

## How to Interpret Standardized Test Scores

### I. What is a "standardized test"?

- when the same (standard) conditions are used to measure student performance across every test situation.
- norm-referenced: each student's performance is compared to a "norm group" of 100 typical students.
- multiple-choice, fill-in-the-bubble, timed

### II. What is the purpose of standardized tests?

- to reveal certain broad trends in a school system
- to rank students in comparison with thousands of students from all parts of the country
- to compare schools and school districts
- to distribute student scores on a "bell curve": the point is to have half of the scores fall above the average, and half below the average. **The tests are designed to produce these results.**

### III. What kind of scores are reported and what do they mean?

- A. National Percentile Rank (NPR): This score is NOT A PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT ANSWERS. Percentile rank shows how your child's score compares to the scores of the students in the norm group. For example, a percentile rank of 63 means your child scored as well or better than 63% of the students who took the same grade level test nationally. It also means that 37% of students scored better than your child.

**IMPORTANT:** Any percentile rank between 25 and 75 is considered "normal" or average.

1-24 percentile = Below Average, 25-75 percentile = Average, 76-99 percentile Above

\* If your child receives a National Percentile score of 99, that is the highest score possible. There is no such thing as a percentile rank of 100 because a child cannot score better than himself.

#### B. Grade Equivalents (GE)

The raw score is converted into a grade level and months. A grade equivalent does **not** mean that a student should be placed in a higher grade. If your third grade student in the 8<sup>th</sup> month of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (3.8) performed at a grade equivalent of 5.7, it means that the child scored as well as a typical student in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> month would score on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade test.

Since our students took the ITBS eight months after school started, their testing grade levels are 1.8, 2. 8, 3.8, etc.

#### IV. **Tips for Parents**

- Use data about your child's standardized test scores, along with his or her grades and overall academic performance, to identify areas in which additional help might be needed.
- Keep these test scores in perspective. They serve as a snapshot of your child's ability on a given day, in the areas of math and language arts. It is not the most effective measure of reasoning skills, or other higher level cognitive abilities.
- As parents, you need to know that these tests demonstrate how much your child knows as compared to other children their age, but that it is not a measure of intelligence or even potential or ability. They may tell you what your child knows today, but they say nothing about what he or she can learn tomorrow.
- If you have any questions about your child's ITBS scores, please contact your child's teacher or Dr. Pristash.