

“Mapping” Our Way to High Levels of Learning

Dear Parents,

St. Michael Catholic School has elected to begin using an assessment called MAP, short for “Measure of Academic Progress” by NWEA, the Northwest Evaluation Association. NWEA, is an educational non-profit, and is mission-driven to help kids learn and succeed. It was founded by teachers for teachers over 40 years ago. Used widely among public and private schools as a valuable instructional tool, MAPs are not state or federally mandated.

WHAT are MAPs?

MAPs are a personalized assessment in the area of reading and math. They are computerized (we use laptops or iPads) and the questions presented adapt to your child’s level of learning. Questions hover at each student’s achievement level, presenting items based on prior responses. This means each student has the same opportunity to feel successful and maintain a positive attitude toward testing. MAP results provide details about your child’s current level of performance in reading and math rather than simply giving the number of items correct and incorrect. Over time, the results will show information about individual student growth.

WHEN?

MAPs are an interim assessment, which means they take place at select intervals in the school year. The data provides an objective measure of student progress toward learning objectives, measures student academic growth, and informs instruction. StMCS will use MAPs each fall and spring. There is also a winter window that will always be available for our use should we deem it necessary to test on an individual or class-by-class basis. This year, we utilized the winter window as an introductory run with several classes to acquaint both teachers and students with the assessment.

We will officially roll out our use of this assessment during the spring window, in late April through mid-May. Teachers will notify you about the exact schedule once it is set. Moving forward, we will publish the fall and spring MAP windows in our yearly calendar. Each child, grades 2-8, will take the Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) in reading and math. They are untimed, however, they typically take students about one hour for each reading and mathematics assessment.

Students in K-1 will take the MPG, which is the MAP for Primary Grades, tailored for the youngest of students. This opportunity will help us identify each child’s starting point as early as possible. Taking the assessment on the computer with headphones, each child has the questions and responses read for them. They can have the questions repeated as many times as needed and they move at their own pace. If this instrument proves as useful as we predict, we will be able to eliminate a number of other one-on-one assessments thereby freeing up time to best meet students at their level of learning.

WHY MAPs?

We are administering MAP tests to better determine your child's instructional level and to measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year. Results will help teachers make informed decisions about what instructional programs or strategies might be used to help students learn best. This data will be used as *one* of many data points for instructional decisions and never as a sole decision-making tool.

Following each assessment window, you will receive a report showing your child's present level of learning and growth.

HOW Can Parents Learn More?

You are invited to attend an informational meeting hosted by an NWEA representative on Thursday, March 26 from 6:30-7:30 pm. The presentation will cover "MAP Basics for Parents" explaining further, the purpose of the tests, how to interpret your child's results and how you as parents can use the information obtained to promote your child's learning. Watch for an RSVP form in your March 12th Family Folder.

Lynn Lamers of NWEA will be our presenter. Ms. Lamers has worked in Minnesota in K-12 education for 26 years. She was an elementary classroom teacher for 20 years, and then served as part of a curriculum team where her duties included overseeing MAP testing, assisting as a data coach for teachers, and helping staff implement standards-based instruction.

We are truly excited to implement this tool that focuses on every child's individual growth and achievement. Partnering to help all kids learn, parents and teachers can have a profound positive effect on the lives of our children.

For more information on resources for parents, download the "Parent Toolkit" at <https://www.nwea.org/resources/parent-toolkit/>.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Haller

Principal

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Support Specialist (Coordinator of Assessments)