



MARK DAY SCHOOL

ERB Scores and Parent Information Meetings - 2019

Dear Grade 4-8 Families,

This annual letter addresses three topics about ERB testing at Mark Day School:

- Mark Day School's philosophy about ERB testing
- An invitation to a parent information session in the fall about ERB testing
- Directions for how to pick up your child's scores starting in August

School Philosophy Regarding Standardized Testing

One tenet of Mark Day School's philosophy is maintaining a thoughtful approach to innovation. We like to employ a wide range of best practices, including current student-centered methods as well as aspects of teaching and learning that have stood the test of time. Standardized testing is a reality in our educational landscape, and has something to offer our community.

- Since many of our graduates consider independent high schools, experience and comfort with standardized testing, developed over time, has proven very helpful when approaching the Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT) test in eighth grade.
- ERB scores, when taken into consideration alongside our personalized, well-rounded knowledge of each student, can contribute toward a multi-dimensional understanding of a student's learning profile.
- ERB scores provide one of several school-wide forms of feedback that allow us to reflect on our program.
- ERB scores provide an assessment that complements the wide range of assessment tools and approaches used by our faculty, including observations, performance assessments, student self-reflection, scores, rubrics and other formative and summative assessments.
- The school does not formally teach test-taking techniques for standardized tests because we believe our time is best spent on the curriculum. ERB procedures provide some practice and tips for success in the warm-up activities prior to each test, which we feel is sufficient for student guidance.

It is important to note that ERB tests measure knowledge, skill and understanding in *one particular way*. They provide a normed snapshot of a student's ability under a controlled set of circumstances that do not always allow students to apply skills and techniques that reflect best practices in teaching. For example, students in grades 4-8 are taught to annotate text while reading to foster deeper engagement and personal connection. This strategy cannot be employed during an ERB test due to the standardized conditions. Similarly, students at Mark Day School are guided and challenged to develop skills and understandings with time management, curiosity, self-advocacy and teamwork. ERB tests cannot assess a student's growth in these areas, yet research has consistently indicated that these skills are associated with long term academic and life success.

We continue to believe in the value of multiple forms of assessment, and ERB tests continue to contribute to our fundamental goal of knowing and guiding each individual student as thoughtfully as we can.

ERB (Educational Records Bureau) tests are one of the most commonly used standardized tests for independent schools and some school districts. Mark Day School uses the CTP suite of achievement and aptitude sub-tests, including reading, vocabulary, writing, and mathematics. We also administer the WRAP in which students compose an original piece of writing in response to a prompt.

ERB Information Meeting

You are invited to attend a parent information session and discussion on **Wednesday, 9/18 from 8:30-9:15 AM**. This event is open to all families in grades 4-8 who wish to learn more about ERB testing at Mark Day School and score interpretation. Dave Hickman and Thad Reichley will provide a short presentation, followed by a period for general discussion.

Requesting a Copy of Your Child's Scores

You can pick up your child's individual subscore report **as of Monday 8/19/19**, along with a copy of the ERB score interpretation guide, in any of the following ways:

- Stop in to Sandy Bohm's office and request a copy.
- Email Sandy Bohm (sbohm@markdayschool.org) with your child's name and grade and request that she leave a copy in an envelope for you in the parent pickup box in the office.
- Pick up your copy at the end of one of the information meetings described above.

Parents who wish to discuss their child's individual scores should schedule a separate meeting with Dave or Thad through Sandy Bohm: (sbohm@markdayschool.org).

In partnership,



Dave Hickman
Head of Upper School



Thad Reichley
Head of Lower School