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Dear Parents and Guardians,

In April 2016, elementary schools across the Archdiocese of Chicago administered the ACT Aspire summative test for the first time to all students in grades 3-8. The ACT Aspire assesses students' academic proficiency in five academic areas: English, Reading, Math, Science and Writing. Students completed the exam over four mornings at their school.

ACT Aspire is aligned to the rigorous curriculum standards that inform classroom instruction in all classrooms across the Archdiocese. More information about the ACT Aspire, including grade-level test exemplars for each subject test, can be found on www.discoveractaspire.org.

The Archdiocese's Office of Catholic Schools is pleased with the results from this first administration of the ACT Aspire test. Please note the Aspire test assesses student understanding of concepts and asks students to demonstrate their proficiency with grade-level skills in a manner that may be different from other standardized tests your child has taken in the past. Additionally, ACT Aspire engages all students in a written response to a grade-appropriate prompt. Assessment of writing has high value for our college bound students and this competency was not a part of the *TerraNova* test that was administered in our Catholic schools in the recent past.

A *sample* of student performance results for all Archdiocesan students in grade 3 for each of the content areas tested by ACT Aspire is provided in the following table. Terms found in the table are also explained below.

- **Aspire Benchmark:** This numeric score indicates the benchmark that indicates grade-level proficiency.
- **AoC Average:** This numeric score reflects the average score across the approximately 5,000 students across all grade-levels who tested in the Archdiocese.
- **National Average:** This numeric score reflects the average score for all students nationwide who took the ACT Aspire in the spring of 2016.
- **Readiness Level:** Scores for each subject test area reflect the average performance of all students in this grade level categorized into one of the following levels: *Exceeding*, *Ready*, *Close* or *In Need of Support*.

	Grade	English	Math	Reading	Science	Writing
Aspire Benchmark	3	413	413	415	418	428
AoC Average	3	419	415	415	417	424
Nat'l Average	3	417	413	413	415	422
Readiness Level	3	Exceeding	Ready	Ready	Close	Close

Your school will provide individual student performance results for ACT Aspire, as well as grade-level results and readiness levels for students in grades 3-8 that can be compared to the average performance of other Archdiocesan students. While it is interesting to note the national average for each subject level test, it is most important to acknowledge the performance level of students in relationship to the Aspire benchmark for that grade level.

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

With best wishes for a successful new school year,

Associate Superintendent

Cc: Dr. Jim Rigg