

Support and Innovation

Happy New Year

Upcoming Dates

- News Day ADE Closed on January 1st
- **Grants Open January 1st**
- S&I Staff Meeting on January 8th 8:30-5:00pm
- Martin Luther King Day ADE Closed on January 15th
- First Benchmark with Reflections due on January 15th
- Project Elevate @Sky Song on January 22nd-24th
- **Grant Application Closes January 31st**

News from the Desk of Devon Isherwood

The Support and Innovation Team is excited about collaborating with the newly identified Comprehensive Support and Innovation Schools as they work to improve student outcomes. Specialists have reached out to Superintendents to introduce themselves. We have also been busy developing resources and professional learning opportunities for CSI Schools. We look forward to getting to know each of you, the LEA and school successes and your planned improvement efforts. Please know that we are here to support you. Reach out to us at any time.

Devon Isherwood
Deputy Associate
Superintendent

Support and Innovation

Meet the Support and Innovation Team

“Supporting and Driving Academic Reform and Systematic”

Director Elizabeth Allen

Elizabeth Allen is a veteran educator with over 18 years in education. Before joining the Arizona Department of Education she served as an admin-

istrator working with disenfranchised high school students. Under her leadership, student test scores increased and graduation rates increased 20% within one year's

time. Her passion is helping grow leaders into focusing on the right systems of support to increase student achievement.

Christina Pou-Maricopa Region

Christina Pou a passionate educator dedicated to the advancement of student achievement. Christina is an Arizona native and has been a valley educator, instructional coach and administrator for 15 years. She has focused her career on

quality instruction, behavior management, rigorous curriculum and the professional development of others. Christina has worked in a variety of school environments in the US and abroad. She has helped her schools earn the Arizona A+ award, US Department of Ed-

ucation Blue Ribbon for closing the achievement gap and Tempe's MLK diversity award for school wide work on equity. Christina is passionate and driven to help all students receive the best education possible.

Alisa Garwick-Maricopa Region

Alisa Garwick has over 17 years of experience in education as a successful teacher, instructional coach and administrator with proven success. She developed and led teams that made an impact on academic achievement. She led a school that was recognized as a Title I Academic Achievement School. They successfully closed the achievement gap in their signif-

icant subgroups. The school's socioeconomically disadvantaged students met and doubled their achievement targets set for them two consecutive years in a row. Their significant subgroups consisted of 80% economically disadvantaged students and of the population was a diverse ethnicity. Their success was contributed to their collaborative data teams and their positive, engaging

school culture that focused on the whole child. She received extensive training in Professional Learning Communities, Data Teams, Effective Instructional Strategies, Common Formative Assessments, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

Cathie Devers Education Program Specialist

Cathie Devers a native from Dallas, Texas. She met her husband as a sophomore at an all girl's school and he was a senior at an all boy's school. Yes, stories are true about "all" schools! He then left for Texas Tech 2 years before her. Cathie got there as soon as she could. She then graduated in 3 years with an Elementary Education degree and a Deaf Education

degree. After that it was back to Dallas where she then got married. After travelling, and working on a masters degree in interior design and redoing a house. She had a girl, Maggie and a boy, John Paul came along. Just shortly after she then moved to Phoenix. That's when she started working at the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf in multiple roles from specialist to principal. From

there she retired but eventually got bored and returned to work in the Deer Valley School district as a Intervention Specialist. After that year, ADE seemed the place to be and she was then hired as a Program and Monitoring Specialist in ESS. As the program changed she realized there was a better fit for her in Support and Innovation!

Meg Cota-Southern Arizona Region

Meg Cota is an 18-year, Arizona educator. Her experiences include teaching at the elementary and middle school levels in: bilingual, sheltered English instruction, honors, and inclusive classroom settings. She has 10 years of administrative experience, working as an Assistant Principal and Principal, at the elemen-

tary and middle school levels. Meg has worked primarily in high-minority, high-poverty, public schools, and has extensive experience in supporting transformational school environments. Meg attributes much of her success to her skills in fostering parent and community engagement, as well as creating positive

school climates/ cultures. These are areas she is very passionate about. Meg is currently pursuing her PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of Arizona and hopes to use the knowledge gained through her studies to support her work with schools.

Frank Larby-Southern Arizona Region

Frank Larby has been involved in the field of education for 32 years and in that time he has held a number of instructional and administrative roles. Throughout his roles there has been an emphasis and orientation to improve teaching and learning through the use of personalized learning, high engage-

ment strategies and technology resources. Frank led the development of the technology strategic plan for the Union Elementary School District. Also completing an analysis of data for student achievement and the creation of a data analysis system. Thirteen years as a school principal have exposed me to a broad range of experiences

in education. He participated in and chaired numerous committees to develop collaborative relationships with teachers and other stakeholders. Working to improve the education of students in at-risk populations Frank has worked with school improvement plans, development and use of assessments, and the development and use of data as a tool

Janice Pender-Northern Arizona Region

Janice Pender's extensive career in education has covered an array of assignments throughout Arizona in both metropolitan and rural school settings. She has taught students in most grade levels inclusive of both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in NAU's Education Programs. She has also provided district and school leaders additional support in

the delivery of professional development, in her role as data coordinator, district gifted program coordinator, and as an academic coach and mentor for district teachers. In her current position as Education Program Specialist with the Arizona Department of Education's Support and Innovation unit, Janice works to assist schools and districts in creating and sustaining high quality systemic change in

order to increase outcomes for Arizona students. Arizona State University and West-Ed program is based on the belief that it takes both system and school-level leaders working together to create a culture of learning where every student has the best opportunity for success to graduate college and career ready.

Cindy Richards-Project Specialist

Born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago, Cindy found her "thing" in high school was business classes. She was Vice-President of the Business Club for two years and received the "Business Education Award" upon graduation; leading to the logical and true conclusion of her children that she was a Nerd in high school. Married since 1978, Cindy and her husband raised 4 children, working as a Typesetter for a local newspaper during the evening so she could be home with the kids during the day. Upon returning to the daytime work

place, her background led her to become the administrative assistant for the CIO of the Océ Reprographic Headquarters in Chicago where she worked for 13 years. In 1982, Cindy was first introduced to Arizona when her mother-in-law moved to Scottsdale. Over the next 22 years there were many family vacations to Arizona; each time Cindy would tell her husband "It's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there". Losing the war of words in 2004, Cindy and her family moved to Arizona. While

finding some aspects of Arizona life pleasing, she still misses the first Robin of springtime, Fire Flies on a summer night, the colorful trees in the fall and the fun aspects of snow at your door step. When not at work, Cindy helps with her grandkids and as often as possible enjoys seeing her favorite musicians in concert. And, 44 years after graduation, she can still be thought a nerd as she works in education, in a business capacity, and remembers every word of her high school spirit song; just don't ask her to sing it.

Lea Bryant-Program Project Specialist

Lea Bryant is new to the Department of Education as a recent Graduate of Grambling State University. Lea is a big football and college basketball fan, she enjoys just hanging out with her family. And right she is focusing on

getting her Master degree in Business. I have been living in the valley for over 10 years but originally from Kansas. I have worked in the news aspect for about a year. As a part of studio production, running the audio broad, studio cameras. She is now turn-

ing he attention toward working maintaining website information and assisting program specialist for support and innovation team. Although she is new she is ready to dig deeper in to education and ready to help!