



Catholic
Schools

ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

A Parent's Guide to Performance Series

- The Archdiocese of Baltimore's Department of Catholic Schools is using Performance Series by Scantron this year as our diagnostic and placement tool for Grades 2-8.
- The Performance Series assessments make it easy for your child's teachers to identify areas of strength and areas for growth. The new suite of assessments will provide teachers with detailed information that will inform their daily instruction. Overall, teachers will use the data from these assessments to:
 - identify your child's ability levels.
 - demonstrate academic growth over time.
 - place your child in the appropriate instructional group.
 - identify gaps in knowledge and skill acquisition.



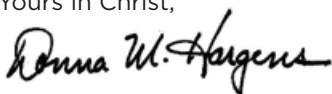
Dear Parents / Guardians,

The information found on the subsequent pages will introduce you to the new standardized testing program for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. During the 2020-21 academic year, all students in grades 2-8 will complete a reading, language, and mathematics assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. In the spring, students in grades 3, 5, and 7 will complete science and social studies assessments. These assessments are shorter than the Iowa and CogAT, so the total amount of time testing will be comparable to previous years. Since testing in the spring of 2020 was canceled due to school closure, it is essential that we assess students this fall to determine potential content knowledge and skill gaps.

Further communication about the test will take place gradually throughout the year. Expect details on testing dates and results to come from your child's teacher and/or principal.

This decision was made by a team of leaders in the Department of Catholic Schools and principals across the Archdiocese. All schools were consulted on the decision and we are all excited about the value that the new platform will provide.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donna M. Hargens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" being the most prominent part.

Dr. Donna Hargens
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Archdiocese of Baltimore



What is Performance Series®?

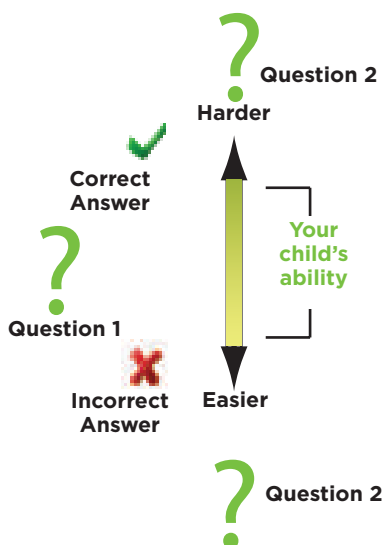
Performance Series is an online computer-adaptive test that adjusts to your child's instructional levels based on his or her responses to questions. Unlike other assessments, Performance Series is norm-referenced and completely computer-based, and all test results are available to teachers and administrators immediately.

All tests begin in relation to your child's current grade level the first time he or she takes a test in that subject. For those students who tested previously, the next test taken starts at a difficulty level where the student left off at the end of the last test. All scores are used for instructional grouping and to show growth and progress over time toward academic goals.

Computer-adaptive testing works by presenting questions that adjust based on the student's answers. Questions get slightly easier when a student answers incorrectly and slightly more challenging when a student answers correctly. Due to the adaptive nature of the test, each student will have a unique testing experience that will more accurately measure your child's instructional level.

Why is this helpful to me?

- Unique tests matched to your child's instructional level more accurately determine his or her next steps in the classroom.
- Results from these tests provide information to help you understand your child's growth academically, through this year and across years.



Why is this helpful to my child's teacher?

- Immediate results mean teachers can adjust instruction more quickly to help your child master important concepts.
- Educational materials can be customized by group or individual student based on score results, which helps teachers improve learning outcomes.
- Detailed reports allow teachers to evaluate current or new teaching strategies against the scores for the class and make adjustments as needed for any skills and/or concepts that may need re-teaching.

When are the tests given?

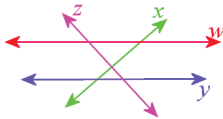
The tests are administered three (3) times per year in reading, mathematics, and language arts for grades 2-8. As a result of the computer-based model, students will spend less total time testing than previously seen with paper and pencil tests that took up to a week of instructional time.

What Subject Areas and Units Are Covered?

Mathematics

Look at the diagram, then answer the question.

Which lines appear to be parallel?



Units:

- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis & Probability
- Number & Operations

Reading

Braille is one of the most commonly used systems of reading and writing for people who are blind. Louis Braille invented it in 1834, when he was only fifteen years old. Louis had been blind since he was three. He learned to read by touching letters engraved in wood. It was a very



What do the following three events have in common?

- Braille used in the United States
- Braille officially adopted by the United States
- Braille adopted as universal code for English

Units:

- Vocabulary
- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Long Passage

Language Arts

Which word fits best in this sentence?

I was very hungry, _____ I could not eat the squid.

- ☐ A. yet
- ☐ B. and
- ☐ C. or
- ☐ D. for



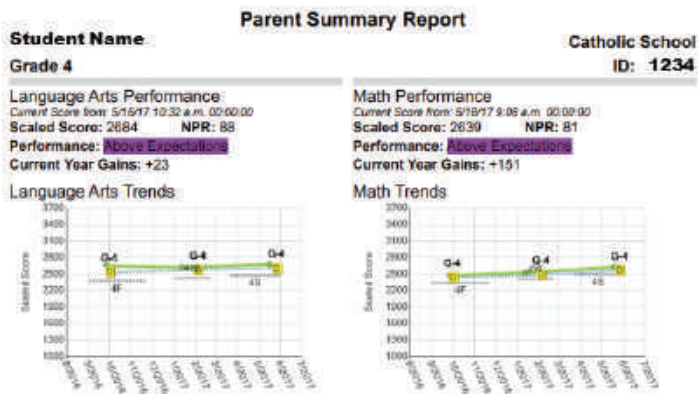
Units:

- Capitalization
- Parts of Speech
- Punctuation
- Sentence Structure

What Do the Scores Mean to Me and My Child?

Scaled Score

The Performance Series tests use a scaled score as an estimate of your child’s instructional level, which is independent of grade level. The scaled score spans across all grade levels and all tests, so teachers and parents are able to monitor growth and progress in a subject over time. If you think of the scaled score as an “educational yardstick” you can then measure your child’s growth from fall to spring in one school year or from year to year. Along with a scaled score per test, there are other ways to measure a student’s growth and progress as well as how your child’s score compares to others in his or her grade level. You can see a sample of the scores in the Parent Summary Report below.



Gains

Gains refer to the number of scaled score points between one test and another in the same subject. Gains are shown in the trend line on the student profile. Teachers and parents can look at a full year of growth for a child and see if that child “grew” at the same pace as other students who tested similarly in the fall in Scantron’s national norm group.

National Percentile Ranking (NPR)

The National Percentile Ranking score (NPR) compares your child’s scaled score to the scores of his or her grade level peers in Scantron’s national norm group. For example, if your child has an NPR of 74, your child’s score is above 74% of his or her peers in the same grade level in the national norm group.

Performance Rating

The performance rating represents your child’s rating in the context of the Scantron-defined set of performance bands by scaled score range. There are four (4) bands in the set, each one representing an NPR quartile.

What Else Should I Know?

Suggested Learning Objectives (SLOs)

The Scantron skills that are measured in the Performance Series tests are aligned to the custom standards selected by the diocese. These skills appear on reports as Suggested Learning Objectives by unit for your child and are individualized based on your child's test experience. The scaled score works in tandem with the diocesan standards to determine where to focus your child's learning.

Are the tests timed?

No, children are allowed as much time as needed to take the test.

Do all students see the same test?

All children see the same topic areas, but all children do not see the same test questions, because Performance Series is computer-adaptive—each test is unique for each child.

How many test items does each student receive?

The test is online and computer-adaptive, so each child receives a unique test and the number of items may vary. There is no set number of questions. The average number of questions in a testing session is about 50.

