* **Be proactive to tell an accurate story**

Use every opportunity to be transparent and to explain what the data show and what it doesn’t. There will be a natural tendency for schools, educators, and parents to want to simply compare SY 2020-2021 student scores to previous years. One way to mitigate this challenge is by being proactive in communications to define how the results can be accurately used.

Opinion polling has shown that the general public and parents view assessment results as part of the larger effort to recover from COVID-19[[1]](#endnote-2)[[2]](#endnote-3). With that in mind, there is great benefit to consistent use of messaging that demonstrates how assessment results will be used in the short and long term to support students and ensure equity as schools look to build back stronger after disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

* **Provide resources ahead of the scores release that will help school communities understand what information will be released**Along with establishing an accurate narrative, resources serve to explain how the current circumstances directly impact how assessment results are reported.
* See One-Page Document that explains what’s different about testing this year.
* **Build understanding by packaging results with contextual information and supporting text**

Information related to the test taking itself such as participation rates, the rate of remote test takers, and the rate of students learning in in-person, hybrid, and virtual settings as well as opportunity to learn data like attendance and access to internet and technology will provide important context to help school communities understand the data. Importantly, this information will also help them avoid the temptation to simply compare the test results to previous years.

* **Leverage multiple channels to reach your audiences in order to be timely and transparent**It’s important to leverage multiple channels to increase the penetration of the message and to reach a variety of audiences in your district. For example:
  + Digital channels (i.e. district/school websites and social media)
  + Engagement with civic, business,parenting, and community groups
  + Direct messages to parents via letter, e-newsletter, and text message
* **Acknowledge and validate the efforts of educators and school-based staff**

As you know, your district’s educators and staff have faced unprecedented challenges in the last year. Communications language should use asset-based framing that emphasizes how the results can be used to support students, educators, and schools and describes how the results will not be used to judge educators.

* See Template with sample language that your district can use to communicate directly to educators and school-based staff in an email or letter that explains the assessment results and how they will be used.

1. Learning Heroes and National PTA (2021). *A Year into the Pandemic: Parents’ Perspectives on Academics, State Assessments, and Education.* Retrieved from: <https://r50gh2ss1ic2mww8s3uvjvq1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PTA-LH-Survey-Deck-Final-slides.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Data Quality Campaign (2020). National Poll Finds Parents and Teachers Want More Data and Better Support to Use It Effectively to Help Students during COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/news/national-poll-finds-parents-and-teachers-want-more-data-and-better-support-to-use-it-effectively-to-help-students-during-covid-19/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)