

News From Your School Counselor

Gale-Bailey Elementary School

Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3...

Dear Parents and Families,

March is an important month for students to prepare to really show what they have learned in school. Next week, students in first and second grades will take the third quarter Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Quarterly Assessment. After Spring Break, students in third, fourth, and fifth grades will be required to take the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). These tests help teachers and parents compare the progress of students at our school with student in other schools in our county and state. They also help teachers find areas where students are struggling so that they will be able to improve their teaching strategies and increase student learning. It is extremely important for students to do their best on every test they take and show what they know! This newsletter emphasizes some important testing skills and strategies for students as well as tips for parents to help them prepare to do their best. Please take some time to review this newsletter with your child and talk about ways for him or her to show what Gale-Bailey Lions know!

Sincerely,

Nina Ogasawara

Nina Ogasawara (Miss. O.)
School Counselor

Testing Issue

March 2008

2008 Testing Dates

March 17

CCPS Reading

March 18

CCPS Math

April 2 & 3

MSA Reading

April 8 & 9

MSA Math

Preparing for Testing...

Study Smart!

Encourage your child to pay attention in class! Our curriculum is aligned with the test, so what students learn in class will probably be on it. Help them to review old worksheets, vocabulary lists, and homework to better prepare for the test.

No Distractions!

Help your child find a regular study area that is quiet. Homework and study time should not be interrupted by TV, telephone, food, music, video games, or other distractions. Students will be able to concentrate better in the same quiet study spot each day.

Eat Well!

Students who eat a good breakfast tend to get higher grades at school than students who don't. Eating breakfast helps students stay alert and gives them more energy. Be sure to have your child eat a healthy and balanced breakfast on the day of the test.



Come to School!

Studies show that students do better on tests when they take it with their classmates and regular teacher. If your child is sick, he or she should stay home, but encourage your child to have perfect attendance on testing days! Coming on time is also important, since students will not be permitted to enter the classroom once testing has started.

Sleep Well!

Students should get at least 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night so they can do their best in school. Be extra sure that your child gets enough sleep the night before a big test. More importantly, students should be in bed by 9pm, regardless of meeting or exceeding the 8-10 hour quota. Getting enough sleep helps your child perform at his or her best!



Dress Well!

Help your child pick out an outfit that is comfortable to wear on testing day. Discourage wearing things that are itchy, tight, or uncomfortable. Wearing something too comfortable can make your child feel sleepy, so pick out something just right! Wearing layers, like a t-shirt and sweatshirt is a good idea so he or she won't be too hot or too cold.



During Testing...

Understand Directions!

It is important that your child understands what he or she is supposed to do on the test. Remind him or her to read and reread the directions before starting the test. Additionally, reading the question and all answer selections carefully before responding is also extremely important.

Check Your Work!

Remind your child that if he or she has time, he or she should go back over the test to be sure every question has been answered. A blank answer is automatically a wrong answer, so be sure that each question is marked. Even more important is checking over work to make sure each question is correct. A good strategy to use is to pretend to retake the test and work through each problem a second time.

Use Time Wisely!



Students should not spend too much time on one question. Students who feel stuck should move on, then go back to work through the difficult items. Students can use their scrap paper to write a reminder to go back to specific problems.

Answer Questions Completely!

Remind your child that test graders can only grade what they see on the answer sheet, so students should extend and expand their Brief Constructed Responses (BCRs)! Be sure they write everything they can that supports their answers!

Don't Give Up!

It's not likely that everyone will know the answers to every item on the test. Don't worry, just encourage your child to try his or her best. Remind your child that if he or she really doesn't know the answer, he or she should make a guess of what could probably be the correct answer.

Use the Tools You Have!

Students may be given tools like calculators and rulers to use on their tests, but remind them that they always have the text and scrap paper as helpful tools. Encourage your child to go back to the text in the section to check his or her answer and use scrap paper to work out problems. These tools are always available and often not used enough!

Think Positively!

Practice visualization exercises with your child. Help him or her imagine that he or she is taking the test and doing well. Help your child think of positive thoughts to say in his or her mind like, "I know I can do this!" to pump him- or herself up before and during the test.

Don't Panic!

There's no need for you child to worry about the test as long as he or she is doing his or her best! Practice the stress relieving tips at home so your child knows how to respond to stress during the test.

Gale-Bailey Elementary

Nina Ogasawara (Miss O.)
School Counselor

4740 Pisgah-Marbury Road
Marbury, MD 20658

Phone: (301) 743-5491
Fax: (301) 743-2119

Stressed from Testing?

Take Time To Talk!

Your child may be feeling really stressed about having to take the test. Talk to him or her or encourage your child to talk to his or her teacher, school counselor, or other trusted adult to talk about any fears or anxieties.

Take a Deep Breath!

Breathing deeply helps to slow down heart rate. Practice with your child taking slow and deep breaths in and out through the nose. (Breathing through the mouth will make your mouth dry.)

Stretch!

Students won't be allowed to get up or move around during testing, so practice these in-seat exercises so you can be a pro at relieving testing aches and pains!

Mud Puddles: This is a perfect exercise for students who have been sitting at a desk for a long time. Pretend you are sitting with your feet in a puddle of mud. Very slowly squish your toes and feet deep into that imaginary puddle.



Turtle: This is an great stretch for students who are feeling tense and stressed. Pretend you're a turtle and stick your head deep inside your shell by raising your shoulders high and as close to your ears as possible. Then very slowly, come out from your shell, sticking your neck out into the air.

Lemons: Squeeze lemonade with two imaginary lemons into an invisible cup over your desk. This is a perfect exercise when hands are feeling cramped from writing!



Sunshine: A blinding light has come into the room! Close your eyes tight so that no light can enter. Then, very slowly open them up again. This helps tired eyes that have been staring at a test for too long!