**THE MYTH OF CHARTER ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE CRASHES DOWN**

**District schools outshine charter schools on the 2016-17 preliminary A-F school ratings and touted college prep charters suffer the embarrassment of B’s and C ‘s**

By Jim Hall

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The release of the preliminary 2016-17 K-8 A-F scores for Arizona Schools on October 9th held some shocking news for the school choice movement. Despite the significant lack of minority, poor, and special needs students in charter schools compared to district schools, charter schools failed to out-perform public district schools. Overall, charters had a significantly smaller percentage of schools receiving either an “A” or “B” rating – nearly half of all district schools received an “A” or “B” while only 40% of charter did so. See Table 1

Table 1 Charter and District A-F percentages 2016-17

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | CHARTER | % TOTAL | DISTRICT | % TOTAL |
| A | 52 | 14% | 180 | 16% |
| B | 95 | 26% | 363 | 33% |
| C | 72 | 20% | 315 | 29% |
| D | 17 | 5% | 134 | 12% |
| F | 10 | 3% | 20 | 2% |
| No Results | 31 | 9% | 26 | 2% |
| Under Review | 84 | 23% | 63 | 6% |
| TOTAL | 361 |  | 1101 |  |

George Washington Academy, an Edkey school founded by Senate Education Chair Sylvia Allen, was one of the ten failing charter schools.

Basis, Great Hearts, and other college prep charter schools are reeling from the news that they have many ”B” and even “C” schools in the 2016-17 A-F rankings. Basis has four schools that received a “B” rating and another 10 Basis schools have requested a review of their scores – implying that they did not receive the expected “A” rating. Great Hearts has seven schools with “B” ratings and four with a “C” rating. Eight more Great Hearts schools have requested a review. See Table 2

Table 2 Basis and Great Hearts A-F ratings 2016-17

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Charter School | Grade |
| BASIS Goodyear | A |
| BASIS Phoenix Central Primary | A |
| BASIS Tucson Primary | A |
| BASIS Chandler Primary - North Campus | B |
| BASIS Chandler Primary- South Campus | B |
| BASIS Goodyear Primary | B |
| BASIS Oro Valley Primary | B |
| BASIS Ahwatukee | Under Review |
| BASIS Chandler | Under Review |
| BASIS Flagstaff | Under Review |
| BASIS Mesa | Under Review |
| BASIS Oro Valley | Under Review |
| BASIS Peoria | Under Review |
| BASIS Phoenix | Under Review |
| BASIS Prescott | Under Review |
| BASIS Scottsdale | Under Review |
| BASIS Tucson North | Under Review |
|  |  |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Chandler | A |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Cicero | A |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Scottsdale | A |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Lincoln | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway North Phoenix | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Trivium East | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Trivium West | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Veritas | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Cicero Prep | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Maryvale Prep | B |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Arete | C |
| Great Hearts Academies - Archway Glendale | C |
| Great Hearts Academies - Lincoln Prep | C |
| Great Hearts Academies - Teleos Prep | C |
| Great Hearts Academies - Anthem Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Arete Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Chandler Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Glendale Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - North Phoenix Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Scottsdale Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Trivium Prep | Under Review |
| Great Hearts Academies - Veritas Prep | Under Review |

Districts where many of the Basis and Great Heart students reside had a large number of A schools. Scottsdale Unified had over 65% of its schools receive an A rating (15 of 23 schools) and Gilbert Unified had 14 of 34 schools receive an A. See Table 3 and 4

Table 3 Scottsdale Unified A-F ratings 2016-17

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scottsdale Unified Schools** | **Grade** |
| Anasazi Elementary | A |
| Cherokee Elementary School | A |
| Cheyenne Traditional School | A |
| Cochise Elementary School | A |
| Cocopah Middle School | A |
| Desert Canyon Elementary | A |
| Hopi Elementary School | A |
| Kiva Elementary School | A |
| Laguna Elementary School | A |
| Mountainside Middle School | A |
| Navajo Elementary School | A |
| Pima Elementary School | A |
| Pueblo Elementary School | A |
| Redfield Elementary School | A |
| Sequoya Elementary School | A |
| Desert Canyon Middle School | B |
| Echo Canyon K-8 | B |
| Hohokam Traditional School | B |
| Ingleside Middle School | B |
| Mohave Middle School | B |
| Yavapai Elementary School | B |
| Tavan Elementary School | C |
| Tonalea K-8 | C |
| Copper Ridge School | Under Review |

Table 4 Gilbert Unified A-F ratings 2016-17

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gilbert Unified Schools** |  |
| Burk Elementary School | A |
| Canyon Rim Elementary | A |
| Carol Rae Ranch Elementary | A |
| Finley Farms Elementary | A |
| Greenfield Elementary School | A |
| Highland Park Elementary | A |
| Meridian | A |
| Neely Traditional Academy | A |
| Oak Tree Elementary | A |
| Pioneer Elementary School | A |
| Playa del Rey Elementary School | A |
| Quartz Hill Elementary | A |
| South Valley Jr. High | A |
| Towne Meadows Elementary School | A |
| Ashland Elementary | B |
| Augusta Ranch Elementary | B |
| Gilbert Classical Academy Jr. | B |
| Gilbert Elementary School | B |
| Greenfield Junior High School | B |
| Highland Jr High School | B |
| Islands Elementary School | B |
| Mesquite Elementary School | B |
| Mesquite Jr High School | B |
| Patterson Elementary School | B |
| Settlers Point Elementary | B |
| Sonoma Ranch Elementary School | B |
| Spectrum Elementary | B |
| Superstition Springs Elementary | B |
| Val Vista Lakes Elementary School | B |
| Boulder Creek Elementary | C |
| Desert Ridge Jr. High | C |
| Gilbert Junior High School | C |
| Harris Elementary School | C |
| Houston Elementary School | C |

With 147 charter and district schools under review, it is too early to make definitive statements about the 2016-17 A-F ratings. Two things are certain: It is going to be much harder for parents to fork out the $1500 “suggested donation” to a Basis or Great Hearts school that has a B or C rating. And school choice advocates will not be able to hide behind the mantra that charter schools do not need to be transparent because they perform at such a high level. It doesn’t look like charters are doing so well.

A full report will be released when final grades are determined.