



For Immediate Release

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Buckeye Elementary’s WestPark and Sundance Schools “Beat the Odds”

Two BESD schools receive honors as schools focusing on mentoring and training

February 3, 2016, (Buckeye, Arizona) – Seven schools with high minority, low-income student populations received gold awards in the State of Arizona and have been named "Beat the Odds Schools" by Beat the Odds, an initiative of the Center for the Future of Arizona. Nine schools earned silver and nine earned bronze awards. WestPark Elementary in Buckeye was selected as a Gold Award winner, the highest level of achievement and conferred the title of a “Beat the Odds” School. Sundance Elementary was recognized as a Bronze Level School.

Based upon research and 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. Additionally, six keys to success are followed and include a strong and steady principal, a clear bottom line, ongoing assessment, collaborative solutions, customized instruction to fit each student’s needs and a commitment to stick with the program.

"Our award winners demonstrate that demography is not destiny. They have overcome obstacles and improved academic performance through their commitment to Beat the Odds’ Six Keys to Success," said Amanda Burke, Center for the Future of Arizona senior director of education.

Dr. Kristi Sandvik, BESD Superintendent shares, “We are so proud of the work of WestPark and Sundance Schools in their quest to ensure a bright future for all of their students. In following the six keys to success, they have seen dramatic improvement and cohesive campuses that breed positive changes and productive environments. It is wonderful to see the schools receive the accolades they deserve for their hard work on behalf of the students, staff, families and communities they serve.”

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

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