

Milton L. Olive Middle School



Kenya H. Vanterpool, Principal

Dear Parents/ Guardian:

BEFORE THE TEST BE PREPARED

Many teachers will send information home about testing schedules and class preparation plans. Information that you should know includes:

- What is the test and what will it measure?
- Will the test results affect your child, school, or both?
- Are there ways that you can help your child prepare for the test? (Narang, 2008).

Help your child in areas that are difficult for him/her

If your child has struggled with a particular area or subject in the past, you may be able to help her overcome some of that difficulty by providing some extra practice. Many workbooks target test preparation by offering practice exercises and questions like the ones students see on the test. Focus your practice on your child's weaknesses rather than her strengths so that she doesn't get bored with the exercises (Narang, 2008).

Give your child a chance to practice

If your child has trouble taking tests, try practicing test questions and studying new words. Your child's school or the library may have some samples to use. Keep the sessions short, and set small, manageable goals so that the extra practice boosts your child's confidence (Narang, 2008).

If you have concerns about the test or testing situation, talk with your child's teacher.

Discuss your concerns with the teacher and/or school administrator. If you're not satisfied with the outcome, however, you can reach out to some other organizations that monitor testing, including your local PTA, The National Center for Fair & Open Testing or the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (Narang, 2008).

If you believe that your child's difficulty with standardized tests may be the symptom of a problem such as a language or learning difficulty, speak with your child's teacher to learn if your child qualifies for any assessment accommodations.

ON TEST DAY

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and eats a healthy breakfast.

Many teachers report that students who don't do well on tests haven't gotten enough sleep, and haven't eaten breakfast on the morning of the test. Both of these things will ensure that your child is working at full capacity (Narang, 2008).

Make sure your child is prepared

Some schools may supply the tools your child needs for the test, such as pencils, an eraser, paper, and a calculator. Others may require the students to bring those materials themselves. Check with your child's teacher to see if you need to provide your child with any of these materials. Also, check to see whether your child will be able to make up the test if she is sick on test day (Narang, 2008).

Remain positive

Staying calm will help your child stay calm. If she gets nervous about the test or is likely to experience anxiety during the test, help her practice some relaxation techniques that she can try once she's taking the test (Narang, 2008).

AFTER THE TEST

What about the results?

Assessments vary from test to test, but the test scores should include information that helps you interpret the results. Talk with your child's teacher if you have any questions about the test results. You may also suggest that the school offer a testing information session to parents (Narang, 2008).

Review tests with your child.

Help your child review any parts of the test that she did not understand (Narang, 2008).

ON A DAILY BASIS

In addition to these strategies, there are a number of ways that you can maximize your child's learning capabilities throughout the school year, which can lead to confident test-taking. Some of these strategies include:

- Assisting your child with homework and ensuring that your child is completing all homework assignments
- Helping her to develop good study habits, thinking skills, and a positive attitude towards education from an early age
- Ensuring that your child has good attendance at school
- Staying in communication with your child's teacher
- Encouraging your child to read as much as possible, and to increase her vocabulary - even reading magazines, newspapers, and comic books regularly will help improve her reading skills
- Looking for educational games and programs that engage your child
- Helping your child learn how to follow directions carefully (Dietel, 2008; IRA (2002); Narang, 2008).

Finally, remember that standardized tests and grading systems are not perfect; each format has its own limitations. As you help your child do her best on the tests she takes and in all of her schoolwork, also remind her that testing is just one part of her education. With your support and involvement, she will be well on her way to her own bright future.

Respectfully,

Mr. Vanterpool
Principal

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Vanterpool', written over the printed name and title.

What keeps scholars at level one?



Food For Thought

- ✓ A written response demonstrates confusion about prompt and/or reading passages.
- ✓ Scholar's responses are copied parts of the text and nothing else.
- ✓ Scholar's responses don't answers don't answer the actual question.
- ✓ Scholar's responses are too short to fully respond to prompt.
- ✓ Scholar's responses are illogical with few or no transitions that make sense.
Use of evidence is random and very sparse.

What keeps scholars at level two?



- ✓ Written responses are not fully developed.
- ✓ Written responses only answers part of the question.
- ✓ Scholar loses focus, includes tangential or irrelevant information.
- ✓ Details are not explained, and/ or may not truly match claims in the essay or answer the prompt.
- ✓ Scholar's responses are too short to fully respond to prompt.
- ✓ Organization lacks coherence can clarity- transitions are weak and/ or structure is lacking.
- ✓ Doesn't fully answer every part of the question, though threw may be volume in writing.

What keeps scholars at level three?



- ✓ Scholar can explain use of details with more insight and specificity
- ✓ Scholar may have voice, but lack connection of voice to the actual prompt.
- ✓ Scholar need to continue to include many text references in each section – not get too carried away with analysis without leaving time or space for citing multiple specific examples.

Note: When scholars are able to apply the recommendations listed in box **What Makes a Scholar a Level Three** he or she will have crafted a level four piece of writing.