



The Spring School

Excellent Montessori Education since 1970

August 1, 2018

Dear Parents,

Hooray! We have received our scores on the Terranova Achievement Tests this year in a timely fashion. Your child's scores are enclosed. Students in 2nd – 8th grades took the test in May.

You will find two pieces of paper. The first, "**Home Report**," shows a bar graph.

Please note your child's "grade level." If your child is in Grade 6.8, that means she took the test in the eighth month of sixth grade.

The **gray band across the center of the page** shows the range of scores for an average student. If your child's score falls in this range, congratulations! Your child is **on grade level!** If some of your child's scores are above average, that is even more wonderful. If some scores are below the average range, these pinpoint areas of concern for us to work on next year.

Please pay particular attention to the **three most important scores**: the **Reading Composite**, the **Math Composite**, and the **Language Composite** score. These are your child's overall scores; the other bars represent sub-tests that contribute to these overall scores. The **Total Score** is the average of these three scores.

On the second sheet you will find information an **Individual Profile**. This shows how your child did on particular areas of each test. For instance, under reading, there are categories such as "Basic Understanding;" "Analyze Text;" "Evaluate/Extend Meaning;" and so on. This is intended to help our teachers figure out exactly where a student has very specific strengths and weaknesses. In this area, a black dot shows where your child's score on particular questions lies with relation to national percentiles.

(Please note that **our students did not take the Science and Social Studies tests** which are provided by Terranova. Those tests are not relevant to our curriculum. According to national standards, 3rd graders are supposed to be learning about community helpers such as firemen, but our 3rd graders may be studying Renaissance artists and scientists. So we skip these sections on the test, and that's why we have no scores for them.)

On the back of the Individual Profile, you will find some "Norm-Referenced" statistics which compare your child to others who took this test. The "**NP,**" or **National Percentile**, is the same score which is shown on the bar graph on the Home Report. This score compares your child to every child across the United States who took this test. If

your child scored 70% on a particular sub-test, it means he or she did better than 70% of **all the children in the country who took this particular test.**

Parents are often concerned when they see a score such as 75%. They may think that this means their child has only completed 75% of the test questions correctly. (That would mean a grade of C, so no wonder they are concerned.)

However, this is not the meaning of the percentile score. If your child has earned an NP score of 75%, this means your child is **in the top 25%** of all the students in his or her grade who took the test this year across the entire country. This puts your child in the top quarter of all students, an achievement of which we should all be proud.

“GME” or Grade Mean Equivalent is also a highly interesting score. A child may have a Grade Equivalent which is higher than his or her actual grade level. A child who is only in the eighth month of second grade (2.8), for instance, might have a Math score of 4.8.

This means that **he did as well taking the second grade test as the average child in the eighth month of fourth grade.** (It does not mean, however, that he did many fourth grade problems, because, unfortunately, there were only a few on the second grade test. So please don't conclude that your 2nd grader needs to be placed in 4th grade!)

We are simply amazed at some of the GME scores we see our students have earned this year.

One reason we administer Terranovas is to find areas of relative weakness on which individual students need to work.

We notice that several students need **extra work on math computation.** We urge you to make sure your child is spending some time each evening working computation problems as part of math homework. Sometimes, when students have moved on to conceptually difficult topics such as Pre-Algebra, we forget that they still need to practice multiplication and division just a little bit each day to keep up their skills and their speed.

We are very disappointed to see that quite a few students score lower in **vocabulary** and **reading comprehension** than in other areas of the test. As much as we read and work on vocabulary during the school day, this work in school cannot take the place of wide reading to broaden a child's vocabulary.

It may be that, when parents see that their children are strong readers, they feel they do not need to do anything further to encourage reading at home.

But the more children read, the better they will perform on standardized reading and writing tests, and the better they will be prepared for college. Schoolwork is about basic literacy, but it is at home that a child develops a love for reading.

Is your child spending too much time on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games, and not enough time each day reading for pleasure? Even valuable scheduled activities such as soccer or music practice should not take the place of daily reading.

There are such a wonderful variety of books available for children today. Does your student prefer non-fiction? Biography? How-to-do-it books? Magazines for children? Newspapers? What about fiction? Does your student read novels? Science fiction? Adventure stories? Historical fiction? Stories about friendship?

You do not need to spend a lot of money on books to establish the reading habit. How about a weekly visit to your local library?

No amount of reading instruction in school can take the place of reading at home, every day, for pleasure. Read, read, read!! And read TO your child as well, no matter what her age.

Even when children read a great deal on their own, they may be skipping unfamiliar words. You, as parents, need to take particular steps to make sure your child is **learning new vocabulary words** when he reads. You should ask your child to **circle unfamiliar words or write them** on a piece of paper or post-it note. Then you should **go over these words** with your child, **look back at the passage**, and **explain the meaning in context**. If the words are unfamiliar to you, too, then you should look them up in a **dictionary** with your child, and **go back and interpret the passage**.

This is especially important for children whose **families speak a second language at home**. Even when your child is fluent in English, her vocabulary may suffer relative to third or fourth generation English speakers because you, yourself, do not use as rich a vocabulary as some others do. This is a very common issue for first and second generation Americans, especially when they speak languages which do not share many cognate words with English. You will have to work extra hard to bring your child's vocabulary up to the levels we see for children whose parents and grandparents speak English as a first language.

I would like to share with you our school's statistics.

Our **second graders' Grade Equivalent** scores are as follows:

- Reading 6.4
- Vocabulary: 4.9
- Reading Composite 5.4
- Language Mechanics: 7.2
- Mathematics 5.3
- Mathematics Computation: 3.7
- Mathematics Composite 4.4
- Spelling 5.9
- Total Battery: 5.7

Goodness gracious! Our second graders are reading as if they were 6th graders, and their Mathematics scores are like those of 4th graders. But even more amazing, their Language Mechanics score is in the 7th grade range, reflecting their very strong preparation in writing, editing, punctuation, and grammar, subjects which are barely being taught in many public schools.

Our **third graders'** scores are as follows:

Reading 9.3
Vocabulary 8.2
Reading Composite 8.7
Language 11.3
Language Mechanics 11.0
Language Composite 11.3
Mathematics 9.9
Math Computation 6.1
Math Composite 7.9
Spelling 8.4
Word Analysis 6.4
Total Battery: 10.2

On average, our third graders performed as well as average 10th graders would have performed, had they taken this test. That is simply stupendous.

The scores in our **Upper School** are equally impressive:

Our **Fourth Graders'** average scores are as follows:

Reading 10.2
Vocabulary 10.9
Reading Composite 10.8
Language 11.5
Language Mechanics 8.3
Language Composite 10.1
Mathematics 8.3
Math Computation 7.2
Math Composite 7.9
Spelling 8.3
Total Battery: 10.0

This delightful group of 4th graders is reading as if they were 10th graders and doing mathematics, on average, as if they were 7th or 8th graders. Their strongest area is Language, where they compare to 11th graders.

Here are our **Fifth Graders'** Average Scores:

Reading 11.6

Vocabulary 11.1
Reading Composite 11.4
Language 13.0
Language Mechanics 11.9
Language Composite 13.0
Mathematics 10.8
Math Computation 12.5
Math Composite 11.4
Spelling 9.2
Total Battery 12.0

12.9 means the last month of 12th grade, and I thought that was as high as these scores could go. So I'm not sure what to say when our 5th graders score 13.0 in Language! The math scores for this group are not too shabby either. Computation like a 12th grader?!

Here are the average scores for 6th graders:

Reading 11.8
Vocabulary 12.1
Reading Composite 12.1
Language 12.2
Language Mechanics 11.0
Language Composite 12.0
Mathematics 12.2
Math Computation 12.2
Math Composite 12.6
Spelling 10.9
Total Battery 12.4

We begin to see the trend: the more years a child spends at the Spring School, the more her scores exceed the average for her grade level.

7th Grade Average scores are as follows:

Reading 12.8
Vocabulary 12.1
Reading Composite 12.8
Language 12.9
Language Mechanics 13.0
Language Composite 13.0
Mathematics 12.8
Math Computation 13.0
Math Composite 13.0
Spelling 12.1
Total Battery 13.0

These 7th graders are performing – on average – at the ceiling of the test, as if they were high school graduates taking this test. This is not to say that every student has a perfect score on every test, which is certainly not the case.

Finally, the scores of our outstanding 8th grade graduates:

Reading 12.6
Vocabulary 11.8
Reading Composite 12.4
Language 12.9
Language Mechanics 12.3
Language Composite 12.8
Mathematics 13.0
Math Computation 13.0
Math Composite 13.0
Spelling 12.3
Total Battery 13.0

These highly successful students are going on to top high schools, such as Montclair Kimberly, Fieldston, Avenues, and local public high schools where they have been accepted into multiple Honors Courses.

Our scores clearly show the **cumulative advantage** of each year spent at the Spring School.

Enjoy your summer! If you have any questions about your child's scores, please call me at school to discuss them. I will be out of town from August 10th – 24th, but if you'd like to meet with your child's teachers, we can schedule a conference during the week before school begins.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Knapp,
Director