

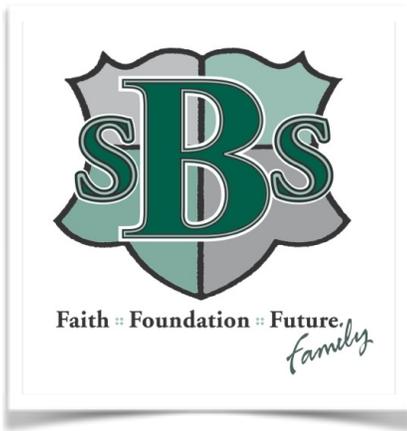
Upcoming
Events

ACT ASPIRE TESTING
GRADES 3-6
APRIL 15-22

SBS FAMILY MASS
APRIL 19

HOME & SCHOOL
MEETING &
ELECTIONS
APRIL 21

FAMILY BULLETIN



The ACT Aspire

At St. Benilde School, we take data seriously. Why? Because for us, curriculum starts with learning what each child knows and can do, and then compare that against standards of what each child should know and be able to do by a certain grade level. Throughout the school year, we use the STAR benchmarks in addition to teacher made tests and other classroom assessments to measure student learning and drive daily instruction. At the end of the year, we use an additional assessment to evaluate the school's overall academic program as well as the year-to-year progress of our students.

For the previous seven years, the schools of the Archdiocese of New Orleans used the *Terra-Nova 3 with InView* assessment for this end-of-year academic checkup. Starting with this school year, we will begin to use the *ACT Aspire*. Here are some quick answers to the questions you may have:

1. *Why are we switching tests?* The *Terra-Nova 3 with Inview* is a great standardized test. However, it is written to measure student performance as compared to the old Louisiana Grade Level Expectations instead of the more rigorous standards we use today. The *ACT Aspire* measures the new standards and therefore provides us with information that is both valid and reliable.
2. *How was the ACT Aspire chosen?* The Office of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of New Orleans chooses the end of year assessment. During the 2013-2014 school year, a committee of school administrators and associate superintendents reviewed multiple assessments and ultimately chose the *ACT Aspire*.
3. *Why was the ACT Aspire chosen?* The *ACT Aspire* is written by the same company that writes the *ACT* that high school juniors and seniors take for college admission. Therefore, it is both an end-of-year assessment and practice test for the *ACT*.
4. *How is this test different than the Terra-Nova 3?* Aside from the more rigorous standards the *ACT Aspire* uses, there are two main differences. First, the *ACT Aspire* is criterion-referenced, while the *Terra-Nova 3* was norm-referenced. In a norm-referenced test, student performance is

reported in percentiles compared to how their peers performed. In a criterion-referenced test, student performance is measured against the standard itself, or a raw score. In other words, instead of reporting that a student performed in the 95th percentile of all students, the *ACT Aspire* will report that a student got 70% of the answers correct for a given standard. The second difference is that the *ACT Aspire* does not have the cognitive *Inview*, which measures innate cognitive ability. As a result, we will not know if an individual student is performing higher or lower than they should given their cognitive ability.

5. *How prepared is St. Benilde School?* The *ACT Aspire* is a brand new assessment, so there are kinks to be worked out. For instance, students were supposed to be able to take the test on their devices. However, the apps are not ready yet, so students will be taking the test in the computer lab. The Archdiocese also did not provide any training to schools on the test until two weeks ago, which means that teachers have very little chance to prepare kids for the test. However, students have taken a practice test and the new math and reading resources the school has purchased over the past two years are designed to help students succeed on tests like the *ACT Aspire*.
6. *How do we think students will do?* It is very hard to project how students will do in the first year of any new assessment. This is especially true for one as new as the *ACT Aspire*. So this year, we will be setting a new baseline upon which we will improve in future years.
7. *When will we get results?* One advantage of an all-digital test is that we get results much sooner than with paper and pencil tests. In fact, we should get results in three weeks instead of the old six-to-eight weeks. That will give the school plenty of time to analyze and report on school results, as well as give us a head start on planning curriculum improvements for next year. Keep an eye out for a parent meeting in mid-May where parents can get their child's test results and receive a report on overall school performance.

Spring Break 2016

The school is busy putting the finishing touches on the 2015-2016 school calendar, and we need your help. Mardi Gras is very early next year (February 9, 2016), which makes our annual Mardi Gras break February 8-12, 2016. That also means that the second semester will have few breaks from mid-February through Memorial Day. Another option then is to keep Mardi Gras break

Upcoming Calendar

4/13: Student Council Meeting, 3:15 PM

4/14: Rite of Illumination, 6:30 PM, Church

4/15: School Mass, 1:30 PM, Church

4/15-22: ACT Aspire Testing, Grades 3-6

4/19: SBS Family Mass, 11:00 AM, Church

4/20-24: Spring Book Fair

4/21: Home and School Meeting & Elections, 7:00 PM, Cafeteria

4/22: School Mass, 8:20 AM, Church

4/24: Talent Show, 1-2:45 PM, Cafeteria

4/24: End of Fourth Interim

4/24: Men's Club Family Outdoor Movie Night, Field, Dusk.

4/25: Night at the Races, 7:00 PM, Cafeteria

short so that students return to school on Ash Wednesday, and instead taking a long Easter Break from March 24-April 1, 2016.

So we need your help. Please go online to the school's Facebook page and answer our Spring Break survey between Monday, April 13 and Friday April 17. The official calendar will be reviewed by the Advisory Board during our April meeting and then released in early May. We thank you in advance for your feedback!

The Archdiocese of New Orleans Retreat Center News

The Retreat Center for the Archdiocese of New Orleans located at 5500 St. Mary Street in Metairie announces the following retreats:

Seeking the God of Mercy

Rev. Simeon Gallagher

May 15-17, 2015

May 22-24, 2015

The Gift of St. Francis

Rev. Keith Hosey

May 29-31, 2015

Young Women's Retreat

Yvonne Hymel

May 30-31, 2015

For more information or to sign up for a retreat, please contact the retreat center at 504-267-9604 or online at retreats.arch-no.org.

First Day of School:
August 17, 2015!