than ever, education and training to enter and thrive in Mesa's workforce. Employers will only choose to do business in Mesa if the workforce is competitive and the education system is strong. If Arizona meets it's 60% attainment goal by 2030, it will *pump 3.5 Billion dollars annually into our state.*

The following **recommendations** come from the Mesa Achieves Higher Education task force, these recommendations will begin to align Mesa's collective education efforts and will create the foundation necessary to meet our Achieve60AZ Goal and ensure Mesa has the workforce of the future.

1. The City of Mesa officially join the more than 40 government entities and 100 business/education organizations in adopting the Achieve60AZ goal:

By 2030, 60% of Arizona adults, ages 25 to 64, will hold a postsecondary credential or degree.

2. Create and Convene a MesaAchieves60AZ Steering Committee

Establish a standing committee to oversee, guide, and coordinate the Achieve60AZ Mesa efforts and strategies.

- Establish the City of Mesa's role as convener
- Ensure dedicated staffing for the committee over a ten-year period (2020-2030)
- Consolidate and/or coordinate committees and task forces that address similar issues to reduce the number of small and isolated efforts, decrease redundancies, prevent duplicative efforts, and improve results
- Identify representatives from each partner organization
- Monitor specified attainment indicators and ROI
- Report out to Council and community on Achieve60AZ/Mesa progress

The MAHE Task Force has determined the first three action items necessary for the new committee to address once convened, see below:

A. Develop, Monitor and Maintain a College Promise Campaign

- Determine the scope of program, parameters, and eligibility requirements for a last dollar scenario, 2.25 GPA, no Gap funding and mesa residency or student status
- Use National best practices for program design
- Develop a budget and raise funds
- Consider and develop a cost-match approach with Mesa's largest businesses
- Fund the program using a cross- sector approach using philanthropy, COM, MPS, MCC and other partners to be determined as donors are discovered and initial funding is established
- City of Mesa will assume the operational costs of the Archive60AZ and work collaboratively with Mesa Community College on the implementation of the Mesa College Promise Campaign.

B. Create and Populate a Mesa PK-20 Education Dashboard

- Create and Compile, monitor, and analyze data related to the 60 percent attainment goal and, where feasible, disaggregate data by high school and student groups.
- Data to include graduation rates, FAFSA completion rates, and trend data; number and percentage of seniors who (a) enroll in postsecondary studies immediately and (b) within 24 months of high school graduation; number and

percentage of postsecondary completers (credentials and degrees) for groups (a) and (b) above

- An additional indicator to determine and track is the number of students who must complete credentials and degrees to reach the 60 percent attainment goal
- To communicate the imperative, the dashboard should also include estimates for the return on investment as earning potential increases based on higher attainment rates (e.g., economic impact at 45%, 50%, 55%, and 60% attainment).
- Create a formal data sharing agreement among Mesa Public Schools and Mesa Community college to populate the dashboard, along with the ASU Decision Center for Educational Excellence

C. Increase Mesa's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion

- Leverage local and state efforts regarding the FAFSA challenge, Project Benji, etc. to increase FAFSA completion among MPS high school seniors

D. Mental Health Services and Social-Emotional Learning Opportunities

- Address the growing need for accessible, high quality services focused on improving mental health and helping students develop the social and emotional skills needed to be successful after high school

Data sources include Mayors Education Roundtable (spring 2018) and Town Charts
www.towncharts.com/arizona/education/mesa-city-AZ-Educational-data.html
ASU Decision Center for Educational Excellence
Achieve60AZ
Arizona Department of Ed
US Census