



TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN



FROM ONE PERSPECTIVE...

- ▶ Teachers can use the test scores to inform instruction, personalize learning, and monitor the growth of individual students.
- ▶ Principals and administrators can use the scores to see the performance and progress of a grade level, school, or the entire district. Because standardized tests are graded by computers, they are not as subject to human bias or subjectivity, which makes them a more accurate reflection of student success.
- ▶ Assessment data is also useful for year-over-year internal comparisons. Data can be compared over a number of years to find trends—and then trace any changes back to their source.
- ▶ Standardized tests allows school districts to measure one component of teacher effectiveness.
- ▶ Standardized tests objectively compare student skill levels across schools.
- ▶ Standardized testing is paired with standards to ensure mastery of grade-appropriate material.
- ▶ Students often set learning goals, and standardized tests can identify specific weaknesses and motivate students to set higher learning goals and to work harder.
- ▶ For the civil rights community, standardized test data provide the power to advocate for greater equality under the law.
- ▶ Students will take tests throughout their college careers. While the nature of these tests may change at the university level, the content on AP exams as well as on the ACT and SAT, is intended to help prepare high school students for the rigors of college.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

- ▶ As the US added more emphasis to standardized testing, it has dropped in global education rankings.
- ▶ Standardized testing assume that all students start from the same point of understanding.
- ▶ People have many different strengths that may not be reflected in the context of a standardized test. Traits like creativity, enthusiasm, empathy, curiosity, or resourcefulness cannot be tracked by these tests, even though they are highly desirable traits in modern careers.
- ▶ In recent years, students have lost more than 2 hours of instruction time in cultural studies and the arts so they can focus on subjects that are on standardized tests, such as reading and math.
- ▶ The brief, snap-shot approaches typified by M-STEP or MAP are not sensitive enough to capture what Montessori students actually know and are able to do.
- ▶ Research suggests 75% of job success is due to optimism, social intelligence, and the ability to handle stress, whereas only 25% is due to academic ability.
- ▶ What we measure in schools is not entirely congruent with now known predictors of success. If the goal of schools is to create a successful citizenry, then it makes sense to teach and assess that which is correlated to becoming a successful citizen. If we're racing toward the wrong finish line, we can never expect to come in first. So, what should schools be measuring? What are the greatest predictors of success? As it turns out, hope and engagement (passion for what one is doing) are better predictors of post-secondary success than our current measures in school.

Standardized testing is truthfully a very difficult issue, because we do need internal and external assessments to measure student success. Assessments are useful when they're used as data to help schools improve the quality of the teaching and learning. They become harmful, however, when tests are used to judge students' natural abilities and when educators are put under pressure to "teach to the test." Schools and parents should always look at standardized tests not as a value judgement on the student, but as an additional data point that can provide some perspective on student learning.



WALDEN GREEN
MONTESSORI

40 THINGS A STANDARDIZED TEST CAN'T MEASURE

CHARACTER
RESPONSIBILITY
COMPASSION
HUMILITY
COOPERATION
CONFIDENCE
ASSERTIVENESS
KINDNESS
CONSIDERATION
COURTESY
COURAGE
CREATIVITY
PATIENCE
EMPATHY
GENEROSITY
COMMITMENT
RESILIENCE
SELF-DISCIPLINE
INTEGRITY
PERSONALITY

THINKING FLEXIBLY
MANAGING IMPULSIVITY
INNOVATION
A SENSE OF HUMOR
THINKING INTERDEPENDENTLY
A LOVE OF LEARNING
PHYSICAL FITNESS
COMMON SENSE
LIFE SKILLS
WORK ETHIC
FAITH
MOTIVATION
GRACE
WIT
HAPPINESS
PASSION
LOVE
WISDOM
RESPECTFULNESS
PEACEFULNESS



Even though standardized tests will **never** be able to assess the **whole-child**, we value the data received from the M-STEP and NWEA MAP Growth assessments. At Walden Green, we carefully **analyze** the data to **help prepare** our Montessori environments and **utilize** it to ensure **optimal learning experiences**. We also use the data for our **intervention** programs and **Child Study** process.

"Without data, all anybody has is an opinion."

- Edward Deming