

VAIL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 20

“Where Education is a Community Effort”

July, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In November 2014, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted a new statewide achievement test for Arizona students called AzMERIT, Arizona’s Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching. This new assessment was given to Arizona students in grades three through high school for the first time in spring 2015.

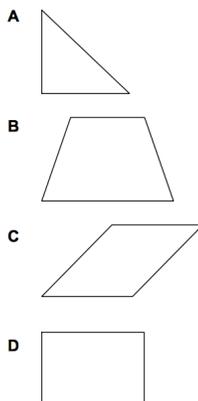
The purpose of these state mandated tests is to measure your child's knowledge and understanding of Arizona Academic Standards. Test items were written to measure specifically whether students have mastered performance objectives in reading, writing, and mathematics. The tests have questions requiring students to respond in a multiple-choice, short answer and extended writing format.

Included is a comprehensive score report with detailed information about how your child performed on both the English language arts (reading and writing) and math portions of the AzMERIT test. Here are a few important things to keep in mind:

- **We are on the right track.** Arizona is asking more from our students. The AzMERIT test goes beyond the previous test (AIMS) by also measuring a wide range of skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analysis. Below are sample test questions from AIMS and AzMERIT for the purpose of comparison.

AIMS: Grade 5

30 Which figure has only one pair of parallel sides?



AzMERIT: Grade 5

The names of five shapes are shown.

Write a letter of a number in each empty box to order the shapes from least number of angles to greatest number of angles.

Shapes	Ordered Shapes
A. Hexagon	
B. Octagon	
C. Pentagon	
D. Rhombus	
E. Triangle	

Least
↓
Greatest

- AzMERIT looks different than AIMS. It is in its 2nd year of administration and is setting a higher bar for what students need to know and be able to do. Teachers, students, and parents are continuing to make adjustments.

AzMERIT test results may seem lower than what you have come to expect from your child. There is no need to be alarmed. That is what we expect during these transition years. It doesn't mean your child is doing worse. As a matter of fact, in past years, Vail students have performed 25% above the Arizona State average on the AIMS assessment. On the 2015 AzMERIT assessment, Vail students performed 57% above the Arizona State average. On the 2016 AzMERIT assessment Vail students performed 61% above the Arizona State average.

Please remember this is only one measurement of your child's academic progress. If you have any questions, please contact your school's principal or my office at 879-2000.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hedgepeth,
Deputy Superintendent