

High School Graduation Requirements Overview

Revised August 26, 2013

Summary

The State Board of Education has adopted a transition plan to phase out the high stakes AIMS test and to phase in new assessments that will measure student achievement at the end of each relevant course – necessary due to the full implementation of the new academic standards (Arizona Common Core).

Students in **the graduating classes of 2014, 2015 and 2016 will be required to pass the three AIMS content areas in order to graduate.**

Students in **the graduating class of 2017 and later** will no longer be required to pass a high stakes test in order to graduate and instead **will have their performance on course specific achievement tests incorporated into their course grades throughout their high school careers.**

Graduating Classes of 2014, 2015 and 2016

Background

State Board of Education Rule R7-2-302 establishes AIMS HS Writing, Reading, and Mathematics as the competency tests students must pass for graduation from an Arizona public high school. This requirement was first effective for the graduating class of 2006 and will remain effective for all students graduating through the class of 2016.

Students have their first opportunity to test on AIMS HS Writing, Reading, and Mathematics during the spring semester of their second year of high school. Students may retake the AIMS HS tests once each fall and spring semester, as needed, until graduation.

For those students who do not earn passing scores on all three content areas of AIMS HS there are alternative methods for meeting the AIMS high school graduation requirement.

Alternative Methods

These alternative methods are authorized by State Board of Education Rule R7-2-302.10 (AIMS, Substitute Passing Scores or Additional Credit) :

- **College Entrance Exam Reciprocity**
Certain scores on the SAT or the ACT are acceptable in lieu of passing AIMS HS scores. To qualify for this alternative method, **students must be in grade twelve.** More details are posted online at www.azed.gov.
- **Other States' Exam Reciprocity**
For students who transfer into an Arizona public school from out-of-state, certain scores on other states' statewide high school exams are acceptable in lieu of passing AIMS HS scores. More details are posted online at www.azed.gov.
- **Board Examination Systems used for Grand Canyon Diplomas**
For students participating in board examination programs (Grand Canyon Diploma), certain scores on board examination systems as adopted by the State Board of

Education are acceptable in lieu of passing AIMS HS scores. To qualify for this alternative method, **students must be in grade twelve**. More details are posted online at www.azed.gov.

- **AIMS Augmentation**

Student may add bonus points, based on grades earned in required courses, to non-passing AIMS HS scores. To qualify for this alternative method, **students must test on AIMS HS at every opportunity**. Detailed rules for AIMS Augmentation and an AIMS Augmentation worksheet are posted online at www.azed.gov.

- **Waiver for students with an IEP or 504 Plan**

Students with an IEP or 504 plan are not required to pass any AIMS HS tests for graduation unless such a requirement is specifically identified in the IEP or 504 plan.

- **Assessments Subsequently Adopted by the State Board**

In 2014-15, the State Board will begin the transition to newly adopted end of course assessments to measure student achievement on the approved academic standards (Arizona Common Core). Once in place, the Board will adopt certain scores on these new end of course assessments that will be acceptable in lieu of passing AIMS HS scores for students graduating in 2015 and 2016. More information on this alternative will not be available until late in 2015.

While multiple alternative methods may be used to meet the AIMS HS Graduation requirement, there are no provisions for combining alternative methods. For example, augmentation does not apply to the various reciprocal exams. For a specific content area of AIMS HS, only one alternative method may be applied. If needed, a different method may be used for each content area. For example, a student who transfers into an Arizona public high school from out-of-state might meet the AIMS HS graduation requirement in one content area via reciprocity with the state exam from his/her previous state, meet the requirement for a second content area by earning a passing score on AIMS HS, and meet the requirement for the third content area via AIMS Augmentation. **Documenting how a student met the AIMS high school graduation requirement is the responsibility of the school.**

Questions about the AIMS high school graduation requirement may be directed to HighSchoolGraduation@azed.gov.

Graduating Classes of 2017 and Later

Background

Beginning with the graduating class of 2017, students will no longer be required to pass AIMS or another high stakes test in order to graduate. Instead, imbedded in the minimum course of study required for graduation, students will have their performance on course specific achievement tests incorporated into their course grades throughout their high school careers.

The Board is currently in the processes of identifying the new assessments that will be used. Further information will be shared with the field as information becomes available.