



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AzMERIT**

### **What does my child's test score mean?**

The new state test measures how well your child is performing in English language arts and math. AzMERIT scores are just one of several measures, including report card grades, classroom performance, and feedback from teachers, that can be used to measure your child's academic progress.

### **When will I receive my child's scores?**

In November 2015, parents will receive their child's AzMERIT score report. Within the report, parents will find information on their child's test performance and specific skills that need improvement. SUSD will provide an easy-to-follow tutorial on how to navigate this report on our school website. Beginning in 2016, AzMERIT results will be distributed before the end of the school year.

### **Will my child have to pass AzMERIT to graduate?**

Passing AzMERIT is not a requirement for high school students.

### **What should I take away from this report?**

This AzMERIT score report helps you understand your child's academic achievement. You can see how your child is performing in comparison to peers in the same grade level, school, and district. In addition to giving you an overall score, the report also breaks down each subject into categories to provide you with a better understanding of how your child performed in different areas of math and English.

### **Why does my child's score look different than scores on previous tests?**

Because AzMERIT is a new test, these first year test scores set a new baseline from which progress will be measured. Your child's score, as well as school and district results, may look lower this year because the test measured more complex skills including critical thinking, problem solving, and analysis. A low score does not mean your child did not improve or learned less. It simply means that the expectations have been raised for students. It is also important to know that AzMERIT is a very different test than we've had before, so it is not possible to compare our old test to AzMERIT. In addition, as a new test, students and teachers still need time to adjust to the new assessment. Given time and our support, we know that our students will rise to the challenge.

### **How will my child's score be used?**

Scores will be used to better tailor instruction to individual student needs and give us a tool to see how students and schools across the state are doing.

### **What types of questions were on the test?**

AzMERIT includes a number of different types of questions, including performance tasks that are multi-step assignments that ask students to apply their knowledge and skills to address real-world problems. In English, students have to apply their research and writing skills, and in math, they solve complex problems and then describe and defend their reasoning. The test also includes traditional multiple choice questions, as



well as interactive questions that require students to drag and drop their answers into a box, create equations, and fill in the answer.

**What if my child did well on his or her report card last year, but not as well on this test?**

Report card grades include multiple sources of information, including participation, work habits, group projects, and homework, all of which are important in determining a child's academic achievement. These sources are not reflected on the test, so there may be some differences. To further explore your child's academic achievement, talk with his or her teachers.

**How can I use these test results to help my child improve?**

You can use the test results to guide a discussion with your child's teachers about additional supports or challenges that may be needed in class, as well as ways to support your child at home. Your child's performance is broken down into categories in each subject. Therefore, you can use also this information to locate activities online that were designed specifically for each category at every grade level.

**How was AzMERIT graded?**

All of the test items are reviewed and approved by Arizona educators. That review includes confirming the answer key for items and any scoring rubrics. Items that require hand scoring are scored by trained scorers using the appropriate scoring rubric.

**When are the test results being released?**

According to the Arizona Department of Education, initial AzMERIT scores will be sent to districts and charters by early October. SUSD will receive copies of each student's family score report after our October break, and we will send the reports home late October/early November.

**How will I receive my child's score report?**

Schools and districts will be responsible for distributing the score reports to each student's family. Schools can decide to send them home in backpacks, schedule parent meetings or mail them home.

**What resources are available to help my child?**

Arizona Aims Higher: information about Arizona's College & Career Ready Standards and AzMERIT, along with tips and resources to help your child succeed in school.

[ArizonaAimsHigher.org](http://ArizonaAimsHigher.org).

Do Your Homework Arizona: a free tool created by Stand for Children Arizona to help parents better understand homework related to Arizona's new academic standards in math and English in kindergarten through eighth grade. [DoYourHomeworkArizona.org](http://DoYourHomeworkArizona.org)

**Are there any ways to see if a child is not doing well due to lack of effort versus lack of understanding?**

Comparing student performance on AzMERIT with other English Language Arts and/or math assessments or course work can help determine whether poor performance on AzMERIT is due to not trying or due to not understanding. A student who did not try on AzMERIT would likely show better performance on other tests or coursework.