

The weather has turned and our eyes tend to focus more and more upward as we await the inevitable falling of the little white flakes that signal that winter is here. At the Valdez City School District Offices I have a clear view of the mountains and I like to think about the upcoming snowfall as something that is not only unstoppable, but also something to look forward to each year. Like the snowfall, each year holds for the school district the unmistakable drive towards the springtime standardized testing season. Whether or not you agree with the standardized testing we are required to give each year, you know that it is coming. We know as administrators, teachers, and support staff that our perceived effectiveness is tied to those scores whether we like it or not. We also know that teaching has become more and more about results and less about the intangibles.

This upcoming testing season should not be viewed as a necessary evil, but instead as a way to help us to know how we are doing in comparison to other school districts. We need to look forward to the testing time of year so that we can show to everyone how we are doing as a school district. We need to allow ourselves to get excited about the opportunities we will soon have to put our best foot forward and get unbiased feedback. The feedback from the tests is only feedback, it is not positive or negative, it is only data. Many times I have heard people complain or express anxiety about testing, but we have no choice on whether or not to test, we only have the choice of how we will respond. I ask that all adults, whether you are a parent, teacher, principal, or support staff member to focus on the positive outcomes of testing, and not just the negative. Let us work together to use the data from those tests to improve our teaching, to improve our curriculum, and to improve the educational experience for all students in the Valdez area. Together, we can change the focus from one of dread, to one of anticipation!

Thank you,

Jacob Jensen

Valdez City School District Superintendent