

Problems with AzMerit --Why Parents Feel the Test is Immoral:

1. It is not a valid test. It has never been independently validated. AIR (American Institutes for Research), who wrote the AzMerit, President David Myers has said that he believes "in the use of experimental designs in education settings." [a][b]
2. Parents and teachers are not allowed to view the test questions --ever. Teachers are required to sign a contract that they will not even peek at the test or they will lose their teaching license in the state of AZ. Parents should be allowed to view anything that their children view at school --especially when they are the taxpayers who are paying for the test.
3. The answers that our children give on the test are owned by AIR, not by the SBE or ADE. (PARCC never gave the results out for their pilot guinea pig test in 2014 --even after the SPI asked for them. They told the SPI that they owned the answers, not the state.)
4. Testing consortia, like AIR, are making big bucks off the taxpayer. We are essentially "renting" the test questions for \$5,000 a piece. AZ spent \$19 million on the AzMerit last year alone. The president of AIR, David Myers, make over \$566,000 a year, while parents are asked to bring in school supplies such as paper, pencils, pens, markers, and tissues because not enough money makes it down to the classroom. [c][d]
5. The AzMerit was created by AIR who is a sister company of Smarter Balanced, who was given over \$175 million by the U.S. Department of Education to develop their test, which in turn AZ pays to rent each test question for \$5,000. Haven't they already received enough taxpayer money? [e] [f]
6. AIR is a behavioral research company. Parents do not trust a behavioral research company to administer and own their children's test questions and answers --especially in today's world where people are viewed as data points. AIR also experienced a serious data breach in 2014. [g] [h]
Dr. Gary Thompson, a child psychologist of the Early Life Child Psychology and Education Center, has reviewed AIR's test questions and has concluded that AIR is performing psychoanalysis on our children via the test to gather data such as religious views, family values, and political affiliations. [i]
7. Statewide high stakes tests do not hold schools and students truly accountable. We know this from the history of our previous AIM's test when the cut scores were lowered because schools didn't want to have too many second year seniors and look bad from failing miserably on the test. High stakes tests are not about accountability. They are about lining the pockets of testing consortia and their political friends. [j]

Sources:

- a. <http://www.air.org/news/press-release/david-myers-nationally-recognized-education-researcher-joins-air-senior-vice>
- b. <http://eduresearcher.com/2015/07/06/critical-questions-computerized-testing-sbac/>
- c. <https://newarkschoolsforsale.wordpress.com/tag/american-institutes-for-research/>
- d. <https://www.azed.gov/assessment/files/2014/11/award-specific-qa.pdf>
- e. <http://www.air.org/resource/air-partners-smarter-balanced-assessment-consortium-create-online-test-delivery-system>
- f. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/awards.html>
- g. <http://www.air.org/about-us>
- h. <http://www.databreaches.net/major-school-research-and-assessment-provider-hacked/>
- i. <https://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/2014/11/18/dr-gary-thompson-sagecommon-core-tests-break-basic-codes-of-test-ethics/>
- j. <http://archive.azcentral.com/families/education/articles/0512education12.html>