

# St. Germaine Family Newsletter

May 1, 2009

## Sharing Great News Terra Nova Test Results Spring, 2009

We recently received the annual testing results for our third, fifth and seventh grade students. In March, these students completed a battery of tests called the TERRA NOVA Multiple Assessment Test. The test contains two major parts: a cognitive ability test that is an updated version of IQ tests from the past, and an academic achievement test. Unlike the standardized tests we might remember, TERRA NOVA calls for students to do more than just fill in "answer bubbles." A portion of each test asks students to use data and apply concepts as well as to compose non-multiple choice answers.

We can really be proud of our students' achievements on this test! The results indicate in a statistical way something that we as a school community have known for a long time. We have an excellent school program that prepares our students extremely well. We would like to summarize some of the data for you.

- At the third grade level, the average "grade equivalent" score for the total battery (Reading, Language and Math) was more than a year above the norm (3.6).
  - At the fifth grade level, the average "grade equivalent" for the total battery was almost 4 years above the norm (5.6).
- At the seventh grade level, the average "grade equivalent" for the total battery was almost 4 years above the norm (7.6).

Percentile scores of 50 are considered average. The chart below shows the percent of St. Germaine students who scored **ABOVE the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile**.

(Remember, statistically, we would expect that only 50% of the students should score above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

	Reading	Language	Math	Total	Science	Social St.
Grade 3	69.0 (+19.0)	72.4 (+22.4)	68.9 (+18.9)	72.4 (+22.4)	89.7 (+39.7)	86.2 (+36.2)
Grade 5	89.3 (+39.3)	85.7 (+35.7)	82.1 (+32.1)	89.3 (+39.3)	92.9 (+42.9)	92.9 (+42.9)
Grade 7	89.3 (+39.3)	89.4 (+39.4)	87.3 (+37.3)	91.5 (+41.5)	91.5 (+41.5)	91.3 (+41.3)

In addition, the testing company provides us with a chart very similar to our report cards. The chart shows 29 of the major areas of the subtest (reading comprehension, math computation, problem solving, life sciences, for example). The chart then provides data to show how our students (individually and by grade level) did when compared to the national averages. By far, these charts show the most dramatic impact.

In each of the three grade levels tested, our school average is above the national average in all 29 of the subsections! In some of the sections, the difference is as much as 18 or 19 points.

The test results also provide an indication of the student's actual performance (obtained score) compared to an "anticipated score." The anticipated score is related to the student's score on the cognitive abilities portion of the test (his or her innate ability). Again, the averages of the results show St. Germaine students with obtained scores above those that were anticipated. This indicator gives evidence that the level of student achievement is, in most cases, better than what was predicted. In other words, we find strong support for the idea that St. Germaine students are being challenged by the content of the curriculum and are responding positively to those challenges.

All in all, the TERRA NOVA results speak very positively of our students and their achievement. We congratulate them, their teachers and, you, their parents on this outstanding accomplishment.

A detailed analysis of the data is available in the school office.

Individual scores will be sent home to the parents of the students who took the test early next week. Please contact Mr. Reedy if you would like to discuss the meaning of the scores your child received.

## Walk11.com

Information will be sent out on Monday about our annual walk for technology. The walk-a-thon is scheduled for May 15. (Please remember that that day is an 11:30 dismissal day.)

While we worked on the School Improvement Process and evaluation visits this year, the parent surveys, teacher reflections, and recommendations from the visiting team all included suggestions for our school computer program. We would love to implement them but funds need to be available in order to do so. We would like to add a number of LCD projectors and carts so that teachers could use internet resources with their classes more efficiently. We need to expand into some of the more sophisticated applications—like photography and video production, but will need to purchase additional digital cameras and video cameras to make it possible. In addition to the annual licenses for application software, filters and security software, costs for printer toner and the addition of color printing capabilities really stretch the technology budget.

We know that the economic hardships have hit many of our school families deeply this year. We would ask that each family help us to reach of technology goals in any way they can. Your contribution to the walk-a-thon would be most appreciated.

### Illinois State Board of Education Parent Transportation Reimbursement Forms

The Transportation Reimbursement Program gives parents in non-public schools who do not have access to school bus transportation a rebate. In order to be eligible, the one-way distance to school must be at least 1.5 miles. (An exception for hazardous crossings is available for families who live less than 1.5 miles from school. These exceptions must be approved by the ISBE. As we informed you in several earlier newsletters, the deadline for applying for this exception was February 1, 2009)

We sent copies of the 2009 form to all families who completed a form last year. If you did not file a claim last year and live more than 1.5 miles from school, call the school office—or send a note—to request the claim form.

All forms must be accompanied by a MAPQUEST verification of the distance. The forms must be submitted to the state of Illinois electronically by the school. You cannot file the claim yourself.

All claim forms must be returned to the school office by June 3, 2009.

## Summer Program Offerings

We recently surveyed parents about their interest in enrolling students in a St. Germaine Summer School Program. The numbers seem to indicate that there is not enough interest to offer a formal program this summer. Several of the teachers who normally teach in the summer session are willing to tutor at St. Germaine during the month of June. (If you are interested in pursuing the idea, please call the office for more information.)

A number of other institutions in the area are offering summer academic programs:

St. Christina School (773-445-2969 Moraine Valley 974-5735	Tuesdays/Thursdays	June 16-July 7
	Math and Reading Review	
Center for Inclusive Education at St. Bede 312-534-5220	Reading and Math	June 22-July 30
Chicago State U At St. Xavier 800-979-9151	Reading	July 14- Aug. 16
Brother Rice HS  773-429-4363	Math	July 6-10, July 13-17 July 20-24
Essential Learning Systems St. Bernadette 857-2005	Reading/Phonics	

Some students would definitely benefit from a summer academic program. If you are interested in any of these programs, you can contact them directly. We have a supply of brochures from Moraine Valley that we would be glad to share with any parents who are interested.

### With Health in Mind

We all have a heightened awareness of coughs and sneezes these days with the information we are receiving about the outbreak of Swine Flu. Please, out of consideration for others in our school community, keep your child at home if they exhibit flu symptoms.

In the same regard, we have had a number of students who come to the office only a few minutes after the morning bell to tell us they are ill and want to go home. They all indicate that they told parents, but come to school anyway. Please be aware of these early complaints. Very often, parents are just getting to work when we have to call them to report that their child is ill. They are then confronted with the necessity of returning to school or finding another adult to pick up your child. In the long run, it seems easier just to keep your child home if they are sick. Of course, the caution has to be about the "little boy who cried wolf," who is merely finding an excuse for not attending class. As parents, you are certainly the best judge of that!

### Manna News

We'd like to repeat our invitation to all families to make use of the Manna Program. As we discussed in the last newsletter, the program should be a "no-brainer" since it does not cost you, as participants anything and has the added benefit of bringing revenue into our school from the "outside." This makes it the ideal fund-raiser. Can we suggest that you try the program for essentials such as gasoline or groceries? We have a variety of vendors that can provide you with many options.

### Box Tops for Education and Target "Take Charge of Education" Donations

We recently received a check for \$432.00 for our participation in the General Mills Box Tops program. Please keep saving the box top logos for us. Each box top earns ten cents!

Thanks to Laura Lenz who continued to chair the project.

We also received a check for \$411 from Target as rebates for charge card purchases made by our families. We thank them for their support. To sign up you can call Target at 1-800-316-6142 or visit Target.com/tcoe.

## BaseballMania

The School Board is sponsoring BaseballMania this spring. The fundraiser is a way for families to earn a rebate toward 2009-2010 tuition and fees and to support our school efforts to raise need money to keep tuition low.

With Easter coming quickly, it's a time when families gather. It would be a great time to invite other family members to participate in the sweepstakes.

We ordered 1500 tickets, hoping that we can make a good contribution to the fundraising budget for next year.

As an incentive, we're offering a \$5 rebate to the seller of each ticket. These rebates will be posted on the August tuition invoice, just as we do with Manna rebates. This will give us a chance to recognize the efforts of parents who help us to "sell-out" the tickets!

We will distribute packets of ten tickets to any family that would like to sell them. As you return each group, we'll be glad to issue another set of ten.

All you need to do is complete the bottom portion of each ticket with the purchaser's name and complete address. (We need this information because prize money is mailed out each week.) Give the top half of the ticket, with the team listings, to the purchaser. Please write your name at the bottom of the stub as the "seller" so we can credit the rebate correctly. Return all of your tickets to the school office in an envelope along with payment. Checks should be made out to St. Germaine School. Tickets must be activated by St. Germaine School in order to be eligible to win. All tickets (sold or unsold) must be returned to school by June 1, 2009.

If you would like to purchase a single ticket for yourself, drop us a note along with your check for \$20 and we will send it to you. (You will receive the \$5 rebate for any tickets you purchase for yourself)

Like the Manna Program, this is a great way to support the school, to keep tuition increases to a minimum and to receive a rebate for your family's tuition bill. We hope that everyone will participate. Thanks.

## Tuition Payments Using Credit Cards

At the beginning of this year we offered parents the option of making tuition payments using Visa or MasterCard. In the course of the year, we had very few families who took advantage of the option. We feel that the cost of the program to the school has outweighed the benefits. Unfortunately, we will not be able to continue the program for next year. We apologize to those families who used the service for any inconvenience.

## Penny Wars Projects

This year's Catholic Schools Week Penny Wars generated about \$1200 for various missions and charities. Donations, in the name of St. Germaine School, were made to the Sisters of the Presentation's "Lantern Lights" program for the homeless (\$250), the "Dollars for Dreams" project sponsored by the Archdiocese to support a school in Kenya (\$500), and the Holy Childhood Mission Program (\$500). Thank you for your generosity that made these donations to worthy projects possible.

## Ala Carte Donates to the St. Germaine Food Pantry

During Lent, students who made purchases at the lunchroom ala carte window were asked to donate a portion of their change. We raised \$52.88 which was donated to the St. Germaine Food Pantry. Thanks to all the students who generously donated to this project.

### Looking Ahead. . .

- 5/1 Pre-School "Tea" in the Presentation Room
- 5/3 Eighth Grade Ribbon Breakfast, 10:00 Breakfast; 12:00 noon Mass
- 5/6 Athletic Association Sports Banquet
- 5/7 First Communion Practice in Church
- 5/9 First Communion, 12:00 noon in Church
- 5/12 Market Day
- 5/13 School Board, 7:00 p.m in the Faculty Room
- 5/14 Kindergarten Program
- 5/15 Walk 11.com, 11:30 dismissal  
Eighth Grade Dance 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. in the Church Hall
- 5/19 Oak Lawn Summer Reading Program kick-off
- 5/25 Memorial Day; No student attendance
- 5/26 Kindergarten Screening for new kindergarten students  
Eighth Grade Class Trip to Great America
- 5/29 Eighth Grade Graduation, 7:00 p.m. in the Church