

Bishop's Follow-up Parent Letter for SBG

April 13, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Second Vatican Council highlighted the value of Catholic education in the life of the Church and its fundamental mission to spread the Gospel. While our society often places competition and academic excellence above the development of a student's moral and intellectual excellence, our Catholic schools have an essential obligation to provide our students with more than just a rigorous academic curriculum to prepare them for high school, college and beyond. Catholic education must also prepare students to take their place in society as Disciples of Christ; instilling in them a sense of service and challenging them to live the Gospel through daily interactions with all whom they come in contact.

In an ongoing effort to fulfill this mission, the Office of Catholic Schools had plans to recommend the full implementation of standards-based grading with the use of subject-level letter grades in grades 6-8 in every elementary school within Diocese of Columbus, thus providing SBG for all grades in our elementary schools. On March 25, however, during a diocesan meeting with principals and pastors regarding this initiative and based on their feedback, it has been determined that SBG should be a requirement at all grade levels and that subject-level letter grades should be phased out for all Catholic elementary schools in our Diocese. Additionally, an implementation plan should be developed to ensure a smooth, gradual transition for students, parents, teachers, and administrators alike.

Other items discussed at the meeting include:

- Those schools now utilizing SBG for all grades will continue to do so; for schools that are not ready to implement SBG, a timeline is being developed to aid in this transition.
- Every school **MUST** include on their student progress reports standards-based grades for all grades (K-8).
- Those schools that are not ready to implement SBG in grades 6-8 will have the option to continue to use subject level letter grades ***in addition to SBG*** for these grades during the 2015-2016 school year.
- Some new progress codes and descriptors will be used on student interim and progress reports, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.
- It is an expectation that SchoolSpeak will be used to print student progress reports.
- The Office of Catholic schools will establish a committee, comprised of a representative sample of schools that have and have not implemented SBG, to work on the timeline, plans for professional development, and necessary instructional materials for parents for the 2015-2016 school-year.

By implementing SBG for all students, more detailed, accurate information about student performance can be communicated by teachers to parents. Additional details will be shared by your school principal prior to the start of the coming school year. Please refer to the Office of Catholic Schools web page, under the "Parent" tab, to learn more about both SGB and the new student progress report.

We are confident that that these practices will not only support our goal to help each child in our schools to reach his or her full academic potential, but to do so within the context and tenants of Catholic teaching, helping them to begin to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. Again, thank you for your continued support of Catholic education and this important ministry.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Frederick F. Campbell, D.D., Ph.D.
Bishop of Columbus

Joseph A. Brettbacher, Ph.D.
Episcopal Moderator of Catholic Education & Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Pastors and Elementary Principals