

The Counseling Connection

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Dear DRMS Parents & Guardians,

Welcome back from spring break! I hope everyone feels well-rested and ready to tackle these last two months of school. It is officially crunch time and time to prepare for the upcoming

SOLs that begin on April 26th. Mrs. Chandler has worked tirelessly to make this process as smooth as possible for all students. If



they are feeling some anxiety about these tests, please have them come see us!

“Don’t stress. Do your best. Forget the rest.”

Test-Taking Strategies

Reminding students at home of these same test-taking strategies they are learning at school is the key to making sure your student feels prepared going into these tests.

- ◇ Read directions carefully and more than once

- ◇ Look at questions before reading a passage to know what to look for
- ◇ READ THE PASSAGE
- ◇ Double and triple check math problems

- ◇ Get rid of any answer choices that are wrong
- ◇ Use the tools provided: highlighter, pen, formula sheets, etc.
- ◇ BREATHE

The Day of the Test

Parents can't take the tests for their students, but they can provide the best support to set them up for success. The night before and the morning of these tests are so important. They can either make or break the outcome of a test, so I en-

courage you to provide a safe and positive environment for you child so that they can start their morning off the right way. The last thing they need is to carry the stress of



what is going on at home into the school.

Creating the Perfect Environment

- ◇ Set an early bedtime (they won't like it, but they will thank you in the long run feeling well-rested and clear-headed for their test)
- ◇ Set a bedtime for the phone, too!
- ◇ Make sure they eat a breakfast (it's free at school if your mornings are rushed!)
- ◇ Encourage your student– tell them they are going to do great
- ◇ Stay positive//avoid arguments the morning of the test
- ◇ Consider leaving an encouraging note somewhere in their book bag to surprise them later
- ◇ Be their biggest cheerleader and supporter!

“Behind every child that believes in himself is a parent who believed first.”

Your Role as the Parent

How we talk to our children is what they become. It is natural to feel the stress of these tests just as much as the students do; however, as the parent it your job to remain calm and encourage them. Holding them accountable and making sure they are studying and doing

their work is absolutely a part of the job, too. But, most importantly, your job is to remind them and tell them often how smart they are, how proud of them you are, and how confident you feel they will do great on these tests. Borrow some of the phrases on the next page.



Positive Phrases

Some ways to keep things positive over the next few weeks in preparation for tests is in how we speak to our children. Try incorporating some of these phrases into your conversations daily:

- ◇ “Thank you for working so hard.”
- ◇ “I am so proud of you and how serious you are taking your education.”
- ◇ “Wow! This is really hard and you are doing great with it!”
- ◇ “You are so smart!”
- ◇ “I appreciate your dedication.”
- ◇ “I love you no matter what.”
- ◇ “All I ask if that you try your best.”
- ◇ “These tests do not define you.”
- ◇ “Your hard work will pay off!”

Test Anxiety is Real

Some students can be completely prepared for a test, but the minute they sit down to take it the anxiety creeps in and takes over. If this is your child, please talk to them about how they can combat this feeling. Confidence is key! Build their confidence by telling them over and over they know the material and they are prepared. Talk to them about taking deep breaths before the test to clear their head.

Remind them not to compare themselves to other students and how quickly they are finishing or working. Try to keep things slow-paced the morning of the test and try not to make a big deal about the test. The test is important, but so is boosting their confidence.



Don't Stress the Test

Parents naturally stress these tests and grades, but sometimes parents unwittingly add to the stress students put on themselves. These tests are important, but they are not worth making your child

stress over them. If they do not perform well on the tests, it will not ruin their educational career. Students need to know if they give their best and work hard to be prepared, then that is enough.

Threatening your child to get them to do well will always backfire. Offering incentives and rewards could instead give a more positive, stress-free reaction to a test they may be nervous about taking



Questions?

Please reach out if you have any questions or would like more information about the support we offer here at Dan River Middle School to ensure success for all students.

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Middle School Parenting Tip #9

At the end of SOLs, do something with your child that is non-test related. One idea is to do something special that afternoon/evening after all tests are done. Take them to get their favorite food. Get outside and do something. Watch their favorite movie or show with them. Just something that shows you are proud of them and glad it is behind them. Celebrate being done!

