

The Story Behind TestPoint

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The first edition of TestPoint™ is now available to schools. To provide a better understanding, it is necessary to share a brief history of the genesis and development of TestPoint™ since 2002.

TestPoint™ grew out of a need to assist schools in the academic placement of students applying for enrollment. This need was strongly supported by research from surveys that were conducted. Administrators were asked what tools they used for academic placement. The responses were in three categories: 1) Achievement tests, 2) School-made tests, and 3) No tests.

All three responses created difficulties such as securing and keeping up with old achievement tests and keys, creating school-made tests, and scheduling additional staff to administer tests. Furthermore, administrators and teachers were frustrated by the “disconnect” between using secular achievement testing which does not always line up with the curriculums used in the typical Christian school. Teachers that were surveyed indicated the difficulty in providing a quality education when students were placed in their classes without proper academic evaluation. The research established that when teachers were initially provided with accurate academic information on students, then they can provide the best education possible.

Because of the tremendous need, planning began to determine the scope of the TestPoint™ project. In the beginning, the project did not have a name, but the mission was clear. The need was to develop a reliable tool for pre-admission testing that would help schools increase the academic capabilities of their students. High academics are one of the greatest tools to protect the freedoms of Christian schools to exist and flourish.

Strategy meetings, searching for grant monies, and finding a technology partner were some of the early activities. As the project progressed, guidelines were developed to secure teachers and administrators to be Master Test Authors to develop test content in language, reading, and

mathematics. The scope of the content was established to be the academic knowledge students should know at the end of each grade. One of the tremendous strengths of TestPoint™ is that the content and academic standards were drawn from the many years of experience of the test authors and from the many different curriculums, achievement tests, and assessment tools used in schools. With TestPoint™, schools will have the opportunity to evaluate how new students compare academically to the academic levels in their own school.

Developing content was only one element of the TestPoint™ project. Moving to on-line and computer-based assessment is a natural outcome of the increasing use of information and communication technologies to test students. A decision was made to partner with High Ground Solutions (HGS) in Birmingham, Alabama, for the many technology needs of TestPoint™. HGS would be responsible for programming and coding the content, producing scoring reports, marketing, and promotion, etc. Next, scoring modules and norming charts had to be developed that would create scaled scores, percentages, and grade equivalency. Furthermore, quality control and field testing guidelines were created that required on-line error reporting. Teachers and students were selected to take practice tests.

Sonlight Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, was employed to film and develop a promotional DVD about TestPoint™. HGS developed marketing strategies which included attending conventions and conferences, advertisement in education journals, negotiating purchasing agreements with associations, mailings and mass emails, and other avenues to “get the word out” about TestPoint™.

TestPoint™ has been a collaborative effort involving individuals and companies with expertise in education, computer programming, marketing, design, and promotion. As TestPoint™ grows; future updates could include assessment testing, other content areas, on-line achievement testing, and survey modules.

TestPoint™ is a tool to help schools do a better job academically to provide the best education possible to students that enroll. As Paul Harvey says, “*that’s the rest of the story!*”