A black and white photograph of an Arizona landscape, featuring a large saguaro cactus in the foreground, a rocky hillside, and a mountain range in the distance under a cloudy sky. The image is partially obscured by a large red graphic element on the right side.

**FALL**

*Guide to Test Interpretation*

**AIMS HS**

**ARIZONA'S**

*Instrument to Measure Standards*

AZ00000915

**PEARSON**

# PEARSON



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*The Arizona Department of Education gratefully acknowledges the work of thousands of Arizona teachers involved in the development of the AIMS tests. Their dedication to creating a fair and reasonable test for the students of Arizona is greatly appreciated.*

# Introduction

## History of AIMS

The following federal and state statutes establish the mandates for the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). ARS 15-741 authorizes the State Board of Education to implement a standards based test to measure pupil achievement on the state board adopted academic standards in at least writing, reading, and mathematics in at least four grades designated by the board. Federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requires a standards based assessment in language arts (reading) and mathematics for Grades 3 through 8 and once in high school and a standards based assessment in science once during each grade-band of 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12.

ARS 15-701.01 authorizes the state Board of Education to develop a competency test for graduation of pupils from high school in the areas of writing, reading, and mathematics. State Board of Education rule established the graduating class of 2006 as the first graduating class required to pass these three content areas of AIMS HS to earn a high school diploma. Students have multiple opportunities to pass all content areas for graduation. ARS 15-701.01 also allows alternate paths to graduation that do not require passing these three content areas of AIMS HS.

AIMS HS was first administered in Spring 1999 in the content areas of writing, reading, and mathematics and was based on the 1996 Arizona Academic Standards. AIMS for Grades 3, 5, and 8 was first administered in Spring 2000 in the content areas of writing, reading, and mathematics and was based on the 1996 Arizona Academic Standards. The first fall administration of AIMS HS was in 2004. In Spring 2005, AIMS was expanded to include all grades 3 through 8, and a norm-referenced test was embedded in AIMS for all Grades 3 through 8. Also in Spring 2005, all grade levels of AIMS Reading and Mathematics were based on the articulated grade level 2003 Arizona Academic Standards. The science content area of AIMS was first administered in Spring 2008 in grades 4, 8, and HS and was based on the 2005 Arizona Science Standard. The Spring 2010 administration of AIMS in the content area of mathematics was the first to be based on the 2008 Arizona Mathematics Standard.

## Arizona's Academic Standards

Arizona developed Benchmark Academic Standards in 1996. After the enactment of NCLB, Arizona articulated grade level academic standards in reading and mathematics in 2003, writing and science in 2004, and social studies in 2005. The Science Standard was updated in 2005. The Mathematics Standard was revised in 2008.

Arizona's standards are written by Arizona educators, who represent the diversity of the state, through a multi-committee process. The standards are also reviewed by national experts and by Arizona citizens through public forums and comment periods. The last step in the development of a standard is the adoption of the proposed standard by the State Board of Education. Once adopted by the State Board of Education, schools and districts are given a transition period of one school year prior to full implementation of a newly adopted standard. AIMS is based on the adopted academic standards and the first assessment of a "new" standard is in the spring of the implementation year.

## **Development of AIMS**

It is essential that AIMS measures the depth, breadth, and intent of the Arizona Academic Standard for each content area. The cycle of test item development is a two-year process from writing an item to its use as an operational item on a test.

Arizona educators are an integral part in the development of AIMS. All items on the test are developed by Arizona educators and are directly linked to Arizona's academic standards. Committees of educators create the test blueprint, design the item specifications, write the actual items, review the items for bias and content match to the standard, and select the items to be field tested. Reading, mathematics, and science field test items are generally embedded into the operational assessments. Writing prompts are field tested in stand-alone field tests. These field test items and prompts do not count toward a student's score but are evaluated for statistical quality to potentially use operationally. After field testing, committees of educators analyze the field test data and finally select items that appear on AIMS.

AIMS tests are composed of multiple choice items. AIMS Writing includes a single writing prompt. The Blueprint for each academic area assessment can be found on the Arizona Department of Education Web site at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov).

## **Content Standards and Performance Level Descriptors**

The Arizona Academic Standards provide the basis for the Performance Level Descriptors that characterize the four Achievement Levels that students can achieve on AIMS. The standards are the target that all students should strive to meet. Content Standards can be found on the ADE Web site at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov). The performance level descriptors are organized into achievement levels. These achievement levels describe the performance of a typical student at that level.

- Falls Far Below the Standard

Students who score in this level may have significant gaps and limited knowledge and skills that are necessary to satisfactorily meet the state's standards. Students will usually require a considerable amount of additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

- Approaches the Standard

Students who score in this level show partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who approach the standard possess some understanding and skills necessary to begin working on the content required of the student who meets the standards. Due to incomplete understanding, additional instruction and remediation may be necessary in order to achieve a satisfactory level of achievement.

- Meets the Standard

Students who score in this level demonstrate a solid academic performance on subject matter as reflected by the standards. Students who perform at this level are prepared to begin work on materials that may be required for the next grade level. Attainment of at least this level is the goal for all students.

- Exceeds the Standard

Students who score in this level illustrate a superior academic performance as evidenced by achievement that is substantially beyond the goal for all students. Students who exceed the standard have demonstrated exceptional and exemplary attainment of knowledge and skills.

There are also detailed content specific Performance Level Descriptors for Writing, Reading, and Mathematics for high school students. The detailed descriptors by content area can be found at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov).

## The Purpose of Testing

One of the principal purposes of a school testing program is to provide teachers with information to help students learn. Testing, or assessment, plays a vital role in today's education environment. Assessment results often are a major force in shaping public perceptions about the capabilities of our students and the quality of our schools. As a primary tool for educators and policymakers, assessment is used for many important purposes. Assessment results are used to help improve teaching and learning and to evaluate programs and schools. Assessment is also used to generate the data upon which policy decisions are made. Because of the important functions it performs, educational assessment is a fundamental activity in every school, district, and state. It is a vital complement to innovation, higher standards, and educational excellence.

AIMS HS results can be used to guide the planning of curriculum and instruction within a classroom, school, and district. The test results can help inform changes that directly impact student understanding of the academic standard.

AIMS HS results are used in the state accountability system (AZ LEARNS) for the evaluation of school and district performance. The spring results of students in their second year of high school are used in the federal accountability system (AYP).

The majority of Arizona high school students must pass AIMS HS Writing, Reading, and Mathematics in order to graduate. Students test for the first time in the spring of their second year in high school. Students have additional opportunities to test in the fall and spring until they graduate.

## **Components of Fall AIMS HS**

### **Writing**

AIMS HS Writing measures skills in written communication through an extended writing response. Students demonstrate their ability to apply critical thinking as they work through the writing process and produce an extended response to a prompt. AIMS HS Writing is based on the traits of Ideas & Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. It is scored by four readers who are trained with materials designed by Arizona teachers.

### **Reading**

Comprehension of written communication in all forms, both fiction and nonfiction, are assessed in AIMS HS Reading. Students will read various passages and answer questions. Demonstrating the ability to understand complex text requires students to read and apply comprehension skills. Each passage will have several multiple choice questions ranging from recall to analysis of author's intent to following multi-step directions. AIMS HS Reading is based on Reading Process, Comprehending Literary Text, and Comprehending Informational Text. AIMS HS Reading contains multiple choice items with four possible answer choices for each item. The answers are machine scored.

### **Mathematics**

Students demonstrate their ability to understand the concepts of mathematics and their application in problem solving and computation. Communication, problem solving, reasoning and proof, connections, and representation are applied in problems of estimation, interpreting graphs, geometry, and algebra. AIMS HS Mathematics provides multiple choice items that measure student ability in these areas. AIMS HS Mathematics is based on Number and Operations; Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics; Patterns, Algebra, and Functions; Geometry and Measurement; and Structure and Logic. AIMS HS Mathematics contains multiple choice items with four possible answer choices for each item. The answers are machine scored.

# What Information Do I Receive

## Reading and Interpreting Test Results

This section describes the AIMS HS scores that you may receive for individual students or for your school. These scores provide information to help you plan instruction. To interpret the test results, you will want to understand the purpose and special characteristics of each type of score. Each score provides a distinct way of identifying strengths and weaknesses of individual students and groups of students. The various scores will also help provide ways to determine how well each student is meeting the instructional objectives and standards specified for his or her grade.

### Raw Scores

The most basic score is the raw score, the number of questions the student has answered correctly. A raw score must always be interpreted in relation to the particular set of questions on which the score was earned. Because each content area differs in length, content, and difficulty, raw scores cannot be compared directly across content areas.

### Scaled Scores

AIMS HS Scale Scores provide a stable means of comparing student performance across administrations for a given content area. This is done by adjusting for minor differences in test difficulty across administrations and transforming raw scores to a stable scale score metric. For example, a scale score of 600 on one administration reflects the same student ability as a scale score of 600 earned on another administration for the same content area aligned to the same standard. However, scale scores cannot be compared across content areas or across standards.

### Criterion-Referenced Scores

Criterion-referenced scores describe performance relative to a predetermined external criterion. AIMS is a criterion-referenced test. The items are directly linked to the Arizona Academic Standard, which is what students are expected to master prior to testing.

### Performance Levels

A performance standard is a criterion-referenced score that represents a level of mastery. They provide information about what students should know and be able to do. Performance standards on the AIMS HS were obtained through a standard-setting procedure. AIMS HS provides four levels of performance levels:

- Falls Far Below the Standard.
- Approaches the Standard.
- Meets the Standard.
- Exceeds the Standard.

Each performance level depicts student performance relative to state academic standards for a given subject area. Performance level results provide an indication of how well Arizona students are meeting the state academic standards.

## How Did My Students Do

### Looking At Performance

The results of the AIMS HS test can be of great value to teachers when considered together with information from other sources. Test results can give you information about specific areas of strength and weakness in achievement for individuals or groups of students; help you set up instructional priorities; assist you in grouping students for instruction; and allow you to compare the performance of your students against the Arizona State Content Standards. Remember, however, that test results are a picture of a student's achievement at a single point in time. Test results must be considered in light of information you have gathered about the student from other sources. Such sources include teacher-made tests, classroom performance in both large- and small-group activities, informal assessments, teacher observations and checklists, portfolios, and logs. The following general guidelines will help you review and analyze test results for an individual student or group of students.

### General Guidelines

Watch for the unusual. In general, test results confirm or extend what an observant teacher already knows about a student. Unexpected patterns of scores, high points, and low points can often direct you to individual or class instructional needs or to areas where more information is needed.

### Interpretational Cautions

**Group and Item Level Comparisons**—Caution must be taken when evaluating results based on either groups of students or subsets of items. Statistics such as means or percentages based on small group sizes or only a few test questions can be misleading because the measurement error increases as the sample sizes decrease. The smaller the sample, the poorer the statistic is for drawing inference.

**Raw Score Comparisons**—Raw score results should not be compared across grade level or across test administrations, even within the same content area. With no correction for differences in item difficulty from one test to another, raw score totals reflect differing levels of overall performance and do not provide the necessary foundation for drawing reliable conclusions.

**Always ask "Why?"** Why did Christopher do so much better in Mathematics than in Reading? Does he have a special interest in math? Was he absent during a very important time in English class?

In addition to questions about an individual student's performance on one or more content area, you should also compare an individual student's performance to that of the group as a whole. For example, Marita's scores were among the highest in the group, but her classwork is average. What factors could account for this difference in performance? Does she have trouble working in the class environment? Is she easily distracted by others? Does she like to learn on her own about topics she particularly enjoys rather than about topics in specific school subjects?

Answering these questions will probably require further investigation and the use of additional sources of information.

***Don't overemphasize small differences.*** Standardized tests are a good source of information, but like any other measuring instrument, they are not perfect. If the tests were readministered or if another form of the test had been given, most students' raw scores would vary somewhat. One student might score a bit lower in one strand and slightly higher in another strand; another student might score a bit higher in one strand and exactly the same in a second strand, and so on. Small differences in a student's scores are best treated as random fluctuations.

Large differences, however, should be noted. These are most likely meaningful differences.

***Interrelate information from different content areas.*** It is sometimes helpful to consider performance in a content area in light of performance in other content areas. Deficient language or reading skills, for example, often affect performance in other areas. Special instruction in language and reading for those students with marked difficulty in these areas may well result in improved performance in other areas where learning and assessment are dependent on these skills.

***Don't expect to discover something new and different about every student.*** A testing program is similar to a periodic medical checkup; you don't expect to find something unusual every time you see the doctor. Knowing that nothing is wrong is good information. Most students will have scores that fall into a regular pattern. Some will be above average and some below average, without any exceptional differences between their scores in each content area. However, sometimes you may find that patterns of scores are different from what you had expected. The times that you learn something about your students that you didn't know previously make the testing program worthwhile.

## Factors Affecting Achievement

There are many factors that you should keep in mind when looking at test performance. As you examine and interpret students' test results, remember that achievement in school and on the test may be affected by any of the factors listed below:

### Student/Home Factors

- The student's general health and physical condition.
- The student's school-attendance record.
- The student's interest in school.
- The student's study and work habits.
- The stability of the student's home environment.
- The support and/or help the student is able to receive at home.

### School Factors

- The appropriateness of the level of instruction for the student.
- The amount of time available for instruction.
- The expectations set for the student.
- The appropriateness of school settings/groupings for the student.
- The appropriateness of instructional materials and methods for the student.

## Evaluating Group Performance

An analysis of the performance of the individual students within a group best begins with an analysis of the performance of the group as a whole. Areas of strength or instructional need for individual students will have more meaning when considered in light of performance of the entire group. Areas in which performance was low for a significant number of students in a group, for example, may indicate that a particular instructional standard had not yet been introduced; or it had been introduced but not yet mastered at the time of testing. Areas in which a significant number of students performed very well may indicate that further instruction for that standard may not be required for many students in the group.

Test scores can provide many valuable insights into students' skills and abilities. It is important to remember, however, that educational decisions in the classroom must ultimately be made by the person who knows the students in a particular class and is familiar with their instructional backgrounds—the teacher.

The AIMS HS is administered to determine a student's degree of competency in the Arizona Academic Standards. AIMS meets both federal and state assessment requirements. The data derived from AIMS is used to guide instruction and to measure school performance.

## **District Summary Report**

The District Summary Report (Figure 1) communicates to administrators the number and percentage of students in each performance level, the number and percentage of students passing, and the average mean score for each school in the district. The overall state, county, and district level numbers are also reported for each district. The District Summary Report is provided in PDF format and posted in PearsonAccess; no paper copy is produced.

## **Summary Concept Performance Report**

The summary concept performance report (Figure 2) communicates to administrators the performance of groups within the school at the strand/concept level. The report will be provided in both paper and PDF formats. The electronic copy will be posted in PearsonAccess. The report will contain number of points possible, state mean points, district mean points, school mean points, and the mean scores for each group within the school.

## **Confidential Roster Report with Summary**

The Confidential Roster Report with Summary (Figures 3a and 3b) communicates to administrators the scale score and performance level of each individual student in a given content area. The summary provides aggregated information of the performance level within the school, the number of students with valid results, and the mean scale scores. The report will be provided in both paper and PDF formats. The electronic copy will be posted in PearsonAccess. The report detail will contain scale score as well as performance levels while the summary will contain the number of students with valid results, a mean scale score, and the aggregated performance levels of students by cohort within a particular school.





# Confidential Roster Report Detail

## Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards High School (AIMS HS)

Test Date: Fall 2010

Dist-Sch #: 999999-999999  
School Name: SCHOOL NAME35CHARACTERS  
District Name: DISTRICT NAME35CHARACTERS  
COUNTY NAME

School: ANYSCHOOL

Cohort: 2011

Student	Score	Mathematics	PASS?
1 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Female	Scale Score Performance Level	533 Meets	PASS
2 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Male	Scale Score Performance Level	469 Falls Far Below	
3 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Male	Scale Score Performance Level	485 Approaches	
4 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Female	Scale Score Performance Level	522 Meets	PASS
5 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Female	Scale Score Performance Level	699 Exceeds	PASS
6 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Female	Scale Score Performance Level	536 Meets	PASS
7 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Male	Scale Score Performance Level	*	
8 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Female	Scale Score Performance Level	300 Falls Far Below	
9 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Male	Scale Score Performance Level	**	
10 LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME M DOB: mm/dd/yy SAIS#: 12345678 Male	Scale Score Performance Level	700 Exceeds	PASS

**Purpose**  
The AIMS HS is administered to determine a student's degree of competency in the Arizona Academic Standards for writing, reading, and mathematics. AIMS meets both federal and state assessment requirements. The data derived from AIMS is used to guide instruction and to measure school performance.

\* This student did not have a valid attempt.  
\*\* This student's test result was invalidated.

Figure 3a Confidential Roster Report with Summary, Page 1

# Roster Report Summary

## Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards High School (AIMS HS)

Dist-Sch #: 999999-999999  
 School Name: SCHOOL NAME35CHARACTERS  
 District Name: DISTRICT NAME35CHARACTERS  
 COUNTY NAME

Test Date: Fall 2010

Cohort: 2011

School: ANYSCHOOL

Performance Levels	Mathematics
4 EXCEEDS	4% ## Students
	38% ## Students
3 MEETS	27% ## Students
	31% ## Students
2 APPROACHES	###
1 FALLS FAR BELOW	###.#
Students with Valid Results	
Mean Scale Score	

**Purpose**  
 The AIMS HS is administered to determine a student's degree of competency in the Arizona Academic Standards for writing, reading, and mathematics. AIMS meets both federal and state assessment requirements. The data derived from AIMS is used to guide instruction and to measure school performance.

Students with no valid attempt or whose test results were invalidated are not included in this summary report.

071210-Z0000001-00000000-0000001

Figure 3b Confidential Roster Report with Summary, Page 2

## Evaluating Individual Performance

After you have evaluated group performance, you should analyze individual reports for the students. Interpreting test results for an individual student not only gives you information about the student's strengths and instructional needs but can also help you understand group performance. A close evaluation of students' performance on the strands and concepts within a content area, for example, may help to explain unusual patterns of performance in that content area for the group as a whole.

### Student Report

The Student Report is shown in Figures 4a and 4b. The paragraphs below explain each section of the report.

#### **1** Student's information

Here you find the student's name, birth date, test date, school, and district.

#### **2** Student's score

See how the student did on the AIMS HS test by looking at the vertical bar. The student's score is shown by the number at the top of each bar. A score that falls within the "Meets the Standard" range or within the "Exceeds the Standard" range is a passing score.

Most students are required to pass AIMS HS in the content areas of writing, reading, and mathematics to qualify for high school graduation. Students who have not passed one or more of the required content areas should be given additional help to master the Arizona Academic Standards prior to participating in additional AIMS HS testing opportunities.

#### **3** Performance Levels

There are four performance levels: Exceeds the Standard, Meets the Standard, Approaches the Standard, Falls Far Below the Standard. This section describes the general skills and abilities that a typical student demonstrated on AIMS HS content for each of the performance levels. More detailed performance level descriptors are available on the Arizona Department of Education Web site at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov).

#### **4 The student's strengths and needs based on this test**

This section of the report provides more detailed information about how well the student performed within the tested content area.

For the content areas of reading and mathematics, the chart on this page lists the tested strand and concepts within the content area. The columns show the number of test questions, the number of test questions answered correctly, and the percentage of test questions answered correctly.

For the content area of writing, the chart on this page lists the tested writing traits. The columns show the points possible and the points earned for each trait.

The tested strands, concepts, and traits are based on the Arizona Academic Standards, which describe what the student should know and be able to do at the completion of the first 2 years of high school. For additional information about Arizona Academic Standards, please visit [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov).

A closer look at the Student Report will help provide a number of insights into a student's achievement. Keep the following question in mind as you examine each student's report:

- In general, is this student's result what you would have expected, given your day-to-day observations of the student and his or her achievement in class?

When interpreting any set of test results, the teacher's judgment plays a critical role in gaining a total picture of a student's school performance. Achievement test results can add an important ingredient to the formulation of an individual instructional plan.

# STUDENT REPORT

For the family of  
**LASTNAME25CHARACTERSXXX,  
 FIRSTNAME20CHARACTERS I.**

**1**

**Arizona's  
 Instrument to Measure Standards  
 High School (AIMS HS)**

SAIS #: 12345678  
 Birth Date: mm/dd/yy  
 Test Date: Fall 2010  
 Cohort: ANYCOHORT

Dist-Sch #: 99999-999999  
 School Name: SCHOOL NAME35CHARACTERSWWWWWWWWWWWWWW  
 District Name: DISTRICT NAME35CHARACTERS  
 COUNTY NAME

## How did FIRSTNAME perform on the Reading Assessment?

Dear Parents/Guardians:



This report includes the results for the Reading portion of the AIMS HS Assessment. The individual scores indicate your student's knowledge and mastery of the Arizona Reading Standard. Detailed information about a student's performance on each concept tested is found under the Strand/Concept Results on the back of this report. These results allow teachers to target specific concepts, ensuring that students learn more.

Sincerely,

Tom Horne  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction

## 2 AIMS HS Standards Based Results

Reading		
PASS	EXCEEDS THE STANDARD	900
		773
	MEETS THE STANDARD	772
		722 - Meets
		674
	APPROACHES THE STANDARD	673
		627
	FALLS FAR BELOW THE STANDARD	626
		500

The performance level indicates your student can consistently perform what is described for that level and the levels below. Your student may also be capable of performing some of the competencies described at the higher levels, but not enough to have reached that level of performance.

## 3 Performance Levels

### 4 Exceeds the Standard

Students who score in this level illustrate a superior academic performance as evidenced by achievement that is substantially beyond the goal for all students. Students who perform at this level demonstrate strong analytical and inferential skills in comprehending more challenging and complex text. They are able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using minimal context clues, correctly utilize colloquialisms and historical jargon, and use knowledge of modes to interpret text.

### 3 Meets the Standard

Students who score in this level demonstrate a solid academic performance on subject matter as reflected by the reading standard. Students who perform at this level are able to identify and analyze literary elements such as theme, character, setting, plot, and point of view in complex texts. They will be able to support conclusions drawn from ideas and concepts in expository text and synthesize information from multiple sources to draw conclusions.

### 2 Approaches the Standard

Students who score in this level show partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who perform at this level show a basic understanding of literary elements, making relevant inferences, and interpreting graphic sources of information to support ideas. They can compare (and contrast) classic works of literature that deal with similar topics and problems. Some gaps in knowledge and skills are evident and may require additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

### 1 Falls Far Below the Standard

Students who score in this level may have significant gaps and limited knowledge and skills that are necessary to satisfactorily meet the state's reading standard. Students will usually require a considerable amount of additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

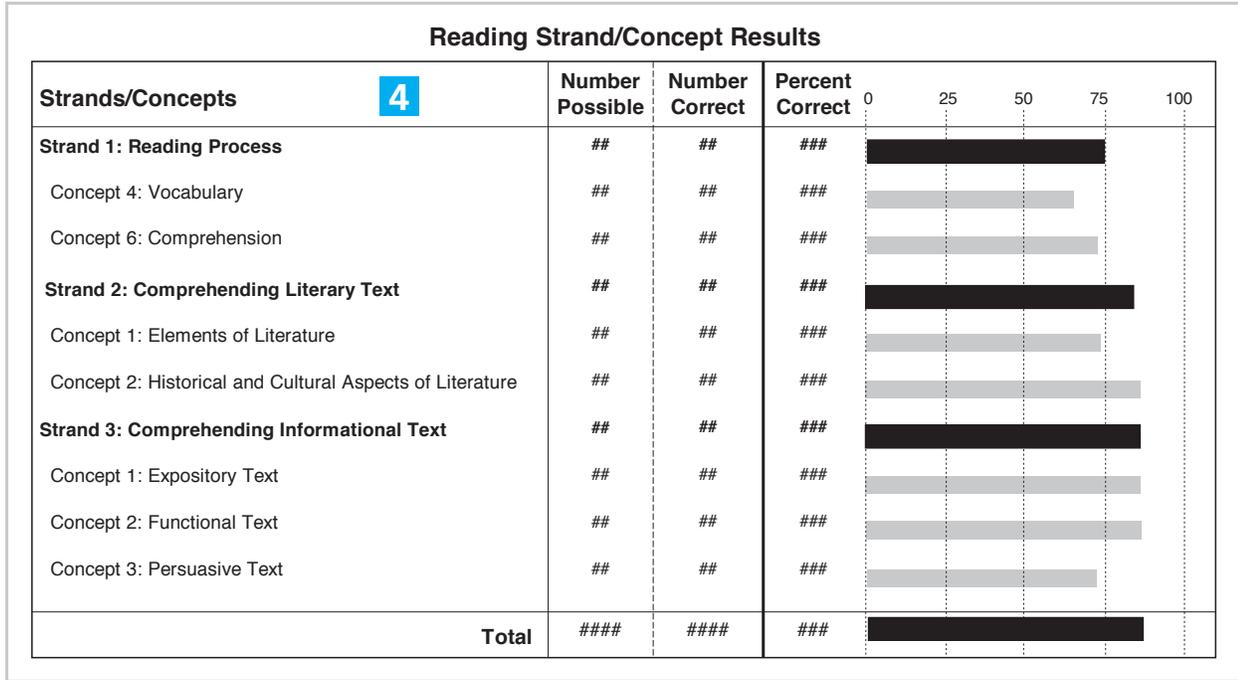
### Purpose

The AIMS HS is administered to determine a student's degree of competency in the Arizona Academic Standards for writing, reading, and mathematics. AIMS meets both federal and state assessment requirements. The data derived from AIMS is used to guide instruction and to measure school performance.

070110 Z0000011-00000000-0000001

Figure 4a Student Report, Page 1

How did FIRSTNAME perform on each Reading Strand/Concept?



**Additional Resources and Information**

Additional information about the Arizona Academic Standards and performance level indicators can be found on the Arizona Department of Education website at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov).

Figure 4b Student Report, Page 2

# Using Test Results

## Planning for Instruction

Generally, the classroom teacher is responsible for making decisions concerning the day-to-day structure and management of the instructional program so that all students in the class understand the academic standards.

Classroom teachers determine instructional priorities; make decisions about instructional methods, activities, and materials; and monitor student progress. Teachers make these types of decisions based on their knowledge of teaching and learning, familiarity with subject matter, and experience with students. In making sound instructional decisions, teachers must also gather and consider information from a variety of sources. Individual student differences must be recognized and accommodated. Instructional time must be addressed. This section will help teachers use the test results, along with other information, to make decisions about instructional programs.

## Monitoring Progress

Monitoring the progress of students is an ongoing part of the teaching process. Every teaching opportunity is also a chance to gather information about students' strengths, needs, and misunderstandings.

In order to monitor progress, both the teacher and the student must know where the student started out and where the student is headed. The AIMS HS test provides information about what the student knows or can do in relation to the standards. Test results can serve, at least in part, as a baseline for instruction. The students' results on AIMS HS should be shared with them in a clear, nonjudgmental way.

The monitoring process should be systematic, but it does not need to be complicated or time-consuming. Teacher-made tests, formative assessments, benchmark assessments, classwork, and homework provide excellent feedback. As you implement your plan for instruction, you can also gather other important kinds of information about individual students, groups of students, or the entire class. For example, you might note the amount of time needed for students to master a particular concept or skill; the types of problems students have with a specific lesson; the types of questions students ask; or the number of times a certain concept must be taught.

Other tools can be used to monitor progress. Keeping samples of students' work can serve as a concrete way to share progress with parents. You may want to keep observational records on individual students or the class as a whole. This method of monitoring progress may take more time than other methods, but it allows you to gather important information about students' behaviors, attitudes, interests, and other factors that can help you make instructional decisions.

As partners in their own learning, students' attitudes will very likely improve if they are able to see that their efforts are paying off. Active participation by students in the monitoring process encourages them to take responsibility for their own accomplishments. Student checklists, journals, surveys, portfolios, and progress charts work well for self-monitoring in different areas of the curriculum. These evaluation materials can provide evidence of areas of progress as well as evidence of those areas still needing work. Monitoring students' progress in this way allows both you and the students to judge the effectiveness of your joint efforts and to adjust instruction when necessary.

## **A Partnership for Learning**

Parents, students, and schools share the responsibility for educational success. Everyone concerned, especially the student, benefits when there is a partnership for learning. Test results are most meaningful when parents and students have been informed before testing about the reasons for testing, what will be tested, and how test results will be used.

Studies show that parental involvement in almost any form appears to produce a long-term positive effect on student achievement. Parents who are in touch with the school and who help their student at home promote an attitude that encourages the student's success in school. Once the test has been administered and you have student results, you will want to help parents and students understand the information about test scores. Evaluation of test performance should be a positive experience for students. The *AIMS HS Student Report* acknowledges the student's efforts on AIMS HS and tells parents, teachers, and the student in a constructive way about the student's test performance.



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