

January 2018

Dear Parents,

It is important to us that we keep our parents informed about the changes that are coming in March concerning standardized testing for our students. While we are very grateful for your patience and understanding with the delay in receiving the Terra Nova scores, steps have been taken to ensure this does not occur again for our schools.

As a result of this challenge in the 2017 school year, the diocesan leadership in the four dioceses in New Jersey met throughout the summer and after in-depth investigation made a decision to implement the IOWA Assessment Standardized Test in March for all of our students in grade two through eighth grades. As in the past, it is optional for our secondary schools to administer the IOWA Assessment.

This assessment, designed at the University of IOWA, assesses student achievement in Reading, Written Expression, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Language. Today, with much emphasis on STEM education it is important to provide assessments that measure current growth in these areas. Also, the IOWA assessments rely on the use of technology to provide timely feedback.

This will be a new opportunity to use new testing norms (2017) to guide the administration and faculty to develop instructional strategies as well as teaching and learning objectives that meet the current students' potential.

The administration and faculty will access the students' testing results in a timely manner through the Data Manager online program provided by the company. This advanced program will enable the teachers to gather the data to make adjustments to curriculum and target learning via Lexile scale that notes individual reading levels. The testing reports will be web-based, will combine results from different assessments, enable disaggregation of results and allow exporting of results at the local school.

Students in the second, fourth and seventh grades will also take the Cognitive Abilities Test that guides planning of curriculum that meets the needs of the students. Parents will receive a Home Report that will indicate the testing results of their student.

This assessment also has the ability to evaluate student preparedness from the sixth grade for achievement in the ACT/SAT testing.

The administrators in each school will receive professional development that will enable them to share ongoing data information with the staff and parents.

We appreciate your patience as we upgrade our testing program to provide positive assessment results to guide our students to reach their potential.

The IOWA assessment will be administered the week of March 5th with the week of March 12 set aside for make-up days.

May this new year of 2018 be filled with many blessings for all our students and their families! We are grateful for all your kindness, support in choosing our Catholic school to educate your child.

Thank you!