

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**ARIZONA**

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**State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

**The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)**

Introduced in the spring of 1999, AIMS will be used in grades 3, 5, and 8 and at the high school level to decide whether students entering high school as freshman during the 1998-1999 academic year will graduate. High school students first take each of the test's seven components that measure achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in their sophomore year. If a student fails a section, s/he can retake the section up to four times. They must pass all components to graduate in 2002.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)*

**The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)**

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

Grades 3, 5, 8 and 10 were tested using AIMS in the following subjects during the spring of 2000:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics.

All students in grades 2 through 11 were also tested using the **Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT9)** in:

- Math
- Reading
- Language.

For the purposes of Title I adequate yearly progress, students in Title I schoolwides or receiving assistance through Title I funds also take the SAT9 in grade 12 as well.

Results from the SAT9 in grades 3 through 8 are used in the **Arizona Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)**. The Stanford 9 achievement test was administered to all students in grades 2-11 in the spring of 2000 because it is a state budget reconciliation bill requirement.

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced:*

AIMS is criterion-referenced

SAT9 is norm-referenced

- *Matrix or Census Testing:* Census
- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview)*  
*such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*

AIMS includes three types of items: 1) multiple choice and 2) short answer items are found in the reading, writing and mathematics subtests. In addition, the writing portion of AIMS requires students to 3) write a two-page essay. The proportion of item types varies by subject. Specifically:

- Reading: 82% multiple choice, 18% short answer
- Writing: 58% multiple choice, 20% short answer, 22% extended response
- Mathematics: 81% multiple choice, 19% short answer

High-speed optical scanners score multiple-choice items. Short answer and extended-writing items are scored by trained and monitored staff of National Computer Systems (NCS) in Iowa City, Iowa. All NCS scorers employed on AIMS are college graduates and are monitored for inter-rater reliability purposes.

The SAT9 is multiple choice only.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*  
SAT9: (window) April 1 through May 1, 2000  
AIMS, Form A: March 27-30, 2000

AIMS, Form B: April 10-13, 2000  
AIMS, Retest: May 1-4, 2000

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

AIMS at the high school level serves as the exit exam for high school students. High school students first take each of the test's seven components which measure achievement in reading, writing and mathematics – in their sophomore year. If a student fails a section, s/he can retake the section up to four times. They must pass all seven components to graduate in 2002.

- *Other Assessments:*

District assessments and NAEP are also administered.

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System: Final*

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? If a commercial test was used by the state, were modifications or additions made to the assessment to address state requirements or standards? If so, what did they include?*

AIMS was developed for grades 3, 5, 8 and high school through a process involving test contractors (CTB/McGraw-Hill and National Computer Systems), the Arizona Department of Education, teachers and district test coordinators. All items on AIMS were selected, written and revised in an effort to be free of bias and ensure adherence to the standards. Short answer and extended-writing responses were further reviewed in a process called "range-finding" where all possible answers were reviewed and a uniform scoring guide was created. The test contractors and the Arizona Technical Advisory Committee (AZTAC), a committee made up of measurement specialists and district assessment coordinators, also reviewed items for "technical qualities." "Questionable items" were excluded from the item pool and were not used.

3. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

State law requires that there be a district achievement plan that addresses the state standards and local assessments to measure progress on those standards, but the state is no more specific in terms of grades and the data is not collected at the state level.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*
  - *Refining standards*
  - *Revamping assessments*
  - *Adding components to assessments**What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?*

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is a test designed to measure each student's progress in learning the **Arizona Academic Standards**.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

Arizona teachers from around the state who were familiar with the standards reviewed the test items for alignment and those items that were not aligned were not included or were modified so as to be in alignment.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

The SAT9 is used for adequate yearly progress under Title I. The results from both the AIMS and the SAT9 are reported. The **Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)** uses the SAT9 as the measure and the grade level as the unit of analysis within the school and the results of this system are also reported.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes have been planned at this time; this is the final system currently.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The primary issue in the state will continue to be the full implementation and use of the AIMS as the state develops a more extensive system of accountability beyond reporting data.

## **Inclusion Policies for Assessment**

Arizona is instituting a comprehensive statewide system for assessing achievement of all students on the Arizona Academic Standards. All students, regardless of disability or group membership, are instructed in accordance with the Arizona Academic Standards, and will be assessed with a variety of state assessment instruments. This system will include ALL students in both district and statewide assessment programs.

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

There are no standard exemptions for a particular group of students from the state assessment program. Adaptations may be used for students who, in the past, would have been excluded from statewide testing. However, **ONLY** the specific adaptations necessary for each individual student in a particular content area shall be used. For example, a student may need

an accommodation in reading but not in mathematics. Additionally, adaptations may differ by state test instrument (i.e., Stanford 9 v. AIMS).

The only exemption from state tests will be for those students (probably only one to two percent of the total student population) whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) exempt them from participating in standardized testing programs, even with adaptations available. These students have disabilities so significant that they cannot participate meaningfully in traditional assessment. **Alternate assessments** will be constructed by the state and districts, in accordance with state and federal guidelines, for these students as required by their IEPs.

Decisions about providing adaptations and/or exempting a student from part or all of a state administered test must be clearly documented on that student's IEP, 504 accommodation plan, and must be in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes 15-744 and fall within state guidelines for limited-English proficient students. These decisions must be based on each individual student's needs; they should be neither disability specific nor based on performance expectations or reporting predictions.

Ultimately all students in Arizona will need to pass a battery of graduation exams (AIMS) in English to receive a diploma, and limited English proficient students are not exempt from AIMS. They may be provided certain adaptations during testing. These adaptations are available for a period not to exceed three consecutive years, upon enrollment in an Arizona school district starting at grade 2 or above.

School teams must take into consideration when assessing the LEP exempt student that:

- It is necessary to state clearly what all students are to know and be able to do before determining whether there is a need for a specific accommodation.
- It is important to consider accommodations for both instruction and assessment. When students need accommodations in how they learn, they will usually need accommodations in how they are assessed.
- Accommodations must be determined for each student based on his/her individual strengths, needs and immediate context. Students who require accommodations in one area may need none in another area.
- The more intense the student's needs, the more likely it is that he/she will need an accommodation.

Decisions about exempting an LEP student from **Stanford 9** testing must be based on each individual student's need. Exemptions must be in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes which states that:

*The governing board of a school district may exempt pupils who are limited English proficient...from the nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement testing requirement prescribed by this article for a period not to exceed three consecutive school years. The first year of the exemption is the first academic year in which the pupil is enrolled in a school district in this state in grade two or above. The instructional program for limited English proficient pupils who are exempt from the nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test requirement as provided in*

*this subsection shall include an alternative assessment of achievement to be administered annually.*

LEP students who are not exempt are required to take the Stanford 9 with no accommodations, unless the student has been identified as having a disability. At that point, the accommodations for students with disabilities will be based on the Individual Education Plan for that individual student. Districts must annually report to the ADE the number of exempt pupils by school, disability category, language group and grade level.

LEP students may be exempt from the **SAT9** if:

1. the exempted pupil has been determined to be LEP by following proper identification and assessment procedures
2. the LEP pupil is enrolled in an appropriate instructional program
3. the pupil has been enrolled in a school district in the state for less than three academic years beginning with the second grade
4. the district has selected and scheduled alternative assessments for all exempted students.

Alternative assessments for LEP exempt students include the Stanford 9 with adaptations, Aprenda 2 for Spanish-literate students or an assessment identified by the district.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

A student's IEP must specify that the student will participate in the statewide assessment program in one of the following ways:

**Under standard conditions** - Students with disabilities participate in the same manner as students without disabilities of a given age or grade level. Many students with disabilities can and should participate under standard conditions. For example, a student who has a learning disability in mathematics may not need an accommodation on a reading or writing assessment.

**Accommodations** are provisions made in *how* a student accesses and demonstrates learning. These do not substantially change the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known. For example, a student who has a learning disability in reading may not need an accommodation on a mathematics or writing assessment.

**Modifications** are substantial changes in *what* a student is expected to learn and to demonstrate. Changes may be made in the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. Such changes are made to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, environments and assessments based on individual needs and abilities.

**Alternate Assessment** – The Alternate Assessment, referred to as AIMS – A, is being developed for use in the school year 2000-2001. AIMS – A is intended for students with significant disabilities. These students are being taught at the functional level and/or study a curriculum that focuses on the development of daily living skills. We estimate that one to two percent of the total student population will take AIMS – A.

All students whose IEPs include instruction at the Functional Level and who qualify for AIMS – A will be **not** be tested at the state level **for 1999-2000**. AIMS – A will be administered statewide during the spring 2001. The IEP Team shall determine the method of assessment until AIMS - A is available. To be eligible for AIMS - A, a student must meet the following criteria:

1. Have a current IEP.
2. Have sufficient educational performance data available to apply these criteria.
3. Demonstrate cognitive abilities and adaptive skills that prevent completion of the state-approved Arizona Academic Standards at the Foundations Level even with accommodations and modifications.
4. Require extensive direct instruction in multiple settings to master and generalize skills necessary for functional application in school, work, home and community environments.

If the student is 14 years of age or older, the student must also be unable to complete the graduation standards necessary to meet the requirements for graduation, even with extended learning opportunities and/or instructional modifications.

To determine a student's eligibility for alternative assessment, the IEP committee must:

1. Agree that the student can not participate in AIMS at the third, fifth, eighth or high school levels even with appropriate accommodations and/or modifications and state the reasons why;
2. Agree that the student meets all of the eligibility criteria for alternative assessment; and
3. Document the student's eligibility for alternate assessment on the IEP.

Districts may administer the Stanford 9 to exempt students if the parent of the student requests the test to be given. Districts may choose to administer the Stanford 9 to an exempt LEP student, if the test, with appropriate accommodations, could serve as the alternative assessment of achievement. Test results for these pupils would not be included in the summary results of tests. Although Stanford 9 test results for exempt pupils are not included in the summary results of tests, individual results are sent to the school and to the parent or guardian. The decision to use an accommodated Stanford 9 should be neither language specific nor based on performance expectations or reporting predictions. Any accommodations used in test administration must be based on each individual student's needs and should correlate with the accommodations required by the student during instruction.

Possible accommodations for EXEMPT students may include the following:

- Provide translation dictionary
- Have teacher provide clarification (interpret or simplify language)
- Extend time
- Administer test in several shorter sessions
- Administer test over several extra days
- Translate written directions to student
- Reread directions for each page
- Simplify language in directions
- Administer test individually in separate location
- Administer test in small group

This list of accommodations is not exhaustive, and a school team must make the determination of the type of accommodations needed for exempt students. Accommodations must not alter the content of the test or provide inappropriate assistance to the student within the context of the test.

The governing board of a school district shall not exempt pupils who are limited English proficient from the AIMS test. However, at the district governing board's option, LEP students may be provided certain adaptations during the administration of the AIMS test. These adaptations are available to students for a period not to exceed three consecutive school years, upon enrollment in an Arizona school district starting at grade two or above.

For grades 3, 5, and 8, two types of assessment adaptations are available for eligible LEP students:

1. Spanish language AIMS. Spanish literate pupils may be administered the Spanish version of AIMS only once. Students taking the Spanish version of AIMS in grade three will not be given the grade 5 AIMS test in Spanish, despite eligibility for adaptations.

2. English version of AIMS with accommodations. Eligible pupils who have taken the Spanish version of AIMS once and all other eligible LEP pupils may take the English form of AIMS with some or all of the following accommodations:

- Provide translation dictionary
- Have teacher provide clarification (interpret or simplify language)
- Administer test in several shorter sessions
- Administer test over several extra days
- Translate written directions to student
- Reread directions for each page
- Simplify language in directions
- Administer test individually in separate location
- Administer test in small group

At the secondary level, all pupils will be administered the English version of AIMS. Limited English proficient pupils eligible for adaptations may be allowed the use of a translation dictionary. LEP pupils in their second semester of grade 12 may request an interpreter for the all sections of AIMS except Language Arts (reading and writing). The following accommodations are available at the secondary level:

- Provide translation dictionary
- Administer test individually in separate location
- Administer test in small group.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

The AIMS test is offered in Spanish for grades 3, 5, and 8 - students whose native language is not English are exempt for up to three calendar years from testing in English. High school students, however, must take the test in English.

Aprenda 2, a Spanish language norm-referenced test is available as well. This test is appropriate for students who are proficient in Spanish. If a student has NOT received Spanish language instruction, i.e., through a bilingual program, but rather through a English as a Second Language (ESL) program, the use of Aprenda may not be appropriate; the results of the Aprenda or any other second-language norm-referenced test cannot be directly correlated to the Stanford 9. At the district's option, any other alternate assessment, including district assessments, may be administered as an alternate to the Stanford 9 for students that are LEP exempt.

It is the District Governing Board's decision whether or not to exempt students for reasons of language proficiency on the Stanford 9. Exemptions must be in accordance with State Board guidelines. LEP students who are not exempted are required to take the Stanford 9 with no accommodations, unless the student has been identified as having a disability.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

The Alternate Assessment, referred to as AIMS – A, is being developed for use in the school year 2000-2001. AIMS – A is intended for students with significant disabilities. These students are being taught at the functional level and/or study a curriculum that focuses on the development of daily living skills. The state estimates that one to two percent of the total student population will take AIMS – A.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

All students are to be included once the alternative assessment is in place, without exemption.

6. *Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The Alternate Assessment, referred to as AIMS – A, is being developed for use in the school year 2000-2001. AIMS – A is intended for students with significant disabilities.

## **Performance Standards**

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The four AIMS score performance levels for 1999-2000 were developed in March of 1999 by the SBE and include the following definitions:

**Exceeds the Standard:** This level denotes demonstration of superior academic performance evidenced by achievement substantially beyond the goal for all students.

**Meets the Standard:** This level denotes demonstration of solid academic performance on challenging subject matter reflected by the content standards. This includes subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real world situations, and content-relevant analytical skills. Students who perform at this level are well prepared to begin work on even more challenging material that is required for the next grade level. Attainment of at least this level is the goal for all students.

**Approaches the Standard:** This level denotes partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who approach the standard demonstrate competency in the prerequisites necessary to begin working on the challenging content required of the student who meets the standards, but do not demonstrate full understanding of that challenging content.

**Falls Far Below the Standard:** This level denotes insufficient evidence of the prerequisite skills to approach meeting the standards. Students who perform at this level have serious gaps in knowledge and skills. They, in all likelihood, require a considerable amount of additional work and remediation in the basic skills that are prerequisite to the challenging work expected at the current grade level.

Students who meet or exceed the standard have completed the AIMS requirements for that subject area at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school level, a rating of Approaches the Standard means that a student needs additional study and must retake the test. A rating of Falls Far Below the Standard means that a student needs significant study and must retake the test. The following are the performance levels for the AIMS:

<b>Reading</b>	<b>Scale Score Range</b>	<b>Raw Score Range</b>
• Falls Far Below the Standard	200-466	1-22
• Approaches the Standard	467-499	23-30
• Meets the Standard	500-565	31-39
• Exceeds the Standard	566-800	40-44
<b>Writing</b>		
• Falls Far Below the Standard	200-430	1-28
• Approaches the Standard	431-499	29-40
• Meets the Standard	500-601	41-49
• Exceeds the Standard	602-800	50-55
<b>Mathematics</b>		
• Falls Far Below the Standard	200-480	1-54
• Approaches the Standard	481-499	55-63
• Meets the Standard	500-574	64-85
• Exceeds the Standard	575-800	86-96

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

The **Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)** uses the SAT9 as the measure and the grade level as the unit of analysis within the school. Two indicators are used:

1. **One Year of Growth**: indicates whether a grade level has achieved one year of academic growth from spring 1998 to Spring 1999. The standard is based on growth in scale score points that are necessary to remain at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile from one grade to the next.
2. **Star Rating**: indicates the performance, by grade level, of a school in relation to other schools in the state. The ratings are as follows:
  - 5 (excellent): grade level performed better than 80% of Arizona schools in growth
  - 4 (above average): grade level performed better than 60% of Arizona schools in growth
  - 3 (average): grade level performed better than 40% of Arizona schools in growth
  - 2 (below average): grade level performed better than 20% of Arizona schools in growth
  - 1 (low): grade level is among the bottom 20% of Arizona schools in growth.
3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

See above. Performance standards are based entirely on student achievement calculations and do not include non-cognitive data.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

Yes, all students included in the assessments are to be included in these calculations.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are planned at this time.

## **Reporting Performance Data**

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*
  - *Student reports*

The AIMS Parent Report summarizes how a student performed in each content area of AIMS. Districts will be provided with a copy of this report for every student tested. The first page provides parents an overview of the Arizona Standards and AIMS. Policies concerning AIMS as a graduation requirement and opportunities for retesting are described. Also on this page, the student's performance level in each content area is indicated. Whether or not the student has completed the testing requirement or needs to retest is noted as well.

The second page features a brief description of AIMS, the student's scores and performance levels, and comparable information for the student's school, district and the state. Using the shaded bar under the performance levels, parents can see how close their child is to the next higher performance level. They can also see what percent of students achieved the same performance level.

A student needs to achieve a scale score of 500 to Meet the Standard for each content area. Though the required score is the same for all subject areas, the scores cannot be compared between subject areas.

The last page of the Parent Report is a summary of the knowledge and skills contained within each performance level of the content areas.

- *School and District reports*

The Arizona School Report Card includes the following:

1. School Overview: mission statement, organization and philosophy, academic goals, instructional programs (ESL, Gift and Talented, etc.) enrollment
2. School Site Council: composition and duties
3. Staffing Information: staff totals and experience
4. Shared Responsibilities between School and Parents
5. Transportation Policy
6. Calendar Information
7. Resources Available at the School Site: nutrition and limited English proficiency programs, special facilities, extracurricular activities, school/community resources
8. Indicators of Success: school achievements/accomplishments, student information, including: attendance rate, transfers, promotion rate, retention rate, dropout rate, status unknown
9. School Honors
10. School Safety
11. Academic Achievement Indicators: SAT9
12. Arizona Academic Standards (Summary): AIMS results will be reported after initial testing in the spring of 2000.
13. Contacts

The district report is very similar to the school report but includes information aggregated to the district level and specific to the district.

- *State reports*

The Statewide Report summarizes how students performed in each content area of

AIMS for every school, district and county in Arizona. This report is available upon request from the Arizona Department of Education and on the Internet.

The report is organized alphabetically by county, district and school. Three basic types of information are communicated on the statewide report: the number of students tested (with valid and comparable scores); the group's average scores and the percent of the group achieving the AIMS performance levels.

When the number of students in a group is small, extreme performances on AIMS can disproportionately impact the group averages. The number of students tested is provided for this consideration. When fewer than five students are summarized, results have been replaced with asterisks to protect the privacy of these students.

Two average scores are provided: the mean score (the sum of student scores divided by the number tested) and median (the middle score). When the summary population is not normally distributed (i.e., is not bell-shaped) or when the number of students summarized is low (below 30), the median score is recommended.

The percent of students in each of three performance levels is presented. Privacy considerations in individual districts and schools require that scores in Falls Far Below the Standard and Approaches the Standard be combined.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

Reports are distributed at the student, classroom, school, district, county and state levels. Reports are sent to the districts so that they can then be distributed to all students. District in-services are also provided to go over the scores and what they mean.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

The state disaggregates by all of the categories required under IASA except socio-economic status, but does not report these data. Special education results are, however, reported separately.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from "1996-97 on")?*

The SAT has been given in the state since 1997, and the AIMS was new for 1998-99.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

Stanford 9 scores are reported at the school and district level in all administered grades for:

- All Students: Standard Conditions
- Regular Education: Standard Conditions
- Special Education: Standard Conditions
- Special Education: Non-Standard Conditions

Stanford 9 test results for exempt LEP pupils are not included in the summary results, but individual results are sent to the school and to the parent or guardian.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

All districts, whether in school improvement or not, must write a **District Achievement Plan**. The DAP normally consists of two sections:

1. data forms (DAP Reporting Form and the Academic Standards Completion Report (ASCR)) and
2. a descriptive Narrative.

The Narrative includes information on plans for assessment of students not enrolled for an entire school year; plans for remediation of students who have not reached the approved level of proficiency in the Arizona Academic Standards; accommodations/modifications for special populations (Special Education and LEP students, for instance); and alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment to the Arizona Academic Standards. Additionally, the Narrative describes how the district will assess all students' progress in achieving the standards, including a description of reporting and use of test scores and non-test indicators.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

There are plans to add more data to the reporting structure but specifics were not mentioned.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Many students are falling below the standards on the AIMS due to the level of assessment rigor. In addition, small schools in which 100% of students are falling below the standard address the issue of privacy...if all students are listed in one performance standard, are you then taking away individual student privacy by reporting those results?

### **State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

Students will be required to pass all seven of the AIMS components in order to graduate in 2002. The state has not developed an accountability system beyond public reporting at the

school and district levels, but they are planning to put one in place now that the criterion-referenced AIMS has been implemented.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Students will be required to pass all seven of the AIMS components in order to graduate in 2002.

- *School and District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Beyond the system of reporting and “public shame” for poor performance, the state has not developed rewards or consequences for schools and districts.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

The performance standards include absolute targets on the AIMS as does the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP). However, these are distinctions only for the purposes of reporting and do not carry further consequences.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The state does not have a general accountability system for all schools and so the Title I system standards alone as the only model in the state.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state is planning to develop an accountability system for schools and districts along with the system to be implemented for student accountability on the AIMS.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

## **Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts**

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

Title I programming provides multiple forms of support, but the state system provides only professional development in the general sense to all schools, regardless of their performance.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Not applicable; no formal accountability system is in place.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state has decided that it needs a system to identify low performing schools and districts but such a system has yet to be designed and implemented. That will be the change for the future in the state.

## **Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress**

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

A subset of test items on the state-administered Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (Stanford 9) is the basis for AYP. The evaluation includes Reading Comprehension and Mathematics test items aligned to the Arizona Academic Standards, as measured in grades 3, 8 and 12. The next stage uses the recommended cut scores for each of the four performance categories at grades 3, 8 and 12. These performance categories, in order of skill and proficiency, are: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Basic* and *Below Basic*. The cut scores for these categories are outlined as follows:

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Reading Cut Score</u>	<u>Math Cut Score</u>
Advanced:	Grade 3	35	30
	Grade 8	38	43
	Grade 12	44	34
Proficient:	Grade 3	29	23
	Grade 8	31	32
	Grade 12	38	23
Basic:	Grade 3	15	12
	Grade 8	17	19
	Grade 12	28	13
Below Basic	Grade 3	<15	<12
	Grade 8	<17	<19
	Grade 12	<28	<13

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

*Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?*

Using a Gap Reduction Model (GRM), AYP describes the amount of yearly improvement each Title I school and district is expected to make to enable low-achieving children to meet the high performance levels expected of all children.

- Goal 1: Ninety percent of all students will score *Proficient* or above in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics from the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, extracted items; and
- Goal 2: No students will score *Below Basic* on either Reading Comprehension or Mathematics from the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, extracted items.

AYP is the determination, using the GRM, of the progress of a school toward these goals. The goals are consistent with the Arizona framework of increasing the academic achievement of every student while giving all students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. This foundation supports an accountability system for all students, including those with disabilities and those who are limited English proficient (LEP).

Utilizing the fact that the IASA of 1994 permits transitional assessments to be used until school year 2000-01, the state's process for AYP is still being developed. The Arizona Transitional Assessment Model is described by the state as a "work in progress." The state goals for all schools eligible for funding, or operating, as a Title I school are scheduled to be accomplished by the year 2005. The ADE is providing training and assistance to help parents, students, teachers and administrators to understand the federal accountability requirements and the effect the requirements may have on the school improvement process.

There is no variation between targeted and schoolwide programs under Title I.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

Schools are identified as not making AYP by the district. Districts are only identified for program improvement, and this identification is made by the state. However, the sole criteria in both cases is the criteria set out by the state.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

The ADE has defined a procedure for identifying LEAs and schools in need of improvement. It is the responsibility of the LEA to determine if any of its Title I schools are failing to achieve AYP.

In the first stage of AYP determination, the ADE will obtain data from a subset of items extracted from the Stanford 9 Achievement Test. Comparison data is distributed annually to LEAs and a preliminary determination will be made as to whether each school has met Goal 1 or Goal 2. Once the data are received, the LEA will review the information and the results of multiple measures to determine whether schools made AYP.

Step 1: A school will meet the criteria of AYP if either Goal 1 or 2 has been met; or yearly attainment of reasonable objectives related to either or both goals, as described below, has been met.

The school's improvement expectations will be determined using the Gap Reduction Model (GRM). The GRM determines the progress rate from a baseline value (Current Performance) to a Goal value over a period of time. AYP will be determined by whether the actual improvement met the expected rate. AYP determination will use the spring 1997 scores from the Stanford 9 in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics as a baseline. The achievement of 90% of students scoring *Proficient* or better by year 2005 is Goal 1. The difference between the two, divided by the time span of 8 years, will determine how much a particular school must improve per year; the greater the gap between the Current Performance and the Goal, the greater the expected increase per year. The Required Annual Improvement Rate is graphed as a straight line from Current Performance 1997 to Goal (2005).

Step 2: The LEA is required to investigate school progress further if yearly attainment of

**Figure 1: Gap Reduction Calculations**

reasonable objectives related to Goal 1 or Goal 2 were not met. The LEA must consider additional multiple measures to assess progress toward meeting Arizona Academic Standards, such as criterion-referenced tests, portfolio assessments, norm-referenced tests, district writing assessments and District Achievement Plans (DAPs).

If a school believes that any multiple measures it has collected would better reflect their attainment of AYP, they may submit such data to their LEA. The LEA will review the data and render a decision to the school.

Step 3: The LEA will designate any Title I school failing to meet AYP *for two consecutive years* as in need of School Improvement and report this status to the ADE.

Step 4: The LEA will provide opportunities for each school to make improvements.

The school will create, or revise, a School Improvement Plan to indicate how it will achieve AYP toward meeting the state goals by year 2005.

Step 5: If an LEA has 50 percent or more of its Title I schools identified as in need of improvement, the ADE will identify the LEA as being in need of improvement. Both LEAs and schools may be identified as in need of improvement. When an LEA is designated as in need of improvement the ADE will provide technical assistance and support to help the LEA revise its LEA Consolidated Plan to improve the performance of its Title I schools.

Schools identified for program improvement must demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress toward their targeted goals for at least two out of three years to no longer be considered as in need of improvement under federal Title I funding requirements.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

A school may seek external technical assistance to meet the goals of its School Improvement Plan. LEAs and schools identified as in need of improvement will be supported by a wide array of technical assistance services. The state and LEA will provide support and technical assistance to this goal. Assistance may be sought from institutions of higher education, private non-profit organizations, educational service agencies, a Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, or other local consortia experienced in helping schools improve achievement. The Arizona System of School Support, established in 1997, is in place to assist Title I schools in achieving the goals as set by the state.

**School Support Teams** were created in response to the **IASA directives of 1994**, in which the schoolwide reform concept was mandated. The purpose of School Support Teams is to work cooperatively with **high-poverty Title I schools** that are planning schoolwide programs, or are identified as being in need of improvement. Prior to schoolwide implementation, an eligible school is required to develop its plan with external technical assistance.

Arizona has created School Support Teams to provide assistance to Title I schools planning or implementing schoolwide programs or those identified for improvement. Each team will facilitate a planning and improvement process through collaboration, coordination and cooperation with school-site personnel. A minimum of two site-visits during the planning year, and an additional two visits during the first year of implementation, are required. SSTs:

- Examine school/district resources and support needed to meet state standards. Schools participating in SWPs have the flexibility to combine Title I funds with other federal, state and local reserves
- Provide for ongoing and sustained professional development
- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment; and
- Prepare a comprehensive schoolwide plan with the involvement of the entire school and community.

AYP training sessions have also been offered as a series of three workshop sessions designed for those schools that have been identified for program improvement or those schools interested in improving. Each training session includes three integrated and increasingly sophisticated workshops at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced training levels. For this reason, participants are encouraged to complete the full complement of three workshops in each session. Individual workshops within the sessions will last for two days.

The state is also placing a new emphasis on the importance of the district role in assisting schools in program improvement. When a school is identified for program improvement, it is expected that staff development be provided. A school must provide professional development activities, over two consecutive years, in an amount equivalent to at least 10 percent of the funds received by the school under Title I, Part A during each fiscal year; or otherwise demonstrate that the school is effectively carrying out staff professional development activities. By analyzing the transitional assessment data, the school can identify the areas that need to be addressed through staff development.

#### 6. *Who provides the assistance?*

SSTs may be composed of teachers, pupil-service personnel and experts on schoolwide programs and school reform, as well as experts on teaching and learning strategies. Individual teams will consist of two to four members and a team leader, chosen by the school, based on its technical assistance requirements. In order to serve on a School Support Team, a person must have the appropriate educational degrees, certifications and/or related experience, as well as have the following kinds of experience:

- Program management or development
- Communicating effectively both in writing and orally.
- Experience in IASA programs; Bilingual/ESL strategies; Migrant/Mobile students; and/or
- Professional Development
- Familiarity with team facilitation, conflict resolution techniques, and/or schoolwide reform strategies.

Highly qualified district or local staff, members of local universities, consultants, distinguished schools or other resources may be used to provide professional development services.

Technical assistance is available from several sources. One source is the school district itself. Another local source is school staff members with expertise in the identified areas of need. School personnel are invited to participate in several School Improvement Process workshops sponsored by the ADE. Additionally, a directory of School Support Team members qualified to assist in the School Improvement Process has been compiled by the ADE. However, local resources must be used to fund the services of these individuals.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Yes, waivers have played a role, and the state has been on waivers for some time. The state started to develop new standards in 1995 and has been working with the understanding that it would take until at least 2001 to develop a standards-based assessment and accountability system that is fully aligned.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress?*

The next step is to move the federal accountability system (Title I Transitional Assessment) to a fully implemented state accountability system with the establishment of the Arizona Academic Standards and the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test. The state is planning to allow LEAs to choose between the SAT9 and AIMS after 2001.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

No, the state has not yet developed a general accountability system for all schools.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

Moving from individual to school and district level accountability has been an issue in the state, along with a difference in the level of rigor between the classroom assessments used in the past and the AIMS program in place now. However, the coordination and coherence requirements in IASA has brought multiple people and issues to the table and created more collaboration in the state and a sense that *all students* must be considered, not just those for which an office or division has been responsible.

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