

# A+ School of Excellence Application

2023-2024 School Year

Thank you for applying for an A+ School of Excellence Award. The Arizona Educational Foundation looks forward to reviewing your application. Please click the link below to download the "Application Guide" to help prepare you for your online application submission.

## [Download Application Guide](#)

*Includes:*  
Printable Application  
Deadlines  
Application Criteria  
Writing Tips

*The printable copy of the application is for reference and preparation purposes only. Official applications must be submitted through this online form.*

## Section 1: School Overview

### 1) APID

If you know your school's APID (A+ ID number) please enter it here. If you do not, please leave this blank.

### 2) Official School Name \*

School's full name as listed by the Arizona Department of Education.

### 3) District Name \*

Full district name as listed by the Arizona Department of Education.

### 4) Grade Levels (Click all grades that apply) \*

Pre-K

K

1

2

3

4

**5) Has your school previously earned the A+ School of Excellence Award? \***

Yes

No

**6) Main School Phone \***

**7) School Physical Address \***

Street Address

Street Address Line 2

City

State / Province

Postal / Zip Code

**7b) Is the school's mailing address the same as the physical address? \***

Yes

No

**8) Principal's Name: \***

Prefix

First Name

Last Name

**9) Principal's Direct Email Address: \***

example@example.com

**9b) Principal's Direct School Phone Number: \***

**11) Number of years principal has been in their position at the school: \***

See eligibility requirements for questions.

**12) Name of District Superintendent: \***

Prefix      First Name      Last Name

# School Site Visit Dates

If your school is granted a site visit, this information will be sent directly to the lead judge of the team who will visit your school. The lead judge will work directly with your school administration to schedule your visit dates.

**2023-2024 Site Visits:** Between November 15, 2023 and February 9th, 2024.

**Site Visit Length:** Site visits occur over two consecutive days.

**14) Given your school's 2023-2024 calendar, what dates would be ideal to host an A+ site visit? \***

**15) Please provide the dates of any activities that may interfere with the scheduling of an A+ visit. (Ex: Early release, fall break, overnight or all-day field trips, professional development days, etc.) \***

# Section 2: District & School Demographics

16) Total number of Pre-K-12 students enrolled in the district. \*

17) Number of schools in the district by category:

#

Elementary

Pre-K to 8th

Middle/Junior High

High School

19) Students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in the school.

Pre-K K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

#

21) Racial/ethnic composition of students in the school.

Percent

Black or African American

Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander

Hispanic or Latino

American Indian or Alaska Native

White

Other

**22) Pick the category that best describes the area where the school is located. \***

- Urban, large central city
- Suburban with characteristics of urban areas
- Suburban
- Small city/town in rural area
- Rural

**23) Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year. \***

Calculate this rate by taking the total number of students who transferred to or from your school between October 1 and the end of the s

**24) Limited English proficient students in the school.**

#

Total number of students.

Total percentage of the student population.

Total number of languages represented.

**24b) Specify languages represented at your school. \***

**25) Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals.**

#

Total number of students.

Total percentage of the student population.

If the free/reduced-price meals method is not a reasonably accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how the school arrived at this estimate.

**26) Alternative method for estimating percentage of low-income families.**

**27) Students receiving special education services.**

#

Total NUMBER of students in special education services.

Total PERCENTAGE of student population.

**28) Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific magnet program(s). \***

Yes

No

**29) Indicate the number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below.**

Full Time

Part Time

Administrators

Classroom Teachers

Therapists

Resource Teachers

Paraprofessionals

Support Staff

Other

**31) Attendance rate for past four academic school years. Please report in percentages. Data will be needed for school years, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023.**

2019-2020

2020-2021

2021-2022

2022-2023

Average daily student attendance rate.

Average daily teacher attendance rate.

Teacher turnover rate.

Student promotion rate.

Graduation rate (high schools).

**32) Describe any significant changes or trends in the attendance rate data above. Explain why the changes occurred and the impact on your school programs. Note: for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, the panel understands attendance rates were impacted by early school closures due to COVID-19. You do not need to spend a great deal of time in your response explaining this incidence. \***

800-word limit.0/800

## Section 3: School Summary

The school summary provides the panel with important background information for understanding the school. Please note that if the school is recognized, the summary may be made available to the press.

### 33) Structure the school summary narrative as follows:

- Include the school name, city, and state in the first sentence.
- State the school's vision, mission, and values. Briefly describe the process used to develop the school's vision, mission, and values and related goals.
- Summarize the strengths and accomplishments of the school, focusing especially on what makes the school a unique and successful place for learning and what makes it worthy of recognition. Emphasize the key initiatives and accomplishments that distinguish the school.
- Describe major challenges the school has faced in the past five years, how the school and community have successfully managed them, and what the school and community have learned from them. Be specific.
- Discuss anticipated future challenges and the school's plans to address them.
- Conclude the summary with a strong statement about what makes the school an excellent place for students to learn, grow, and thrive.

### 33) School Summary Narrative \*

1000-word limit.0/1000

# Section 4: Effective Schools Evidence

**34) Demonstrate your school's academic excellence through indicators of success. Upload a document (max 2 pages) that includes data other than AZ Merit that demonstrates significant student academic growth and/or high student achievement over time. A summary of the data should be included as part of the two-pages.**

Reviewers will have your school's most recent AZ Merit scores so do NOT use this space for AZ Merit. Other data examples may include but are not limited to:

- Charts and/or graphs depicting quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Quantitative data that reflects evidence of excellence in academics (for example: Benchmark assessments, DIBELS, AP Placement, AzCCRS, etc.)
- Quantitative data from unique programs that you are highlighting in your A+ application.
- Included in the two-pages should be a summary of the data you are providing.

Note: Attendance and behavior data can be included to support overall excellence of the school but should not be the single indicator.

Note: Any attachment over two pages will be disqualified.

Note: While teacher-created assessment data can be used, it should not be the only data used to show excellence.

**Explain additional qualitative and/or quantitative ways your school measures success outside of achievement data.**

Provide an analysis of the data and tell how the data demonstrates excellence. Examples may include but are not limited to benchmark assessments, caregiver surveys, engagement surveys, teacher and/or employee satisfaction surveys, etc. Tip: Consider how the data you are sharing supports programs or activities that you are discussing in your A+ application.

**35) Additional Explanation of Success \***

600-word limit.0/600

# Section 5: Strong Instructional Leadership

**Describe the leadership structure, roles, and functions that are important at school.**

Specifically:

- Describe the role and style of the principal and/or administrative team as visionary leader(s), instructional leader(s), and lead learner(s). Give specific examples.
- Discuss how key stakeholders within the school have a voice in decision-making. In rich detail, describe how other leadership roles and positions held by stakeholders ensure a shared responsibility for the common good of the community. Talk about how these roles and positions are formed, selected, and structured.
- Describe the process in place for leadership to create, promote, support, measure, and sustain specific, concrete goals to guide teachers' efforts and support students' needs.

## **36) Leadership Structure \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Describe how the school improvement process or strategic plan is organized and managed to ensure continuous growth and improvement.**

Specifically:

- Explain how research findings and data analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) inform policies and practices, programs, relationships, and use of resources to establish priorities and prompt school improvements.
- Describe the school's collaborative school improvement or strategic planning process and how major stakeholders are involved in school-wide and classroom improvement initiatives.
- Explain how professional development and collaboration support and sustain staff efforts, commitment and involvement related to the school's improvement process. Give specific examples.
- Discuss how data analysis and interpretation are used to identify, develop, implement and assess the effectiveness of improvement or strategic planning. Give examples of specific changes that have been implemented as a result of the school's improvement or strategic plan.

### **37) School Improvement Process \***

1500-word limit.0/1500

# Section 6: School Organization and Culture

**Explain how underlying school values, beliefs, and traditions ensure that people work together to solve problems and confront challenges.**

Specifically:

- Describe how the school communicates and monitors the culture and values of the school to all stakeholders. Give specific examples.
- Detail how the observable behaviors and actions of all stakeholders reflect a positive climate at the school.
- Describe the activities and celebrations that are routinely practiced to build positive relations among students, staff, parents, and the community. Include participation rates; who and how many are involved?

**38) Values, beliefs, and traditions. \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Explain how the school environment or climate is conducive to learning for all.**

Specifically:

- Discuss how the school creates, monitors, and sustains a collaborative, cooperative, safe, and orderly environment for all stakeholders.
- Provide specific examples of how non-teaching staff members (i.e. counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals, transportation, maintenance, support, cafeteria, nurse, crossing guards, etc.) support and affect the school culture.
- Describe in rich detail how the school fosters positive interactions, respect, cooperation, and collaboration between and among students and adults, and promotes a healthy peer climate among students. Who coordinates these efforts and how do you know they are making an impact?

**39) School Environment \***

800-word limit.0/800

# Section 7: Guaranteed, Viable Curriculum, Meaningful Assessment

**Describe how the school's curriculum reflects the use of best practices across all grade levels.**

Specifically:

- Detail the school's implementation of clear curriculum articulation as well as authentic teacher collaboration across and within grade levels and to and from feeder schools. Share how essential content (knowledge and skills) is defined, sequenced, and organized to maximize student learning. Include descriptions of policies and procedures that protect instructional time.
- Discuss the procedures and tools used to monitor the consistent implementation of essential curriculum including how curriculum is attained by different groups of students across grade levels.
- Detail the processes that are in place to review the curriculum. Highlight how these processes reflect a school wide commitment to continuous improvement.
- Reference research base(s) as appropriate.

## **40) Curriculum and Best Practices \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Choose one unique program to discuss.**

Consider the following:

- What sets your school apart in your district and/or community?
- Do you have a signature program or another unique initiative that may drive enrollment or support a need unique to your school or surrounding community?
- How does your school shine?

Tip: Avoid discussing programs that are commonplace or foundational among all schools. For example, all schools use some form of RTI. Highlighting RTI would not be unique unless your school is using it in a truly innovative and groundbreaking way.

Tip: In questions 34 and 35, you were asked to share qualitative and/or quantitative data. Consider using this space to elaborate on that data.

Tip: Use rich detail. Who is involved in the program? Why was this program adopted? Where do you see it making an impact?

**41) Unique Program \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Describe how all students, including learners with unique needs, have the opportunity to learn challenging content and achieve at high levels.**

Specifically:

- Describe the process for identifying and placing students in various programs. Tell how student progress is monitored and adjusted to ensure success.
- Tell how programs for diverse learning groups relate to the overall curriculum and how students are integrated into the mainstream classes and activities of the school when appropriate.
- Discuss what strategies are used to address different learning styles and needs. Provide specific examples and outcomes. Examples might include: expansion and modification of instructional time; double blocking; regrouping; co-teaching; flexible grouping; and other diverse instructional practices.
- Explain how these offerings relate to the overall curriculum and provide examples of their success.

Tip: Do not limit your response to just special education students. Include gifted, ELL students, etc.

#### **42) Opportunities for Challenging Content \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

## **Section 8: Active Teaching & Student Support**

**Describe what administrators and visitors at your school would observe on any given day.**

Use rich detail to describe:

- What might they see and hear teachers and students doing?
- What evidence of student learning would be visible?

#### **43) Visitor Observations100 \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Explain how your school is helping students understand they are citizens of the world.**

- What types of opportunities and resources are available both inside and outside of the classroom?
- How are students engaged in service learning or similar type collaborations with local groups that help them connect to the world beyond their schools?
- What resources are provided to support these efforts?

#### **44) Opportunities and Resources \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Using rich detail, share how the non-academic, social-emotional, and cultural needs of the student population are addressed and responded to through a network of cohesive and integrated programs and services.**

Specifically:

- Describe how the school identifies, assesses and meets the specific needs of all its students as defined by its population.
- Describe the non-academic services and programs that are available to support students and detail how they relate to student needs and school goals.
- Describe how all students are encouraged to build sustainable, caring relationships with each other, teachers and other adults on campus.
- Describe systems in place to help students learn to handle frustration, anger, teasing, bullying, and other negative interactions (e.g. counseling, character education programs, health services, student intervention assessments, etc.).
- Articulate school-wide systems in place to address and minimize the effects on school climate of factors such as absenteeism, serious discipline problems, high turnover of students or staff, or other negative factors.
- Discuss the strategies in place to ease transitions and provide support for transfer students, first-year students, family moves, etc.
- Provide specific examples of student success as a result of student interventions.

#### **45) Needs of Student Population \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

## SECTION 9: CAREGIVER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Articulate the role that families, partnerships and the community play in supporting learning.**

Specifically:

- Describe the goals and priorities of school, family and community partnerships and how those same goals and priorities are communicated to stakeholders and aligned with school priorities.
- Describe challenges, if any, the school faces with caregiver involvement or in developing partnerships or participation. Be specific.
- Describe how partnership goals are collaboratively developed with all stakeholders; detail what strategies are used to involve people from all segments of the community in supporting education. Provide examples of community partnerships that resulted in the school being a respected and valued partner.
- Cite ways in which the school involves all families in school initiatives and programs to build a shared commitment to student success; reference participation rates and give evidence of success. Provide specific examples of how the school supports and enhances the caregiver role and involves families in decision-making. Tell how the school establishes two-way communication and ensures authentic involvement of families from all segments of the school community in a way that respects diverse backgrounds and challenging needs of the families.
- Detail how volunteers are recruited, trained, and made to feel like an integral part of the school.

### **46) Role of Families, Partnerships, and Community \***

1000-word limit.0/1000

**Explain how educational resources in the school and the community are used to extend learning opportunities for students, teachers and families.**

Specifically:

- Describe if and how the school partners with outside entities (e.g. museums, public libraries, community enrichment programs, performing arts institutions, nonprofit organizations, etc.) to provide extended learning opportunities for students and/or professional development opportunities for staff.
- Provide an example(s) of an extended learning opportunity that demonstrates a positive effect on relationships, student learning, and/or improved student performance.
- Detail services, if any, that are provided at or through the school in the areas of health and social services, adult education or referrals to community agencies.
- Describe relationships with outside agencies that utilize school facilities outside of regular school hours.

**47) Use of Educational Resources & Community \***

800-word limit.0/800

**Sign and Submit**

Use your finger or stylus to sign.

I have carefully reviewed the information in this application package and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate. If the school receives the A+ School of Excellence™ designation, the contents of this application may be made available to the public. A+ School of Excellence™ is a registered trademark of the Arizona Educational Foundation. The applicant school will comply with the logo and name usage agreement related to A+ School of Excellence™, which will be given to the school upon earning the award. No school is authorized to promote itself as an A+ School of Excellence™ award-winning school unless and until notified by the Arizona Educational Foundation. I also certify that my Superintendent (and School Board where appropriate) has been notified and approves of our submission of this application.

Clicking "Submit" below will complete your A+ application. Congratulations, and thank you for applying for the A+ School of Excellence Award.

**Use 2022-2023 data for questions 16-30.**

**10) Principal's Cell Phone Number: (We will call the school first, but need the cell if we are unable to reach you.) \***