

# Infant Jesus of Prague School

## U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School

March 19, 2009

Dear Parents,

As educational expectations change so too must the standardized tests that assess learning. Beginning this school year the Archdiocese of Chicago will be using Terra Nova Third Edition. This test differs from Terra Nova, Second Edition in several ways.

First, the design of the test is slightly different. Reading and Language are now separate elements. Reading passages are self-contained and appropriate in readability, content, concept and student interest. Language items are assessed separately, and the key components include understanding language structure, familiarity with standard written English conventions and rules, and more knowledge of paragraph development. Both of these tests are designed to demonstrate understanding and using skills essential for communication.

Second, the Math test reflects important new trends in Mathematic education and focuses on “knowing” mathematics-recognizing and developing concepts and procedures appropriate to student development, and “doing” mathematics-investigating, asking questions, formulating problems and using problem solving techniques. The two parts of the math test are computation and using math, applying math concepts to real life situations.

Third, the science and social studies tests are less of a reading test and more of a focus on the stages of concept learning. Science tests seven major objectives: Science inquiry, Life Science, Physical Science, Earth and Space Science, History and Nature of science, Science and Technology, and Personal and Social perspectives in science. Social Studies tests measures concepts in geography, history, civics, government and economics.

Fourth, unlike Terra Nova, Second Edition which used norms from 2000, Terra Nova, Third Edition uses norms from 2007 based on a large nationally representative students sample the reflects all geographic regions, all ethnic groups, and all socioeconomic levels. As a result there are five performance levels in each grade level: Advanced, Proficient, Nearing Proficiency, Progressing and Step 1.

Finally, Terra Nova, Third Edition is now in alignment with current National standards. Therefore, Terra Nova, Third Edition is comparatively more difficult than Terra Nova Second Edition because it reflects higher order thinking skills that should occur in the classroom. **As a result of these changes, scores from Terra Nova, Second Edition and Terra Nova, Third Edition can not be compared.**

Standardized test results are just one measure of a student’s progress within one time frame. Results are used by teachers and administrators in educational planning. Parents should know that standardized tests are merely an objective estimate of a student’s achievement in certain areas.

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