

DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Metuchen follow the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* to guide us in educating your child. By these standards, our students are prepared to live faith-filled lives that reflect a Catholic world view. The standards state that "An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction." While our schools provide a rigorous curriculum for students, we are constantly working to improve upon their academic excellence.

In the fall of 2018, a committee was convened to evaluate how students are assessed in the Diocese of Metuchen Catholic schools. The committee surveyed schools and gathered information regarding our current IOWA assessment, and they researched best practices of a comprehensive assessment. Ultimately, the goal of any assessment is to help teachers identify student academic needs in order to provide individualized instruction. With this goal in mind, and our vision to improve academic excellence, the committee began to review a variety of assessments that would meet the needs of our students.

After reviewing several different assessment companies, the committee identified NWEA MAP as an assessment that could provide data for teachers to help guide future learning for every student. MAP is different from other assessments in that students are tested three times a year. Three of our schools elected to pilot NWEA MAP assessment this past spring. The pilot was successful, and the committee recommended that, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, all Catholic elementary schools administer the NWEA MAP Growth Reading, Math, and Language Usage assessments in grades one through eight in early fall, winter, and late spring.

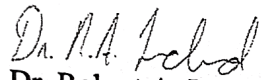
Over 400,000 Catholic school students and 10.7 million public school students across the nation use NWEA MAP. The NWEA MAP is a web-based assessment that is given on school desktop computers, Chromebooks, or iPad. Students take each of the Reading, Math, and Language assessments with their classroom teacher for approximately one hour. We believe that the NWEA MAP assessments will provide a personalized assessment experience that will help students learn, teachers teach, and administrators lead. Some benefits to this new assessment system are that it provides:

1. Data to understand unique learning needs of each student.
2. Adaptive testing measures performance on, above or below grade level.
3. Growth and achievement data 3 times per year.
4. Data reports available within 24 hours of administration.
5. Immediate results on easy to read reports that will drive instruction and improve teacher practice.
6. Lexile scores included on reading reports.

7. Links to the state test and ACT/SAT performance predictions beginning in fifth grade.
8. Norming data to compare students to national, state and Catholic school benchmarks.
9. Compatibility across tech platforms.
10. Accommodations in the regular classroom through technological support.
11. Artificial intelligence to identify and remedy rapid guessing behavior.
12. Cost effective solution to assess more students.

We are excited to partner with NWEA and provide our students and teachers with this opportunity for growth. As always, everything we do is with our mission in mind – to transform students into Disciples of Christ. Your child's school will provide additional information as the school year opens. Please pray for us as we undertake this new venture.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert A. Lockwood
Superintendent of Schools