



Press Contacts:

Arizona Department of Education
Sally Stewart, Public Information Officer
Sally.Stewart@azed.gov
602-542-5072

Arizona State Board of Education
Christine M. Thompson, Executive Director
StateBoardInbox@azed.gov
602-542-5057

BOARD CHOOSES NEW ASSESSMENT WITH ARIZONA STUDENTS AS TOP PRIORITY

~ AzMERIT will demonstrate student progress on Arizona Standards ~

Phoenix, Ariz., November 3, 2014 – Continuing to ensure all Arizona children have the opportunity to succeed, the Arizona State Board of Education (Board) announced today it adopted a new assessment to replace the AIMS reading, writing and mathematics tests. AzMERIT – Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching – will be administered statewide for the first time in Spring 2015.

“The new assessment will be overseen and controlled by Arizona, and will measure each child’s mastery of Arizona’s standards,” said Board President Thomas Tyree. “This assessment will provide reliable and timely information to parents, teachers and policy makers to support our schools as they help prepare Arizona students for success in life, in career, and in college.”

Accountability measures related to AzMERIT, including A-F letter grades, are still being discussed. Together ADE and the Board will actively inform the education community once decisions have been made.

“The Arizona Department of Education will work diligently and expeditiously to implement this new assessment selected by the State Board,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal. “ADE will continue to strive to deliver excellent customer service by providing timely and informative materials to students, parents, teachers, school administrators, and education stakeholders throughout the transition to this new test.”

On March 6, 2014, incorporating feedback from parents, educators, and business and community leaders, the Board adopted a statement of values that was used as the basis for the requirements of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the assessment. Among the values was an emphasis on:

- Involvement of Arizona stakeholders in the development of the test, test-related materials, and achievement levels indicative of college and career readiness;
- Clarity, transparency, accuracy and security in all aspects of assessment development, deployment, scoring and reporting;
- Measurement of mastery of the Arizona standards and progress toward college and career readiness;
- Assessment of cognitive and analytical thinking skills in writing, analysis, and problem-solving across subjects, using multiple assessment methods
- Meaningful national or multistate comparisons of school and student achievement
- Demonstration of accessibility for all students; and
- Cost efficient implementation of the assessments.

This assessment meets those values.

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In June 2014, the RFP for the new statewide assessment was released, and responses were due in July 2014. As allowed by Arizona procurement law, an independent evaluation team was assembled to review vendor proposals, assess the extent to which proposals address the requirements listed in the RFP, and recommend contract award to the vendor that best addressed the state's requirements. The seven member team was made up of volunteer experts from the Arizona education community, all of whom are employees of local schools or organizations.

The evaluation team reviewed six proposals and unanimously narrowed the choice to four groups. These four groups were invited to submit best and final offers, which the evaluation team reviewed. The evaluation team unanimously recommended the not-for-profit American Institutes for Research (AIR) to Chief Procurement Officer Patty Clark and the State Board of Education, who announced their selection of AIR today.

For more information regarding the selection and RFP process, please visit the [State Board of Education's website](#). For more information on the administration of the new statewide assessment, please visit ADE's website at www.azed.gov/AzMERIT.

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