**TESTS: How can you help your student prepare?**

Teachers tell us that successful test-takers tend to be students with good attendance, homework, and study habits; therefore, your daily assistance with homework and attitude toward school have the biggest impact on your child's performance. However, there are key ways you can improve his test-taking ability.

**Optimize brain power.**

Teachers say the students who struggle the most on testing days are the ones who didn't have enough sleep or a good breakfast the day of the test.  Also, students who are physically or mentally unprepared often encounter problems. Make sure she has every tool she needs — pencils, an eraser, paper, a calculator, etc. laid out the night before, as well as any preliminary paperwork filled out, if possible. If she isn't feeling well on the test day, it's better to keep her home and let her make up the test later rather than risk poor performance.

**Know what to expect.**

Information about test schedules are available at **(schoolwebsitepage)** and elsewhere is this newsletter. You should learn…

·         What is the test and what will it measure?

·         What's the format? (multiple choice, essay, short answer, etc.)

·         Are there test-prep tutoring opportunities available at school prior to the event?

·         How is it scored? Will students be penalized for incorrect answers or should they guess when stumped on a question?

**Provide practice opportunities.**

You may be able to request sample or practice tests from your student’s school or find them online.  Be sure to time any practice tests (assuming the standardized test will be timed) so he's not surprised by time constraints on test day. Start practicing several weeks before the date and keep study sessions short. Setting small goals will help him measure his progress and boost his confidence. Suggest that he takes the night before the test off — cramming can increase his stress level.

**Relax and remain positive.**

The best test-takers are confident, committed, and at ease. Even if you are nervous about her performance, be wary of transferring that concern to your student. You never know, some kids actually enjoy tests! If she is likely to get nervous, practice a few relaxation techniques, such as counting from one to ten or taking deep breaths, which can help her relieve tension during the test.

**Discuss the experience.**

Talk to your student about how the test went, what he did well and what he would have done differently. Think of it as a mini-debriefing or brainstorming session. You can talk about test-taking strategies after the fact as easily as beforehand and these discussions will improve performance on future tests.