



STATE OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY  
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Michele Reagan  
Secretary of State  
1700 W. Washington, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Secretary Reagan:

I signed S.B. 1289.

As we improve the A-F accountability system, I urge the State Board of Education to set the bar high. Our "A" schools should be an accurate representation of Arizona's best public schools. The accountability measures in the letter grades should provide parents with a better picture of the quality of the school. The Arizona Board of Education should look to best practices in other states, like Florida, Massachusetts and Indiana, and replicate what works in these states here in Arizona. The State Board of Education, along with the Department of Education, should use the transition period wisely for public engagement and stakeholder input. During this transition, parents must continue to have access to school performance indicators as they make important decisions about their children's education. Once complete, the A-F system should be simple for parents to understand and have clear expectations of quality for schools to follow.

As the State Board of Education considers the future of the A-F accountability system, I call upon the State Board of Education to report to me and the Legislature on the feasibility of including a menu of local and/or statewide assessments in the improved accountability system. Local control, and the flexibility to use the curriculum and assessment tools that works best in each individual school and classroom, furthers accountability and gives freedom to the teacher to teach and the student to learn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas A. Ducey".

Douglas A. Ducey  
Governor  
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable Andy Biggs  
The Honorable David Gowan  
The Honorable Kelli Ward

State of Arizona  
Senate  
Fifty-second Legislature  
First Regular Session  
2015

Senate Engrossed  
**FILED**  
**MICHELE REAGAN**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE**

CHAPTER 76

# **SENATE BILL 1289**

AN ACT

PRESCRIBING A TRANSITION PROCESS TO REVISE THE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. School and school district letter grades; transition  
3 process; report

4 A. Notwithstanding any other law, the department of education may not  
5 assign schools or school districts letter grade classifications pursuant to  
6 section 15-241, Arizona Revised Statutes, for school years 2014-2015 and  
7 2015-2016 in order for the department of education, subject to the approval  
8 of the state board of education, to develop and implement a revised  
9 accountability system for schools and school districts.

10 B. Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, the department of  
11 education shall continue to collect and publish data in school years  
12 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 concerning the academic performance indicators for  
13 schools and school districts prescribed in section 15-241, Arizona Revised  
14 Statutes, subsections C and D.

15 C. For the purposes of section 15-241, subsections K through II,  
16 Arizona Revised Statutes, and sections 15-241.01 and 15-537 and chapter 19 of  
17 this title, Arizona Revised Statutes, and subject to final adoption by the  
18 state board of education, the department of education shall develop criteria  
19 to identify schools and school districts for school years 2014-2015 and  
20 2015-2016 that demonstrate a below average level of performance.

21 D. Notwithstanding any other law, during school years 2014-2015 and  
22 2015-2016, the governing board of a school district may adopt alternative  
23 policies regarding performance based funding pursuant to section 15-977,  
24 subsection B, Arizona Revised Statutes, or policies regarding dismissal or  
25 nonrenewal procedures for teachers who continue to be designated in the  
26 lowest performance classification pursuant to section 15-537, subsection C,  
27 Arizona Revised Statutes.

28 E. Notwithstanding section 15-211, subsection D, Arizona Revised  
29 Statutes, in fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, each school district and  
30 charter school that was assigned a letter grade of C, D or F pursuant to  
31 section 15-241, subsection H, Arizona Revised Statutes, in school year  
32 2013-2014 or that has more than ten percent of its pupils in grade three  
33 reading far below the third grade level according to the reading portion of  
34 the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, if  
35 data is available, shall receive monies generated by the K-3 reading support  
36 level weight established in section 15-943, Arizona Revised Statutes, only  
37 after the K-3 reading program plan of the school district or charter school  
38 has been approved by the state board of education.

39 F. The state board of education, in cooperation with the department of  
40 education, shall submit a report by December 15, 2015 to the governor, the  
41 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate that  
42 includes proposed legislation to implement the revised accountability system  
43 for schools and school districts. The state board of education shall submit  
44 a copy of this report to the secretary of state.

1           Sec. 2. Assessments; student letter grades; moratorium

2           Notwithstanding any other law, a pupil's score on an assessment  
3 selected pursuant to section 15-741, Arizona Revised Statutes, may not be  
4 used as a factor in determining a pupil's letter grade in any particular  
5 course in school years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

6           Sec. 3. Retroactivity

7           This act is effective retroactively to from and after June 30, 2014.

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR MARCH 26, 2015.

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE MARCH 27, 2015.

Passed the House March 19, 2015,

by the following vote: 55 Ayes,  
0 Nays, 5 Not Voting

[Signature]  
Speaker of the House

[Signature]  
Chief Clerk of the House

Passed the Senate February 24, 2015,

by the following vote: 28 Ayes,  
2 Nays, 0 Not Voting

[Signature]  
President of the Senate

[Signature]  
Secretary of the Senate

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

This Bill was received by the Governor this  
23<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2015,

at 1:54 o'clock P. M.

[Signature]  
Secretary to the Governor

Approved this 26<sup>th</sup> day of  
March, 2015,

at 11:31 o'clock A. M.  
[Signature]  
Governor of Arizona

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

This Bill was received by the Secretary of State  
this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015,

at 9:30 o'clock A. M.  
[Signature]  
Secretary of State

S.B. 1289