

Dear Parents,

Enclosed you will find a report of your child's performance on a list of skills that were tested earlier this Fall using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) (5th graders only). As with all exercises that generate data, its best use will be in providing questions, not answers. Receiving information like this is the beginning of our work, not the conclusion. Our data committee is currently poring over the numbers to explore questions about our curriculum, teaching methods, resources, and schedule. Teachers have been working in grade level groups during our early dismissal in-services to learn what they can from the numbers.

So how did we do? As we all know, our performance on standardized tests is a very narrow picture of what we are about, but we are still proud to say that our academic progress is excellent when compared to the national student and school norms. The chart below summarizes the percentile rankings from each grade and each ITBS component.

The abundance of statistical terms and acronyms can be very confusing. For instance, what is the difference between the "National Student Norm" and the "National School Norm?" The "student" norm is created by averaging our students' scores in each category to create the "STM average student." That score is compared to all student scores nationally in that category. In other words, our average student score is better than 86% of all student scores in the country for grade 4 Math. The "School Norm" compares the average of our students against the average score from other school systems. For example, the average STM score for grade 3 math is better than the averages of 99% of the other schools.

The question, "who are we being compared to?" is a valid one. To some degree, IOWA percentiles can help discern whether we are aligned to the achievement levels of other schools, and for the purpose of those who are choosing schooling, that can be an important factor. But from an educational standpoint, the measure of each single student or cohorts of students inform us as teachers on what is working and what is not working for our children.

If you have any questions or concerns about what you are seeing, please contact your child's teacher. Thank you for all of the academic support you give our children.

GRADE 3

	Rdng	Lang	Math
Nat'l Student Norms	89	88	87
Nat'l School Norms	99	99	98

GRADE 4

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	90	90	86	91	87	90
Nat'l School Norms	99	99	98	99	99	99

GRADE 5

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	87	87	86	89	88	85
Nat'l School Norms	99	99	99	99	99	99

GRADE 5 CogAT

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	86	86	85	89	88	84

GRADE 6

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	84	80	81	82	77	84
Nat'l School Norms	98	99	95	97	94	99

GRADE 7

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	87	86	84	84	84	86
Nat'l School Norms	99	99	97	99	99	99

GRADE 8

	Rdng	Lang	Math	SS	Sci	Ref. Skills
Nat'l Student Norms	88	82	84	85	83	85
Nat'l School Norms	99	99	98	98	99	99

In Christ,

Michael W. Ashton, Ed.D.
Principal, St. Thomas More Catholic School