



# Diocese of Manchester

## Department of Catholic Schools

153 Ash Street P. O. Box 310 Manchester, NH 03105-0310  
Tel. (603) 669-3100 Fax (603) 669-0377

April 2, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians,

For the last few months as the new superintendent of Catholic schools in the diocese of Manchester, I have spent much time visiting our schools, meeting the faculty and staff in these communities and, most enjoyable to me, meeting the wonderful children and families the Catholic schools in the diocese of Manchester serve. I am impressed by your commitment as parents and that of your children's teachers, to educating your children in a learning environment that is faith-centered and rooted in the traditions of our Catholic faith.

I am proud of the efforts on behalf of your children to offer quality educational programs where all students are called to be their best and to achieve academic success. I am struck by the fact that while each school embraces a common curriculum, each school also understands its own culture and responds to the learning needs within that community. As I examine the achievements of our schools, one area that provides good data to me is student assessment results.

Next week, April 9-13, all students in grades two through eight in Catholic schools in the diocese will participate in CTB Terra Nova Standardized Testing. The Terra Nova tests measure not only your child's performance (what they know), but also provide information on your child's anticipated success (what the typical learner at this same age and level is anticipated to score). Terra Nova standardized tests are nationally norm-referenced. What that means to us is that the tests were developed on a national level to assess achievement based on current national standards in the core subject areas of math, reading, language, science and social studies. The scores against which your child's scores are measured are compared to the performances of thousands of students in all learning environments nationally: public, private and religiously affiliated schools in rural, urban and suburban settings.

Standardized testing is only one of the means to assess your child's academic accomplishments. Daily, through class performance, homework, tests and quizzes, projects, and classroom participation, your child's teacher assesses progress. The Terra Nova test gives us one more objective indicator. The results of the tests also provide the schools and teachers with good data to help inform curriculum and make appropriate changes to respond to needs identified through the test results.

Please treat this week as a typical week for your children. Keeping regular bedtimes and schedules reinforce the understanding that the tests are really about the children showing us what they already know. Encourage them to try their best. While there may be a question they cannot answer for any number of reasons, they should not be discouraged but rather just work through the rest of the test. I believe your children are well prepared. It's important that they hear from you and their teachers that we're just asking them to work hard and feel good about all they have learned.

I wish your children well next week. Once the results are received, I hope to give you a broad overview of our students' academic successes. Thank you for supporting your children's efforts and working with us to provide the best we can for them.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Moran  
Superintendent of Schools