

Minutes
St. Peter School
Parent Association Meeting
February 1, 2012

1. Guest Speakers: Mrs. Leahy and Mr. Gray spoke about standardized testing that will occur in grades 2-8 during the week of March 19.

Catholic schools are not required to participate in MCAS. Instead, St. Peter School will administer Olsat 8 and Standford 10.

History: The Terra Nova standardized test was used for many years at St. Peter School. After extensive research by a committee at the Catholic School Office, Olsat 8 and Standford 10 tests were adopted in March 2010 by the Archdiocese of Boston and across the U.S. Mrs. Leahy distributed a package of descriptive materials about the tests. Extra copies are available in the office.

When:

- Practice Tests will be given during the week of March 12 to grades 2, 3, and 4. Because middle grades have experience with standardized tests they will not participate in practice tests.
- Tests will be given during the week of March 19. All Catholic schools administer the tests at same time. Mrs. Leahy encourages families not to schedule school-time activities (dentist, doctor appointments) during this week.
- Makeup tests will be given during the week of March 26.

2 types of testing:

Olsat 8 – Ability

Students in grades 2 and 3 write answers in books; grades 4-8 use answer sheets. The tests capture how students think logically; perceive relationships, similarities, differences, classification, and patterns.

Standford 10 – Achievement

Students in grades 2 write in answer books; grades 3-8 use answer sheets. This test includes reading, vocabulary, math, science, and social studies. A new aspect of this test is a listening session in which students will listen to a story and provide answers based on that story.

Philosophy of Standardized Testing

Standardized achievement testing provides an overview of student achievement as measured in relationship to objective standards and to the students' own cognitive ability. Cognitive skills testing are an indicator of a student's ability to succeed in academic areas. Both serve to give direction to the development of appropriate academic strategies for both individuals and class groups.

For both tests students are given a recommended amount of time to complete their work. They may have extra time if necessary. Testing will be spread throughout the week. Students will still have regular activities. We were given the option to conduct testing 2 times per year but opted not to do this.

Overview of Results

St. Peter School scores well above average, particularly in math. Mr. Gray presented that 2 years ago our median scores (where we stand in relation to other kids who took the test) were the following: math -- 90%; reading -- 79%; language -- 80%. Last year's scores were not available until late in the year. Mr. Gray will make last year's results available at next meeting.

It is important to realize that the graph that will be sent home in the student report signifies the childrens' **percentile** against the national percentile in which 30-70 is the average result. The percentile represents the number of children participating in the test, not the number of items on the test.

Mrs. Leahy usually does not send home "cluster reports" but will consider sending these home if parents request them. Cluster reports give results of Olsats for comparison.

General Points about the tests:

- Children get credit for number of correct items on the test. Parents may be able to find practice tests on line.
- School result is not made public.
- Mr. Gray analyzes the results for the entire school and has reports on subgroups for teachers.
- For Grade 2 students, this is their first experience with standardized testing. Mrs. Leahy suggests that parents help the students by encouraging them not to worry about the test.
- The results give us a way to focus our curriculum. We adopted the Saxon math method in part because of past math results.
- Each school is assigned a number; within the school each student also is assigned an identification number.
- Kids from St. Peter School generally go on to great success in high school and college.
- Mrs. Leahy and Mr. Gray will provide a follow-up discussion next month.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 7, 2012