
Find the *good* news in your IA results
Creating positive talking points for your community

“Test scores are important because they're objective measures of the schooling outcome.”

Marcus Winters
The New York Times, July 23, 2012

“Standardized tests are imperfect measures of student achievement...”

Marcus Winters
The New York Times, July 23, 2012

This week you will be getting access to your school's test scores. I understand the research behind educators' ambivalence toward standardized testing (note the same source for both quotes above). Nonetheless, for most parents, these scores are still an important indicator of their child's progress.

Look for good news you can share.

This could be your school's overall scores, average grade level ranking as compared to actual grade placement, student growth from one year to the next, student ranking for “career students,” etc. Find something you can honestly share as a positive indicator about your school. (I trust you were all listening when Rick Nelson and Monte Nystrom explained how they review testing data and report it to their boards.)

Find a concise way to explain those successes to parents, your board and your church constituency...

This is an excellent "talking point." Take the time to write your success points clearly and concisely. And explain **why** these are positive indicators.

...then share them often.

These pieces of good news need to keep coming again and again and again. If you find three great success indicators, don't share them all at once. Start with an overview and then focus on each one separately--you'll get more bang for your buck. Here's a starter list of channels for sharing.

- Your weekly school newsletter
- Parent-teacher conferences (don't share just Johnny's scores, but the success indicators for your school as a whole)

- School board meeting (give members a handout they can take home and share)
- Letter to your supporters (donors, volunteers, prayer warriors, etc.) thanking them for their support
- Church bulletin inserts
- Church announcements
- Church slides
- Student-written school newspaper
- Link on the home page of your website to more detailed information on a sub-page
- Monthly financial statements to parents

Credits:

Rick Nelson and Monte Nystrom

Thank you for your great examples of thoughtful analysis

Binder tab: October

School size: All