

Common Core State Standards

Handwriting (graded) will again appear on all levels of the report card. Grades K-2 and Grades 3-8 will be assessed using an Archdiocesan rubric based on the 4, 3, 2, 1 grading scale. In recent years there has been a concern that poor handwriting has held students back when they were completing constructed responses in tests. Its inclusion as a real-life skill is supported with recent research connecting handwriting and learning. As an example, I'm including an excerpt from an article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal last month.

How Handwriting Trains the Brain

Excerpts from Gwendolyn Bounds' Wall Street Journal Article

In the Wall Street Journal article "How Handwriting Trains the Brain," Gwendolyn Bounds discusses the important connection between handwriting and learning. She states: "Recent research illustrates how writing by hand engages the brain in learning. During one study at Indiana University published this year, researchers invited children to man a 'spaceship,' actually an MRI machine using a specialized scan called 'functional' MRI that spots neural activity in the brain. The kids were shown letters before and after receiving different letter-learning instruction. In children who had practiced printing by hand, the neural activity was far more enhanced and "adult-like" than those who had simply looked at letters."

Bounds goes on to say, "...research highlights the hand's unique relationship with the brain when it comes to composing thoughts and ideas. Virginia Berninger, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Washington says handwriting differs from typing because it requires executing sequential strokes to form a letter, whereas keyboarding involves selecting a whole letter by touching a key. She says pictures of the brain have illustrated that sequential finger movements activated massive regions involved in thinking, language and working memory – the system for temporarily storing and managing information. And one recent study of hers demonstrated that in grades two, four and six, children wrote more words, faster, and expressed more ideas when writing essays by hand versus with a keyboard."

- Thank you to all of our families who were so supportive of *The Night at the Races*. It was a most successful evening in so many ways. Those who were able to attend can attest to the fact that it was an enjoyable night out!
- *Good News!* Our instrumental music students recently auditioned for the Archdiocesan Band and once again we placed the greatest number of students in both the prestigious Honor Band and the Festival Band. Congratulations to Gabby Good (1st chair), Gillian Haviland, and Thomas Hill - clarinetists; Jack Judge -percussionist; Gen Tarlo, Grace Majkut, and Maggie Hallahan - flutists; Edward Goebel (1st chair) - French horn player; Mary Kate McGoldrick - tenor sax player; Collin Quigley, Daniel O'Connell, Joseph Cawley - trumpeters who will all be playing in the Honor Band. Festival Band members are Aine Playdon, clarinetist; Ryan Good (1st chair), Megan Lynch, and Julia Mayro, flutists; and Molly DiMaria, trumpeter. Thank you, Mr. Schmauk, for your dedication as our Band teacher.

- *Good News - continued!* Phillies Charities, Inc. issued us a grant in the amount of \$7,500 to continue existing programs or launch new programs and services in our school. Our grant was written to enable us to complete our "wish list" for our Physical Education and Health and Science programs. Mr. Roken, our PE teacher and Mrs. Overmier, our moderator for Running Club will be representing our school on Monday, December 12th, at the Diamond Club at Citizens Bank Park.
- Our Annual Alumni Mass and Reception will be held this weekend on Sunday, November 20, 2011. Mass is at 11:30am with a reception immediately following in Conahan Hall. We welcome all of our former students and families to join us. Please spread the word to graduates near and far and invite them to celebrate their ICS memories with you!
- *Finding Nemo* will be the movie for the next Movie Night (Wednesday, November 23rd) sponsored by our 8th grade students. A flyer is included today with details.
- *Crazy Sock Day*, also sponsored by our 8th grade students takes place on Tuesday, November 22nd. A flyer with details is included today.

"Online Extension"

- If you "missed" our Book Fair, this year you still have an online shopping opportunity which ends on Friday, November 18th. Go to <http://www.scholastic.com/schoolbookfairs/2921658>. Please note that all of the funds raised in our Book Fair go directly to the Library for new books and supplies.
- *We were notified that Yankee Candle orders were shipped and will be delivered today, November 17th. Students will take them home or, depending on your order quantity, candles will be available for pick up after 2pm.*

Calendar Revisions:

- Carol Night - Tuesday, December 13th at 7pm
- School will be in session on Tuesday, January 31st. The Mass for teachers at the Basilica has been cancelled.

EACH TIME YOU SHOP AT GIANT USING YOUR BONUSCARD (THROUGH MARCH 31, 2012) OUR SCHOOL EARNS A+ SCHOOL REWARDS. THIS MONEY CAN BE USED FOR ANY SCHOOL ITEM WE CHOOSE. VISIT GIANTFOODSTORES.COM/APLUS, REGISTER YOUR BONUSCARD ONLINE AND SELECT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL, JENKINTOWN. OUR 5-DIGIT ID CODE IS 03750. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Included today or online:

- Neumann Scholarship information to all 8th Grade families
- Tag Day flyer