



**A r i z o n a**  
**Department of Education**  
**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI #** ADED16-0002

**Issue Date:** June 6, 2016

**Description:** Arizona School Accountability Components & System

**Due date:** July 15, 2016 **Time:** 3:00 p.m. (MST)

**General Information:**

In accordance with ARS §41-2555, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) hereby gives notice via this Request for Information (RFI), of its desire to receive responses, feedback, suggestions and comments regarding the items set forth herein.

In accordance with R2-7-G301, responses to the RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted to form a binding contract. To the extent allowed by law, information contained in a response to an RFI may be considered confidential until the procurement process is concluded or two (2) years from when the RFI's due date has elapsed, whichever occurs first. Responders are solely responsible for expenses associated with responding to the RFI. The State is under no obligation to the responders in so far as the next steps to this process are concerned.

Responders are invited to respond to one, any, or all of the questions contained in the RFI.

Responses to the RFI shall be submitted as follows:

All informational documents in text or PDF format shall be submitted directly to ADE's Accountability Unit through its [online collection system](#) on or before July 15, 2016. Respondents shall receive a copy of their submission as successful receipt by ADE's Accountability Unit.

**Confidentiality:**

Any submitted materials considered by the respondent to be proprietary or confidential shall be clearly marked as such and provided as a separate section in your response. In response to such requests, the State will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality of these materials to the extent permissible by law. However, should the State be required to release these materials, the State will provide the respondent reasonable notice in advance of doing so in order to allow the respondent time to take any action to prevent these materials from being released.

**Clarification of Solicitation Requirements:**

It is the responsibility of all Offerors to examine the RFI and seek clarification of any item or requirement that may be clear or unclear to them and to check all offers for accuracy before submittal to ADE.

Any questions regarding this solicitation can be answered by emailing the Arizona Department of Education Office of Procurement at [Procurementinbox@azed.gov](mailto:Procurementinbox@azed.gov). All questions must be in writing. The ADE Chief Procurement Officer is the only authorized person to give information as to the requirements of the solicitation in addition to that contained in the written

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documents. **Questions should be emailed and received by Office of Procurement no less than seventy-two hours before the RFI due date and time.**

All questions must reference the page and item that is to be addressed.

**Purpose:**

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) must develop and administer a fair and systematic high stakes accountability system using multiple measures adherent to state and federal requirements. This process will provide ADE and its group of technical and policy stakeholders access to innovative and diverse considerations in order to develop and recommend an accountability system with the highest level of integrity and transparency. **This RFI solicits feedback from interested parties with any relevant expertise, systems, or methodology they have developed or conceptualized which meet the intent of any one or more of the components described below.** If appropriate, ADE may include non-proprietary responses to this RFI as documented stakeholder engagement tools used to develop Arizona’s State Plan required by ESSA and/or a final A-F Letter Grade Accountability System Recommendation.

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**Instructions for Responding:**

Please frame responses to address requirements outlined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), ARS §15-241, SB1430, the State Board of Education’s Principles of Agreement, Superintendent Diane Douglas’ *AZ Kids Can’t Afford to Wait* Plan, and other historical documentation (i.e. subcommittee minutes, archived materials, publicly available data sets, presentations, White Papers, etc.) which might impact the recommendation and/or adoption of any proposed system of holding Arizona schools and districts accountable.

All stakeholders with shared interest in the State of Arizona’s method of holding schools and districts accountable are encouraged to submit responses to one or all of the items below. Please provide answers to as many of the questions as possible and provide supporting materials that describe the proposal and any other related considerations. Partial responses must identify the specific item(s) the submission will address. The Department of Education will not grant access to student-level information for this RFI; respondents should reference existing publicly available aggregated data sets if needed. With the exception of proprietary or confidential information, all submissions to this RFI shall be made publicly available by the Department. Consequently, the Department will use peer review and/or statistical modeling to assess the fairness and viability of each relevant submission before inclusion in a high stakes accountability system.

This RFI is being issued to obtain information only and may or may not result in contracts or vendor agreements with any respondent. Respondents to this RFI will not be excluded from eligibility to participate in any future requests for proposals (RFPs) based on their decision to respond to this RFI or on the content of their responses to this RFI; however, respondents to this RFI will be excluded in evaluating and integrating responses which may or may not result in a high stakes accountability system and related competitions.

**Information Being Requested:**

**1. Demonstration of values**

- a) How does a transparent and fair accountability system define an “excellent” school in regards to:
  - i. Preparing all students for College/Career readiness

**An “excellent” high school is one that follows the Arizona Revised Statutes and Arizona Administrative Code, including R7-2-308 regarding the education of adults. An “excellent” high school enrolls, and reenrolls, all students including those who are severely under credited, under credited by one year, and/or cannot graduate with their cohort class because of specific course completion. The ability to prepare all students for College/Career readiness can only be addressed first by enrolling all students.**

**The AzMERIT end of course tests are a good indicator of progress in theory. However, as seen over the past two testing cycles and since the test has no bearing on the success or failure of the student, the result is, the majority of students do not take the test with earnest effort. The exception to this rule is the student who is motivated for success. National data reflect 30% of high school graduates attend post secondary education. This motivated class of student will be prepared for college regardless of this testing indicator. Also, with a focus on College/career**

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readiness, the focus on the career aspect of this indicator is lost. National data reflect 70% of high school graduates go into the work force or military. There are a large group of students who will make their careers in: cosmetology, automotive repair, HVAC repair, culinary arts, military service, administrative services, construction, plumbing and electrical, and sales.

The post-secondary and/or career ready criteria can be measured by: ACCUPLACER taken and resulted in college-level indicator scores, SAT/ACT scores at college admission level, General Education Development test or other HSE taken and passed, student internships completed and student licenses or certifications earned (including Work Keys certifications). These tests can be taken on demand and are acceptable for community college and university enrollment. Calculations can be based on percent completed and a point system attached to each for the evaluation. To be inclusive of all schools, allow the LEA to decide which two measurements on which to be evaluated.

- ii. Improving achievement and outcomes among student subgroups

**Student growth for the three student subgroups: English Language Learner, Special Education, and Bottom 25% should be determined by completed credits to achieve the Arizona Administrative Code R7.2.309 Completion of grade 10, on time and passing course work.**

It is the responsibility of the District to identify and evaluate students who, within the intent of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need or are believed to need special education or related services because of a disability. Students may be eligible for services under the provisions of Section 504 even though they do not require services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). The District has developed procedural safeguards for actions related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students entitled to Section 504 protections. Standardized assessments are used to evaluate all students including students in the bottom 25%, students with an IEP (unless expressly prohibited by IEP), and ELL students. Data gathered from all tests indicate student progress, achievement, and academic readiness for postsecondary endeavors.

The criteria to measure student achievement among subgroups can be measured by: performance on state assessments (percent of all students annually scoring proficient or advanced) only for those schools with consistent year over year enrollment, English Language Learners (improving one proficiency band per year with an additional focus on those testing proficient), graduation rate (percent of 12 graders who annually graduate of all extended year (e.g., 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> year 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and summer graduates or receive a GED from the Arizona Department of Education), and course credits earned (average number of courses earned annually by each student.) Calculations can be based on percent completed and a point system attached to each for the evaluation. To be inclusive of all schools, allow the LEA to decide which two measurements on which to be evaluated.

- iii. Graduating students prepared for postsecondary workforce and/or education

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**Students who have a working knowledge of algebra, geometry and calculator usage are prepared for entrance into the workforce.**

- iv. Demonstrating growth on standardized assessments aligned to Arizona’s standards

**The criteria of student academic growth can be measured by improved performance on state assessments (percent increased from prior year performance) and academic growth as documented in the student education and career action plan (percent of student with documented growth during the school year). Calculations can be based on percent completed and a point system attached to each for the evaluation. To be inclusive of all schools, allow the LEA to decide which two measures on which to be evaluated.**

- v. Providing a high-quality, well-rounded education to families regardless of income

**The current accountability system has had the effect of resegregating schools based on student’s socioeconomic standing. Over the past four years the demographics of the student body at the International Commerce Secondary Schools has experienced a shift in enrollees. More than 85% of the entering students are more than one year behind in required high school graduation credits, many are 10 or more credits behind cohort year requirement, and more than 70% of entering students have not passed and/or taken the state standardized test in Language Arts or Mathematics. A majority of the students attending International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc. come from low income households. Parents are generally not involved in their children’s academics per the student population. Seventy-five percent of students are above 18 years of age or older and an additional 20 percent will be 18 years of age before the end of the school year. Several students live in group homes and several students are refugees. Most students enrolled are working adults. Many students are married and/or have families to support. Many students turn 21 years of age prior to completing their high school diploma. Less than 5 percent of students are adjudicated youth. The charter has a very good relationship with Child Protective Services and Juvenile Probation Officers. Students are respected as adults and therefore, behave as adults.**

**This dramatic change in student demographics at the schools under the International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc., which can be attributed to the A-F letter grade system. The students are much older, and have earned fewer high school credits. Many of the students who enroll have not earned the high school credits for completion of grade ten (Administrative Code R7-2-309). However, per ARS 15.821.A, “Unless otherwise provided by article 1.1 of this chapter or by any other law, all schools shall admit children who are between the ages of six and twenty-one years, who reside in the school district and who meet the requirements for enrollment in one of the grades or programs offered in the school. A school may refuse to admit a child who has graduated from a high school with a recognized diploma.”**

**According to administrative code R7.2.309, completion of grade 10 is accomplished when a student has earned 10 credits which shall include: two credits of English; one credit of mathematics; one credit of science; and six credits of additional courses prescribed by the local Governing Board. Even though all students are above compulsory attendance age, ARS 15.802.A, they have not earned two years of required course credits in English or Mathematics. Many have no credits in either subject.**

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Arizona Department of Education assigns grade level based on age not credits earned. Enrolling students are severely under credited in Language Arts Reading and Writing, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics and have not taken the statewide assessment(s) or do not meet in one or more areas. This has required the Charter to redesign part of its curriculum to specifically address Adult Education per Administrative Code R7.2.308. The International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc. provides Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, Literacy, and English Language Acquisition for Adults.

Schools should use Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English Language Acquisition for Adults (ELAA), and Literacy, per Administrative Code R7.2.308 and R7-2-302.01 to evaluate curriculum. Additionally, schools are to use the graduation requirements as outlined in Arizona Revised Statutes 15-701.01 and Administrative Code R7-2-302.02 to evaluate its curriculum for all students.

A high-quality, well-rounded education to families regardless of income may be measured by: attendance (percent of annual attendance), completion of career pathways (percent of students completing a career pathways course during the school year, and community/service learning, percentage of student documenting at least 40 hours of community service learning during the school year). Calculations can be based on percent completed and a point system attached to each for the evaluation. To be inclusive of all schools, allow the LEA to decide which measures on which to be evaluated.

- vi. Meeting the needs of parents and students in the community

The charter collects completed course surveys from students, which asks students to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and teaching methods and how their outlook on learning has been affected by the course(s).

The charter collects surveys from parents, which asks parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and teaching methods and how their child’s outlook on learning has been affected by the course(s).

The charter analyzes assessment results and course completing data, solicits recommendations from faculty through weekly staff development meetings.

- b) How does a transparent and fair accountability system define a “failing” school in regards to:

- i. Preparing all students for College/Career readiness

A “failing” high school is one who refuses to enroll or reenroll students who are under credited or are lacking credits in courses required for graduation. A “failing” high school does not follow the Arizona Revised Statutes or the Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-308, regarding the education of adult high school students. Districts, charters, and schools who refuse to enroll students who are so described may be tracked and monitored by the AzEDS system.

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- ii. Improving achievement and outcomes among student subgroups

**A “failing” high school is one that can not demonstrate improved student achievement and outcomes among student subgroups of English Language Learners, Special Education students, and those in the Bottom 25% based upon state standardized tests and/or nationally recognized test.**

- iii. Graduating students prepared for postsecondary workforce and/or education

**A “failing” high school is one that graduates students without a working knowledge of algebra, geometry, or the use of a scientific calculator. A “failing” school is one that does not demonstrate progress towards graduation and post graduation planning based upon the Education and Career Action Plan per Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-302.05 and verified by the appropriate school administrator.**

- iv. Demonstrating growth on standardized assessments aligned to Arizona’s standards

**A “failing” high school is one that does not demonstrate growth on standardized assessments including high-stakes assessments, high school equivalency exams, and community college/university entrance exams that may be taken upon demand.**

- v. Providing a high-quality, well-rounded education to families regardless of income

**A “failing” school is one that does not enroll students based on age or credits earned. Nor do these schools enroll students who are under-credited or are missing credits. Many of these students have had to leave school to enter the workforce full time which accounts for their lack of credits.**

Meeting the needs of parents and students in the community

**A “failing” high school is one that refuses to enroll or reenroll students who are under credited or are lacking credits in courses required for graduation. A “failing” high school does not follow the Arizona Revised Statutes or the Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-308, regarding the education of adult high school students. Districts, charters, and schools that refuse to enroll students who are so described may be tracked and monitored by the AzEDS system.**

- c) How does a transparent and fair accountability system differentiate among schools that are neither “excellent” nor “failing”?

**A school that is neither excellent nor failing, e.g., a “B”, “C”, or “D” school, statistically should be the majority of the schools. Destigmatizing these schools is paramount as it is these schools serving the majority of Arizona’s students.**

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## 2. Background

- a) Provide a brief history of the organization and its governance structure, if applicable, or provide a brief overview of the individual's experience with accountability of K-12 public schools and districts

**The International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc. is an Arizona corporation. The mission is to prepare adult high school students, ages 16 to 21, academically for occupational education, postsecondary education, social responsibility, employability, and lifelong learning. The governing board has over 40 years of experience in working with educational institutions including serving as Superintendent of Schools, District Administrator of Federal Programs, a teacher, served on State Advisory Commissions and served as a school district attorney.**

- b) Identify the individuals from the organization that will be working with Arizona officials on all aspects of the accountability system's implementation.

### **E. Sue Durkin**

- c) Disclose and discuss the organization's work within and around Arizona's state education agency, local education agencies, and/or public education agencies including assurance any work or deliverables produced by the organization will exclude bias or undue influence, if applicable.

**Members of the organization have served on numerous state advisory commissions and have hosted many events associated with those commissions. The institutions have consulted with adult educators on instructional methodology and in the training of educational standards and business standards evaluators.**

## 3. Overview of System

- a) List and define the metrics included in a potential accountability system which meets the needs of Arizona's various school types and uses multiple measures. Please highlight the extent to which academic achievement on Arizona's statewide assessments (i.e. AzMERIT, NCSC, AIMS, etc.) and/or results from a menu of assessment can be meaningfully integrated in the proposed system.

**To address the >95% test rate the AzMERIT test should be given on demand with multiple opportunities to pass. All schools without ability to administer the CBT must provide access to a testing center. Turn-around time for test could then be immediate for non essay test and one week for essay tests. Too, like the placement AZELLA exam, LEA teams could be trained to grade the essays and could provide immediate results. If these tests are not made available on demand, student growth could be measured by successful completion of the GED, HiSET, TASC, TABE, or ACCUPLACER examinations which may be taken on demand. The following exams, that are available on demand, should be used to verify student growth and be used in place of or addition to the AZMERIT and count toward the 95%:**

**GED, The General Education Development test is America's only nationally recognized high school-equivalency test. Since 1942, the GED test has been an important part of the country's education and a vital second-chance opportunity. The GED is used in 40 states as a high school equivalency test. The**



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standard score is derived from the performance of approximately 15,000 graduating high school seniors. By testing graduating high school seniors, the competency examinations ensure that the knowledge and skills represented by the traditional diploma and the American Council on Education credential were comparable. Nationally, approximately 42% of graduating all high school seniors would be unable to pass the American Council on Education General Educational Development Test(s) Passing scores of the General Educational Development Test(s) for the 2014 version of the test were conducted in a similar manner. The GED test has played an important role in America's education landscape for 70 years. The GED test soon spread beyond service members, becoming a pathway for adults who didn't finish school to earn a high school-equivalency credential and have the opportunity to go to college, trade school, or find a better job. More than 18 million people have passed the GED test.

HiSET, The High School Equivalency Test exam measures the academic knowledge and proficiency equivalent to those of a high school graduate. It covers five content areas: Language Arts – Reading, Language Arts – Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. The purpose of the ETS HiSET exam is to certify a test-taker's attainment of academic knowledge and skills equivalent to those of a high school graduate. Test takers take the HiSET exam because they are interested in furthering their education, improving their job situation, gaining personal gratification and much more. Scores from the exam identify those test takers who have performed at a level consistent with high school equivalency. Information from the HiSET exam also helps to identify areas in which test takers are career- and college-ready, as well as areas in which additional preparation may be needed. Twenty states currently offer the HiSET as a High School Equivalent test.

TASC, Test for Assessing Secondary Completion, was field tested and normed in 2013, the TASC test delivers the newest high school equivalency content available. It is used in 13 states as a High School Equivalency exam and is aligned to Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) National College and Career Standards for Adult Education, Next Generation Science Standards, and Social Studies national frameworks.

ACCUPLACER, is a comprehensive, integrated system of sophisticated computer-adaptive placement assessments, diagnostics, and remediation support designed to evaluate and strengthen students' skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Results are delivered immediately and accurately, so the student and college have an accurate measure of academic skills. ACCUPLACER helps answer the challenges of accurate placement and remediation.

SAT, is accepted by all U.S. colleges, the SAT (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test) is an opportunity for students to show colleges they've got what it takes to succeed on campus. Most students take the SAT for the first time during the spring of their junior year and a second time during the fall of their senior year.

ACT, (formerly the American College Test) is the leading US college admissions test, measuring what was learned in high school to determine academic readiness for college.

AzMERIT, Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching, tests grade and class level understanding in Language Arts and Mathematics.



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**AIMS, Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards tests Science in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade science only**

**TABE, Tests of Adult Basic Education is used to provide a solid foundation for effectively assessing the skills and knowledge of adult learners and the probability of success on the GED and the TASC examinations.**

- b) Describe how the proposed metrics are aligned to college / career expectations and include any alignment studies, if available.

**Included above.**

- c) Describe how differentiated weights and metrics resulting in an overall letter grades can be compared between schools and across years to inform the following:

**Below is a draft of the accountability evaluation chart for alternative schools for the state of Arkansas. This system, coupled with the additional testing options would complete a fair accountability system for all schools.**

Alternative Education Optional Accountability Evaluation						
CRITERIA	MEASURES	CALCULATIONS	EVALUATION	INSTRUCTION / RUBRIC	SUB-TOTALS	TOTAL
<b>STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT 25%</b>	Performance on State-Mandated Assessments	Percent All Students Annually Scoring Proficient or Advanced	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 7 pts. ___ - ___% = 3 pt.	Pick a minimum of three (3) of the sub-categories or use a combination of the four categories.		___/25
	English Language Learners (ELLs) Achieving Proficiency in English on State-Mandated Assessment	Percent ELLS Annually Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the ELA Assessment	Above ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 3 pts. ___ - ___% = 1 pt.			
	Graduation Rate	Percent of Seniors Who Annually Graduate or Receive a GED from the ALE	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 7 pts. ___ - ___% = 4 pts.			
	Course Credits Earned	Average Number of Courses Earned Annually by Each Student	___ or More = 5 pts. ___ - ___ = 3 pts. ___ - ___ = 1 pts.			
<b>STUDENT ACADEMIC GROWTH 20%</b>	Improved Performance on State-Mandated Assessments	Percent Increase from Prior Year Performance	___ or More = 20 pts. ___ - ___ = 10 pts. ___ - ___ = 5 pts.	You may pick one of the two categories or use a combination of the two categories.		___/20
	Academic Growth as Documented in Student Action Plans	Percent of Students with Documented Growth During School Year	Above ___% = 20 pts. - ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pt.			
<b>POST-SECONDARY and WORKFORCE READINESS 10%</b>	Student Internships Completed	Percent of Students Completing Internships of at Least ___ Weeks During School Year	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 2 pts.	You may pick one of the two categories or use a combination of the two categories.		___/10
	Student Licenses/ Certifications Earned	Percent of Students Earning Professional	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 2 pts.			



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		License or Certification During School Year				
<b>STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 15%</b>	Attendance	Percent Annual Attendance	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 2 pts.	You may pick two of the two categories or use a combination of the three categories.		___/15
	Completion of Career Pathways	Percent Students Completing a Career Pathway Course of Student During the School Year	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 2 pts.			
	Community/ Service Learning	Percent Students Documenting at Least ___ Hours of Community/Service Learning During the School Year	Above ___% = 10 pts. ___ - ___% = 5 pts. ___ - ___% = 2 pts.			
<b>Social and Emotional Preparedness 20%</b>	Counseling and Therapy	Services provided within the program are of a comprehensive, wrap-around nature that includes both individual and group therapy	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.	You may pick two of the categories or use a combination of the three categories		___/20
	Social Skills Training	Program that actively teaches rules and behavior expectations to students, recognition/reward systems that reward expected academic and behavior expectations, and correction responses to violations of rules and behavior expectations program-wide.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.			
	Life Skills training	Provides instruction in social competence, self-management, vocational, and recreation appropriate for the developmental and specific needs of students.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.			
<b>School Climate 10%</b>	Mission	Mission statement, goals, and expectations are clearly defined and communicated to staff, parents, and students.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.	You may pick two of the categories or use a combination of the four categories		___/10



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	Whole Student	A holistic view of the student is the focus of the program.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.		
	Expectations	Rules and behavioral expectations exist which are written, clearly understood and accepted by staff, students, and parents and are actively taught, rewarded or recognized and monitored to guide student behavior, evaluate progress, and manage the learning experience.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.		
	Communication	Communication of high expectations for student academics, behavior and teacher performance with opportunities for student success demonstrated on a regular basis.	10 pts. 5 pts. 2 pts.		
<b>School District</b>	<b>LEA #</b>				<b>Total</b>

- i. Achievement of all students and progress of student subgroups
- ii. Information needed by parents/communities to inform school choice
- iii. Improvement of various types of schools within Arizona
- iv. Construct relevant components of school quality

d) Describe how the proposal may reduce administrative burden for LEAs and the SEA given the variation in accountability requirements related to applicable federal laws, state laws, State Board of Education rules, charter school authorizers, and other regulatory bodies.

**The accountability requirements cannot be in conflict with federal laws, state laws, State Board of Education rules, charter school authorizers, and other regulatory bodies.**

#### 4. Measuring Student Growth

a) What are the advantages of utilizing this measure of growth on Arizona's statewide assessments and in Arizona's new A-F Letter Grade Accountability System?

**Measuring student growth on statewide assessments is only advantageous if the test has some consequence to the student. Passing a grade level test should result in commencing to the next level of coursework. Not passing should result in retaking the test after a three week remediation period. This would then measure student growth and student achievement.**

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**If these tests are not made available on demand, student growth could be measured by successful completion of the GED, HiSET, TASC, TABE, or ACCUPLACER examinations which may be taken on demand.**

- b) Please discuss evidence of technical appropriateness and statistical robustness to support the validity and reliability of student-level growth scores based on each of the following assessment scenarios:
- i. Vertically scaled assessments of grades 3 through 8 ELA standards
  - ii. Vertically scaled assessments of grades 3 through 8 Mathematics standards
  - iii. Vertically scaled, non-sequential with extreme variability in the instructional format for end of course assessments of high school ELA and Mathematics standards

**To address the >95% test rate the AzMERIT test should be given on demand with multiple opportunities to pass. All schools without ability to administer the computer based tests must provide access to a testing center. Turn-around time for test could then be immediate for non essay test and one week for essay tests. Too, like the placement AZELLA exam, LEA teams could be trained to grade the essays and could provide immediate results.**

**The following exams, that are available on demand, should be used to verify student growth and be used in place of or addition to the AZMERIT and count toward the 95%:**

**GED, The General Education Development test is America’s only nationally recognized high school-equivalency test. Since 1942, the GED test has been an important part of the country’s education and a vital second-chance opportunity. The GED is used in 40 states as a high school equivalency test. The standard score is derived from the performance of approximately 15,000 graduating high school seniors. By testing graduating high school seniors, the competency examinations ensure that the knowledge and skills represented by the traditional diploma and the American Council on Education credential were comparable. Nationally, approximately 42% of graduating all high school seniors would be unable to pass the American Council on Education General Educational Development Test(s) Passing scores of the General Educational Development Test(s) for the 2014 version of the test were conducted in a similar manner. The GED test has played an important role in America’s education landscape for 70 years. The GED test soon spread beyond service members, becoming a pathway for adults who didn’t finish school to earn a high school-equivalency credential and have the opportunity to go to college, trade school, or find a better job. More than 18 million people have passed the GED test.**

**HiSET, The High School Equivalency Test exam measures the academic knowledge and proficiency equivalent to those of a high school graduate. It covers five content areas: Language Arts – Reading, Language Arts – Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. The purpose of the ETS HiSET exam is to certify a test-taker’s attainment of academic knowledge and skills equivalent to those of a high school graduate. Test takers take the HiSET exam because they are interested in furthering their education, improving their job situation, gaining personal gratification and much more. Scores from the exam identify those test takers who have performed at a level consistent with high school equivalency. Information from the HiSET exam also helps to identify areas in which test takers are career- and college-ready, as well as areas in which additional preparation may be needed. Twenty states currently offer the HiSET as a High School Equivalent test.**



## Request for Information

State of Arizona  
Department of Education  
1535 W. Jefferson Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RFI No.: ADED16-0002

Description: **Arizona School Accountability Components & System**

**TASC, Test for Assessing Secondary Completion, was field tested and normed in 2013, the TASC test delivers the newest high school equivalency content available. It is used in 13 states as a High School Equivalency exam and is aligned to Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) National College and Career Standards for Adult Education, Next Generation Science Standards, and Social Studies national frameworks.**

**ACCUPLACER, is a comprehensive, integrated system of sophisticated computer-adaptive placement assessments, diagnostics, and remediation support designed to evaluate and strengthen students' skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Results are delivered immediately and accurately, so the student and college have an accurate measure of academic skills. ACCUPLACER helps answer the challenges of accurate placement and remediation.**

**SAT, is accepted by United States colleges, the SAT (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test) is an opportunity for students to show colleges they've got what it takes to succeed on campus. Most students take the SAT for the first time during the spring of their junior year and a second time during the fall of their senior year.**

**ACT, (formerly the American College Test) is the leading US college admissions test, measuring what was learned in high school to determine academic readiness for college.**

**TABE, Tests of Adult Basic Education is used to provide a solid foundation for effectively assessing the skills and knowledge of adult learners.**

**The above options are cost effective for the state.**

**AzMERIT, Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching, tests grade and class level understanding in Language Arts and Mathematics.**

**AIMS Science, the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Science tests grade level science in 4th, 8th and 10th grades.**

- iv. Across test administration modality (Paper and computer-based) equated on a common vertical scale in each of the subjects above

**All schools without ability to administer the computer based tests, must provide access to a testing center. Testing on demand would allow students to schedule tests in order to ensure that testing centers are not overwhelmed.**

- v. Varying assessments selected off of a menu of assessments potentially available in high school grades and administered in various modalities

	<h2>Request for Information</h2>	<p><b>State of Arizona</b>  <b>Department of Education</b>  1535 W. Jefferson Street  Phoenix, AZ 85007</p>
RFI No.: ADED16-0002 Description: <b>Arizona School Accountability Components &amp; System</b>		

**Students above the compulsory education age should be reclassified as adults and alternative tests should be included at counting toward the >95% test rate. The following exams, that are available on demand, should be used to verify student growth and be used in place of, or in addition to, the AzMERIT and count toward the >95% testing rate. Testing on the GED, college level scores on the Accuplacer, TASC, TABE, and HiSET tests should all be included in the test completion rate.**

- vi. Varying assessments selected off of a menu of assessments potentially available to students in elementary grades and administered in various modalities
- vii. Annual tests of English language proficiency as measured by AZELLA administered in Grades K through 12

**Students should be improving one proficiency level per school year at minimum.**

- viii. Summative assessments of Science standards administered to students enrolled in grades 4, 8, and high school

**As previously noted, unless students are incentivized to test proficient, best efforts will not be used when taking the test. This is not an indicator that students are or are not learning the information in the classroom. The GED, TASC, and/or HiSET all include a summative assessment of high school science.**

- c) Please describe the organization’s professional experience and technical capacity for conducting this type of work on behalf of education agencies locally, nationally, and/or internationally.

**The governing board of the International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc. has over 40 years of experience in working with educational institutions including serving as Superintendent of Schools, District Administrator of Federal Programs, a teacher, served on State Advisory Commissions and served as a school district attorney. Members of the organization have served on numerous state advisory commissions and have hosted many events associated with those commissions. The agency has consulted with adult educators on instructional methodology and in the training of educational standards and business standards evaluators. The entities are ready, willing, and able to assist the State Board of Education in the development of a new and fair A-F accountability system.**

- d) Describe any services or assistance the vendor might provide to expedite the calculation of student growth scores so they are available to ADE, schools, students, and parents via student score reports produced by Arizona’s test vendor(s).
- e) How can parents, teachers, students, and schools use growth score(s) to interpret individual student trajectory relative to Arizona’s academic standards?
- f) How can growth scores be aggregated and integrated into accountability determinations which may include varied weighting of proficiency results and other indicators of school performance?

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**5. Other Technical Considerations**

- a) Describe any detailed analyses currently available or could be conducted to support the validity, reliability, and fairness of a proposed system as well as the methodology and validation process for standard setting the overall A-F letter grade determinations. The ADE will model all components for possible inclusion in a final accountability system.

**The Arkansas Alternative Education Optional Accountability Evaluation model is a complete and comprehensive tool that the Arizona State Board of Education could model its grading system after and could be used across all schools. The Arkansas model allows the LEA to determine which of the sub-categories best reflect success of the school. All criteria outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act are present in this model and yet still provides flexibility for all schools outside the traditional schools.**

- b) Describe the timeline necessary to produce school accountability ratings which will differentiate and support the variety of public schools and districts within Arizona.
- c) Describe the level of complexity and ability to replicate the statistical techniques which may be utilized throughout the system to differentiate school performance.
- d) Describe any resources related to personnel, data, and/or technology the proposal may require, including any additional resources, data collection, management, and storage needed by the Department.
- e) Please highlight any significant deviations from previous practice or changes to operational definitions currently utilized within Arizona’s system of holding schools accountable.

	<h2>Request for Information</h2>	<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>State of Arizona</b>  <b>Department of Education</b>  1535 W. Jefferson Street  Phoenix, AZ 85007 </p>
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**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SUBMIT THE COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR RESPONSE TO THE RFI.**

I/We **E. Sue Durkin**, the undersigned, do hereby submit this response for information with regard to Arizona's Statewide School Accountability System in accordance with ARS §41-2555 Request for Information specification contained herein.

**E. Sue Durkin**

**7/12/2016**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**International Commerce Secondary Schools, Inc.**

**Director of Assessment**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

**5201 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, AZ**

**800.762.0010**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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