



Newsletter from the Secretary of Elementary Education

Monthly Messenger – November 2022



Dear Catholic School Educators,

We hope everyone is getting their first chance to exhale a bit as we successfully work towards the end of the first trimester of school. With all the excitement of fall activities underway and the weather definitively changing, this can be a nice time in which students and teachers settle into their established routines and rhythms. Its also a time to reflect on the start of the year and what adjustments we can make as educators to help ensure the year long success of our students.

Truly, the academic year is quite a marathon and its important that we gauge ourselves along with our students as we near the end of the first trimester. For ourselves, its important we enact enough spiritual and physical self-care as we give so much of our own beings towards this profession and career. For prayer,

we remember the perseverance of St. John Neumann and his constant zeal to bring the good news to all people in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. We can also look to the calming intercession of our Blessed Mother through prayer of the rosary, both individually as well as with our students and colleagues. For physical self-care, we give mutual encouragement to find a healthy balance between home and work as well as finding the right physical habits that we can lock into before we have to think about setting a new-years-resolution.

Finally, as we near Thanksgiving, we encourage all to spend the well-deserved time with family and friends. However, we at OCE want to express our gratitude to every educator in the Archdiocese for what they do each day with our young people. Truly, the calling of an educator is one of the highest vocations as it paves the way for the well-being of our nation and world. The influence and example set forth by each one of our educators are the most important lessons that can be taught to a young generation that faces new challenges and pitfalls. Through the examples put forth by educators and the sacramental gifts of our church that are so openly proclaimed in our schools, we give our young people the best possibility for a bright and happy future.

May God bless you!

Dr. Andrew McLaughlin
Secretary of Elementary Education

Upcoming Events

- Nov 8 - District Mtgs. Phila South & Delaware Counties
 - Nov 9 - District Mtgs. Phila North & Montgomery Counties
 - Nov 10 - District Mtgs. Bucks & Chester Counties
 - Nov 15 - District Mtg. Early Childhood
 - Nov 16 - New Teacher Induction II - Phila North, South & Bucks
 - Nov 17 - New Teacher Induction II - Chester, Delaware & Montco
 - Nov 13 - 19 - Discover Catholic Schools Week
 - Nov 23 - Thanksgiving Holiday Begins End of School Day
 - Nov 28 - Classes Resume
 - Dec 2 - End of First Trimester
 - Dec 5 - Second Trimester Begins
 - Dec 5 - Universal Principal Mtg.
 - Dec 8 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception
 - Dec 23 - Christmas Holiday Begins End of School Day
-



Early Childhood Winter Workshops

- Date: February 25
- Location: Immaculata University
- Speaker: Leslie Davila - Identifying and Dealing with Signs of Abuse in Young Children;
- Speaker: Tim Hogan - *Where Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Meets the Gospel: Five Simple Strategies to Revitalize School Culture*

STREAM EXPO: Pre-K - 12

- Date: April 25 - 27
- Plan to showcase something from your STREAM program at one of these events.
- All schools at every level are encouraged to have at least one project to display.
- Details will follow.

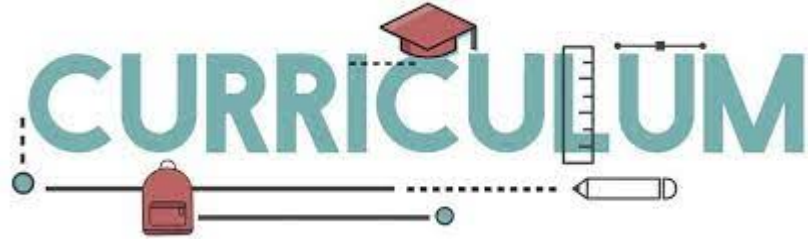
Reading Olympics - Final Competitions

- Date: May 10
- Reading lists have been distributed and registration is currently taking place.
- Because of questionable selections, we are not participating in any regional competitions.

CUES Conference

- Date: June 22
- Location: St. Joseph University
- The Catholic Urban Education Symposium sponsored by the Catholic University School Partnership (CUSP). The focus will be on Mental Health issues. It will be open to all administrators and teachers at all levels.

[CONTACT: Sr. Edward Quinn, IHM](#)



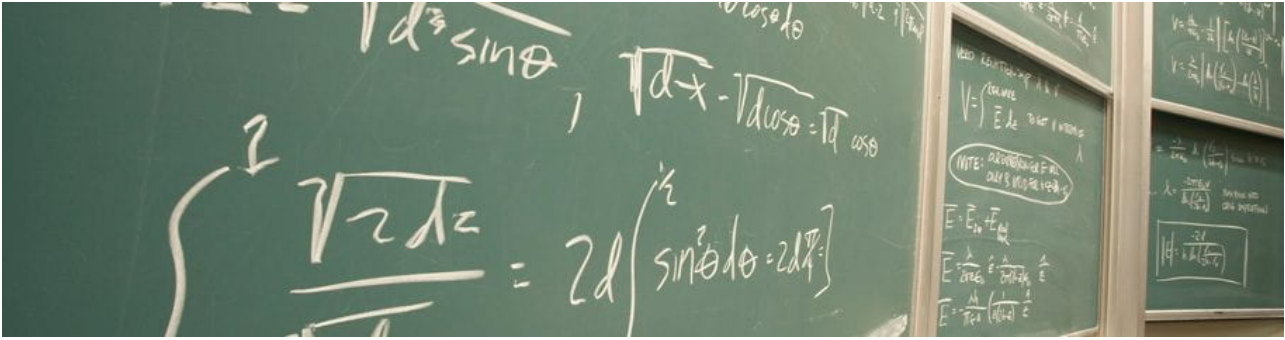
HELP NEEDED: After several years of social distancing and the inability to conduct committee meetings, we are anxious to return to the tasks of updating our curriculum, approved programs, and end-of-level assessments. The fact that during this time our standardized testing showed little or no learning loss gives evidence to the strength of our curriculum and the dedication of our teachers. Our curriculum is strong because it was developed **by** our teachers **for** our students.

We are at a point of reviewing and re-building what is in place. As you will note in some of the following paragraphs, there are a few items scheduled for an update in the coming year. Volunteering to assist with curriculum committee work is your opportunity to give input to curriculum updates, approved programs, professional development, curriculum events and end-of-level assessments. Committees meet once a month (often by Zoom so you would not need to travel) to complete their work.

With retirements and position changes this past year, we are in great need of committee members in many areas at **all** levels. If you are willing and able to be of assistance, please e-mail the chairperson of the committee you are interested in. They will contact you and fill you in on the committee's work and meeting dates. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

- Religion - [Terri Power](#)
- Math - [Michele Kiss](#)
- English Language Arts - [Mary Finnegan](#)
- Science - [David Heacock](#)
- Social Studies - [Mary Kay Hennessy](#)
- STREAM - [Kathleen Logan](#)
- Early Childhood - [Kathy Collier](#)
- Library / Media Arts - [Kay Burgess](#)
- Physical Education - [Barbara Nawn](#)
- Fine Arts - [Stephanie Leicht](#)
- World Languages - [Sr. Edward Quinn](#) (Interim - Chair Needed)

Honors Math



Criteria for Admission

The criteria for acceptance into the Honors Math Program is being updated to include a score above the 70th percentile for all areas of Math on the Objectives Performance Index of Terra Nova. This score is a greater indicator of Mastery of skills than the National Percentile.

Recognized Programs

We have been receiving concerns addressed by parents about schools advertising Accelerated Math Programs. While we encourage differentiated instruction in the math class, the Honors Math Program and Math Matters Program are the only approved accelerated programs. According to **Policies and Procedures**, “*With the exception of honors math students, students are heterogeneously grouped for mathematics instruction.*” (Section 600)

Algebra Assessments

Our secondary schools were notified in June by Scantron that they would no longer be supporting the Achievement and Performance Series Assessments that are used for Algebra classes. This affected our elementary Honors Algebra classes since our agreement with the high schools to award credit for the Algebra course is contingent on the fact that we are using the same assessment as the Freshman Algebra classes. The process to adopt a new assessment involved research, evaluating programs to determine if they were aligned to our curriculum, drawing up a contract, legal review of the contract, and setting up the program. Unfortunately, we have also run into some issues with our schools reaching out to other providers of the formerly used tests and have been trying to set up assessments without authorization. This caused further delays for us.

A new assessment has been selected and we should be able to start set-up within the next few weeks. For more information on this program follow the link below. We will send additional information as it becomes available.

Renaissance STARS <https://www.renaissance.com/products/star-math/>

Fine Arts

As noted in an earlier edition of the Monthly

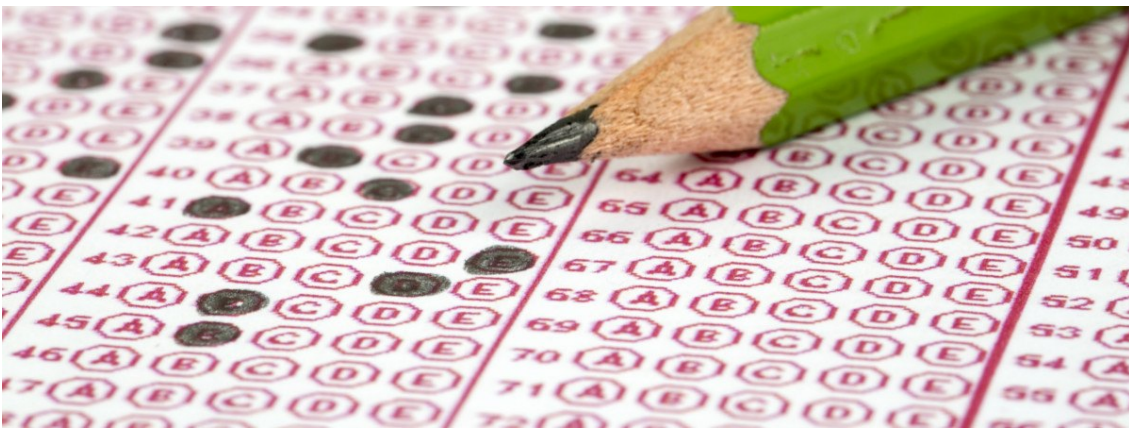


Messenger, the latest release of *Standards for Fine Arts* address five areas of fine arts—music, art, dance, drama and media arts—rather than separate standards for art and music. This will precipitate a change in how we address these areas in our classes.

With teacher shortages as we are experiencing them, we might see schools sharing art and music teachers by doing double periods of art /music in one trimester in one school and switching in another trimester. Skills could be combined with drama, dance and media arts to produce a program in the third trimester. This could also be done on an alternating week/month schedule. As for content skills, dance will be incorporated into physical education; media arts applied using technology in all content areas; and drama is appropriately incorporated into ELA.

CONTACT: Sr. Edward Quinn, IHM

Standardized Testing



Terra Nova NEXT

The Terra Nova test has been updated to a new edition—Terra Nova NEXT. The following changes will be seen in this newest edition:

- Schools will have the option of doing either online or pencil and paper testing. (All in the school must use the same format)
- There is only one format for the testing at all levels, eliminating Complete Battery and Multiple Assessment format.
- There are no Constructed Response questions in this format. The skills formerly tested by the constructed response questions have been incorporated into stronger depth multiple choice questions—sometimes requiring more than one choice to an answer or more than one question related to a topic.

- In order to obtain foundational scores at the primary level for the purpose of accurate longitudinal studies,, Grade 2 will be included in the mandated testing. This will also include the InView testing so that a preliminary CSI score can be obtained.
- Schools will no longer need to purchase pre-printed practice activities as these are available as pdf files at no cost on the online reporting system.

Beacon

If your school participated in the Spring or Fall pilot of the Terra Nova NEXT testing, you have been given free access to the Beacon Benchmark Assessments which are both adaptive and predictive of success in the Terra Nova NEXT. DRC BEACON is designed to be administered multiple times a year, allowing students and educators the opportunity to check for learning throughout the year rather than relying on a single summative test score at the end of the year. This enables educators to monitor student performance throughout the year and to make informed decisions to promote academic growth.

Testing Training Tuesdays

Testing Training Tuesdays will continue in the second trimester with a focus on using the Beacon Assessments and preparing for Terra Nova Next. A schedule will be sent out at the beginning of the trimester.

End of Level Assessments

Performance assessments should be administered in all content areas throughout the school year. These have been included as part of the end-of-level assessments for several years to model for teachers what a quality performance looks like and how it is assessed. **This year we will have only one assessment in each content area at each level.** It will incorporate both objective skills and minor performance tasks to be administered at the scheduled time for end of level assessments, allowing for more instructional time during the month of May.

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Office of Catholic Elementary Education
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

cjennings@archphila.org

Subscribers are automatically added upon your employment hire at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia or Archdiocese school.

[Unsubscribe](#)

