



Dear Parents:

Each spring we administer the Stanford Achievement Test [SAT] to all of our students in grades K-8. **We are proud that each of our classes in grades K-8 achieved a composite score on the complete battery of above average (see chart below).** Enclosed are the test results for your child. *The school grade level bar graph of Saint Michael scores is printed on the web site at <http://www.smlcs.org/academics/sat.htm>.* If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child’s teacher to set up an appointment.

Achievement test scores are important; however they are only one of several measures of your child’s academic performance. Compare these test scores to report card grades, classwork, homework, and project grades. Remember that achievement tests do not measure talent or ability directly; they measure how much your child has learned compared to the nationally normed group of students at their same grade level.

A quick method of interpreting your child’s results is to look under the testing column titled: National Individual (Natl. Indiv.). This column lists your child’s percentile rank (PR), and stanine (S). The scores show your child’s performance in comparison with student performance nationally.

Stanine (s)		Percentile Rank (PR)
9, 8, 7	Above Average	76-99
6	High Average	61-75
5	Average	41-60
4	Low Average	25-40
3, 2, 1	Below Average	1-24

Please read the back of your child’s test result summary for additional information on test interpretation.

If you are concerned about your child’s achievement level, now is the time to take action to locate the specific skills that are missing or deficient. In addition to consulting with your child’s teacher, you may want to consult with professionals who specialize in diagnosing skill gaps and are experts in providing individualized evaluations to help improve academic performance. Please contact me if you desire a referral.

Why doesn’t a perfect score on some subtests or achievement test batteries yield the 99th percentile?

“On any given subtest, the most acceptable method for assigning percentile ranks is to assign them to the middle of the interval. (This method is described below.) Assigning perfect scores arbitrarily to the 99th percentile, or to the bottom of the interval, is not statistically correct. Therefore, Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement assigns percentile ranks to the middle of the interval.

For example, if 100 students tested and 10% earn perfect scores, these 10 students did not score higher than 99% of the students tested--only 90%. The bottom of the interval percentile method assigns the 90th percentile. Because the middle of the interval is 5, we assign all 10 students the 95th percentile.

This phenomenon most often occurs with short tests or tests with good content validity. Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement believes that the trade-off, that is, sacrificing statistical ranking for validity, is appropriate.

Another Analogy

If you have 10 horses in a race and 3 of them tie for first place, those 3 horses didn't beat 99% of the horses--only 70%. So let's share the award and assign them the 85th percentile.” [Harcourt Testing Services]

Many thanks to our Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Mueller for facilitating the SAT testing program at St. Michael.

In Christ,

Robert J. Ziegler, Principal



Excerpts from:
“Understanding Standard Tests”
by Dr. Richard Konkel, April 1993

Standardized Tests tell you how well your child is doing academically compared to other children. Thousands of children are compared to make a representative group on each grade level. These children’s scores are used to “norm” the test. Test results help you and your child understand how much your child is learning compared to other children in their school, the state and nation.

A percentile score tells you what percentage of students in the norm group scored higher and lower than your child on a particular sub-test. For example, a score saying “80%ile” means that your child scored higher than 80% of the students in the norm group represents a national group.

A stanine score is expressed in a number ranging from 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest). It tells you if your child scored above-average or below-average in a sub-test. A stanine score of 9, 8, or 7 says your child is among the very highest of academic achievers; 6, 5, or 4 scores indicate slightly-above to slightly-below average; and 3, 2, or 1 scores indicate below-average to lowest achievement.

“Good” and “poor” scores are relative measures. The exact same score for two children may be “good” for one “poor” for another. It depends on the abilities or talents of the child. A brighter child scoring slightly-above average may, in fact, not be achieving as well as another student of average ability. The question is: Does my child achieve as well as he should? Since achievement tests measure learning outcomes instead of abilities, your child’s scores can be improved. Knowledge and skills levels should increase with schooling. Deficiencies can be corrected.

It would be well-advised to locate specific skills that need improvement and to get help from teachers and other professionals who specialize in diagnosing skill gaps and are experts in providing needed instruction to bring a student up to or even beyond the expected level of performance.

Students who struggle in school because they are missing some academic skills to do grade level work typically suffer with poor self-esteem. They may have talents that are not being fully utilized.

When you receive your child’s achievement test scores, study them carefully. Is your child achieving at his or her talent level or slipping in one or more areas? Get help if you think your child needs it.