



DIOCESE OF COVINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

April 25, 2011

Dear Parent,

On behalf of the Department of Catholic Schools, I wish to announce the acceptance of the Diocese of Covington and its nine Catholic high schools into the ACT District Choice State Testing Program (DCST), beginning with the 2011-2012 school year. DCST permits a school district to test all of its juniors on the same day, during the school day, and at the attending high school. Our first test date is Tuesday, March 20, 2012.

The Diocese of Covington is the first Catholic school system in Kentucky to apply for and be accepted into the ACT DCST Program. We now join the Kentucky public schools in this designation. As a former teacher, guidance counselor, principal, and current superintendent, it is with complete certainty that utilizing DCST will benefit our juniors, you the parent, our schools, and our school system.

The ACT includes four curriculum-based tests that measure students' educational achievement in English, mathematics, reading, and science. The tests are based on the major areas of instruction in American high schools and colleges. A student's performance has a direct and obvious relationship to his or her academic development. Both educators and students as indicated by scores, sub-scores, and skill statements, readily understand the meaning of that performance – *ACT*.

I have enclosed an article from the April 22 edition of the *Messenger* that explains more about the implementation of ACT DCST into the Diocese of Covington.

Our Diocese has always been and continues to be committed to Catholic school education. I am most grateful for your commitment to our schools and for entrusting your children to our Catholic school system. As Bishop Roger Foy wrote in a 2010 letter to parents, "The love you bear your children by providing them with a Catholic school education will not be lost on them. They will remember you, as I remember my own beloved parents, as loving parents whose sacrifice provided them with a solid foundation in the Faith."

Very truly yours,

Michael Clines  
Superintendent for Catholic Schools

## High schools named ACT District Choice

Laura Keener  
Assistant Editor

The Diocese of Covington is the first Catholic school system in Kentucky to apply for and be accepted into the ACT District Choice testing program. They now join the Kentucky public schools in this designation.

Most people are familiar with the ACT program and the ACT test, which is taken by high school students, mostly juniors, each year. The ACT test assesses college and career readiness. As an ACT District Choice designate school system, beginning next year, every junior in each of the nine Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Covington will take the ACT test at their school on March 20, during the regular school day, proctored by their teachers. The test can count towards the college admissions process and the NCAA clearing house.

Michael Clines, superintendent for Catholic Schools, announced the designation to high school principals at their April meeting. In a separate interview with the *Messenger*, April 15, Mr. Clines, who is also a member of the ACT Council for the State of Kentucky, explained his decision to apply for the ACT District Choice program and the benefits of the designation.

"The main reason is it benefits everybody," said Mr. Clines. "Whenever in education you can make a decision that benefits all of the stakeholders — the students, parents, teachers, administration and district — it's an easy choice."

Mr. Clines said that students will benefit from taking the test in a familiar learning environment, with all of their classmates, during their usual learning time and proctored by teachers with whom they are familiar. A smaller advantage for some students is that taking the test during the school day, instead of on a Saturday morning, will avoid conflicts with extracurricular activities and sports.

Students will not need to register for the March 20 test; as students of a District Choice testing school they will already be registered. Cost is \$34, the same as if the test were taken at a national test site.

"For many of the students this will be their first exposure to the ACT. After the District Choice test the next available national test date will be in April (2012). So for students taking the test again in April they will have already had one ACT testing experience," said Mr. Clines. It's not unusual for students to take the ACT test multiple times in order to improve their test score.

For parents the benefit from District Choice testing is simply convenience. Parents might also appreciate that their child is taking the test in their typical learning environment.

"There's a certain relief that your child is taking the test at school," said Mr. Clines. "When you are really concerned about how well your child will do, you want them to be comfortable."

As part of the ACT District Choice testing program teachers supervising and proctoring the test will need to be trained. "This brings a heightened sense of the college and career readiness and standards to the school and hopefully that will be reflected in the classroom," said Mr. Clines.

Mr. Clines said that many of the schools already provide special instruction for students preparing for the ACT test. Having all juniors taking the test on the same day at school adds structure to these programs.

The largest benefit to the school and the district, said Mr. Clines, is the data. "We will know on this certain date where all the juniors are on their scope and sequence in college and career readiness standards which are produced by the ACT and tied into the common core standards in the State of Kentucky. That's a huge district benefit. Also, we can see as the years go on how our juniors are progressing," he said.

But the singular reason is the students. "We want to make sure that every student is college- and career-ready," said Mr. Clines, "and the ACT helps measure that."

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