

Dear Middle School Parents,

This letter is to share some general information about the ERB tests. The first part of the letter will review what the ERB tests are. The second part of the letter will give information about the results that are being shared with you, and how to interpret the results. Most grades differ in the tests they write:

Part 1 - ERB tests - What are they?

All CDS students were required to take the ERB CTP tests last school year. Grades 4 - 8 were tested in the following categories:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension
- Writing Mechanics
- Writing Concepts & Skills
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Mathematics Part 1
- Mathematics Part 2
- Constructed Response - Math
- Constructed Response - Reading

What is the ERB? The Educational Research Bureau (ERB) is a non-profit educational services organization offering assessments for both admission and achievement for independent and public schools for Pre K to grade 12.

What is the CTP? The Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP) is a challenging test designed to discriminate among students at the highest level. The objective of the assessment is to gain information that can contribute to the student's education.

What does the CTP assess? The *achievement tests* assess how well students are learning the curriculum. The *reasoning tests* assess language arts and mathematics skills that might not be obvious in day-to-day activities in the classroom. The *reasoning tests* are very good at showing underlying skill in handling higher-order thinking. They may also reveal that a student is not working up to his or her potential, if the *achievement test* scores are significantly lower than the *reasoning test scores* in an area.

Why does the school use the CTP? The school as a whole uses it to evaluate how well the curriculum is working. For individual students, it can be used to see whether they need special attention, enrichment, or different placement. For both curriculum and student evaluation, the test is a kind of ‘reality check’. It can be a useful tool in assessing the students, but because the use of the CTP test is relatively new to CDS, it will *not* be included when determining the report card grades.

The CTP is only one piece of the puzzle. Class work, homework, and teacher observations and assessments are all necessary. When it comes to student learning and achievement, more information is better.

Every year, information is gleaned about students in both *independent schools* and *public schools* who take the test. Our students and our school will be compared to these groups. Specifically, our school’s results will be included in the *independent schools* group.

Students grow and change; annual testing helps teachers and administrators keep track of that change over time. The test can assist in catching students’ needs as soon as possible, as well as pinpointing unknown strengths.

Following the testing, the results will be interpreted, and information will be shared with parents and students.

Part 2 - ERB tests - How to interpret the ERB results (Individual Instructional Summary)?

Each child who completed the ERB tests last school year will receive results called the ***Individual Instructional Summary***. There are three main parts to the ***Individual Instructional Summary***:

- 1. Multiple Choice Tests and Subscore Categories**
- 2. Number of Questions**
- 3. Average Percent Content Mastery**

The following are details of each of the three areas:

1. Multiple Choice Tests and Subscore Categories

Description of Tests
Verbal Reasoning: this test measures students’ ability to analyze and draw logical inferences, to recognize analogical verbal relationships, and to generalize verbal categorical attributes
Vocabulary: recognition and understanding of a wide range of grade-appropriate vocabulary and use of context clues to determine meaning
Reading Comprehension: comprehension of written material, including recall of information, identifying of main ideas, and hypothesizing using information from passages
Writing Mechanics: understanding of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage conventions.
Writing Concepts and Skills: understanding of the components of effective written composition
Quantitative Reasoning: the ability to analyze mathematical concepts and principles, to make generalizations, and to compare quantities mathematically
Mathematics: conceptual understanding of mathematics, application of mathematical knowledge to solve problems, and the ability to compute or estimate solutions

2. Number of Questions

- A. Students tested – this is simply the number of students who took the test in our class/grade
- B. Presented – number of questions in the category, e.g. Writing Mechanics (45 questions): Spelling (10) + Capitalization (10) +Punctuation (10) + Usage (15)
- C. Attempted – how many questions the student *attempted* to answer; how many did they try

3. Average Percent Content Mastery

- A. Percent Content Mastery – this is the most useful information. It looks like a percent correct score, but it is not. Based on a student’s performance and the**

characteristics of the items answered correctly, it is an *estimate* of the percentage of items a student would get correct if he or she could take all items/questions in a particular content area. Student Percent Mastery of Content scores are based on both the characteristics of the items answered correctly and the student's performance level. The Student Percent Mastery of Content score required to meet expectations and to exceed expectations in each content area is based on the judgments of a panel of teachers at schools using CTP tests.

- B. Sub. Pub. & Ind. – these are the Norm Groups. They are groups of students with whom your child is being compared – usually other students in the same grade.
 - i. Sub. Pub consists of students in *suburban public* schools that use CTP
 - ii. Ind. Pub. consists of students in *independent* schools that use CTP

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Kind Regards,

CDS Middle School Administration