



Karol Schmidt
Executive Director, State Board of Education
1535 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

For decades, at the direction of its membership, the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry has aggressively advocated for high academic standards and for holding students, teachers and schools accountable for achieving them. Setting a high bar is critical to delivering relevant education and for graduating every student ready to participate in the modern economy. Academic performance transparency carries obvious value for parents, taxpayers, and policymakers. Not only do families deserve to know how their child's school fares, it is critical to our state's educational future to see and know what is working so that we can make access to excellence a reality in every community and for all students.

A prior era of state accountability seemed to necessitate evaluating performance with a single assessment. However, available research and a desire to move away from a single measure have illuminated numerous strategies that can be integrated into a multiple-measure A-F formula. This includes the ability to thoughtfully integrate assessment choice in to the new A-F system.

Equating the results of other assessments with the expectations of AZMERIT and the AZMERIT Performance Levels is not only doable but has also already been done in order to assess the rigor of AZMERIT cut scores. Such a policy preserves accountability while honoring the various instructional models. This is particularly true for accelerated learning models that use rigorous assessment to validate their results, provide students college credit, early graduation opportunities, career certifications, and accurate college readiness scores.

We support assessment models that tell us if schools are helping their students reach Arizona's specific and rigorous standards. However, we do not believe it is necessary to require schools to use only the data from a single state assessment if options exist that can be equated to the state assessment, approved by the State Board of Education and relieve students and schools of unnecessary additional testing.

Many high schools already use high-quality, end-of-course assessments such as AP, ACT and Cambridge that have been or could be equated to the AZMERIT assessment. Further, the use of local assessment for K-8 holds promise, as does exploration of CTE assessment and certification systems.

We realize the evolution of assessment and accountability creates an ongoing change in practice for the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. However, choice, innovation, and success are intertwined. As Governor Ducey noted last year in his signing of SB1289, assessment choice honors local practice, honors schools and students exceeding expectations, and respects the numerous models blooming across Arizona to support student learning.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Glenn Hamer". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with a large initial "G" and "H".

Glenn Hamer
President and CEO