

St. Joseph School
Celebrating 60 Years of Excellence
In Catholic Education

December, 2011

Dear Parents,

As you are aware, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is in the process of transitioning to a **Common Core States Standards Curriculum**. These changes have also prompted a change in our assessments, reporting system and documents.



Children are still assessed by way of **formative** and **summative** evaluation tools.

Formative Assessments include tests, quizzes and written responses as well as informal classroom observations, choral responses, response cards, class exit cards, classroom hands-on activities and more. These ongoing assessments help teachers to adjust instructional planning, re-teach, try alternative approaches and strategies, or offer opportunities for more practice along the way.

Summative Assessments (usually one or two in a trimester) may be in the form of major unit tests, in-class projects, constructed written responses and performance demonstrations that are based on specific criteria or rubrics. These major assessments will indicate a degree of proficiency or mastery of the curriculum standards at a given level.

Though our “**GradeBook**” system (River Valley Software) experienced some technical difficulties in the beginning, our reporting system is now on track, but the changes still require further explanation.

The trimester reports are now represented by three levels:

- **Kindergarten** (number rated scale)
- **Primary Grades, Gr. 1-3** (letter rated scale)
- **Upper Grades, Gr. 4-8** (number averages)



The, now integrated, ELA grade will be an average of the equally weighted sub-categories of:

- **Reading**
- **Writing**
- **Language (Spelling/Grammar)**
- **Listening and Speaking ****

**** Listening and Speaking**, as an equally weighted sub-category of ELA (English Language Arts), is new to this report card. This grade, for the most part, emanates from all content areas and general classroom activities, and is evaluated over time, as opposed to specific tests in the area. **A rubric for this category can be found on the school website.**

The, **now integrated, Math grade** will be an average of the equally weighted sub-categories of:



- **Problem solving**
- **Modeling to represent concepts**
- **Computation**
- **Communicating mathematically (written math).**

The sub-categories for both **Math and ELA** will reflect whether or not a student has mastered the targeted standards at a given level, by using a **plus sign (+)** or a **check () mark**. **These signs do not indicate weakness or strength – simply complete mastery or progressing at this point.**

Homework will always be a very important part of our academic program, but will be reflected, not in the content area grade, but in the **Effort and Study Skills** category on the left hand side of the report card, along with the **Personal and Social Growth** category. It is important to mention here that the **(+)** and/or **()** sign in these categories are optional and **do** reflect strength or weakness in a particular area.

To help you to better understand the criteria on which some of the grades are based, particularly those indicated by numeric values of 1 through 4, or Outstanding, Very Good, etc....in the primary grades, we have posted rubrics on the School Website. It would be advantageous to print them out and discuss them with your children when reviewing their progress.

Once again, this year, in addition to new books, materials and technologies, we also presented to you and your children, a newly adopted curriculum which should be more rigorous and relevant to their future readiness for college and career. We are working to help and motivate your children to embrace these new challenges with enthusiasm.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you,

St. Joseph School Faculty and Administration



“Let the children come to Me...”

