This past spring, your child took a statewide test in math and English language arts called AzMERIT. The test is a tool that parents and teachers can use to learn if a student is on track to succeed in his or her current grade and in the future. Along with classroom assignments, homework, grades, and your conversations with his or her teachers, AzMERIT scores provide a complete picture of how your child is doing.

Your child’s school will be sharing his or her results from last year with you this fall. You will receive a comprehensive family score report with detailed information about how your child performed on both the English language arts and math portions of the AzMERIT test. Please contact your child’s teachers to talk through the results and how you can work together to help your child succeed.

**What should you take away from the family score report?**

The AzMERIT score report will help 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 am I first receiving last year’s score this fall?**

Arizona is working hard to get the scoring right on these new tests; therefore, students are receiving last year’s results this fall. We know it is frustrating for parents and teachers, but in subsequent years the goal is to have scores available by the end of the school year.

**Will my child’s score improve over last year?**

When examining this year’s AzMERIT scores, the first thing you should keep in mind is that this is only the second year of the exam. It’s quite different than AIMS and requires more from students. It’s still new, especially for those who may have taken the paper/pencil version the first year and the computer-based test this year.

Students and teachers still need time to adjust to the AzMERIT test and to the more challenging academic standards being taught in classrooms today. Educators do expect scores to steadily improve as teachers and students become more familiar with the standards and better equipped to rise to the challenge.

**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)
- **Math Power Book**: created by The Rodel Foundation of Arizona, this book was designed for parents and families who want to help their children make sense of math and covers concepts introduced in first grade all the way through sixth grade. [RodelAZ.org/home/the-math-power-book](http://RodelAZ.org/home/the-math-power-book)
- **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)
How will my child’s score be used?

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

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

The new tests are only one of several measures used to determine your child’s academic performance. Report card grades include multiple sources of information – 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 teacher.

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 where he or she may need additional help or could be challenged more 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 this information to locate activities online that were designed specifically for each category at every grade level.

How long will it be before I can see progress in my child’s score?

As teachers spend more time focusing on the content outlined in the new standards and students gain more practice with the skills, scores are expected to improve over time.

What types of questions were asked?

AzMERIT includes a number of different types of questions, including performance tasks that are multi-step assignments and 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 does AzMERIT mean for students?

AzMERIT focuses on measuring real-world skills. For example, students are asked to read complex passages, analyze them, and write thoughtful responses, which is different from previous tests.

AzMERIT does not lend itself to teaching to the test as it emphasizes applied skills versus memorization. By moving away from simple fill-in-the-bubble tests, the temptation to teach to the test was eliminated. Strong teaching coupled with engaged learning throughout the year is the best way to prepare for this test. Since the standards ensure students are learning what they need to know and AzMERIT is aligned to the standards, schools can now focus on what is most important instead of test prep.