



Office of Catholic Schools

P. O. Box 1979
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Historically Archdiocesan elementary students have taken the TerraNova test to measure student performance each year. The Archdiocese of Chicago has recently updated its curriculum standards to ensure alignment with national and college readiness standards and has realized that the TerraNova is not aligned to the new standards. As a result, beginning this academic year, students in grades three through eight will take the Aspire test, a standardized assessment that is aligned to the new curriculum standards. The Aspire test is a product produced by ACT. The ACT is the most widely administered college entrance exam in Illinois and is required for admissions to state universities.

Students will complete tests in 5 key areas: English, math, reading, science and writing. The TerraNova test did not require students to produce an extended written response to a grade-level appropriate prompt and Archdiocesan educators are enthusiastic about having this important skill assessed.

The Aspire test will be administered across the Archdiocese from April 11-15*. Students who receive testing accommodations will have additional time during the week of April 18-22 to complete their testing. More information will be coming to you from your school closer to the April test dates. A testing schedule for the Aspire will be established in late February 2016 and will be followed by all Archdiocesan schools. * Additionally, some schools have opted to administer periodic grade-level assessments created by ACT that are aligned with the summative Aspire test that will be given in April 2016. If your school has chosen this option, it will share information with parents and students about these assessments in a timely manner.

Please note that the Aspire test is aligned to more rigorous curriculum standards that require students to respond to more complex questions. Thus, some students' scores on the Aspire may not be consistent with their previous performance on the TerraNova. This is to be expected and not a cause for concern. Last year, grade eight students across the Archdiocese adjusted to the Aspire test with a high degree of success.

Over the last three years, our schools have been modifying classroom instruction to engage students in more rigorous intellectual work. The new curriculum standards have informed these efforts and we are confident that Archdiocesan students will be prepared and will perform well on the Aspire tests. Aspire results will be used to provide insights into the effectiveness of instruction and student achievement.

For more information on the Aspire test, please access the following link: <http://www.discoveractaspire.org/>

Thank you for your continued partnership in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Kearney, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent