



Wickenburg Unified School District
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November 14, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for all you do to support your children in their academic development. Our teachers also are working hard to help every child succeed.

The Arizona State Board of Education has announced a new assessment to replace the AIMS Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests beginning spring 2015. They voted and approved that American Institutes for Research (AIR) will provide Arizona's New Assessment, AzMERIT - Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching.

Wickenburg students in Grades 3 through high school will take AzMERIT in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in Grades 4, 8, and 9 will still take the AIMS Science test.

High school students graduating after December 31, 2016 will no longer be required to pass the AIMS test to graduate high school. Beginning with the class of 2018, students must demonstrate proficiency on Wickenburg High School's End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in order to qualify for the Grand Canyon Diploma, the standard diploma for Wickenburg High School.

Features of AzMERIT:

- These exams will be aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. Arizona will control the decision making for all aspects of the exams including test design, test and item content, scoring, and reporting.
- AIR has demonstrated the ability and commitment to comply with all Arizona laws regarding student privacy.
- These new exams will offer computer-based tools which will better measure students' mastery of the standards including problem solving and critical-thinking skills.
- AzMERIT has similar testing times and windows as the AIMS test.

The Arizona State Board of Education must still make decisions about how the results of AzMERIT will be used and in particular how the Move on When Reading requirement will be affected. They are expected to discuss the establishment of a "safe harbor" year, meaning they may vote not to hold back third graders based on their reading scores on the AzMERIT for school year 2014-2015. Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is currently in discussions with AIR and will share more details about the test, including testing windows and timelines in the coming days and weeks.

You may find additional information on ADE's website at www.azed.gov/AzMERIT.

Educationally yours,

Debbie Hodgkiss
Director of CAILL Initiatives
Wickenburg Unified School District