

New Jersey School Performance Report for Richard E. Byrd School

I am writing this to help inform you as parents about the School Performance Report that was recently published on nj.com. The information in that report is very misleading and paints Byrd School in a light that misrepresents how well our teachers and students are performing.

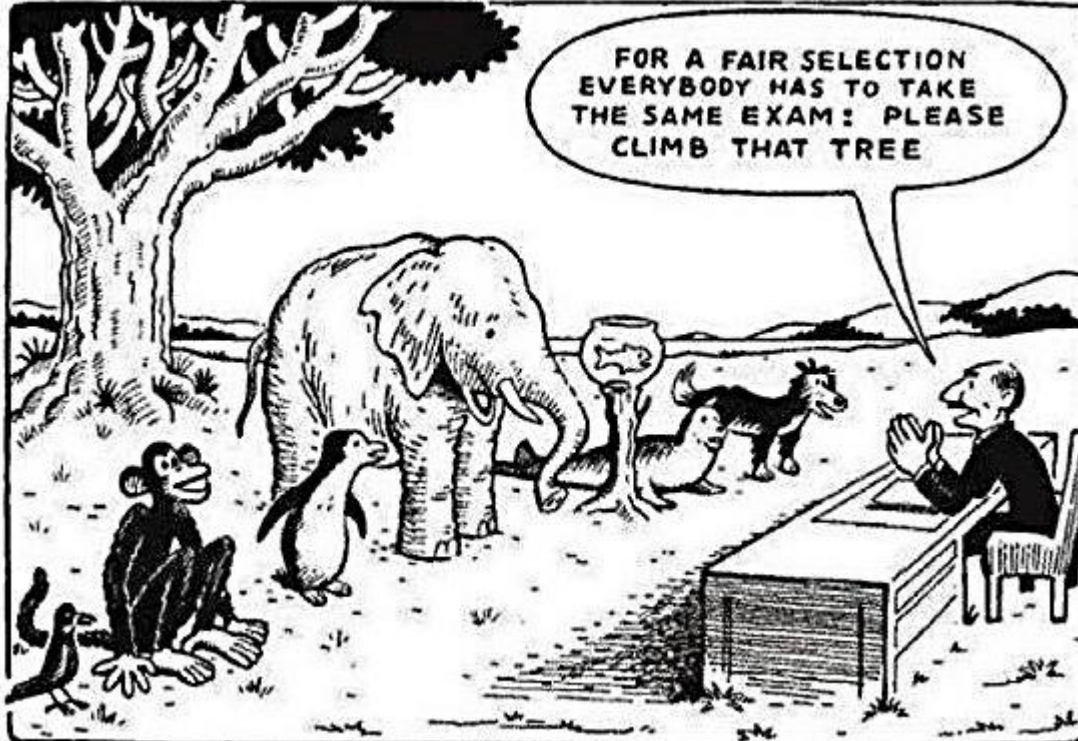
"Testing!1...2...3...Testing!!! Judging an individual school based upon unproven, standardized testing is at best, misleading!

Measuring Temperature with a Tablespoon

For several important reasons, standardized achievement tests should not be used to judge the quality of education. The overarching reason that students' scores on these tests do not provide an accurate index of educational effectiveness is that any inference about educational quality made on the basis of students' standardized achievement test performances is apt to be invalid.

Employing standardized achievement tests to ascertain educational quality is like measuring temperature with a tablespoon. Tablespoons have a different measurement mission than indicating how hot or cold something is. Standardized achievement tests have a different measurement mission than indicating how good or bad a school is. Standardized achievement tests should be used to make the comparative interpretations that they were intended to provide. They should not be used to judge educational quality. Let's look at three significant reasons that it is thoroughly invalid to base inferences about the caliber of education on standardized achievement test scores."

(Veritas, 2018)



To help explain the report, I offer the following information:

The ABCs of School Performance Reports

With the recent publication of the School Performance Reports for 2016-17 by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), there have been a number of articles in the news media and

postings on social media, which do not include interpretations or detailed information of the data. As Mr. Watson, Glen Rock's Interim Superintendent, shared with at a recent Board of Education meeting, the NJDOE and Glen Rock certainly encourage constructive discussion among all stakeholders of the data reported. That said, I feel the need to weigh in on some conclusions being drawn that question the overall performance of Byrd School.

Information in the School Performance Reports is reported at the student group, school, or district level, but is based on student-level data. Throughout the reports some symbols are used to indicate the following:

* – indicates that data was available for too few students to report the given information or the data represents a small percentage of students.

N – indicates that no data was available to report

** – indicates that data were not available for the minimum 20 students in order for a student group to be included in New Jersey's *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* accountability system. This will only appear in sections of the report related to *ESSA* accountability.

"Are the Students on Track for Success?," a one page summary that I shared at our recent Home and School Association meeting, provided a synopsis of how well Byrd School students in grades three through five performed on the PARCC assessment that was administered last spring. The data addressed the following two questions:

- o Are students on track for success?
- o How much are students learning?

The Academic Achievement Reports provided administrators with individual grade level reports in the areas of English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. Many of the cells in our data reports contained the *, indicating that we did not have the requisite cohort of 20 students for the information to be reported. Last year, Byrd School has twenty-one students between third through fifth grades opt out of the testing. That resulted in us not meeting the cohort requirement or 95% of the students in a grade; information the article did not state.

Additionally, there is a section of the New Jersey School Performance Report that considers student attendance. As I shared at the H.S.A. meeting, students who are absent for 10% or more of their days enrolled are considered chronically absent. While we scored in the Showing Progress realm, our chronic absenteeism rate was 5.6%. It is widely acknowledged that students who are in school are likely to be learning more than those who are absent. Chronic absenteeism has been identified by New Jersey as an indicator of school quality and student success for *ESSA* accountability.

The bottom line of the data for Byrd School indicated that our students are meeting or exceeding expectations on the PARCC assessment.

In the area of English Language Arts/Literacy 74.7% of our students in grades 3-5 who took the assessment showed progress (the range for this indicator was 40-79%);

In the area of Mathematics 71.5% of our students in grades 3-5 who took the assessment showed progress (the range was 40-79%);

In the area of Chronic Absenteeism, our percentage was 5.6% of students were absent for 10% or more of their enrolled days. This does not include students who are consistently tardy, thus missing valuable instruction in either reading/language arts or mathematics.

Again, I am writing this to help allay any concerns that Byrd is underperforming compared to the other elementary schools in Glen Rock, other schools throughout Bergen County or other schools in the state.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.