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## **Thriving Together Marks First Year Helping a Quarter-Million Young People Succeed from Birth to Career**

**PHOENIX, Arizona (July 20, 2015)** – At the end of its first year of on-the-ground activities, a first-of-its-kind educational initiative in Arizona has yielded several key successes in preparing young people for the future.

The work for the unprecedented education initiative, Thriving Together, began through partnerships with schools in August 2014. The initiative has begun to change the lives of a quarter-million young people in the Phoenix metropolitan area and impact the future of Arizona. Thriving Together was introduced to the public at an event in March, accompanied by the publication of its baseline report.

Thriving Together is a long-term movement that will use the resources of the private and non-profit sectors to ensure children, youth and young adults within the boundaries of the Phoenix Union high schools, charter schools and its partner elementary schools succeed from birth through career. More than 250,000 children live within these boundaries, which span from 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to 68<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Northern Avenue to South Mountain Park, in Phoenix.

Dozens of leaders from more than 60 local organizations – including higher education, social services, foundations, community groups, business and industry, government, faith communities and parents – have come together to help young people succeed via Thriving Together. Resources from throughout the community are being marshaled and fused to help students improve educational results as they reach key benchmarks in their development, placing and keeping them on a path to success.

Studies have shown that if children are prepared at several key milestones in their educational career, they can stay on a path to success. Those milestones are the focus of Thriving Together and its efforts to provide measurable results. They are where children and young people are most likely to lose their way – it's where they fall behind, or get frustrated, or suffer from a lack of support. Thriving Together is focusing on four key areas: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading, 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, high school graduation and college attainment.

Thriving Together co-chairs Dr. Kent P. Scribner, superintendent of the Phoenix Union High School District (PUHSD) and Pam Conboy, lead regional president of Wells Fargo Arizona, along with Merl Waschler, President and CEO of Valley of the Sun United Way, convened education and community leaders who are charged with continuing to advance the Thriving Together initiative.

“Thriving Together is already making a difference in our schools and community by targeting a small number of critical benchmarks on a student’s educational journey,” Scribner said. “Instead of getting lost in a myriad of programs and interventions, we are collaboratively analyzing data linked to student success, to scale up excellence both inside and outside the classroom, and selectively redirect resources from less effective programs.”



In its first year, Thriving Together brought together more than 200 people from across the community to support and carry out this important work aligned to common goals. These subject matter experts and volunteers work through Collaborative Action Teams to create improved results in each of their areas of focus. As of today, four teams have been created, with two more slated to launch. Their expertise is invaluable to the success of Thriving Together, and ensures the kind of accountability needed to create positive change.

“We want every child to achieve their full potential inside and outside the classroom,” Waschler said. “Our partners from diverse sectors are working shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure our children are college and career ready. Together, we are strengthening the Valley of the Sun for generations to come.”

Early results prove that Thriving Together is already making an impact. Results include:

**Alignment of math concepts:** Thriving Together has partnered with Degree Phoenix to place math experts from schools and non-profits — who have never worked together in the past — in the same room for the first time. They are developing the solution that will lead to huge gains in math achievement across the board for high school students.

**Striving toward better, faster data:** Teachers already use data and use it well and Thriving Together is committed to use data more effectively and efficiently so that teachers can quickly intervene when students fall behind. If teachers are able to look at data every two weeks as opposed to every quarter, or in some cases every year, they can determine whether the interventions are effective or adjust their strategies to more effectively improve results for students.

**Helping young men stay in college:** A Lumina-funded Collaborative Action Team found that male Phoenix Union High School District graduates who must take remediation classes have the lowest attainment scores — meaning they don’t make it through college and attain a degree. They must take non-credit bearing courses that have a negative affect on their ability to manage the time and expense of an education.

**Fostering Continuous Improvement:** Thriving Together is establishing a vital continuous improvement process. Teachers, district leadership, subject matter experts and the business community are working together to co-design improvements and practices that will positively impact student achievement in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Math. Businesses are providing continuous improvement coaches to work hand-in-hand with schools. The improvement process commences in August for these two teams and will be integrated across each Collaborative Action Team to maximize success for all students.

“It’s been very gratifying to see the business community partner with the public sector, non-profit sector and educators to begin to make a difference in the classroom,” Conboy said. “These students are the future of not only our community, but our economy as well. It’s critical to make sure they have the tools they need throughout their educational careers and into adulthood to give them the best chance for success. That’s what Thriving Together does, and that’s why we’re so pleased to be a part of it.”

To sign up for collaborative action team and for more information, visit [www.thrivingtogetheraz.org](http://www.thrivingtogetheraz.org).