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Education Policy Research Unit

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

from the **Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU)**

and the **Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)**
at **Arizona State University**

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Find the complete text of this report at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps1/EPRU/documents/EPSL-0210-122-EPRU.doc>

**ARIZONA EMPLOYERS SAY AIMS MATH EXAM TESTS
FOR SKILLS NOT USED BY ARIZONA EMPLOYEES**

TEMPE, Ariz.— Arizona employers say that the math skills and understandings tested at the AIMS Grade 10 level are not representative of math skills used by their employees in their daily work.

Based on six questions from the Grade 10 AIMS Mathematics test, a recent study concludes that the skills tested are more appropriate for college-level mathematics assessment than for a high school exit examination.

In the study, “The AIMS Test and the Mathematics Actually Used by Arizona Employees,” by Gene V Glass, Arizona State University’s Education Policy Research Unit, and Cheryl A. Edholm, Longwood High School, Middle Island, N.Y., only three of 43 managers from a wide spectrum of industries reported that the exam tested math actually used by their employees.

Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards—known as AIMS—has been criticized for being inappropriate as a measure of the readiness of high school students to graduate. “Extraordinary failure rates on the AIMS test, particularly the Grade 10 Mathematics test, have reinforced the suspicion that something is wrong with the test,” says Glass, lead researcher on the study.

Only one of the six questions had any noticeable endorsement in the sample of employers, and even then, three out of four managers did not feel the math skill tested was used by their employees.

“The overall conclusion,” the researchers wrote, “is undeniably one in which these managers regard the mathematics tested by the Grade 10 AIMS mathematics test as irrelevant to the functioning of their employees.”

Arizona students have had failure rates of nearly 90 percent on the AIMS test, while at the same time meeting and exceeding the national average for nationally standardized achievement tests.

“The problem with AIMS Math appears too serious to be cured by adjustments or delays of implementation of the use of the test as the gatekeeper of the high school diploma,” the researchers concluded.. “Any instrument seen as so irrelevant by the employers of Arizona’s high school graduates suffers from defects more serious than what ‘adjustments’ can correct.”

The Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU) conducts original research, provides independent analyses of research and policy documents, and facilitates educational innovation. EPRU facilitates the work of leading academic experts in a variety of disciplines to help inform the public debate about education policy issues.

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The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA), the Education Policy Reports Project (EPRP), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU).

The EPSL is directed by ASU Professor Alex Molnar.

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