

IMPROVING TEST SCORES

*What Can I As a Parent
Do to Help My Child
Score Better on the School's
Standardized Tests?*



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WHAT CAN I AS A PARENT DO TO HELP MY CHILD

SCORE BETTER ON THE SCHOOL'S STANDARDIZED TESTS?

In today's educational society, parents are becoming partners with the schools at an increasing rate. No longer can parents simply blame the school for a student's lack of success. No longer can the school simply blame the parent for a student's lack of success. Administrators, teachers, parents and students must be partners together in raising student test scores.

The following are a number of suggestions for parents in helping do their part in raising their child's test scores.



Parent Tips for Improving Your Child's Test Scores

There are a number of things that you can do at home to create a situation where your child can succeed on the school's standardized tests and raise their scores.

Everyone has a critical part in the testing process—teachers, administrators, students and parents, too. Helping to ensure that your child goes to school in the best physical and mental condition possible is the parents' role in raising test scores.

◆◆◆ *Make sure your child eats a good breakfast every testing day.*

Breakfast provides the energy necessary for your child to focus on the test. An athlete would never consider competing in any sport without having eaten during the day. A student cannot concentrate fully without having had the necessary food intake earlier in the day.

However, there are a few very important points to consider during breakfast. First and foremost, sugar intake should be severely limited the morning of a test! Sugared cereals, sugared juices, donuts, cookies, and high-sugar items such as these should be avoided at all costs. The sugar gives a "sugar-high" for the student which lasts about an hour or two. Unfortunately, at that point, a huge "sugar-low" then hits the student. The result of this low is your child having less energy than before breakfast. This will directly affect performance on the tests that day.

Instead of sugar-based food, your child should eat things such as whole-wheat breads, fruit and some sort of protein for breakfast. Pancakes, French toast, sausages, eggs are all good types of breakfasts on the day of a test. These foods give long-lasting energy which will directly affect your child's performance on the school's standardized tests.

The material in this supplement is directly adapted from the book, IMPROVING TEST SCORES: A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS, Scott Mandel, Zephyr Press, 2006. For detailed explanations and additional material in the areas covered, please refer to that book.



◆◆◆ *Have your child get a good night's sleep before a testing day.*

A good night's sleep before a test is as critical for success the next day as breakfast. Many students—especially those in middle and high school—do not fully wake up until second or third period. On a normal testing day, this would be well into the first test of the day. You may have a little battle on your hands, but be sure to get your child to bed at a reasonable time the night before a test.

◆◆◆ *Get your child to school on time.*

It's critical that you get your child to school in time on testing days. When students come late on testing days, two things often happen:

- ***Their stress level is raised, causing them to do less than their best on the tests.***
- ***If they arrive after the test has started, they may not enter the testing room. They have to go to a "holding room" for the entire test session, and then get pulled out of class on another day for a make-up exam.***

◆◆◆ *Try to limit morning stress.*

Student stress is a major factor in doing less-than-your-best on tests. Although this may be difficult, try to limit arguments and reprimands with your child the mornings of the standardized tests. Hold the discussions off until the afternoon or evening, when your child's concentration is not needed for succeeding on the exam.

◆◆◆ *Provide incentives.*

The school often provides motivational awards for students to have excellent attendance and to do their best during the testing period. Parents can use the same strategy. Provide some sort of incentive for your child to eat a good breakfast on test days and to get a good night's sleep the evening before the exam.

◆◆◆ *Help the school motivate your child*

Talk to your school and find out what type of incentive programs are being carried out for motivating the students. These may be attendance incentives, raffles, special testing breakfasts. Be aware of what is happening and talk to your child and help motivate him or her to do his or her best during the testing situations.

If you are a member of the school's PTSA, you can help with some sort of fun, spirit-filled promotional events during the week before and during testing. By creating a "pep rally-type" of atmosphere throughout the school during the testing period, the excitement and motivation to do well on the tests will dramatically increase for the students.

Having parents involved in the process demonstrates to the students that the standardized tests are important—important enough that parents are willing to donate their time and efforts to helping the school raise their test scores.



- ◆ ***Make sure your child eats a good breakfast every testing day.***
- ◆ ***Have your child get a good night's sleep before a testing day.***
- ◆ ***Get your child to school on time.***
- ◆ ***Try to limit morning stress.***
- ◆ ***Provide incentives.***
- ◆ ***Help the school motivate your child***





◆◆◆ *Where can you go to get more help?*

The Internet has become a fantastic tool to enable parents to get curricular help for their child. Many educational web sites can be used to locate material for two reasons:

- **To give the student extra help in extending a topic that is covered in class, or clarifying material**
- **To give the parent background material in a subject that the child is learning so as to be able to understand the material and assist the child in their work or studying**

To help your child or simply improve your personal understanding of a subject, there are two ways of easily locating curricular material:

Go to a general education web site. Bookmark the site Teachers Helping Teachers on your computer (www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/). Scroll down to the Educational Resources page. On this page you will find dozens of subject matter sites that you can use that will pertain to areas that your child is studying in school. You can also go to the Guest Book and leave a message/question for teachers if you cannot locate the material you want.

Go to a specific subject matter site. The following are a list of good sites that you can use to find information on a specific topic:

History/Social Studies

ANCIENT HISTORY: Internet Ancient History Sourcebook www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.html

AMERICAN HISTORY: HistoryNet www.historynet.com

WORLD HISTORY: Hyperhistory www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html

Language Arts

LITERATURE: Children's Literature Web Guide www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html

GRAMMAR: Library Spot—Grammar/Style www.libraryspot.com/grammarstyle.htm

Math

GENERAL MATH: Math Forum mathforum.org

ALGEBRA: Algebra Homework Help and Solvers www.algebra.com

GEOMETRY: The Geometry Center www.scienceu.com/geometry

Science

BIOLOGY: The Biology Project www.biology.arizona.edu/default.html

CHEMISTRY: Chemistry Resources chem.lapeer.org/Chem1Docs/Index.html

PHYSICAL SCIENCE: Eric Weisstein's World of Physics scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics

The Arts

THE ARTS: World Wide Arts Resources wwar.com