

Analysis

ALPINE/edCOUNT 2015 VALIDATION REPORT of FLORIDA STANDARDS' AIR ASSESSMENT

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www.flcommoncore.net

Credits:

<http://floridacitizensalliance.com> <http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com>

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In this report **bold and underline are added for emphasis*

C.S. Lewis once said, "A wrong sum can be put right: but only by going back till you find the error and working it afresh from that point, never by simply going on."

And so it is with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS were a train wreck waiting to occur from inception from its rushed implementation to its testing absence.

To borrow from C.S. Lewis' math analogy, the CCSS error occurred in the planning stages. To attempt to "correct" CCSS at any subsequent point is an utter waste of time.

On January 11, 2013 governor Scott requested from the Florida Department Of Education (FLDOE) an extension to his Race To The Top (RTTT) grant process. On February 11, 2013 governor Scott received a response back from Ann Whalen at FLDOE in which she explained what changes would be allowed. The changes coincided with what governor Scott and Florida commissioner of Education Pam Stewart stated on Sept 23, 2013 about how the Florida was going to be moving forward from that point. On July 17, 2013 and prior to any of the three public hearings/town hall events, governor Scott obtained a time extension as well as the requested two amendment changes. All RTTT funds were to be distributed by September 1, 2015.

On September 23, 2013 US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan e-mailed former Florida governor Jeb Bush. The e-mail stated that governor Scott had contacted him and was asking for advice on how to respond to the people's concern's regarding Common Core. Former Florida governor Jeb Bush responded to the e-mail that he knew governor Scott was "fearful of rebellion and that he wanted to stop using the term Common Core (re-branding) but wished to **keep the Standards, but get** out of PARCC."

Later that day - September 2013, governor Scott issued an executive order for Florida to leave the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), one of the two major consortia, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) being the other. Both consortia administer assessments for states. The executive order indicated that Florida would create its own Florida Standards. Secretary Duncan had given governor Scott leeway to proceed with public hearings and subsequently add to the changes to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS then became "rebranded" Florida Standards.

In the following months, Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart hosted three public hearings across Florida. Simultaneously a website was put in place where parents and educators could submit objections to the Common Core State Standards as well as requests for items to be included in the new Florida Standards and amended to CCSS.

On January 23, 2014, at FLDOE's recommendation, the Florida State Board of Education adopted the new "Florida Standards" as part of "Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards". Florida officials announced that the state's new Math and English learning standards could no longer be referred to as "Common Core State Standards." Instead, K-12 leaders and educators now were to refer to "Florida Standards" instead of CCSS.

Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart stated that the name change was justified given that 98 changes or modifications to the Math and English learning standards had been made. Therefore, the **name** "Common Core" was out and the **name** "Florida Standards" was in.

References to Common Core were deleted both in Florida statutes and official websites. The sources in this report are extracted directly from the respective organizations'/corporations' own websites, including their affiliates such as Alpine/edCount and AIR where the term Common Core is widely used and referred to. Common Core IS the vehicle to the future of education despite interested parties' denials, bans, deletions, renaming or avoidance of "Common Core".

Florida state officials denied that the Florida Standards are Common Core claiming that Florida now had its own standards. But there was never a clear explanation about the retention of the larger and major part of the Common Core and that changes were merely added. It also needs to be understood that Common Core could not be just erased because Florida still had unspent or not yet distributed Race To The Top (RTTT) funds. At that time the FLDOE was still showing Math and ELA as Common Core. If the State (Florida) did NOT comply with its FDOE agreement e.g. receiving RTTT grant funds, the unused portion would have to be returned.

It needs to be noted also that from the beginning the National Governors Assoc. (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) were allowing participating states to make minor changes to the CCSS. However, there would not be any testing on ANY changes.

Subsequently, FLDOE informed the State (Florida) of the need to create specific Florida "standardized tests". So on March 17, 2014 Commissioner Pam Stewart recommended to the Florida State School Board to consider American Institutes for Research (AIR) to produce a Florida specific statewide exam. AIR was approved as the assessment administrator for Florida Standards.

According to AIR, the new, as-yet-unnamed test was required because Florida was completing its switch to new math, language arts and literacy standards largely based on the Common Core State Standards which Florida and 44 other states had adopted.

The current Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was not designed for the new standards nor could other available testing services have tests which included the changes Florida had made to the standards.

A press release confirmed that AIR would **field test** exam questions in **Utah** that year and the test would include the more complicated questions known as "performance tasks". Performance tasks are interactive, puzzle-like tasks students must do to answer a question.

Subsequently, and at the recommendation of Commissioner Pam Stewart, the Florida Board of Education contracted with Utah based American Institutes for Research (AIR) to administer Florida's assessments for a term of six years to the sum of \$220 million.

At the time, Commissioner Stewart was questioned about the agreement e.g. if it was a good idea to make a deal with AIR considering:

- There is no "current" way in which to compare the effectiveness of AIR tests;
- Florida would be unable to compare results with other states since Florida's tests are exclusive to Florida (despite CCSS' sales pitch to have the ability to be uniform e.g. standard for every state);
- Florida's ability to properly serve the children of Florida: first there were the well publicized server problems followed by AIR's claims to be hit by a cyber-attack a.k.a. a "distributed denial of service," or DDOS;
- Concerns "are" already in place questioning whether test results can be trusted; The prior year Kansas' AIR results were thrown out after that state experienced the same problems Florida had e.g. DDOS;
- A review which matched students with similar academic and demographic characteristics, found that children who tested while problems were occurring, could no longer be compared to those who were tested later. Bad scores are worse than no scores;
- "Any sense of standard conditions seems to have been compromised by the events reported," a statement from Steve Dunbar, a testing expert at the University of Iowa. He also stated that, "Problems of this frequency and magnitude are significant in how they might affect student performance on the test. **They would not be tolerated in college admissions or certification testing,** " and
- "The same can be said for school accountability testing that carries high stakes", Steve Dunbar said. ***Florida's 10th-grade writing exam is part of the state's graduation requirement;***
- Scott Marion, associate director of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment stated, "It's what we don't know that killing us. At a

certain point, even if you don't like to give up on accountability, you're risking the credibility of the system". Miami-Dade superintendent Alberto Carvalho wondered whether Florida hadn't already hit that point. He said the state rushed to put the Florida Standards Assessments into play and its administration has been "less than smooth. Alberto Carvalho said, "Even if everything goes well from here, I question whether the problems so far have eroded the tests' credibility";

- AIR is now involved with the Center for Transformational Training or CT# to train teachers on how to implement "No Nonsense Nurturing" or NNN form of teaching. This new form of teaching requires "control of", "submission", "robotics", "intimidation", "isolation", "shame", "manipulation" "bullying" and "humiliation" of the students;
- AIR Vice-President and Institute Fellow of its Education Program is also a Board member of U.N./UNESCO's education division. His term does not end until 12/31/2015.

In April, 2015 the State of Florida had released its 2013-2014 School Year RTTT report to the federal department of education (US ED). On page 5 of the report, it states, "In order to allow for additional public input on the CCSS, Florida provided the English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards for a public review in the fall of 2013. The adoption of the Florida Standards, which includes calculus and cursive writing standards, required educators and state officials to adjust their implementation plans mid-course, as they quickly revised online tools, resources, and instructional guides to align with the Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS) and Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS).

On May 22, 2014 governor Scott stated to Floridians that Common Core was a "thing of the past" and that Florida's educational standards were Florida Standards, not the federal government's a.k.a Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and he further stated that Florida was not going to allow the federal government run the education of Florida's children. Governor Scott didn't actually lie, he just didn't explain the whole truth. That very same day, governor Scott issued a press release detailing his plan "to protect Florida from the federal government's overreach in education policy."

To be noted, there are two different testing systems on the table. One test averages a series of test results to determine a student's score. The other is a single, adaptive test, tailors questions based on a student's past answers. Both tests are designed and implemented by AIR. AIR questions follow the adaptive assessment and uses the single, adaptive test which tailors questions based on a student's answer to a previous question. For instance, a question might be "who was the first President of the United States"? Tommy would answer George Washington. Suzy might answer James Madison. The following question would be totally different for each student based on his

or her responses. With this type of testing, how can there possibly be comparable figures?

There is no doubt that politics play a major role in the reason for the two types of tests. Under federal Race to the Top Assessment Program, the program provides funding for groups of states which develop assessments that “provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure student achievement against standards designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace.”

As noted above, in the spring of 2015, there were a number of issues with AIR. As a result, Florida legislators were under pressure from parents and educators demanding to stop the testing. Valid concerns were voiced about the way tests were developed and administered. Sen. Alan Hays, R-Umatilla, went as far as to say Florida should end its contract with American Institutes for Research, "In light of the bill that the governor signed last week that will stop the utilization of that statewide assessment until it is validated – and we all know it won't be valid – I think we as responsible agents of the taxpayer dollar need to stop this \$225 million contract dead in its tracks."

<http://www.centerdigitaled.com/k-12/Standardized-Testing-in-Florida-On-the-Fritz-Again.html>

Indeed, HB7069 included a requirement to review the validity of Florida’s new testing system under set deadlines. During a May 29, 2015 meeting, the panel in charge had only one bid to review. The minutes reflect a 45 minute meeting to evaluate AIR's bid. A partnership of Utah-based Alpine Testing Solutions and Washington, D.C.-based edCount was hired to report on AIR's tests. The legislature set a completion date of September 1, 2015 for the partnership to complete its 6 part study.

Florida's financial implications are also important remember. Alpine/edCount's validation study adds an additional \$ 594,310.00 to AIR's original \$220 million for FSA (assessment) administration for a period of six years. In addition, contractual obligations require Florida pay Utah-based AIR \$5.4 Million for field testing its own questions with its teachers and students. This brings Florida's bill to a grand total for just this part of the Common Core **requirement we no longer have** to \$225,994,310.00. **Do Florida citizens not need to see a detailed line by line audit of how the RTTT funds were spent without grouping?**

As required, Alpine/edCount submitted a project plan on June 19, 2015 as well as a July 31, 2015 preliminary report. Its final report is due by August 28, 2015. HB7069 and Alpine/EdCount’s review/validation study have resulted in a delay of test results making it at least three months behind schedule (estimated release sometime in September) because FDOE is holding off its release of almost all student performance data, and many consequences associated with the results. Until the release of Alpine/edCount's report students will not have their math end-of-course exams count as part of their course grade this year.

On further examination of HB7069's requirement to have Alpine/edCount validate AIR's assessments, one should analyze Alpine/edCount and AIR. Let's consider the reliability and the validity of FSA and FL's need for an "independent" report. Alpine/edCount's independence is questionable considering its affiliations with US ED and other organizations which are an integral part of CCSS. Furthermore, New York ED produced its own internal validity report.

AIR's tests, commonly referred to as SAGE testing, are currently being used in schools for the first time and were developed specifically for **Utah to align with Common Core State Standards**.

Florida officials have requested the use of Utah's test materials for one year while educators there continue work on their own state-specific assessment.

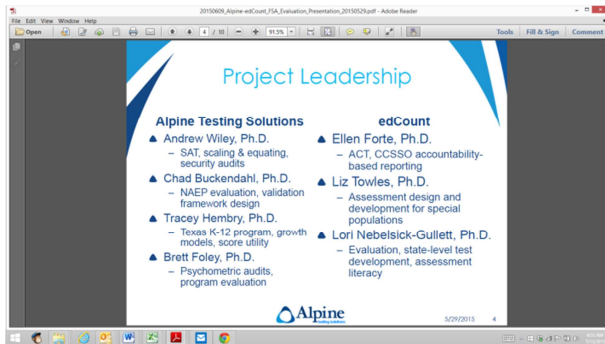
Utah's SAGE testing has generated vocal public criticism largely due to its perceived connection to the Common Core. Rightfully so, a growing number of parents, legislators and educators see the new assessments as a federal takeover of education, despite test development by PARCC and SBAC.

<http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com/the-air-stinks-of-sage/#co>

<http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com/sage-tests-are-a-red-herring/#comment-353296>

ALPINE/ed/Count partnership A Quality Assurance Project *(at taxpayers' expense, courtesy of FL lawmakers)*

The bid to do the work on FSA validity included the resumes of eight key staff members who would participate in the project.



Posted on [June 23, 2015](#) by [Shane Freeman](#)

Andrew Wiley, who recently served on the Board of Directors for the Association of Test Publishers, is lead investigator. As stated before, the group's final report is due September 1, 2015.

<http://www.fsba.org/florida-gets-one-bid-to-review-its-testing-validity/>

<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/florida-gets-one-bid-to-review-its-testing-validity/2231268>

[Alpine Testing Solutions and edCount to Conduct Independent Verification of the Psychometric Validity of the Florida Standards Assessment](#) Posted on [June 23, 2015](#) by [Shane Freeman](#)

<http://blog.alpinetesting.com/> ... ** bold and underline added for emphasis*

In response to the committee's decision, Chad W. Buckendahl, Ph.D., Director of Strategic Partnerships noted, "Alpine is excited about the opportunity to work on this important project. **Alpine is committed to helping maintain the INTEGRITY of the tests and quality assurance** projects like this are an essential instrument to evaluate the validity of the FSA." ... our experience in conducting audits have led us to focus on five key areas:

1. Alignment of program evidence with intended interpretation and use.
2. **Documentation** of participants, processes, procedures, results, and decision.
3. Internal and external communication
4. Monitoring of any external contractors
5. Prevention, detection, and enforcement aspects of test security."

... "Ellen Forte, Ph.D., CEO and Chief Scientist of edCount commented "**We appreciate the opportunity to work with Alpine on this independent verification project. By engaging in this type of independent, quality assurance activity, the Florida Department of Education will better understand how consistent the FSA is with current testing standards.**"

... "edCount, LLC is a federally-registered and certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise. Since its founding in 2003, **edCount has provided direct or advisory services in K-12 assessment to all 50 states** and seven U.S. territories through projects funded via both competitive and sole source opportunities ranging from \$10,000 to over \$3,000,000 annually. As an independent small business that **does not offer operational testing services, edCount is able to offer state education agencies objective, constructive feedback about their assessment programs.**"

QUESTION: While edCount may indeed not offer operational testing services, is it not developing and supporting national policy or submitting evidence to the United States Department of Education for peer review? Yes, it does.

<http://www.edcount.com/index.php/services/policy-evaluation-and-support/developing-and-supporting-national-policy-responses/expert-policy-analysis-and-guidance/160-council-of-chief-state-school-officers-monographs-and-manuals>

* note incorrect verb tense use in first sentence from edCount's website

... " The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) commissioned edCount to produce several monographs reporting on state accountability systems. These monographs provide the nationally-accepted structure for analyzing states' accountability models. Their development involved extensive communication with state education agency staff across the country. Between 2003 and 2007, edCount staff produced a series of "analyses" of states' NCLB accountability workbook and amendments."

... "In 2008, the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) sought out edCount's expertise to support their efforts to fully implement and comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Specifically, PRDE needed help providing validity evidence for its standards and assessment systems. **EdCount** began, as requested, by supporting PRDE's task of **compiling validity evidence to submit to the United States Department of Education for peer review.**"

QUESTIONS:

- ***Does Florida, like Puerto Rico, need edCount to "provide validity evidence for its assessment systems? Consider the state of New York did its own validation.***
- ***Why were there no other bids submitted to the panel in charge of a validity study? Note that during the May 29, 2015 meeting, Alpine/edCount representatives answered that question by submitting that, "other organizations may not have the independence and did not bother applying."***
- ***Did the panel investigate if there could have been other bids that would qualify for the project or did it blindly accept Alpine Chad Buckendahl's***

answer during that May 29, 2015 meeting, "Alpine decided to stay out of Common Core a few years ago to maintain independence... Timing and capacity, and conflicts of interest may have been considerations of other entities."

Qualifications of FSA validation/Alpine/edCount team Leader:

Dr. Andrew Wiley, Director of Ed Services for Alpine Testing Solutions,

<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Andrew-Wiley/287238664> and past Chair, current Executive Director, Senior Psycho-metrician of AlpineTesting Solutions, <http://www.testpublishers.org/atp-leaders>

On Alpine's website, *Posted in Our Perspective, Thought Leadership* Dr. Wiley posts on April 7, 2015, "Contractors should provide complete documentation of the procedures they have completed, but not every contractor is as committed to this principle as they should be."

QUESTIONS:

- ***Did AIR provide documentation of contractors' procedures?***
- ***IF Alpine/edCount DID provide documentation, how did the partnership get around AIR tests propriety and FOIA restrictions?***
- ***IF there is an agreement between AIR and Alpine/edCount, does Alpine/edCount not benefit from preferential treatment, whereas the public is not privy to review the assessments?***

In another post by Dr. A Wiley, dated March 31, 2015, the specific subject of test security is discussed, "For example, if you determine during program design that you will be delivering your exams in high-risk areas with a history of item theft, then your test development process should contain mitigation strategies to protect your exam. All too often, decisions regarding the type of assessments and the test candidates are made without mapping out the long-term security impacts; which can lead to serious unanticipated long-term consequences... This post only skimmed the surface of the issues and activities that need to be considered when trying to prevent security breaches in your testing program. Because every testing environment has different expectations when it comes to the test security protocols, these topics should be evaluated in light of your program's needs. If you would like more information on preventative security, please review our ATP presentation..." [Don't Be Late to the Game – Security Should Not Be An Afterthought](#)

QUESTIONS:

- ***Did the panel investigate if AIR did its due diligence to protect data breaches, was there constant monitoring?***
- ***There is an admission on a blog by Dr. Wiley that there could be unfair advantages. Wasn't this what happened during FSA/AIR assessments?***

Security Risk Assessment - *Posted on [March 17, 2015](#) by [Andrew Wiley](#)*: "Everyone understands the value and importance of test security. It is one of the most critical aspects of any assessment program and one that requires constant attention because of the potential damage that can be done to a program's brand and reputation. In this post, we will review the three broad categories that are essential in any security program – prevention, detection, and enforcement – along with an overview of what can be done within each area. In future posts, we will discuss greater detail on each area, and provide specific examples as well as a discussion of some innovative solutions that organizations have developed. While these broad categories certainly contain a fair amount of overlap and dependencies across each category, it can be useful to talk about each one, because it can highlight the steps required within each. When we start thinking about security, prevention is a critical category that must be addressed. While creating a bulletproof program that is immune to any and all security issues is impossible, it is essential that every program develop a rigorous set of procedures designed to prevent security breaches from occurring. A comprehensive prevention program needs to include education, policies and procedures that address security at every stage of your program, and most importantly proactive test design. These considerations such as secure procedures for the item development process, the number of items in the pool and the rotation of test forms or exposure of items. These will also include confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements with internal staff and external contractors, copyrighting your item banks and tests, comprehensive policies for the delivery of test forms to your candidates, and the development of procedures for people to report any possible security breaches. While most assessment programs have policies designed to prevent security breaches, there is a danger in allowing these policies to become outdated. One of the most critical components of any prevention program is the constant monitoring of the program, and the occasional change in policies such as item pool usage to help ensure that the policies do not become known by the nefarious characters out there trying to best your program. Although prevention is desirable, it cannot eliminate all risks. Therefore, we encourage programs to also incorporate a rigorous set of procedures in place for the detection of any security breaches."

... "These procedures may be qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Quantitatively, there are psychometric procedures that can help in this process by helping to identify items that have been exposed, individuals whose scores are suspect, or group level concerns that may suggest anomalies at a given test center or location.

This type of psychometric data forensics can be built seamlessly into your scoring process, and can be designed to be completed before any final test scores are provided to candidates. **Some of the qualitative detection opportunities may include external secret shopper programs, and monitoring social media or other digital media for content exposure.**

In addition, it is also valuable for testing programs to establish policies and infrastructure that support ethical practices. These policies should allow those on the front lines of your program – test developers, test administrators, your candidates – **to report any security breaches they have observed in a way that respects the rights of all parties involved.**"

QUESTIONS:

- ***Did Alpine/edCount investigate any of AIR's security breaches?***
- ***Will they be an integral part of its validity report?***

... "Lastly, if a security breach is identified, investigation and enforcement of any policies are then critical to maintain the credibility of the program. Most testing programs have a clear set of policies in place for any candidate or individual who has been flagged for potentially fraudulent behavior."

QUESTION: *How is Alpine/edCount determining if in fact AIR has credibility?*

... "But what many programs do not have is a clear set of procedures for how these policies will be enforced. For example, programs may know that they will invalidate test scores for any candidate proven to have cheated on their test, but they may not have a clear set of policies for how these decisions will be communicated, how the procedures will be documented, and who will be responsible for things like testifying in court or communicating with the candidate population or the media. The time to identify these procedures is prior to, and not in the middle of, the chaos that can occur during a serious test security breach. Every assessment program has its own unique set of risks and concerns when we discuss options for security. However, every program is encouraged to evaluate how to address and prioritize prevention, detection, and enforcement strategies when thinking about security. In future posts, we will provide further detail on each, and discuss some innovative solutions that have been applied to help address these concerns."

QUESTIONS: *Knowing that at the FL commission meeting, in order to evaluate Alpine/edCount's bid, Dr. Joyner inquired about the independence of the entities, including prior work with AIR, Chad Buckendahl stated that Alpine had no prior work with AIR. Why did Dr. Joyner not ask:*

- ***Does Alpine/edCount have business connections with CCSS and US ED?***
- ***OK, AIR is not a client of Alpine, but how about edCount?***
- ***Isn't AIR a prospective client? Hasn't FLDOE contracted with AIR for 6 years? Doesn't it matter that AIR could enter into a new business relationship with Alpine or edCount in the future, after the validation report?***

- **Could not AIR's management be recommended by Alpine/edCount to enroll in Alpine University after the validation?**

Disclosure is doubtful as FOIA does most likely not apply.

QUESTIONS for Alpine/edCount:

- **Doesn't the Alpine/edCount partnership have documented relationships with US ED, Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO), which are a major player in the formation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?**
- **Isn't the partnership is an extension of CCSS and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)'s implementation control machine?**
- **Isn't there is also a direct link between US ED and edCount when considering its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) evaluation?**
- **Don't these connections/working relationships bring Alpine's "neutrality/independence" claim for FSA assessment validation into question?**
- **If FL does not allow certain biometrics by statute, doesn't the contract need to mandate that Mr. Brett Foley be able to report back IF and HOW OFTEN AIR's assessments contained such data mining?**
- **Considering that AIR has already experienced two breaches in 2015, is there any insurance or protection regarding student information?**

ALPINE

From the ashes arises a newly reinvented, for profit Alpine Testing Solutions

... "Alpine Testing Solutions, Inc. ("Alpine") was first organized in 1991 as a non-profit under the name of Institute for Computer Uses in Education (ICUE). The intent of ICUE was to develop and introduce innovative computer uses focused on improving and integrating the processes of instruction and assessment in schools, homes, and business. In 1994, the organization amended its articles of incorporation and converted to a **for-profit C corporation** and then in 1998, the company changed its name to Alpine Media Corporation to better represent the company's focus on integrated, multimedia training and assessment solutions."

... "In 2004, the company had four employees and was struggling financially. An independent consultant was hired to perform a business review of Alpine. Driven by the consultant's findings, in 2005 the board of directors hired a new president and CEO with the charge to focus the company and provide value for the shareholders within three to five years. **The company immediately narrowed its focus to psychometric and test**

development services for credentialing programs and changed its name to Alpine Testing Solutions, Inc. successfully transforming itself between 2005 and 2012."

... "Along the way it expanded into the educational testing market and introduced a credential management solution. Today, as an employee-owned company, Alpine provides program and psychometric consultation, test development and validation services, and credential management solutions to credentialing (i.e., certification, assessment-based certificate, licensure, assessment)."

<http://www.alpinetesting.com/about/history.aspx#sthash.YDzqj4vN.aF0rDtAO.dpuf>

*** "This website and its contents (including CertMetrics™ and ItemMetrics™) are the **property of Alpine Testing Solutions, Inc. and protected by U.S. and foreign copyright and trademark law.**"

URLs for Alpine –edCount evaluation proposal May 29 meeting(only bidder):

http://floridacitizensalliance.com/website/wp-content/uploads/20150609_Alpine-edCount_FSA_Evaluation_Presentation_20150529.pdf

Minutes of May 29, 2015 Proposal meeting: http://floridacitizensalliance.com/website/wp-content/uploads/20150609_Draft_Minutes_5-29-15.pdf

Besides multiple meetings in Tallahassee and D.C., some **OBSERVATIONS/QUESTIONS on Alpine/edCount 7/7/15 Report:**

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article31274615.html>

- ***All inquiries are exclusively administrative between AIR/FDOE and Districts, the lowest on the totem pole being test coordinators.***
- ***Students” are not included nor mentioned anywhere!***
- ***Are FL sunshine laws being observed?***
- ***Excerpt: “Given many of the challenges that were publicly reported regarding administration of the FSA in 2015, an evaluation study of the test administration practices will contribute important information about the design and implementation of the delivery platform, as well as the potential impact on the validity of scores for students in Florida. Alpine staff members will lead this investigation and will gather information from multiple sources to ensure that a comprehensive review of the FSA test administration has been completed. This review will include gathering test administration logs that will summarize the test administration across all examinations and provide data on the number of test administrations and the degree of interruptions experienced across all test centers.” Excerpt: “Alpine has drafted a survey that will be distributed to district testing coordinators on July 1 and will remain open through mid-July. The survey includes questions related to the various FSA test administrations and will help Alpine and edCount quantify the impact of the various administration challenges that were encountered in the spring of 2015. The survey is currently being reviewed by FLDOE.”***

QUESTIONS: A) Why is FLDOE reviewing the survey, B) Are the results available to the public?

- **Excerpt: "Alpine and edCount generated a list of needed information and documents that will be used for this study and shared the list with FLDOE, AIR, and DRC. Approximately half of the requested information and documents have been received." What did this include Personal and psychological information on the students?**

QUESTIONS RE: AIR LONGITUDINAL DATA EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

- **If Alpine has psychometric audit expertise, has Alpine/edCount verified that AIR is in compliance with FL statutes regarding data mining/biometrics?**
- **If FL does not allow such testing by statute, doesn't the contract need to mandate that Alpine's Mr. Brett Foley be able to report back IF , WHERE and HOW OFTEN AIR's assessments contained such data mining?**

ADDITIONAL AIR ADMINISTRATION QUESTIONS for Alpine/edCount:

- **Was AIR's available paper testing and processing offered/used to districts which did not have broadband or other technology in place needed for FSA?**
- **Has Alpine verified if alternate assessments for students with disabilities have been offered and used in Florida as AIR is promoting on its website?**
- **Has Alpine verified that AIR tests were adapted below grade level for learning disabilities? Federal statute states that states have to test students at grade level. Has FLDOE taken steps to be in compliance to accommodate students with learning disabilities?**
- **Has Alpine verified that the test questions are the ones even reviewed? Has there been access for review to "real" test questions, could or did it flag, come to resolutions (drop/elimination due to objectionable content) and if so, will a full report be released to the public?**

AIR SCORING QUESTIONS: Has Alpine/edCount:

- **Investigated AIR's "highly trained and certified scorers"?**
- **Determined what scoring criteria is AIR using?**
- **Investigated which organization certifies AIR scorers?**
- **Investigated whether AIR scorers score work for which they are experts in their field?**
- **Investigated whether AIR scorers are full-time hires who have an education background, former teachers, PhDs?**

- ***Investigated if AIR scorers scored specific assessments commensurate with their expertise?***
- ***Investigated whether AIR scorers are hired on a temporary basis and possibly under pressure to score volume?***

In view of the findings in this report, and at a price of \$594,310.00, the best case scenario for Florida taxpayers would be for Alpine/edCount to invalidate AIR's 2015 Florida's State Assessments (FSA) for which Florida's liability is \$225.4 M, not to mention the vast and disastrous implications on the education of our children. To merely obtain a validation report for AIR's assessments to hopefully prevent future breaches and other assessment administration issues in coordination with Alpine/edCount, would be a wasted expenditure. There many other FREE assessments currently available which not only do NOT require validation but which also have a proven record to help and promote students, but that is the subject of another report.

And finally, let's take a quick look at AIR. AIR is not an organization which specializes exclusively in educational testing. AIR is also involved in activities which promotes social engineering with the aid of longitudinal data research. AIR content is based on standards created by unaccountable associations, councils and lobbying organizations such as CCSSO and NGA. AIR's technology and databases are owned by AIR. Its tests are completely its property and not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). AIR has conducted projects for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with US ED.

<http://www.unescobkk.org/education/ict/online-resources/databases/ict-in-education-database/item/article/helping-educators-thrive-in-a-connected-world/>

WHY would Florida go into contractual business with such a company????

In conclusion, if AIR and Alpine/edCount are not a continuation of Florida's implementation of CCSS and its assessments, now a.k.a. in Florida as Florida Standards and Florida State Assessments, then what are they?