

# **Our View: Smarter kids is the goal we all need to be focused on**

**Lee Rozen/Moscow-Pullman Daily News**

Many teachers don't think their pay should be tied to how well their students perform on standardized tests.

Despite that, most states do make the link in some form or fashion. Both Washington and Idaho do.

Spokesmen for teachers' unions will urge that salaries be linked mainly to seniority and training.

The members of the editorial board - and we would bet most teachers - believe there is a distinct connection between teacher performance and student learning.

The better teachers impart to their students a love for both their subject and the process of learning. The poorer teachers can barely keep control of their classroom, let alone convey much passion for the subject matter. We all remember teachers of both stripes.

Why shouldn't their students' performance on standardized tests be used to help identify the quality of teachers' skills?

We agree that it would be ridiculous to base an elementary school teacher's raise entirely on the average yearlong performance of 20 to 25 individuals. So many things related to those individual students could change from year to year. A junior high or high school teacher would likely see 100 or more students a year, however, and the mix would likely change little from year to year.

No one much likes standardized tests, but if they do nothing else - and they should not be expected to - they can raise national standards for academic accomplishment, against which each student, teacher, school, district and state can measure themselves.

Some might say, on seeing below par results, that "ours is a poor district" or "our levy failed" or "ours is an inner-city district."

Excuses don't educate our children. Neither do incompetent teachers. (Or, certainly, parsimonious taxpayers or legislators.)

Each teacher must accept the challenge to see that children learn at the national standard despite the problems they all face. The ones who do should be rewarded. Those who consistently fail should be encouraged to find other work.

As our culture changes with ever more complex technology changing how we relate to each other and other countries, our schools need to graduate more educated kids than ever before.

