

# Curriculum mapping helps schools, teachers

Catholic elementary schools throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore are keeping precise track of what's happening in the classroom thanks to a computerized process known as curriculum mapping.

At the end of each class or at the end of the week, teachers enter information about everything they actually covered in their teaching sessions - not just what they planned to cover.

Dr. Leslie Andrathy, associate superintendent, said curriculum mapping allows schools to have a better understanding of what children are learning and what content areas need more or less attention.

"It's going to give us fewer gaps and overlaps in a variety of subject areas," said Dr. Andrathy, noting that about one third of archdiocesan elementary school participate in curriculum mapping. The archdiocese mandates all elementary school to use the technique and more will be introducing it to their teachers this fall, she said.

"What's really great about this is that teachers can share the maps with their colleagues across grades and across the archdiocese," she said. "Teachers are able to share teaching strategies. They can talk to one another and learn from one another."

Dr. Jane Towery, principal of St. Joan of Arc School in Aberdeen, said her school has been using curriculum mapping for several years. While teachers find it initially labor intensive, the principal said it is more than worth it.

"It's made them more self aware," she said. "It allows for a lot of teacher self reflection."

Dr. Towery said the process has been particularly helpful in mathematics. Through curriculum mapping, the school discovered that while one teacher was spending a

lot of time on geometry, another did not teach geometry until the end of the year. Mapping allowed the teachers to reorganize the way they taught geometry to better meet student needs.

“It is a wonderful tool for cementing the archdiocesan curriculum with the texts and resources used to support that curriculum,” said Dr. Towery.

Dr. Towery said mapping is not done in isolation. Teams of teachers evaluate the maps to assess strengths and weaknesses, she said.

Mary Ann Holt, a national education consultant, is working with archdiocesan schools to train teachers in curriculum mapping, Dr. Andrathy said.

“In the past, the only one who knew the complete educational journey was the child,” Dr. Andrathy said. “This vehicle now gives teachers a better understanding of what that child has learned over the years.”