WHAT CITIES ARE DOING TO HELP STUDENTS

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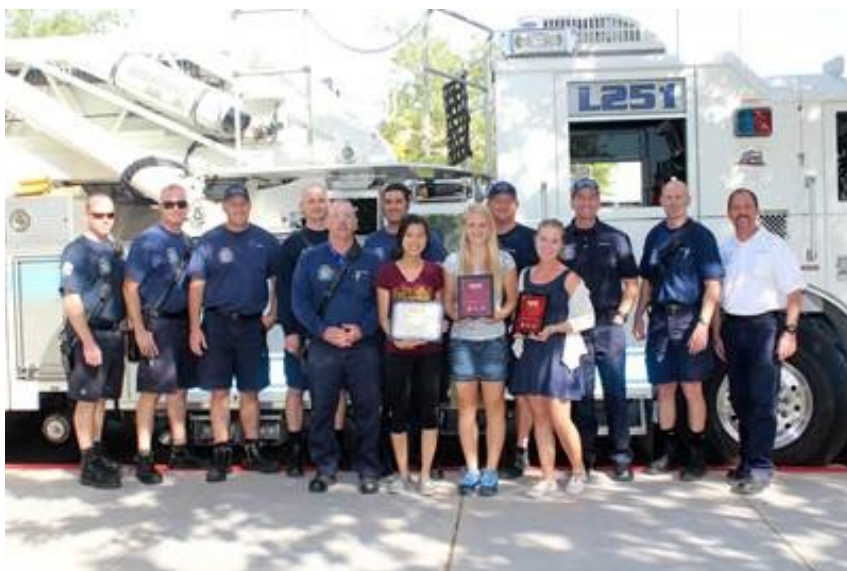
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Here are a few examples of what Arizona cities and towns are doing to help students in their community.

For more information on some of the many projects that the 10 cities and towns that participate in the [Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable](#) are working on, please look at the group's [latest report](#) "Arizona Mayor's Education Dashboards: Ensuring That All Students Are College and Career Ready."

- The City of Avondale held Education Summits in 2013 and 2014, which brought together educators, community leaders and other stakeholders to discuss and develop education-focused initiatives and the early childhood education programs developed have flourished.

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Centennial High School students Jiaqui Wu, left, Kylee Burgess, center, and Mikayla Whalen, right, recently received two awards from the SPARK App League for a mobile app they created for the Town of Gilbert's Fire and Rescue Department. The awards they received are: First All-Girl Team to Submit an App and Best Overall App. Photo courtesy of Peoria Unified School District

Gilbert's SPARK App League helps Arizona high school students learn to develop mobile applications and apply what they've learned to help their community. The league is sponsored by Google and Arizona State University.

- Mesa Counts on College is a partnership between the City of Mesa, Mesa Community College and Mesa Public Schools that seeks to double the number of low-income youth completing postsecondary programs in Mesa over the next 10 years.

- In Goodyear, Mayor Georgia Lord and the city council have partnered with local public, private and charter schools to share resources and ideas for high-quality educational opportunities. Also, the Goodyear City Council created three education committees to focus on various issues.

"The City's three education committees were the product of our annual Building Blocks to Great Schools education summit," Lord said.

This annual event provides a forum for participants from local public, private and charter schools, districts, and community education partners to strengthen and cultivate relationships among education stakeholders, and to develop or refine collaborative and complimentary programs and policies that are supportive of Goodyear students and families.

"Since its inception, the Building Blocks to Great Schools program has helped to support increased School Resource Officers (SROs) in Goodyear, identify regional education trends and opportunities, and strengthen communications and relationships between key City departments and District leadership," Lord said.

Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, left, and Tucson Unified Superintendent H.T. Sanchez talk with a student at his home during their Steps to Success Walk that brings students back to school. Photo courtesy Tucson Unified School District

Helping schools attain good educational outcomes helps a city's economy, so the Tucson Mayor's office has focused on early literacy, dropout prevention and recovery, attendance, alternative programs, education funding, the Mayor's Summer Reading Challenge and STEM internships.

- Tempe has an education coordinator who serves as the liaison between city government and local educational institutions and education initiatives range from AARP Experience Corps Tempe volunteers who provide one-on-one literacy tutoring to kindergarten through third-grade students reading below grade level to College Connect, which helps students complete college and trade school applications, as well as find scholarships and financial aid.

- Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton re-opened the city's education office and partnerships include efforts to help the city's youngest students through AARP Experience Corps and Phoenix Great Start, initiatives to get all kids reading by third grade, which is key to students' academic success, and increase college enrollment.

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- In Avondale, the city is working with one district and the AmeriCorps VISTA program to help deliver science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics activities geared toward improving literacy and math skills.

- Early childhood education is crucial, so the Town of Oro Valley has collaborated with the community and contributed $200,000 to bring the Children's Museum to the town, which is three miles north of Tucson, to help young children learn more before they hit kindergarten.

- A growing partnership between the City of Phoenix, Maricopa Community Colleges, Phoenix Union High Schools and Valley of the Sun United Way is seeking to increase college attainment, particularly for Phoenix's rapidly growing Hispanic youth.

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