



DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

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DEPARTMENT FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

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March 1, 2017

Dear Parents:

The Catholic Schools Office is pleased to announce that the Iowa Suite of Assessments has been selected for standardized testing in the elementary schools in the Diocese. The new Iowa assessments were designed, developed, subjected to an extensive review process, tried and field tested with input from educators, students, and parents, to provide reliable information to prepare our children for continuing education and career readiness.

In addition to a change in the assessments, the testing period has been changed from spring to fall. While spring assessments are helpful in evaluating the curriculum, fall assessments provide more current information about students, which enables the teachers to plan lessons to more closely meet individual needs and promote academic growth and skill development.

Beginning in September, 2017, the achievement tests will be given to students in grades 2 through 8. Those in grades 2, 4, and 6 will also take the Cognitive Abilities Tests. However, in April of this school year only, the current students in grades 2, 4, and 6 will take the Cognitive Abilities Tests in order to apply the results to next year's achievement tests, generate predictive scores for the September testing, and establish the testing pattern. In the future, the technology available through the Iowa tests will reduce the amount of testing required to produce reliable data to guide classroom instruction. Giving the tests in mid-September of 2017 will enable results to be back to the schools in October of 2017 with reports available for parents to review at the first parent conferences.

The new assessment program will provide our instructional staff with reliable student data that is aligned with research-based performance benchmarks. Using this information, our schools will continue to make effective instructional decisions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael A. Latusek
Superintendent for Catholic Schools

Sister Patricia Laffey, S. C.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Instruction, and Assessment