



HOMESCHOOLERS AND THE AIMS TEST

We are regularly asked by our members if their homeschooled child should take the AIMS test.

On January 22, 2007 The Arizona Republic reported that a letter had been sent to all parents of students for whom their office has registered an Affidavit of Intent to Homeschool in Maricopa County. This letter invited parents to bring their children voluntarily to their Central Avenue office for AIMS testing.

AFHE discourages use of the AIMS test by homeschoolers for the following reasons:

1. A.R.S. §15-745(a) states: *“Nothing in this article shall be construed to require the testing of children who are instructed in a home school program while they are receiving home school instruction.”* **Homeschooled students are not required by law to take the AIMS test.** Many home educators do privately test their children to help them plan their curriculum goals. The AFHE website FAQ page has links to private testing resources. We encourage parents to use these tests for their evaluation purposes.
2. The County School Superintendent’s office has no accommodation so that parents may pay for the cost of this testing directly. Therefore, using this service is at a cost to the taxpayers. Entangling private home education with taxpayer money will inevitably lead to loss of freedom to homeschool. Any service has attendant costs and this test is no different such as costs of creation, printing, administration, proctoring, and grading.
3. No assurance that the testing results will be the sole property of the parents is made. Whether another governmental agency may obtain access to the information is not clear.
4. In the 1990’s, AFHE successfully shepherded legislation that resulted in A.R.S. §15-745. We won the right to be free from mandatory testing as home educators and placed the decision regarding testing in the control of parents. We believe that if parents voluntarily submit to an offer of “free” testing it will reopen the debate over mandatory testing once again. We ask that those secured rights be valued and protected by all who enjoy the freedom to homeschool in our state.

NOTE RE: TUITION WAIVER SCHOLARSHIPS AT ARIZONA UNIVERSITIES: In 2005, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) renamed what had been called the Regent's Scholarship (a renewable tuition waiver awarded to high-performing students). It is now called the Regent's High Honors Endorsement Scholarship (RHHE). In the past, a homeschooled student could be considered for this tuition waiver scholarship by scoring at the 95th percentile on either the SAT or the ACT. That is no longer the case. Starting in 2010, the Arizona Department of Education, who administers the RHHE tuition waiver scholarship on behalf of ABOR, agreed to evaluate homeschoolers so long as they take the AIMS test and achieve a triple-exceeds score. AFHE has never encouraged that homeschoolers take the AIMS test for the reasons stated above. However, until such time as the law can be amended, students who want to compete for an RHHE tuition waiver scholarship have no other choice. Contact the Arizona Department of Education to learn which year of high school your homeschooled student should take the AIMS test in order to be considered for the RHHE tuition waiver.

Additional information can be found on our website at www.afhe.org/news_2010_04_30_sb1280.htm