

March 14, 2022

Dear Speaker Bowers and President Fann,

We write to express grave concerns with HB2808 and request your swift action to stop the advancement of this dangerous and punitive legislation.

HB2808 would take over and even close Arizona schools based on arbitrary standardized test scores, disproportionately penalizing low-income urban, rural, and indigenous students, families, schools, and communities.

While the special interests pushing this bill purport to care about low-income communities, they fail to recognize the dangers and far-reaching repercussions this model will inflict on Arizona neighborhoods. Giving low-income schools \$150 per student for three years is hardly the investment these children need, and expecting schools to turn around in such a short time with this paltry investment is unrealistic at best, directly harmful at worst.

Our low-income students deserve additional resources, fully-funded kindergarten, smaller class sizes, and significantly lower counselor-to-student ratios. Forcing third-party operators (in-state and out-of-state) upon our most vulnerable schools with rampant spending and zero accountability, instead of doing the bare minimum for Arizona kids, families, and communities, is insulting and damaging to our workforce pipeline. What's worse, the idea is built on models that have already failed in other states.

Throughout the country, states that have historically deployed these takeover models have been largely unsuccessful. Tennessee, which invested more than \$1 billion over a 10-year period, saw unchanged outcomes for students and schools and is now returning these schools to districts to end this failed experiment.

Further, this bill assumes one-time startup funding for school takeovers of up to \$2,000 per pupil from the Arizona Department of Administration. With roughly 75,000 students in D- or F-rated schools statewide, this would require a \$150 million appropriation, which is not provided for in the bill. Arizona taxpayers deserve to know where this money will come from, and who or what entity will oversee the expenditure of these monies in an effort to ensure that they are utilized properly and with defined accountability measures.

This legislation has been ushered in with very little stakeholder involvement, at a time where schools are focused on unfinished learning and test scores are extremely volatile. Considering the massive ramifications this legislation threatens for communities across the state, we urge you to table this bill.

