



Newport Central Catholic High School

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Dear Parents,

Ever since the article came out regarding the ACT scores of the individual schools in the Diocese with comparisons to the public schools I have fielded some questions about the academics at NCC. Since our parents are our best forum for public relations I wanted to share my response to some of the questions with everyone. This is a good time to communicate this information since we are approaching our Open House on December 7th. I want to have as many voices as possible confidently sharing the many benefits of an NCC education with those considering joining our Family.

I believe strongly that our overall composite ACT scores are unique because our students come from diverse communities with diverse backgrounds educationally and economically. Research shows that both of these factors play a role in standardized test scores. These are factors to consider when evaluating our programs, not excuses. I am proud of our school and the work of both our teachers and students. Neither group will tell you that either is satisfied with the status quo, we are always evaluating, planning, and growing.

The questions I have been asked most are from people who feel our ACT scores should be higher and whether the Trimester system is preventing higher scores. I feel confident in the education we are providing at NCC and both the progress we have made and continue to strive to make. If you look at our scores by comparing the students at NCC to the students of the public or private school they would otherwise attend, you will find the NCC student's scores in most cases exceed those of their "home" district. If you would like to discuss the composite score for NCC students from your "home" district please don't hesitate to see me.

As for the ACT scores suffering because NCC uses a trimester system there is no evidence that supports this thought. In 2005, the third full year of the Trimester system, our ACT composite was 20.6 (Eng 20.9, Math 19.9, Reading 20.7, Science 20.3). In 2011 our ACT composite is 22.7 (Eng 23.2 Math 21, Reading 23.9, Science 22.8). We do not have any evidence that this increase is due solely to the trimester system or was lessened by the trimester system. All we can conclude is while using the trimester system our scores increased by 2 points.

In the spring of 2010, 350 NCC families responded to a survey and rated the Trimester system an average of 5.08 out of a possible 6 when asked about the importance of the trimester schedule to academic success. I recently read on trimesters.org about a high school in Michigan which started using the trimester system in 2009, their scores were up in both 2010 and 2011, and they attribute their improvement to the new schedule.

We do and will always evaluate what we are doing to determine if we are doing our best to prepare our kids for their spiritual, educational, social, and physical journey. This includes looking at the trimester system and how it supports our community's needs. At this time we have no proof that it has an effect on ACT scores in either direction.

Again, I wanted to send out some communication to reinforce to our supportive community that your choice to be a part of NCC was indeed a good choice for your child. As our open house is themed and we all know, NCC IS MORE than just a test score. I wanted to share this with you now so you can continue to help us spread the good word about NCC.

God Bless,

Bob Noll
Principal