



Five Problems With Grade-Span Testing

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1.

Parents, educators, and the public would be deprived of objective comparable information about the performance of most students in their school.

- In a typical middle school serving 600 students, there would only be information on how 1 in 3 of those students are doing in any year.

2.

Parents of students who are struggling academically will be forced to wait years before they learn whether interventions are working.

- A mother who learns that her son is struggling to meet state standards in 5th grade can't afford to wait until he's in 8th grade to learn whether he's back on track.

3.

Those teachers who are in tested grades will face huge pressure, while attention and support could be diverted from those teachers who aren't.

- High-performing schools work hard to build collective responsibility among all teachers, which is based on knowing that all grade levels count.

4.

We won't know how much learning growth individual students are experiencing from one year to the next, which is the fairest way to hold schools accountable for results.

- Especially for high-poverty and high-minority schools where students are more likely to come in below grade level, accountability systems should give credit for growing student learning from one year to the next, not just for whether or not students in one grade are meeting standards.

5.

Grade-span testing limits our ability to ensure that all groups of students, including low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities, count in school ratings.

- To protect student privacy, the number of students in each of these groups must exceed a certain number before their scores are reported and counted in accountability ratings.
- Data on our most vulnerable children will count in far fewer schools, because such groups often do not meet the minimum size in a single grade level.