Six Minority-Intensive, Low-Income Arizona Schools Receive Gold Awards; 8 Earn Silver and 12 Earn Bronze

PHOENIX (February 9, 2015) -- Six schools with minority-intensive, low-income student populations received gold awards and have been named "Beat the Odds Schools" by Beat the Odds Institute, an initiative of the Center for the Future of Arizona. Eight schools earned silver and 12 earned bronze awards.

Based upon methodology from best-selling author Jim Collins, Beat the Odds is a rigorous, multi-year school improvement program providing mentoring and training for principals. It focuses on K-12 schools where at least 50 percent of the students are on free or reduced lunch and at least 50 percent are minority, primarily Latino.

Gold award winners for the 2013-2014 school year are Burk Elementary in the Gilbert Unified School District; Cortez High School and Washington High School in the Glendale Union High School District; L. Thomas Heck Middle School in the Litchfield Elementary District; Emerson Elementary in the Mesa Unified School District; and Franklin Police and Fire High School in the Phoenix Union High School District.

Only schools that attain gold-medal status -- the highest level of achievement in the Beat the Odds program -- are conferred the title of a Beat the Odds School.

Marjorie Kaplan, executive director of Beat the Odds Institute, said, "Our award winners demonstrate that demography is not destiny. They have overcome obstacles and improved academic performance through their commitment to our Six Keys to Success."

Based upon research, the six keys are: a strong and steady principal, a clear bottom line, ongoing assessment, collaborative solutions, a program built on individual student needs and a commitment to stick with the program. "Successful schools do things differently and don't make excuses," Kaplan said.

Participation in Beat the Odds, now in its eighth year, is open to K-12 public, charter and tribal schools throughout the state. Additional information is available at www.BeatTheOddsInstitute.org.

Gold Award Level - Beat the Odds Schools and Principals
Beat the Odds Gold Level schools must have a "B" or better from Arizona Department of Education and must demonstrate consistently improved AIMS scores over three years, plus other criteria.

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BTO Gold, Silver, Bronze 2015 Award Winners

Gilbert Unified School District - Gilbert
Burk Elementary/Principal Brad Paes

Glendale Union High School District - Glendale
Cortez High School/Former Principal Reid Chitwood and current Principal Walter Sampson
Washington High School/Former Principal Carol Lippert and current Principal Tami Strege

Litchfield Elementary School District - Litchfield Park
L. Thomas Heck Middle School/Principal Ron Sterr

Mesa Unified School District - Mesa
Emerson Elementary School/Former Principal Mark Norris and current Principal Christel Arbogast

Phoenix Union High School District - Phoenix
Franklin Police & Fire High School/Principal Lorenzo Cabrera

Silver Award Level - Beat the Odds Schools and Principals
Beat the Odds Silver Level schools must have a "C" or better from Arizona Department of Education and must have ongoing assessment data demonstrating achievement in the majority of grade levels, plus other criteria.

Amphitheater Unified School District - Tucson
Holoway Elementary/Principal Chris Gutierrez

Buckeye Elementary School District - Buckeye
West Park Elementary/Principal Nick Forgette

Fowler Elementary School District - Phoenix
Sun Canyon Elementary/Principal Jonathan Rohloff

Glendale Elementary School District - Glendale
Melvin E. Sine School/Principal Tish Mineer
Sunset Vista Elementary/Principal Dr. Bryan Richman

Paradise Valley Unified School District - Phoenix
North Canyon High School/Principal Elaine Jacobs

Tolleson Elementary School District - Tolleson
Sheely Farms Elementary/Principal Melissa Marze

Tolleson Union High School District - Tolleson
Westview High School/Principal Michele Wilson

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**Bronze Award Level - Beat the Odds Schools and Principals**
Beat the Odds Bronze Level schools must have a "C" or better from Arizona Department of Education and must have full participation in mentoring and a mentor recommendation, plus other criteria.

**Edkey Schools - Tempe**
Children's First/Principal Jevon Lewis

**Espiritu Charter Schools - Phoenix**
NFL-YET Academy/Principal Arlahee Ruiz

**Isaac School District - Phoenix**
Isaac Middle School/Principal Bree Honeycutt
Joseph Zito Elementary/Principal Gerard Hernandez

**Littleton Elementary School District - Tolleson**
Tres Rios Elementary/Principal Dr. Seu Hee Ledet

**Mesa Unified School District - Mesa**
Longfellow Elementary/Principal David Christensen
Ida Redbird Elementary/Principal Nick Parker

**Peoria Unified School District - Peoria**
Desert Palms/Principal Richard Troy

**Phoenix Union High School District - Phoenix**
Alhambra High School/Principal Claudio Coria

**Pima Prevention Partnership - Arizona Collegiate is located in Phoenix**
Arizona Collegiate High School/Principal Mike Dunbar

**Scottsdale Unified School District- Scottsdale**
Coronado High School/Principal Alyssa Tarkington
Tonalea Elementary/Principal Lori Pizzo

**About the Center for the Future of Arizona**
The Center for the Future of Arizona www.ArizonaFuture.org is an independent 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to help Arizonans shape and define the future through an action-oriented agenda focused on contemporary issues and topics critical to the state. More than a think tank, the center is an independent “do tank” that combines public-policy research with collaborative partnerships and initiatives that will create new opportunities for all Arizonans.

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