



School Matters

Issue 8

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Special Interest:

-Website for assessment information and resources for parents/guardians.

-Suggestions for successful test preparation at home

April is the month that we look forward for Spring Break and Good Friday, but we feel some apprehension since state-mandated assessment begins on April 18. Testing in our state has been a moving target for a few years, and it has been an area of frustration for teachers and administrators. Last month I stressed the importance of doing well on the ACT since it is the one assessment that has so much contingent on student scores. It is truly “high-stake” testing and one that parents need to become knowledgeable of even if your students are a long way from taking it.

April testing often causes stress and anxiety for students and for parents. Teachers can also feel the extra pressure put on them for their students to perform well. I want to address this topic in an effort to ease some of the angst that has traditionally been associated with state assessments. Please visit the website: <http://www.tn.gov/education/section/assessment> to access resources to help you and your child as you prepare for this. It’s an informative site with resources and information on the test itself.

Thank you,

Dr. Jeanny Hatfield

TESTING WITHOUT STRESSING

Some type of anxiety is expected when students take achievement tests, and in fact, it can be productive. However, when a child has stomach, head and adverse emotional reactions before or during a test, it can become an area of concern for parents and teachers.

Parents are encouraged to discuss with their child that this is only a small part of their education. It’s only one week out of 36! School is so much more than a test score, and students are valued on other factors that are present all year. Those include their attitude, behavior, attendance and performance on work throughout the year. Also, some students benefit from knowing that they are not supposed to know everything on the test. It is not designed for students to make 100%. A major reason for the test is to provide a picture of the entire school and how it is meeting the needs of its students.



Students will be coming into the testing environment a week after Spring Break, so their minds and bodies should be somewhat relaxed. However, it is im-

portant that during that week that they have a regular bedtime, a breakfast that includes foods that stimulate the brain (eggs, cereal, fresh fruits and whole wheat toast). Avoid fast foods with lots of sugar, caffeine and fat.

It is recommended that your student participate in afterschool activities that will distract them from the testing at school. There should be no nightly homework, so evenings should be open. Movies with the family, a game night, hiking, playing at the park...something enjoyable.

Please keep in mind that teachers will be actively defusing test anxiety in the classroom and encouraging students to do their best. Although testing is not associated with many positive feelings, it is still necessary for accountability of all those involved, planning for next year and indicating curricular strengths and weaknesses. The results are only a comparative tool to gauge the progress of our school system and its various programs.

