

November 11, 2015

Dear Parents of 4th – 8th Graders,

After a six-month delay, the Indiana Department of Education has released **preliminary** ISTEP results from last spring's ISTEP Test. It is being reported that scores from across the state are lower than previous years for various testing issues as well as the transition to new academic standards and a more rigorous type of test. I have reviewed STA scores and while we have many high scores, we do have some that are lower than last year. The Indiana Department of Education has had many discussions with lawmakers about this issue and they will be adjusting some scores to compensate for the issues that the test had in its delivery and content. If you are not familiar with the issues that the Spring ISTEP test had, information is available online (example: Google search for "Indiana ISTEP test issues or problems").

Here is an important part for you the parent: we mailed home to you a document earlier this week that had information on how to log on to the "Indiana Parent Network" so you can see your child's ISTEP Scores AND **request a rescore** on part of the ISTEP test that your child took last spring. I would encourage you to log on to see your scores and consider requesting a re-score to the open-ended questions if needed. **YOU ONLY HAVE UNTIL THIS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, TO REQUEST A RESCORE!**

Parents are the only ones that request a rescore for your child's test, and I would highly recommend that if your child is close to the passing level OR the Pass+ level, that you request a rescore. This choice to ask for a rescore is solely up to you. The only way to request a rescore is to log on to the Indiana Parent Network (indiana.ctb.com/prism/landing.do?theme=inors) and follow the instructions listed on the attachment. **You only have until this Friday to request a rescore.**

While the ISTEP assessment is a test we are required to give our students, the STA faculty and I see it as only one part of a complex process of evaluating and assessing student academic progress. Most importantly we utilize daily assessments in the classroom by the STA teachers who know your child's strengths and areas to improve to help get them where they need to be. The ISTEP test, like any one-time assessment, gives a snapshot of where the student is at that time.

All of our teachers use the Indiana Academic Standards (www.doe.in.gov/standards) as our base (the standards that are tested on the ISTEP Test), and we have the freedom in our local curriculum to go above and beyond these requirements for academic enrichment as well as special areas of fine arts, physical education, foreign language, and technology. **We are a Catholic school, teaching Catholic values, with a main purpose of increasing the level of faith in God in every student.** Our graduates continue to be prepared and excel at the high school and college level in their academics, service to others and faith.

We have already begun to examine the Spring 2015 ISTEP Results and with ongoing teacher assessments, we will continue to add to and enhance your child's curriculum to help them grow in their academics. With your help at home, we will put into place remediation and enrichment to help your child grow. We continue to offer after school tutoring to students that need some extra help as well as a Title 1 program.

Please remember that the state of Indiana Department of Education will not finalize the ISTEP scores until December. I will be able to provide school-wide and grade level data to our community at that time.

The state will also introduce a new version of the ISTEP test this Spring that we are required to give to our students in grade 3-8. With the recent and ongoing lively discussion between lawmakers and the IDOE with regards to state assessment, we will continue to focus on our students growth in academics, service to others, and most importantly, growth in faith. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I thank you for your support and partnership in your child's growth.

Sincerely,

Cara Swinefurth
Principal