

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Do I, as a parent, have a right to see my child's test scores?

Answer: Yes. A.R.S.15-743(E) requires that each school district provide a parent or guardian of each pupil a copy of the pupil's test scores.

Question: Can my child "opt out" of the AIMS DPA or can I request that my child not take the test?

Answer: No. A.R.S.15-741 and federal law mandate that every child in a public/charter school in Grades 3-8 participate in the state's AIMS DPA.

Question: What if my child needs additional help to prepare for the AIMS DPA?

Answer: Check with your child's individual school. Many schools have after-school tutoring programs. Sample AIMS DPA tests and test-items are available through the ADE website www.ade.az.gov/standards.

Question: Will my child be retained if he does not "meet the standards" in all 3 areas of the AIMS DPA?

Answer: No. The state has no guidelines in place for Grades 3-8. Individual districts, however, may establish their own guidelines regarding AIMS DPA scores.

For more information contact:

Arizona Department of Education
Assessment Section
Tel: 602-542-5031
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www.ade.az.gov/standards/AIMS

TIPS

What can you do to help your child?

- Participate in your child's learning activities
- Read aloud to your child, beginning at an early age
- Encourage good study habits
- Set aside a specific time for homework
- Provide a quiet, well-lighted place for your child to study
- Communicate often with your child's teachers
- Talk to your child often about school
- Require regular school attendance
- Emphasize the importance of academic achievement
- Provide activities at home that relate to school learning
- Provide your child with a balanced, nutritional diet
- Support and encourage your child
- Listen to your child
- Visit the ADE website and access the AIMS DPA sample tests

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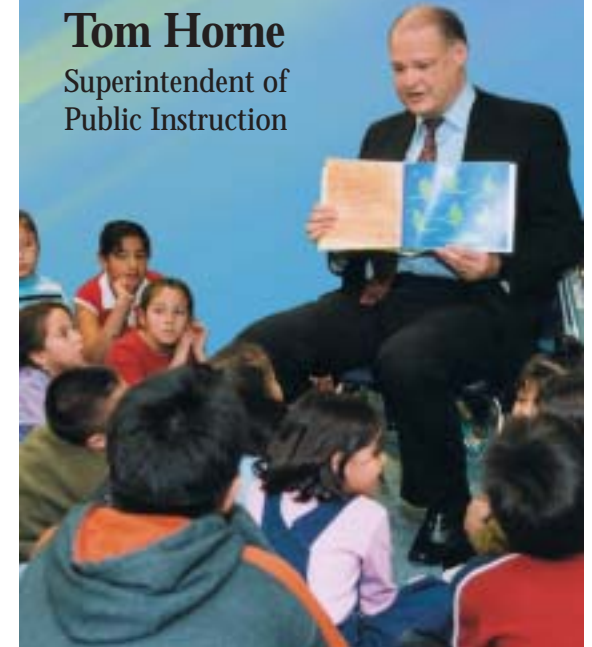
Arizona Department of Education
Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction

A Parent's Guide to Understanding AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment Grades 3-8

"I have frequently been asked what three or four goals I want to achieve in the next four years.....there is one goal that sums it up: that Arizona students learn substantially more than they have been learning."

*Inaugural Address
January 6, 2003*

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction



What is the Purpose of AIMS DPA?

The purpose of Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA) is:

- to reduce testing time from two weeks to one week
 - students are taking fewer tests
 - classroom instructional time is increased
- to provide parents, teachers, and school districts information about a student's academic strengths and weaknesses

AIMS DPA is a statewide assessment that is both standards-based, measuring students knowledge **against the Arizona Academic Standards**, and norm-referenced, comparing student knowledge **against students nationwide**.

- TerraNova norm-referenced test items included in the test compare a student's performance to students nationwide
- AIMS test items measure a child's knowledge--without comparison to other students--based on whether the child is proficient in accordance with the Arizona Academic Standards
- AIMS questions are written by Arizona educators

It is important that you encourage your child to put forth his or her very best efforts on the AIMS DPA.

Arizona Academic Standards

The Arizona Academic Standards are established academic expectations for teaching and learning. They are statements of knowledge and skills that every child is expected to learn. The standards were developed by the State of Arizona educational community and adopted by the State Board of Education to meet federal and state guidelines.

Currently, academic standards for Grades 3 through 8 have been developed in the following content areas:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Foreign Language
- Technology
- Arts
- Comprehensive Health/PE
- Workplace Skills

The AIMS DPA currently assesses students in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

For more information about the Arizona Academic Standards or for sample test items, visit the Arizona Department of Education website at www.ade.az.gov/standards/AIMS.

What do the test results mean?

The AIMS DPA provides a norm-referenced test score (NRT) and an AIMS score. The results of the tests are used by classroom teachers to guide instruction and improve student learning.

- The NRT compares a child's performance on certain test items to the performance of students nationwide by way of a percentile ranking
- The AIMS score assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards. Each child will receive one of the following scores for each of the three areas tested - reading, writing, and mathematics.

✓ **Exceeds the Standard** – denotes superior academic performance on challenging subject matter reflected by the content standards

✓ **Meets the Standard** – denotes solid academic performance and understanding of the state content standards

✓ **Approaches the Standard** – denotes partial understanding of the skills and knowledge necessary for proficient work at grade level

✓ **Falls Far Below the Standard** – denotes insufficient understanding of the prerequisite skills; students who achieve at this level have serious gaps in knowledge and skills and may require remediation