

Guidelines for the Interpretation of Test Results

Interpret the results!

- *Giving* tests is not the same as *using* them.
- Identify every potential user of either individual or summary results.

Interpret appropriately for each audience's needs

- Consider each: student, parents, teachers, PTO/PTA, school board, funding agency, the public, etc.
- Find out what questions they *are* and/or *should be* asking. If people aren't provided answers to their questions, they almost always make up their own and those answers may not be nearly as accurate as the information you can provide.

Interpret clearly and simply

- Avoid intimidating terms (IQ, normal, weakness, deficit, etc.).
- Don't use technical jargon unless absolutely necessary, and define confusing terms you think you must use (norms, mean, t-score, standard deviation, etc.).
- Use sample test items to illustrate what was being measured (*but not actual test items*).
- Use graphics (profiles, charts, etc.) whenever possible.

Interpret accurately

- Know what kind of instrument you are dealing with (aptitude, interest, achievement, etc.).
- Know the test's content in terms of broad concepts.
- Know the manual (reliability, validity, norms, etc.).

Interpret in the proper perspective

- Don't "over interpret", either through repetitious explanation or through inferring something that isn't actually documented.
- Relate data to other sources of information, such as grades, class performance, etc.
- Remember the characteristics of the norm group.
- Remember why the instrument was administered and tie that into the interpretation.
- Remember the testing conditions (preparation, environment, administration quirks).

Interpret in *two-way* communication, including what the person's expectations might have been and whether they were met.

Remember that test results are better seen as **QUESTIONS** than as **ANSWERS!**