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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF THE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

WILLIAM THOMSON  
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

June 3, 2008

The Honorable John Nelson, Vice Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Robert Blendu, Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Representative Nelson and Senator Blendu:

Our Office has recently completed a 24-month followup of the Arizona Department of Education—Accountability Programs regarding the implementation status of the 12 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in June 2006 (Auditor General Report No. 06-04). As the attached grid indicates:

- 10 have been implemented, and
- 2 are in the process of being implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this concludes our follow-up work on the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations from the June 2006 performance audit report.

Sincerely,

Melanie M. Chesney, Director  
Performance Audit Division

MMC:Acm

Attachment

cc: Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Arizona Department of Education

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMS  
18-Month Follow-Up Report To  
Auditor General Report No. 06-04**

**FINDING 1: ADE generally follows best practices for its School Improvement program, but can make improvements**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Additional Explanation</b>
1. ADE should improve its ASIP training program for underperforming schools by:		
a. Providing more examples of specific, quantifiable goals and action steps in ASIPs, and	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	
b. Using a standard protocol for presenting training.	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	
2. ADE should require that schools whose ASIPs were found to be unsound submit a revised ASIP no later than 45 days after the Solutions Team has submitted its statement of findings for the ASIP.	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	
3. ADE should consider instituting a pilot program that would provide full-time, on-site experts to underperforming schools that are particularly weak.	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	After considering this recommendation, ADE decided not to implement it. ADE officials cited concerns over duplicating the role of on-site experts in the State Intervention program, which assists failing schools, and the potential to encourage inappropriate dependence on external support.

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**FINDING 1: ADE generally follows best practices for its School Improvement program, but can make improvements (concl'd)**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Additional Explanation</b>
4. ADE should consider providing underperforming schools with more specialized assistance through its ASSIST Coaches.	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	After considering this recommendation, ADE implemented it by assigning ASSIST coaches to under-performing schools based on the coaches' skills and the schools' needs.
5. ADE should review information obtained in ASSIST Coaches' school logs to determine if additional relevant information, such as achievement data, could be gathered by standardizing the types of information collected.	Implementation in Process	An outside evaluator, the American Institutes for Research, recommended several changes to improve ADE's School Improvement program and ADE is revamping the program accordingly. The role of the ASSIST Coaches is changing and ADE is determining appropriate information to gather under the new model.
6. Once ADE has determined that all relevant information is being gathered, ADE should improve its evaluation of its School Improvement program by performing an ongoing analysis of information to determine whether any adjustments to school improvement policies should be made.	Implementation in Process	ADE is determining appropriate evaluation mechanisms to monitor satisfaction and success of the School Improvement program under the new model.

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMS  
18-Month Follow-Up Report To  
Auditor General Report No. 06-04**

**FINDING 2: Additional monitoring needed to assess efforts to improve participation in tutoring programs**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Additional Explanation</b>
1. ADE should continue to monitor program participation in the state tutoring program.	<b>Implemented at 12 Months</b>	
2. ADE should implement its requirement from the December 2005 board meeting to take steps to improve communication with both schools and districts regarding the state tutoring program.	<b>Implemented at 6 Months</b>	
3. ADE should study ways to ensure that student performance criteria are reasonable and that hours reported by tutors are accurate, including whether it could request that the Legislature provide ADE with authority to require principals to provide this assurance.	<b>Implemented at 12 Months</b>	
4. ADE should randomly audit the records of tutors in the state tutoring program to ensure the reasonableness of the criteria by which student achievement is being assessed.	<b>Implemented at 12 Months</b>	
5. ADE should take steps to improve the response rate of surveys sent to school districts that participate in the federal tutoring program in order to more effectively assess provider effectiveness.	<b>Implemented at 12 Months</b>	