



November 13, 2020

Dear Members of the State Board of Education:

On behalf of the 1,400 members of the Arizona School Administrators (ASA) who have the privilege of working with students, staff, parents, and communities to build safe, welcoming, collaborative and effective learning environments for Arizona's 1.1 million public school students, I thank you for your leadership.

ASA encourages the Board to formally adopt a resolution opposing the assigning of grades to schools and districts for the 2020-2021 school year. Several reasons compel us to take this position.

The labelling of schools and districts relies heavily on the state assessment. This exam is based on Arizona's standards. Can we guarantee that the repeated interruptions in our educational system this year have allowed all our students to receive instruction in those standards? If not, students are being tested on content they have not been taught. Thus, the assessment lacks content validity. If the results are not valid, the labels will be misleading at best and at worst, completely wrong.

Furthermore, we know that students in certain districts have not had the same access, virtually, to instruction, as those in other districts. Thus, the lack of equitable access to instruction will cause disparities in the results and these disparities will be reflected in the grades. If the Board values equity, then it must take a stand on the grading of schools and districts this spring.

Finally, we know that our teachers are making heroic efforts to teach our students and reach our families. They are doing this, often at the risk of their own health and safety. The same can be said of our classified staff—bus drivers, cafeteria workers, office personnel, bus drivers, health employees and so on. Our administrators are under unbelievable stress trying to manage the multiple demands. If incorrect labels are applied to their efforts, they will be demoralized and given the message that what they have done is of little value. In a time of staff shortages, Arizona cannot send that message.

We value accountability, but misleading and incorrect grading systems are not accountability. Please stand up and send a signal to the people of Arizona that now is not the time to mislabel our educators, our schools, and our districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Joraanstad", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Mark Joraanstad, Ed.D.
Executive Director