

Robert, M. J. (2002). Using Data To Think Differently. *The School Administrator*, (24-28).

Every school is determined and dedicated to improve student performance. Test scores on state exams have become the index to measure student performance and school effectiveness. According to Monson, the word *accountability* has become one that many faculty members have associated with certain thoughts, such as *testing, anxiety, fear, and proving your worth*. In his article, Monson focuses on the idea of looking at student growth over a long period of time and engaging students, families, and community in a discussion in identifying and setting expectations for schools

The article discusses the significance of looking at student scores over a long period of time. Test scores are currently used in such a way where the performance of one cohort of students is compared with a completely different cohort. Monson points out that a doctor assesses and predicts a child's development by keeping track of his/her growth on a growth chart. Just like every child grows differently, every child learns differently. Monson stated, "The time has come to look at school accountability and student performance in another way- to look at individual and collective performance over multiple years in the context of a developmental trajectory". In order for these scores to be an adequate accountability tool, they would have to be changed. Furthermore, many districts may not have the resources or the ability needed in order to make this shift. Monson believes that, "looking at individual students and cohort growth and performance against a trajectory over multiple years will be a significant conceptual, logistical, financial, and public education challenge".

With the ability to match a student's test scores from year to year, educators will know whether or not proficient and advanced students are achieving at least a year's growth every

year. This kind of data can give educators the information they need to know in order to modify instruction to meet the needs of the students and make learning more effective. Furthermore, it is important for school leaders to inform the community on the different ways they can help their school. Monson states that, “one has to believe that the public is tired of political finger pointing and that a critical mass of individuals and organizations is ready to work collaboratively with educators to improve the quality of life for all”. If family, school, and community work together as one, achieving the desired goals would be much easier and faster therefore, helping students reach maximum potential at great speeds.