



Diocese of Charlotte
Catholic Schools Office

Janice T. Ritter Ed. D
Interim Superintendent of Schools

September 26, 2011

Dear Parents,

As part of the testing program in our schools we administer a standardized norm-referenced test to all third through eighth grade students. For many years we have used the IOWA Test of Basic Skills, or ITBS. However, as a school system we continually strive to make sure that the programs and products we use are the best ones available to us. Principals continually engage in discussions concerning our curriculum and assessment, and recent discussions have been about our testing program. In fact, a goal for our system's AdvancEd improvement plan is to investigate other testing programs on the market, compare them to our current test and select the one that will best meet our needs.

Over the past year and a half principals and test coordinators at all 16 elementary schools have met with representatives from test publishers. We have engaged in rigorous dialogue, spoken with other school systems, engaged in pilot testing and ultimately made the decision to move to a new test. We have selected the *Stanford 10 Achievement Test, 10TH Edition* and the *Otis-Lennon Ability Test*, both products published by Pearson Publishing Company. We will continue to administer the achievement test to students in grades 3-8, and the ability test to students in grades 2, 5 and 7. We will continue to test the first week in October.

As we move to this new test, we should not be surprised to experience the "changing norms phenomenon." The Average Diocese and School norm-referenced scores may be lower or higher than they were when using the ITBS. The reason for this occurrence can be attributed to the characteristics between the different norm samples and the content and format of a new test. In this first year, we will not compare ITBS scores to the *Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition*. We will use our fall 2011 results as our baseline data for making future comparisons.

We have posted a list of questions we anticipate parents might have, along with the answer to these questions. This list can be found on the Diocese of Charlotte web site at:

<http://schools.charlottediocese.net/our-schools/testinginformation>

We appreciate your support as we implement this change to our testing program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, principal or this office.

Sincerely,

Janice T. Ritter, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools