

February 2011

Our mission is to create a learning community that prepares all students to be productive, responsible, and successful.

Spring (and Testing) is Right Around the Corner

On one of the days where mother nature was giving us cold and snowy weather, we received the manuals for the upcoming ISAT and PSAE tests in March and April. While it doesn't seem possible when looking at our recent winter conditions, this was a subtle reminder that spring is right around the corner and with it comes the annual state tests administered by schools. Each year, 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders are tested in reading and math; 4th and 7th graders are tested in reading, math, and science; and 11th graders take the PSAE which is a combination of the ACT and Workkeys which tests the students' knowledge in reading, math, and science. Although 9th and 10th graders are not given state tests, they do take the EXPLORE and PLAN which is a precursor to the ACT and gauges their future performance on the ACT as juniors. These tests are designed to measure the students' knowledge on state standards, the students' progress and areas for improvement, and are used to help districts determine which areas need more attention and focus. While there is valuable information gained from these tests, the results also depend on the fit between the test and the curriculum of the school, the test taking ability of the students, the testing environment, and how the students are feeling on the particular day of the test. Below are some suggestions on helping your child better prepare for the upcoming state tests.

Optimize chances of a good test day-Students who get a good night's sleep, eat a good breakfast, have materials prepared ahead of time typically have a better attitude on the test day and therefore have higher performance. While attendance during state testing time is important, it is better to keep children that are sick home and having them make up the test rather than risking poor performance.

Know what to expect-Many schools and teachers will send home information about the test schedule and class preparation plans before the date of the test. Knowing what test your child is taking, how the class is preparing, how it is scored, when the results will be received, and how to interpret the results can help you better prepare your child for the test.

Look at your child's past performance-Since the ISAT is given each year, it is possible to identify if there are areas that have been difficult for your child in the past that you can focus on for future tests.

Provide practice opportunities-Many teachers will send home test practice materials prior to the test. Additionally, you can access your child's Study Island account as well as finding many on-line resources geared towards helping students prepare for the ISAT and PSAE.

Encourage good study habits-This is helpful not only for the success of your child on state tests but also for his or her overall academic achievement. By checking the teacher website to determine what assignments, tests, or projects are upcoming; helping your

child organize material; providing a quiet, well-lit area for your child to study; and developing a study schedule and ensuring your child gets a good night's sleep.

Important Upcoming Dates:

February 9th-Midterm

February 11th-Midterm Reports Sent Home

February 18th-No School-2nd Semester Parent/Teacher Conferences

February 21st-No School-Presidents' Day

Through the school improvement process, we hope to promote a positive atmosphere and increased communication and welcome your input and suggestions on ways to accomplish this. Please use the opinions and ideas link on our website at www.okawvalley.org to share any ideas or concerns.

“Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know. “
~Daniel J. Boorstin