

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## The test that tells us something

Last week, I published a chart showing state test scores of Pottstown students going back five or ten years, depending on the test.

Overall, students did better some years than others, but there was no clear pattern.

In fact, for all the obsession with testing, there is only one credible test that has measured student achievement consistently since 1970 -- the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The results, from periodic national samplings, show students have done about the same or only marginally better in reading and math than they did 40 years ago. (See the charts, below.)



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

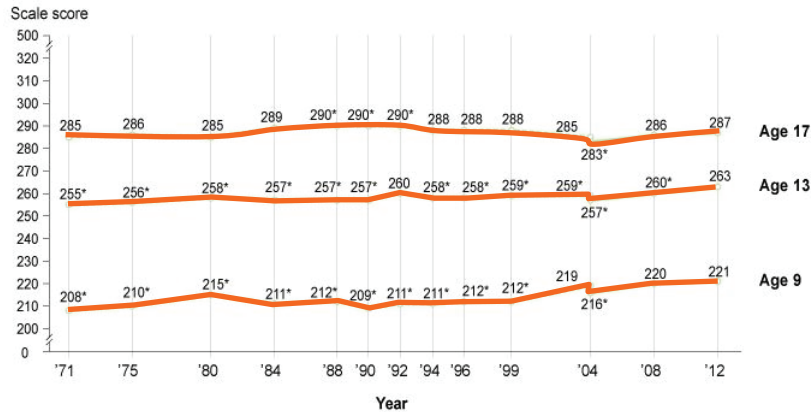
What has changed, dramatically, is cost. In Pottstown, we were spending \$1,600 per student in 1973 when my wife began teaching. When she retired 35 years later, we were spending \$16,200 per student, more than twice the rate of inflation. Statewide — and nationwide — it's pretty much the same story.

Yet the school establishment continues to argue that more spending is needed for higher achievement. If tests are how we measure success, how much more must we spend to raise scores?

*Tom Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the views expressed are his alone and not the board's.*

### READING FROM 1971 TO 2012

Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students



### MATH FROM 1971 TO 2012

Trend in NAEP mathematics average scores for 9-, 13-, and 17-year-old students

