



faith, focus, and achievement

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the last year, the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools underwent a project to discuss the feasibility of system-wide curricular assessment of our early elementary grade students. As you may be aware, the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools currently only evaluates students in grades 3-8 through the use of the ACT ASPIRE assessment package. The Archdiocese of Chicago in its systematic review of academic performance has seen the need for additional information on the progress of our Kindergarten through 2nd grade students. The Office of Catholic Schools through a series of meetings with Archdiocese of Chicago Principals, provided the opportunity to provide feedback on several assessment packages. From those meetings, the Office of Catholic Schools selected one of the assessment packages to be used in a pilot of 15 schools; that package was the *I-Ready Assessment*, supported by the educational group, Curriculum Associates.

I-Ready is an interactive online program that is designed to not only provide an assessment of student progress, but also an individualized instructional plan for each student. I-Ready starts the process with an adaptive diagnostic test that identifies the students' current academic level. Adaptive assessments are frequently chosen for their high precision and efficiency, allowing educators to pinpoint student needs more accurately in less time than with traditional fixed-form assessments. I-Ready with its sophisticated adaptive logic and bank of thousands of test items will be key in pinpointing students' needs in reading and math down to the domain and sub-skill levels. In a recent independent study, I-Ready was found to have strong correlations with common-core based assessments and we believe that this should result in a strong academic gains for all students.

As a result of the I-Ready process, teachers gain real-time access to reports that identify the needs of your child and is given additional curricular resources to continue and accelerate student growth on select assessed standards. Parents also receive detailed reports of where their children are performing including a target score for the next assessment, as well as their child's lexile range used for selecting the correct reading level for your child. I-Ready also provides students a digital instruction supplement where students are able to work independently on targeted activities based on your students' needs. I-Ready lessons consist of a tutorial, guided practice and then an independent activity where feedback is given directly to the student. Students receive real-time comments as well as motivational messages and "credits" that are displayed so children can see their progress.

Schools have started to administer the program and the diagnostic started in November and will continue through mid-December. After this period, schools will have students spend a maximum of one hour per week on the I-Ready instructional program and then another diagnostic assessment in late February or early March. Testing should only take 30-45 minutes per subject and should not be a disrupting impact on a normal school day. The Office of Catholic Schools will continue to monitor the progress of the program. Schools are scheduled for additional professional development meetings for teachers in November and February for further support. Due to these significant benefits for our students, the Office of Catholic Schools is excited about the pilot and the opportunity for principals share feedback on how students are progressing.

For more information on the I-Ready package, please access the following link: <http://i-readycentral.com/familycenter/>

Thank you for your continued partnership in your child's education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hedi Belkaoui".

Hedi Belkaoui
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