

EXHIBIT D

Fisher Response to Transition Plans for Ochoa, Robison, Safford, Cholla and Pueblo

We have some general concerns about the plans as a whole and some specific concerns about the individual school plans. A common factor in each of the plans is the inattention to the academic needs of African American students. No African American student at Ochoa achieved mastery in math or language arts. At Robison, Safford and Cholla, African American students are in the lowest performance level. We can only guess at their level of performance at Pueblo since those statistics were not included in the plan. However, not one of the school plans specifically identifies strategies to address this achievement gap.

The plans need to delineate how they will identify African American students who are not progressing, what interventions will be used and how they will assess progress. These students require focused attention to insure that they receive the instruction and assistance needed for success.

Another overall concern is the lack of attention paid to improving Tier I instruction, other than having teachers review Danielson protocol. How will this be delivered and how will it be monitored. Is each principal adequately trained to observe and supervise teachers' use of the strategies?

Each school lists intervention and remediation programs, but nothing is said about improving classroom instruction. If teachers continue doing what they have been doing, there is no reason to expect different results. The plans need to outline how the principals at each school will identify teachers in need of professional development to improve instructional delivery. It is far better for students to be taught effectively from the beginning than to have to do intervention and remediation.

The District plans to bring in Solution Tree to provide professional development. We need to know more about this program. What will the program provide, how will the training be delivered and how frequent will personnel from Solution Tree work with school personnel. A lot of emphasis is placed on principal walkthroughs. What training will be done with these principals to insure that they know what to look for in these class visits?

A third general concern is the multiple on-line interventions that are being plan. We would like to know more about the approach and success rates of Big Brainz, Think Through Math and Reading Apprenticeship. We also question whether the schools have the technology needed to adequately implement these programs and what kind of certified personnel will work with students using these programs.

Our final overall concern has to do with the curriculum as a whole. What are the reading, math and writing programs at each school? Is the curriculum aligned with the Standards and AZ Merits? A lot of attention is being given to PLC's. Our question is will each school be mandated to provide adequate time for teachers to work in these teams and what training and supervision will be included.

Ochoa

A stated goal for Ochoa is to move their dual language program towards 90% Spanish instruction and 10% English instruction. What is being done for non-Spanish speaking students? What are the plans for including African American students in the AVID program? What we really need to know is how the school plans to address the academic achievement deficiencies for all of its students and specifically African American students? The dual language program has not helped the students the majority of students achieve mastery and especially not the African American students. What changes are being made to effectively teach the students?

Robison

Robison's plan addresses instruction remedies for ELL students, but does not address strategies for African American students although they are performing at the lowest level. The use of Reading Recovery is noted. What we would like to know is how will students be selected for this intervention?

Safford

The school plans to use teaching assistants during the summer to support learning. Is there any plan to use teaching assistants during the school year and if so, at what grade levels.

Will the common assessments be aligned with Standards and AZMerits?

To address classroom management the school plans to utilize Fred Jones Training. To be most effective the teachers should receive this training prior to the start of the school year, so that on the first day of school teachers are in sync with their knowledge, their classroom expectations and consequence.

Utterback

Again, no specific attention is paid to African American students. The school has AVID classes, but we need to know how students are selected for the classes and why all African American students are not in the classes since they are in the lowest percent when it comes to academic achievement.

AVID is aimed at students at average or below average performance, so based on the performance of African American students, they should all be in the AVID classes. This would require funding for training of additional teachers.

The school also plans to utilize Fred Jones Training to address classroom management. Again, this training needs to happen before the start of the school year and needs to be repeated annually for teachers new to the school.

They indicate a desire to continue the fine arts classes, but these classes are not currently funded to serve all students and the material and equipment necessary for the curriculum do not exist at the needed levels.

The continued existence of long term substitutes negatively affects the instruction that students receive. Non classroom personnel who are certified should be placed in the classroom, so that all classrooms have a certified teacher. There is also a need for at least two content area teachers per grade level.

Cholla

Again, African American students are at the lowest level academically. How will the principal insure consistency in assessment and utilization of benchmark data?

Since the school plans to continue the IB program, we need information on the success of the program, the number of students of color in the program and the cost of the program.

We also want to know how many African American students are enrolled in AVID.

Pueblo

The school did not include the performance levels in their plan, so we do not know how African American students are actually faring. Based on the performance of African American students at the other schools and in the District overall, it is safe to assume that there is an achievement gap between African American students and the total population.

The school plans to use Reading Apprenticeship. It is not clear which students will receive this intervention.

The school plans to expand its dual language programs. We ask the same question that we did with Ochoa. What evidence is there that this approach is being successful in teaching the Standards and preparing students for success on AZ Merits? Also, how many African American students are enrolled in the dual language program?

The District has put together five plans with a variety of stated approaches, but no indication of how the plans will be evaluated, how frequently students will be assessed and whether the curriculum is aligned to the Standards and AZMerits. The lack of across the District consistency in programs and instruction dilutes the effectiveness of instructional delivery for all students. There is a need for across the board consistency in approach to teaching and the programs used. For example, Pueblo is planning to use Reading Apprenticeship which is a good program but better suited for middle school. Perhaps, it is something that should also be used at Safford and Utterback. Both of these schools feed into Pueblo.