



Town hall to discuss education reforms

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Representatives from Arizona Ready will host a town hall in Yuma to discuss the Common Core Standards and other education reforms with local community members and businesspeople.

Craig Barrett, chairman of the Arizona Ready Education Council and former chairman and CEO of Intel Corp., will lead the discussion along with Rebecca Gau, Gov. Jan Brewer's director of education innovation.

The town hall will be held March 22 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Arizona Western College Schoening Conference Center in the 3C building, 2020 S. Avenue 8E.

Yuma County School Superintendent Tom Tyree said it will be a great opportunity to discuss pre-eminent issues in the state of Arizona educationally, with the movement to the Common Core standards in addition to the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessment set to replace the current AIMS exam.

Tyree said that the implementation, while needed, proves difficult with the time, resources and professional development needed for educators across the state to prepare for new initiatives.

He said the town hall will be beneficial for people to attend, whether or not they have students currently in the school system.

"Dr. Barrett is not an educator, he is a business person ... I think what his message is and the reason he's involved is because education is the key to the economic success in the state of Arizona. It is one of the drivers that's going to determine how successful we are," said Tyree.

"Corporations like Intel, they'll tell you that they need people who have a lot of technical education, they don't have jobs that require less than a degree and they're looking for people that have master's degrees and higher. So we need a work force that has the education and the technical expertise to do the jobs of the 21st century."

There will be a second town hall later that day for school administrators and various school districts' information technology staff to discuss with Barrett and Gau about the implementation of the state data system that is currently under way.

In addition to concerns of building district data systems that will be compatible with all districts across the state, Tyree said, the Arizona Department of Education is looking for systems that will be usable for their purposes as well, for not just academics, but also for financial data.

"Some districts may already have a large data system, but they, like everything else, have a shelf life. Even if you have a large, robust system, it still needs to be updated and you need to have new technology and new infrastructure ... so the systems can work together and so the state can collect all the data and then in turn people have the ability to access the data so they can use it in their own system."

In addition to being chairman of the Arizona Ready Education Council, Barrett is chairman of Change the Equation, a national STEM coalition, and of Achieve, a national organization that helps states bolster the quality of testing, accountability and academic rigor in schools.

He is a member of the board of directors of K-12 Inc., Society for Science and the Public, and the Arizona Commerce Authority Board; vice chairman of the Science Foundation Arizona; and vice president and chairman of BASIS School, Inc.

Visit www.arizonaready.com for more information about Arizona Ready, the governor's education reform plan.

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