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Achievement Gap in Arizona One of the Smallest in the Nation

The Education Equality Index Shows Major Arizona Cities Among the Most Equitable in the U.S.

PHOENIX — According to the Education Equality Index (EEI), a first-of-its-kind tool released today, students from low-income communities in Arizona have more access to schools that are helping them achieve at similar levels as their more advantaged peers than students in nearly every other state including Colorado, California and Nevada.

Notably, Phoenix's achievement gap is smaller than nearly 75 percent of major U.S. cities. Nearly three of 10 students from low-income families in the city attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.

"Every child deserves an equal opportunity to learn and succeed — here in Arizona and across the country," said A for Arizona Executive Director Lisa Graham Keegan. "This new data highlights the leaders who are creating a more equal playing field for low-income students in Arizona. These schools are growing and inspiring others, and we look forward to being able to offer all students access to great schools and a quality education."

The Education Equality Index is the first national comparative measure of the achievement gap at the school, city and state levels, and identifies the regions where children from low-income communities are most likely to attend schools with small or nonexistent achievement gaps. Funded by the [Michael & Susan Dell Foundation](#) and developed in partnership by the foundation, [Education Cities](#) and [GreatSchools](#), the EEI features school, city and state-level data covering the nation's 100 biggest cities in 35 states.

The Education Equality Index also identifies up to 10 schools in each city with small or nonexistent achievement gaps that serve a student population where the majority are from low-income families. Recognized as one of 10 schools in Phoenix with the smallest achievement gap, South Ridge High School, which is managed by the Leona Group, serves more than 440 students, nearly all of whom are from low-income families.

"Every child deserves an equal chance at success in school and life," said South Ridge School Leader Dr. Melissa Rivers. "We're proud of the work being done here at South Ridge by faculty, staff, students and their families. Our goal is to give all of our students an opportunity to achieve and we hope other schools can learn from our success."

Key findings from the Education Equality Index include:

- With a statewide EEI score of 43, the achievement gap in Arizona is smaller than 32 of 35 states for which data is available.
- Only eight of 100 major U.S. cities are home to achievement gaps that are small (rather than large or massive). Gilbert and Scottsdale are two of these cities.
- Arizona city scores:
 - Gilbert has a score of 59.6 and ranks 2nd out of 100 cities for which data is available. Seven out of 10 students from low-income families in Gilbert attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Scottsdale has a score of 50.8 and ranks 7th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Nearly three out of 10 students from low-income families in Scottsdale attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Chandler has a score of 48.5 and ranks 10th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Four out of 10 students from low-income families in Chandler attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Mesa has a score of 47.4 and ranks 14th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Three out of 10 students from low-income families in Mesa attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Glendale has a score of 45.5 and ranks 18th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Nearly three out of 10 students from low-income families in Glendale attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Phoenix has a score of 41.7 and ranks 26th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Nearly three out of 10 students from low-income families in Phoenix attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.
 - Tucson has a score of 35.3 and ranks 46th out of 100 cities for which data is available. Two out of 10 students from low-income families in Tucson attend a school that has successfully closed the achievement gap.

Notably, the 10 most equitable schools in Phoenix that serve a student population where the majority of students are from low-income families all have nonexistent achievement gaps. They are:

- All Aboard Charter School
- Amerischools Academy - Camelback
- Arizona Agribusiness & Equine Center - South Mountain
- Arizona Collegiate High School
- Bennett Academy
- Franklin Police and Fire High School
- New World Educational Center
- Phoenix Union Bioscience High School
- South Ridge High School
- Sunset School

Note: A list of the top schools from other Arizona cities is available at educationequalityindex.org/arizona.

As detailed in the EEI, there are hundreds of schools across the nation where low-income students are achieving at levels that match or even exceed their more advantaged peers — proving that all children can excel in school when given the opportunity.

“Equality of opportunity is an American ideal,” said Ethan Gray, founder and CEO of Education Cities. “The Education Equality Index shows that while we, as a nation, have a long way to go to ensure our most vulnerable children have the opportunities they need to thrive, there are schools in almost every city proving that equality is possible.”

This is the first in a series of releases intended to identify the practices that are closing the achievement gap at the quickest pace. To see more data from the Education Equality Index and use the interactive online tool, visit www.educationequalityindex.org.

About Education Cities

Education Cities is a non-profit organization that convenes, advises, and supports a network of cities in their efforts to increase the number of great public schools. Learn more at www.education-cities.org.

About GreatSchools

Founded in 1998, GreatSchools is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit helping millions of parents find high-quality schools, support great learning, and guide their kids to great futures. GreatSchools offers thousands of articles, videos, and worksheets to help parents support their children’s learning. Last year, GreatSchools had more than 56 million unique visitors, including more than half of all U.S. families with school-age children. Headquartered in Oakland, California, GreatSchools partners with cities and states across the country to promote access to school quality data to families, particularly those in high need. Through its GreatKids program, GreatSchools promotes parenting for education success and teacher-parent collaboration.

About the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of children living in urban poverty around the world. Headquartered in Austin, TX with satellite offices in New Delhi, India and Cape Town, South Africa, the Dell family foundation funds programs that foster high-quality public education and childhood wellness, and improve the economic stability of families living in poverty. The foundation has committed more than \$1.2 billion to global children's issues and community initiatives to date. Learn more at www.msdf.org.

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