



## Superintendent Joseph Roy Shares Concerns About The State School Report Card – 9/24/14

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is set to release the 2014 version of a “school report” card. For a decade, schools in Pennsylvania and across the nation were measured under the rules of the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) legislation. The current state method to report on school performance is called the “PA School Performance Profile” (SPP).

The Bethlehem Area School District’s research-based Roadmap to Educational Excellence (<https://www.beth.k12.pa.us/District/Documents/>) contains four key components (Core Learning, Stretch Learning, Student Engagement, and Personal Skill Development) all of which are critical to school success.

***Unfortunately, the state’s School Performance Profile (SPP) is, like the old “No Child Left Behind”, based overwhelmingly on state standardized test scores and does not align with BASD’s Roadmap goals.***

Schools around the world, business leaders in America, and communities across the country are rejecting repetitive state standardized testing and its narrowed curriculum common during the NCLB Era. ***Instead, the emphasis is on the whole child, creativity, and a variety of knowledge and skills that resemble our Roadmap.*** The state’s reporting is out of step with this focus on educating the whole child.

Here are specific concerns with the School Performance Profile:

- The PA Department of Education has fabricated a single score that simply cannot capture the true all-around performance of a school (the Building Level Academic Score).
- ***Reducing a school’s performance to a single composite number based largely on state standardized tests in one area of school performance is misleading because it ignores or minimizes other measures and other key components of school performance.***
- In BASD Roadmap language, the state puts **90%** of the fabricated single school score in Core Learning and **less than 5%** in Stretch Learning, with **zero percent** in Student Engagement and **zero percent** in Personal Skill Development.
- Mixing different test instruments with different scoring scales and converting it all to a 100-point scale raises questions about the reliability and validity of the Building Level Academic Score.
- The School Performance Profile does absolutely nothing to try to quantify or mitigate the effect of poverty, transiency, and language proficiency in making its determinations of school quality.

There are useful parts to the School Performance Profile:

- Compiling various measures of school performance in one location called the School Performance Profile is a positive step. Unfortunately, fabricating the single school score from these measures undermines this effort to provide a more robust picture of school performance.
- Although not new, the PA Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS) is a useful tool for measuring student growth and guiding instructional improvement and curriculum alignment. BASD has used PVAAS since it was first provided by the state a number of years ago.
- The School Performance Profile does include some measures beyond the state standardized tests including scores from trade/industry exams, Advanced Placement and SAT scores.

Conclusion:

The PA Department of Education (PDE) should drop the fabricated single score for schools across Pennsylvania because that number is meaningless and misleading. The PDE should focus on expanding the measures of school performance included in the school profiles– including additional academic measures, adding participation measures, and adding other measures that address the education of the whole child.