

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Tracking student test scores

Next month, Pottstown students in grades three through eight will be taking the annual PSSAs, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment tests.

Although these tests are supposed to make schools accountable, the state doesn't provide much guidance to interpret test scores. Looking for trends? The state posts on its website the results for all 500 school districts each year, but there's no direct way to compare them over time.

To create the chart below, I had to cut and paste test scores

from different years posted on the state website. I then cut and pasted the scores a second time to show how the same group of students performed as they progressed through school, from 3rd grade through 8th grade.

The test results show that generally, achievement drops as students move into the higher grades.

There is a huge drop in the 2014-2015 school year (which I've boldfaced). Why? Not because students suddenly forgot everything they learned, but because the state re-normed the test, making it much more difficult (and incompatible with previous years).

So what's the point to all this testing? I'm not sure I know.



Commentary by
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These five charts show how Pottstown students scored in PSSA tests as they progressed through school.

The top line of the top chart, for example, shows how 3rd graders scored in 2011-2012. The second line shows the scores of the same students the following year, when they were in 4th grade.

The third line shows how the same students scored when they were in 5th grade, and so forth.

School Year	Grade	Math Advanced - Proficient	Math Basic	Math Below Basic	Reading Advanced - Proficient	Reading Basic	Reading Below Basic
2011-2012	3	74.1	19.4	6.5	72.7	11.1	16.2
2012-2013	4	69.0	14.0	17.0	57.0	23.0	20.0
2013-2014	5	47.0	20.0	32.0	45.0	21.0	34.0
2014-2015	6	21.4	40.9	37.7	44.4	44.4	11.1

2010-2011	3	79.7	17.0	3.3	72.2	13.3	14.5
2011-2012	4	77.1	12.9	10.0	64.6	17.9	17.5
2012-2013	5	58.0	29.0	14.0	53.0	21.0	25.0
2013-2014	6	56.0	22.0	23.0	49.0	26.0	25.0
2014-2015	7	16.6	37.6	45.9	43.2	47.7	9.1

2009-2010	3	75.8	16.2	8.1	69.7	13.2	17.0
2010-2011	4	84.0	7.6	8.4	71.2	17.8	11.0
2011-2012	5	60.0	27.3	12.7	52.3	25.7	22.0
2012-2013	6	49.0	21.0	30.0	44.0	32.0	24.0
2013-2014	7	51.0	20.0	30.0	56.0	25.0	19.0
2014-2015	8	11.6	27.7	60.7	34.6	50.0	15.4

2008-2009	3	73.4	20.6	6.0	66.5	14.5	19.0
2009-2010	4	84.9	9.5	5.6	64.8	19.3	15.9
2010-2011	5	69.1	24.2	6.6	51.9	25.3	22.7
2011-2012	6	57.2	22.5	20.3	43.3	33.3	23.4
2012-2013	7	55.0	21.0	23.0	52.0	27.0	21.0
2013-2014	8	65.0	17.0	18.0	60.0	15.0	25.0

2007-2008	3	74.1	18.2	7.7	71.2	16.3	12.5
2008-2009	4	77.1	12.8	10.1	65.6	21.1	13.3
2009-2010	5	68.4	20.6	11.1	55.6	26.8	17.6
2010-2011	6	63.7	16.2	20.1	52.9	26.7	20.4
2011-2012	7	60.6	23.2	16.3	54.5	25.7	19.8
2012-2013	8	68.0	15.0	17.0	60.0	23.0	13.0