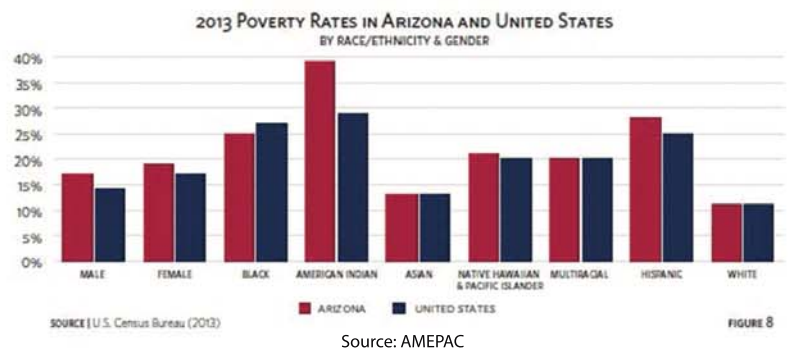


BACKGROUND

According to the 2015 census, there are more than 6 million people living in Arizona. African Americans make up 4.7 percent of this total population. The median household income for Arizona was \$49,928 in 2014. More than 18 percent of all households are living in poverty.

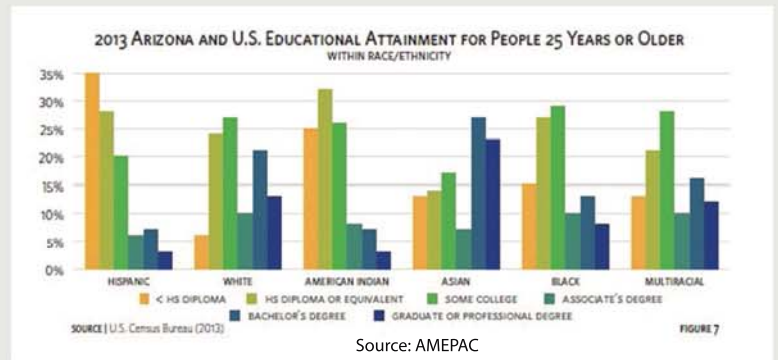
For Arizona residents aged 25 or higher, 14 percent have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent and 25 percent have taken some level of college courses, but have not completed. That means that nearly 40 percent of the adult population has limited educational experience up to a bachelor's degree, and less than 30 percent attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

For African Americans in Arizona, the median household income is \$35,600. However, for homes headed by single mothers this number decreases to \$25,594. Twenty-five percent of Arizona African Americans live in poverty and 15 percent have not obtained a high school diploma. While more than 25 percent have completed high school and have taken some college courses, less than 13 percent have earned anything higher than an associate degree.



Education has always been seen as an equalizer to poverty. The lack of educational attainment through high school, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree and further, could make a significant difference in the earning power of any person. Earning potential over a lifetime drastically changes when the variable of education is applied, particularly in employment and annual income. In 2014, the Pew Research Center determined that for people aged 25-32, there was a wide margin in the income and employment rates of those with and without degrees.

For individuals with a bachelor's degree (or higher) the median income was \$45,400, and for an associate degree (or some college) the median income was \$30,000. With unemployment, those with a bachelor's degree (or higher) saw a rate of only 3.8 percent, while those with an associate degree (or some college) saw an elevated rate of 8.1 percent. However, those with only a high school diploma saw a median income of just \$28,000 and a higher unemployment rate of 12.2 percent. This disparity was also seen in the poverty index, where those with only a high school diploma made up 21.8 percent of those living in poverty. In comparison, this rate is higher than the poverty rate of those with an associate and bachelor's degrees combined.

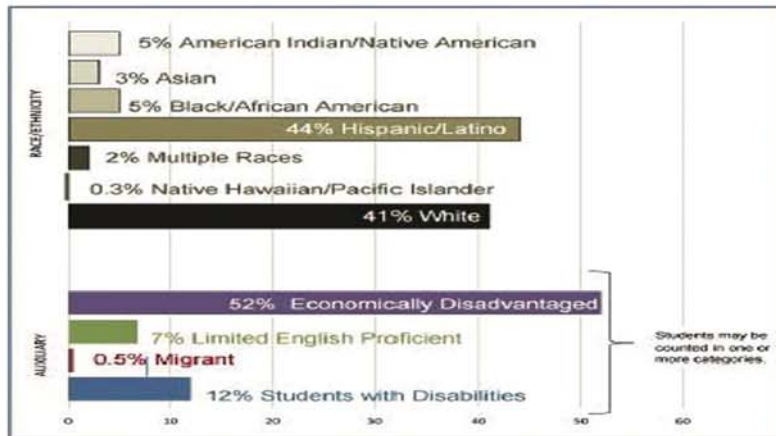


The most significant fact from the Pew Research is that over the last nearly 50 years, the earnings gap between college graduates and high school graduates has steadily grown from a \$7,500 gap up to a \$17,500 gap. With labor market projections, those without some college experience will fare worse in years to come.

Understanding the intersection of poverty, earning power, and education is important to identifying what can be done to positively impact academic achievement in elementary school, graduation rates in high school, and enrollment and completion of degrees in college. The State of Black Arizona has culled through data ranging from the Arizona Department of Education, to the Arizona Minority Student Progress Report, and up through national research done by Pew Research Center and the College Board. Our role is to find the information and present it to our community so that conversations and action planning can begin.

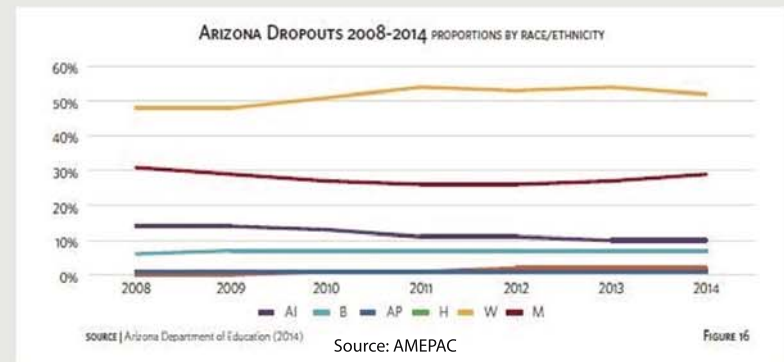
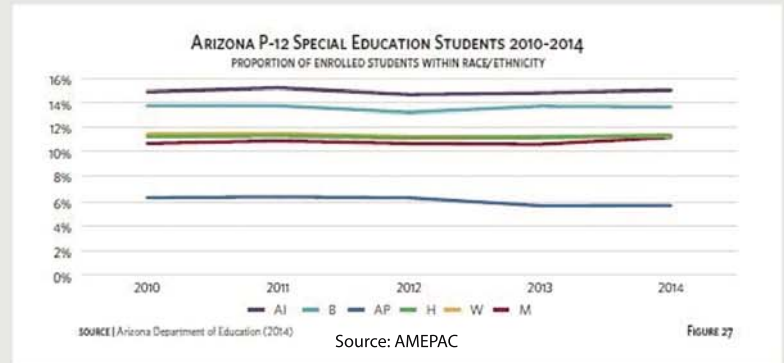
Courageous conversation about educational attainment within our state and local communities must either begin or be elevated. The state of Black education is nearing a crisis point if we do not address the barriers and lack of opportunities for our young children. Similarly, we must identify measures and programmatic initiatives that support students and families looking at college as the next necessary step in the educational process. Further, we must ensure that access, funding, and relevant academic or occupational pathways are available to African American college students that support successful completion.

K-12 Education

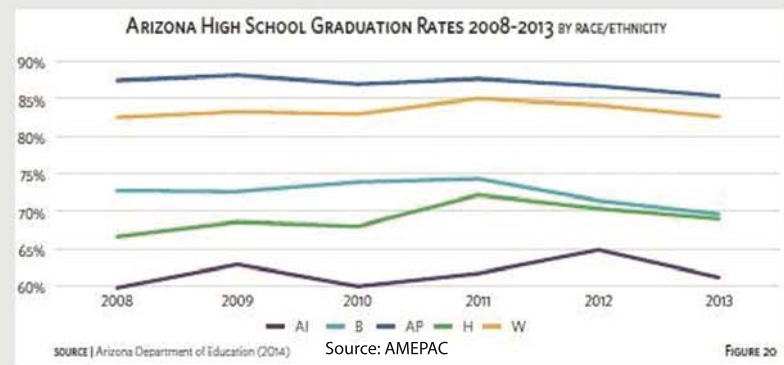


In 2014, there were more than 1.1 million students in Arizona schools. Of this number, 85 percent were either White or Hispanic. Additionally, 52 percent were considered economically disadvantaged, due to their eligibility for free and reduced lunch. While Whites and Hispanics represented the largest portion of enrollments, African American student enrollment increased by 33 percent between 2002 and 2014. For the 2014-2015 academic year, African American student enrollment was at 52,815, with the largest number in Maricopa County (15,302), followed by Pima and Pinal (8,588 and 4,957).

African American enrollment is stable across all grade levels, with a dropout rate of 4 percent (which increased by 1 percent over a four year period). This dropout rate is higher than both white students (2.45) and the state average (3.46). The rate of placement in special education is also alarmingly high, second only to American Indians.



There has also been a decline in high school graduation rates. In 2011, African Americans graduated at a rate near 75 percent. But by 2013, that rate dipped below 70 percent. In real numbers, 3,232 African American students graduated on time in the 2009-2014 high school class.



Testing and Assessments

All K-12 districts engage in testing to determine whether or not a student is meeting the learning standards set by their state. That is not different here in Arizona. This past year, the Arizona Department of Education changed the assessment tool for Reading, Writing, and Math subjects.

This statewide test, known as AzMERIT, is administered each year from grades 3-8 to evaluate student learning, and then again in high school to determine proficiency in each subject. AzMERIT replaced the AIMS testing on the aforementioned subjects, and is administered in the spring.

In 2014, AzMERIT was administered in the state. The results showed that throughout Arizona, students tested at the 34th percentile for language and the 35th percentile for math. Students from low socioeconomic schools tested at the 23rd for language and 24th for math. African Americans tested at the 24th for language and 21st for math, more than 10 percentage points behind the average.

Arizona also participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). "The Nation's Report Card" is a test that looks at how well students are doing on several subject areas across the nation. A portion of schools within the state are selected to participate in this effort. Those schools then test their 4th and 8th grade students.

In 2013, the NAEP released its most recent national report. They reported that nationally for 4th grade, 41 percent of the students performed at a basic level for math, and 33 percent at a basic reading level. Those students at a proficient level were at 34 percent for math and 26 percent for reading. In 8th grade, 39 percent of the students performed at basic level math, and 42 percent at basic level reading. Arizona 4th and 8th graders were very close to the national levels; edging ahead in basic levels within 4th grade math (42 percent) and 8th grade reading (44 percent). However, Arizona scored lower in each of the proficient categories in both grades. African American students (from Arizona) placed further below the state average, as well. African American students in 4th grade had a 22 percent proficiency in mathematics and a 16 percent proficiency in reading. Similarly, Arizona African American students have a 17 percent proficiency in mathematics and a 15 percent proficiency in reading. Our students are lagging 10-15 percentage points behind.

Funding for Schools

Arizona is in the bottom 5 percent of state funding for education with an annual per pupil funding of \$7,205. In comparison, the national average per pupil is \$10,700. Over the past few years, there has been \$727 million dollars cut from K-12 education. One result of these substantial cuts was the school inflation lawsuit which settled in favor of public schools. This ruling requires the state to increase the base level of the state budget for education by \$331 million. In 2015, the governor and some legislators have proposed a ballot measure titled Prop. 123 in order to provide \$3.5 billion to schools over the next 10 years. This would increase per pupil spending by \$300. This additional funding would equate to \$7,505 for each pupil; still far below the national average.

Maricopa (11 colleges) and Pima (six campuses) County Community College Districts lost all of their state funding, effective July 1, 2015. The governor and state legislature cut funding for these two colleges from its budget.

Grade 4

Mathematics					Reading				
Achievement	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Achievement	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
National All Students	1	41	34	8	National All Students	33	33	26	8
Arizona All Students	1	42	32	7	Arizona All Students	49*	32	22*	5*
White	8	37	43	1	White	24	34	33	9
Black	2	60	22	2	Black	48	33	16	3
Hispanic	2	47	25	3	Hispanic	51	37	15	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	31	38	22	Asian/Pacific Islander	36	38	23	12
American Indian	3	45	15	1	American Indian	73	28	7	1
Eligible for NSLP	2	48	24	3	Eligible for NSLP	54	31	18	1
Students with Disability	5	32	11	3	Students with Disability	79	13	7	1
Limited English	8	37	3	#	Limited English Proficiency	92	7	1	#

Participation Rate	Percent	Pro/Adv.
Students with Disability	9	22%
Limited English	9	

Participation Rate	Percent	Pro/Adv.
Students with Disability	92	19%
Limited English Proficiency	96	

Grade 8

Mathematics					Reading				
Achievement	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Achievement	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
National All Students	2	39	26	8	National All Students	23	42	31	4
Arizona All Students	31*	38	24*	7	Arizona All Students	28*	44	26*	2*
White	1	38	32	13	White	16	42	38	4
Black	4	34	17	3	Black	41	43	15	#
Hispanic	4	40	16	2	Hispanic	36	47	17	2
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	32	42	15	Asian/Pacific Islander	14	40	41	5
American Indian	5	36	1	1	American Indian	51	40	9	#
Eligible for NSLP	4	40	16	2	Eligible for NSLP	38	46	15	1
Students with Disability	7	23	3	#	Students with Disability	72	24	4	#
Limited English	#	#	#	#	Limited English Proficiency	#	#	#	#

Participation Rate	Percent	Pro/Adv.
Students with Disability	9	20%
Limited English	#	

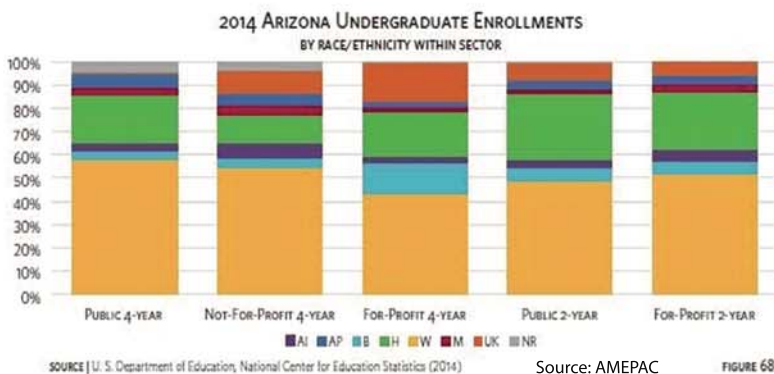
Participation Rate	Percent	Pro/Adv.
Students with Disability	85	15%
Limited English Proficiency	#	

These two counties will have to rely on tuition increases and property taxes to sustain their district's budget. Consequently, these two counties have the largest populations of African Americans.

For the public universities in Arizona, the governor and state legislature have cut more than \$460 million in funding over the last seven years. Arizona ranks 49th in per resident spending on higher education; reaching below \$116 per resident in the coming fiscal year.

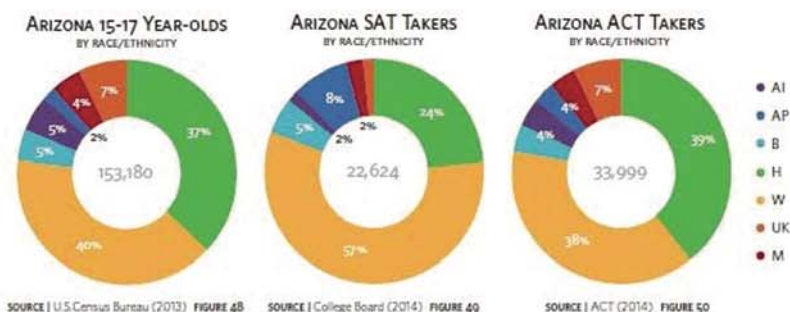
All of these funding issues will have an impact on African Americans in public education.

College Readiness and Completion



In 2014, there were 334,056 students in community college, and 152,933 students enrolled in the public universities. While these numbers are commendable, the road to college readiness and admissions for high school students is not as laudable. Disparity in "college going" among students is evident in the data. For instance, 10 percent of Arizona's public schools represent 50 percent of the high school graduates who enroll in college, while more than half of our public schools send fewer than 10 students to college. Fifty-one schools sent zero students to college.

Source: AMEPAC



Less than 5 percent of African American high school students utilize Advanced Placement (AP) or Dual Enrollment (DE) courses to earn college credits while still in high school. Of the African American students eligible to graduate from high school, only 5 percent take the ACT or SAT. Further, only 36 percent of these students meet the requirements for admission into Arizona's public universities. This means that 6 of every 10 African American high school students do not qualify for university admission.

Table 1. Percent of Arizona High-School Graduates Eligible for Admission to the Public Universities

	2014
African American	36.6%
American Indian	33.6%
Asian American	69.6%
Pacific Islander	37.3%
Hispanic	34.1%
White	54.7%
TOTAL	46.5%

6 out of 10 African American Students Don't qualify for University Admission

**Effective for fall of 1998, the Board of Regents added five high-school units for a new total of 16 curricular requirements. This increase in standards resulted in a dramatic reduction in the eligibility rate for the 1998 high-school graduates.*

Graduation rates of African Americans in community colleges and universities, has increased slightly over the past 10 years. African American graduation rates have only increased by 2 percent for associate and bachelor's degrees. In comparison, Hispanic graduation rates have climbed 15 percent while White students maintain a graduation rate well above 50 percent.

The State of Black Arizona creates a platform for data, demographics, and research to be synthesized in order to inform the community on the status of African Americans in Arizona. This research is intended to help community leaders and organizations in action planning and decision making related to the issues and concerns within the state. The data produced as a result of these efforts is to compel both the decision maker and the grassroots community to move towards concerted actions that provide solutions to improve the lives of all Arizonans.

Prepared by: Felicia L. Ganther, J.D.
 Special Thanks: Pam Asti, Rosslyn Knight, Brandi Lucero and Ray Ostos
 Graphs are compliments of the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center