

UNDERSTANDING TEST SCORES – Handout 1



Interpretation of Test Scores

Percentile Score (Percentile Rank) (PR)

A percentile score or more appropriately a percentile rank shows a student's rank relative to a large, representative sample of students within the same grade. Percentile ranks range from a low of 1 to a high of 99. The number is the percent of students in the standardized sample that earned lower scores on a test. A percentile rank of 35 means that a student performed higher than 35 percent of the students within his or her grade.

National Percentile Score

A national percentile rank (score) describes how well a student performed in comparison with a nationwide sample of students in the same grade.

Stanine Scores

Stanines are single-digit scores ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 9, with an average of 5. Since stanines are single-digit scores, they are easy to record and to use in studies a school may wish to conduct. There is a relationship of stanines to percentile ranks.

Percentile Ranks Stanines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

96 and up

89-95

77-88

60-76

40-59

23-39

11-22

4-10

Below 4

Grade Equivalent Score

A grade equivalent score is a decimal number that describes performance in terms of grade levels-and months. For example, if a ninth grade student obtains a grade equivalent of 10.4 on the vocabulary test, he or she is performing like a typical student at the end of the fourth month of tenth grade.

Standardized Tests

A standardized test is one which has directions, time limits, materials and scoring procedures designed to remain constant each time the test is given. Standardized tests often provide scores based on a norm group.

Non-Standardized Tests

An informal test usually designed to give an approximate index of an individual's level of ability or learning style; often teacher-constructed.