

AIMS Test Coming in April

Each year students in the Wickenburg Unified School District are required to take the state AIMS assessment. The high school administers AIMS in the fall and then again in the spring. Sophomores take the test for the first time in the spring and then again as juniors or seniors to pass components where they were not successful earlier. A WHS student who passes the test as a sophomore may take the test again as a junior or senior to increase their label, most frequently moving from a “meets” level to “exceeds”. As the new Common Core Standards are implemented the AIMS test will go away (2016) as it only measures student proficiency at the 10th grade level. The Common Core Standards are much more rigorous and therefore will require a different exam to measure student performance.

Our grade 3-8 students take the assessment during the month of April each year and thus the countdown has now begun to this important event. We feel confident that our students are well prepared based upon the data we have received from our Galileo Benchmark assessment system, which both predicts individual AIMS performance and provides information for teachers to inform their instruction.

As you are aware WUSD implemented the rigorous Beyond Textbooks learning standards three years ago along with a number of intervention systems to increase student performance. Each week, once students receive instruction related to a certain standard, they complete a short five question test to assess what was learned. If the student scores 4 or better they participate in an enrichment activity that week. If, alternatively, the student scores 3 or below they take advantage of a reteach session. In the reteach session they are reintroduced to the standard, many times in a different format with a different teacher. At the conclusion of this process the student is retested to see if they successfully mastered the topic. If not, the student then moves into an after school tutoring program to pick up the concept and they continue with regular instruction during the day.

We hope to continue to see an increase in test scores at the grades 3-8 level because of these new strategies and the hard work and dedication of our students and staff. The convergence of a research-based system with focused students and staff will result in increased student achievement. It will take a few years, but the successes we are seeing will have an impact throughout our system as students’ progress through the grade levels.

As mentioned earlier the countdown to AIMS has begun and I am excited to see the results that our amazing staff and students will achieve this year. I know that all have worked very hard to achieve success and I believe their effort will pay huge dividends.