

Date: October 9, 2020

Topic: TFS IOWA Test Update and General Information

Dear TFS parents and faculty and staff:

Happy Friday! Yesterday our school completed the required Diocesan IOWA and CogAT testing. We had a bumpy start to the week, but were able to course correct, for the most part, and finish strong. I cannot thank our faculty and staff enough for their work, as I know the test preparation and execution was exhausting. Thank you, as well, to our parents who made sure their students were well rested and prepared for each test day; we always appreciate your partnership.

As a reminder, the Diocese requires that we do IOWA testing every year in 3rd-8th grades, and we also do CogATs in 3rd and 5th grades. We do these tests each year to provide:

- A general sense of our school's academic program to the Diocese and the State.
- Data for internal use to better differentiate instruction for our students.
- Longitudinal data to show student progress across their years at The Franciscan School.

The testing this year went very well for the "in-house" cohorts. However, the same was not true for our distance learners. Still, for both sets of students, we had some changes this year that affected the test integrity:

- The required spacing, and the limits on the personnel we have available, didn't allow us to offer the normal accommodations.
- The testing of students "in house" and online, and those who were Distance Learning online from home, required us to administer the tests in a different way. This calls into question the integrity of comparing these tests to previous years.
- The changes to our test schedule, for the benefit of students and our teachers, compacted the testing.

Unfortunately, some of our Distance Learners and 8th grade students on the hybrid schedule experienced a variety of issues with accessibility and technical problems that the testing company worked to resolve as much as possible. As a result, some students did not have the opportunity to take some of the tests

We recognize the integrity of the process and the usefulness of the data is going to be suspect because of these changes. Due to these integrity issues, the potential of having the same errors occur again, and the logistics of the time and space needed to do so many retests, we are NOT offering "make-up" tests. Please do not worry about making tests up!

We will NOT use this data for placement, and we do not know of any high schools who use this data for placement either, nor will it be used internally other than to see if there

seem to be areas for individual improvement. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding, especially those who were trying to take the tests from home, and we hope to have a more "normal experience" next year.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about IOWA and/or CogAT testing.

For all, just a gentle reminder that next Friday, October 16th, is now a teacher work day for faculty and staff; there will be no school or distance classes for students. We are using this time to prepare for the upcoming weeks of school, and to prepare for the conference days on the 19th and 20th of October. Because of the virtual schedule for conferences and the changes to class schedules in elementary grades this year, we will not have conferences for all students' families. The teachers will reach out, or have already, to find times to meet with those they feel could benefit from their insight and suggestions.

As always, thanks for your support of The Franciscan School, and have a great weekend!

With great gratitude,

Mike Watson, Principal
The Franciscan School