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ARIZONA TAX RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT UNIFICATION

Summary of key provisions:

The Legislature charged the school district redistricting commission (SDRC) with reviewing each common school (K-8) district in the state and submitting to each districts' voters a plan to form a unified (K-12) school district.

The SDRC-recommended plans affect 76 of the 123 non-unified school districts, including districts in nine counties: Cochise, La Paz, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, Yavapai, and Yuma. The redistricting plans include the creation of 27 new unified districts and affect more than 330,000 students.

For three of the affected common school districts, the redistricting plans will create three unified districts that have the same boundaries as the existing districts.

For 44 of the affected districts, the redistricting plans will create unified districts that follow the boundaries of an existing high school district. These proposed districts encompass each of the common school districts that currently contribute students to the existing high school district.

For the remaining 33 affected districts, the redistricting plans will create unified districts that follow the boundaries of only some of an existing high school district's contributing common school districts. These plans will require two ballot questions, one to approve the subdivision of the high school district and a second to approve the unification of the subdivided portions with different common school districts.

The individual plans can be downloaded from the SDRC website www.ade.az.gov/sdrc.

ATRA Policy Concerns/Issues:

Efficiency

Unifying these school districts will eliminate duplicative administrations. The unified districts will be more efficient and, therefore, allow more of the districts' education dollars to reach the classroom.

Articulation

Having only one administration and one school board governing the individual unified districts will provide a greater articulation of the curriculum from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

ATRA Position: Support