

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE



STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Standards and accountability are here—for better, for worse. Better, because student performance is now transparent, meaning that school systems can no longer ignore inadequate achievement—especially among our most vulnerable children and in our most distressed schools. Worse, because implementation is often crude and sometimes it even discourages good practice. In this space, we'll take a regular look at what's better, what's worse—and what should be repaired—as a result of the movement toward standards and accountability.

Making Student Assessment Data Useful

With the annual tests now required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), as well as the tests many states and districts have, one problem with the implementation of standards and accountability is how to make all that assessment data useful. Typically, most teachers get test scores back long after the students have moved on and, in any case, teachers have little basis for determining what the scores mean.

To address this problem, four years ago a small group of former teachers, education consultants, and information technology specialists formed The Grow Network, working with states and districts to turn test results into customized tools that support instruction. A variety of services are offered for teachers, administrators, and parents through print reports and online. Here are a few of the most exciting tools for teachers.

pending on the needs of the state or district). Below are sample pages from a sixth grade teacher's print report on mathematics (there are also online reports, which we'll get to). Notice how you can quickly see which students need the most help. In addition, there's a summary of the class's strengths and weaknesses—a great tool for planning instruction for the coming year.

Easy to Read Test Results for Your Incoming Class

You read it right: Assessment results can be delivered in the summer that tell you how your incoming class of students performed on the spring tests—both overall and broken out in various ways such as state standards or NCLB categories (de-

Overall Scores for Grade 6 Students	Scale Score	Below Standards Level 2, 3, 4, 5	Scale Score	For Above Standards Level 4, 5, 6	Scale Score
Adams, Emily	813	655	655	813	813
Adams, Livia	810	655	655	810	810
Alvarez, David	808	655	655	808	808
Archer, Michelle	800	655	655	800	800
Evans, Eric	500	655	655	500	500

How my students did in each standard on the Grade 5 test	Average % of students correct
Mathematical Reasoning	64%
Operations	44%
Modeling/Multiple Representation	42%
Measurement	41%
Patterns and Functions	39%

The NYCDOE Class Report

Dear Teacher,

Students' assessment is most useful when the data is used to help inform instruction. The Department of Education is committed to providing you with resources to help you accomplish this goal.

Analysis of Each Student's Strengths and Weaknesses

The print report helps you get to know your incoming class as a whole, but as a teacher, you've got to deal with each individual's strengths and weaknesses. Using the Grow Network's Web site, you can examine each student's skills in detail. The sample page on the far right shows how Anita Adams (the first student under "Far Below Standards" in the print report) did on each section of her fifth-grade mathematics assessment and how her performance compares to others in the school district. Anita's score on "Number and Numeration" is much lower than the district average; obviously, she needs a lot of extra help in this topic if she's going to catch up. With a click, Anita's teacher can move from identifying Anita's needs (in this case, in "number properties") to a set of relevant online instructional materials. The sample page above shows the introduction to number properties. These materials are written by current and former teachers and are based on state and/or district standards.

For more information on the Grow Network, e-mail: inquiries@grow.net.

The Class Report

Grade 6: Class #10-Math

Standardized Test Data

2003 RESULTS

In Grade 6 topics, this student is likely to need...

- Number and Numeration
 - Number Properties
 - Whole Numbers
 - Fractions and Decimals
- Operations
 - Whole Numbers - Problem Solving
 - Fractions and Decimals - Problem Solving
- Measurement
 - Time, Measurement, Perimeter, and Area
 - Organizing and Interpreting Data
- Additional Instruction and Practice**
 - Uncertainty
 - Mathematical Reasoning
- Advanced Work***
 - Modeling and Multiple Representation
 - Patterns/Functions

Print Reports for Families

Parents are important educators, but often—and especially as their children get older—they don't know where their children need help or how to provide it. The Grow Network's parent report provides test scores, explains what they mean, and uses the scores to suggest books and activities that will engage students in learning throughout the summer. In addition, teachers in New York City, Chicago, and California say these reports are great for parent-teacher conferences.

Your child's performance in Math

What you can do at home to help your child in Math

Your Child's Score

Your child's performance in Reading

What you can do at home to help your child in Reading

The Grow Parent Report