



## ARIZONA GOVERNOR DUCEY: “Parents should have a basic understanding of how their school delivered for their children during this unprecedented year”

### A Q&A on the Value of Students Assessments This School Year

In a recent [interview](#), Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey doubled down on his commitment to his state’s annual standardized test as a means of better understanding the impact of COVID-19. “Data from the statewide assessment is among our most valuable tools,” he said.

The Republican governor signed an [executive order](#) on Feb. 15 requiring the administration of AzM2—the successor to AzMERIT—Arizona’s statewide achievement test that tracks English language arts and math performance.

In his order, he notes that “Parents should have a basic understanding of how their school delivered for their children during this unprecedented year.” The Republican governor’s order preceded an announcement by President Joe Biden’s administration to refrain from issuing blanket waivers of federally required, annual statewide assessments. Governor Ducey agreed to answer some questions about this issue.

#### **Collaborative: Why did you decide to continue with statewide testing this year?**

Gov. Ducey: Now more than ever, we need to ensure we maintain accountability. With all of the challenges the pandemic has brought, the data from the statewide assessment is among our most valuable tools to ensure no student slips through the cracks - and that we ensure students and families get the support they need.

#### **Collaborative: How will you use collected data to help make decisions about Arizona public schools?**

Gov. Ducey: I signed an executive order directing our State Board of Education to study student assessment data and identify the learning loss that occurred during the pandemic. I look forward to reviewing their report and working with education stakeholders statewide to chart a course forward that ensures Arizona students are given the resources and support needed to set them up for success.

#### **Collaborative: How were you, other education leaders, and advocacy organizations in Arizona able to reach broad agreement on the importance of statewide testing this year?**

Gov. Ducey: This is an example of an area of education policy that there is broad consensus. We know that if we don't administer the test, we won't have data. I think the importance of data-driven decision making is something we can all agree matters, especially when it comes to how we help our kids.

#### **Collaborative: Should districts simply be able to decide which test to administer this year, rather than take the AZM2 (AZMerit) assessment? Why is it important that the statewide test be administered on top of any local testing?**

Gov. Ducey: While some schools offer their own benchmark testing, which is an excellent tool for them to gauge their progress, it simply doesn't replace the key insights we can learn from a standardized statewide assessment. Without a standardized assessment, we lose the ability to draw comparisons across districts, zip codes, and key subgroups to ensure we target our efforts.