

## NEW STATE STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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On October 26<sup>th</sup>, the State Board of Education (SBE) took a vote to reverse their action taken in June 2010 to adopt Common Core and to continue Arizona's current standards, with the ability by the SBE to modify the standards. The vote was passed by a 6-2 vote. The SBE's vote was symbolic in nature only and does not repeal the standards. The SBE has always been able to make changes to the standards. Their vote affirms the current state standards, keeps them in place, and allows the review process to continue.

What does this mean for Wickenburg Unified School District? Educators and students across the district have been working hard over the last five years to adapt to the new, more rigorous standards so all students are college and career ready upon graduating from high school. This hard work will continue. The standards are written to elicit higher level thinking and problem solving, which is something teachers will continue to teach and assess.

In the spring of 2015, WUSD students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – high school participated in the new state assessment, AzMERIT. This assessment was designed to measure students' understanding of academic concepts in English/Language Arts and Math. The AzMERIT results have been released to families and will be released to the public on Nov. 30. As predicted, less students passed the AzMERIT assessment in comparison to the previous state assessment (AIMS). While a student's score may appear lower than in previous years, it doesn't actually mean that the child is not progressing, because AzMERIT test results are based on criteria that differs from previous test results. This decline is the result of a few different factors. 1) The expectations have increased. Arizona's College and Career Readiness standards are more rigorous than the previous state standards. 2) Students must show their work and reasoning on the new assessment in addition to the multiple choice questions. It will take time for students to get used to this format. 3) Students have had less experience with the new state standards, which will improve over time. Teachers and students will become more proficient with the new standards and student achievement will increase. Administrators at WUSD are not discouraged by these test results, but we see these first-year results as a baseline from which to start. With the release of this data we can get a better understanding of the standards and the increased expectation. We will make adjustments to our curriculum and instruction to help each child move to the next academic level and become college and career ready.

For more information about the standards and the AzMERIT assessment please visit: <http://www.expectmorearizona.org> and <http://azmeritportal.org/students-and-families/>