# A Parent's Guide to Performance Series

The Catholic Schools Office in the Diocese of Arlington is using Performance Series by Scantron again this year as their diagnostic and placement tool.

The Performance Series assessment makes it easy for your child's teacher(s) to identify his or her progress—and find the diagnostic information they need to place your child academically and manage his or her instruction.

Performance Series is a web-based, computer-adaptive test that your school uses to:

- identify your child's ability levels
- demonstrate academic growth over time
- place your child in the correct instructional programs

Dear Parents / Guardians,

This booklet will introduce you to the new standardized testing program for the Diocese of Arlington. During the 2015–2016 academic year, the Scantron Performance Series standardized test was piloted in several of our schools. Students, parents, and teachers were pleased with the reports and the guidance provided. This program, the procedures, and the reports are now used in all the elementary schools of our diocese, starting with the 2016–2017 academic year. Students in grades 3 through 7 will participate in this testing program.

Further communication about the test and the results will take place gradually throughout the year. Schools will test three times per year in order to show your child's growth in the tested areas.   This gradual approach will enable the teachers to plan instruction suited for the growth of the student and at the same time will also enable you to see how your child is improving academically.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Bigelow*

Jennifer Bigelow
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Arlington

# 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.

**Question 2**
**Harder**
**Correct Answer**
**Your child's ability**
**Question 1**
**Incorrect Answer**
**Easier**
**Question 2**

## 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.
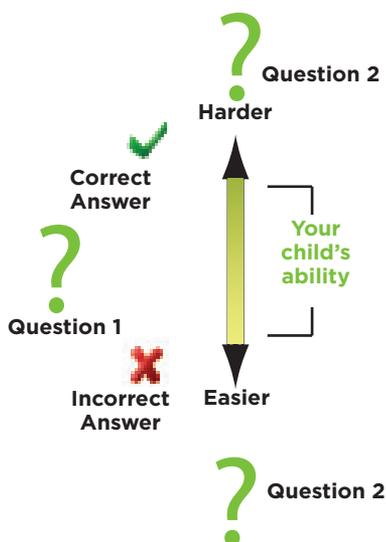
## Why is this helpful to my child's teacher?

- 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, Math and Language Arts for grades 3–7. As a result of the computer-based model, students will spend less total time testing then 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?
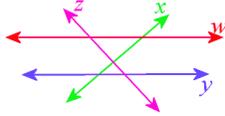
**Units:**
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis & Probability
- Number & Operations

## Reading

Braille is one of the most commonly used systems of reading and writing for people who are blind. Louis Braille invented it in 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.
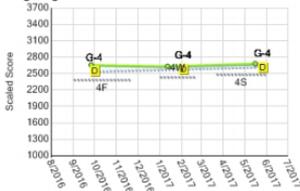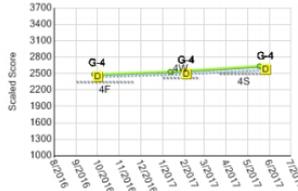


## Gains

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 a *diocese-defined* set of performance bands by scaled score range. There are five (5) performance bands in the diocesan-defined set.

# What Else Should I Know?

## Does Performance Series align to diocesan standards?

Yes, the Office of Catholic Schools worked closely with Scantron to ensure the diocesan standards are used to guide and assess your child. These standards appear throughout the reports as suggested learning objectives.

## 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.