

11-2022 - All About Standardized Tests

We often hear negative comments about standardized tests, but these tests have an important purpose in education. Used correctly, standardized tests, like the state assessments, can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in students, classes, subject areas, and larger student populations.

Grading practices can vary widely among teachers, and although many complain about the “bubble answer sheets,” standardized tests are objective. Teachers use test information to get a big picture of subject area mastery, improve instruction, or see the impact of a new curriculum.

Large scale tests can be comparative and are used to compare schools or school districts to another and determine which schools are making progress for accountability. **All public schools take the state assessments**, including charter schools. Many parochial schools also participate in the state testing program which enables comparison to the public schools.

Pennsylvania has a Standards Aligned System where both instruction and the state tests are aligned to the same set of standards.

The Standards Aligned System Assessment Center has tools for teachers to ensure this alignment: [Standards Aligned Assessment Center](#). In a Standards Aligned System, teachers are not teaching to the test, but teaching to the standards.

--Carol Hodes, Education Chair