



## FPLS Students – Focus, Prepare, Learn, and Succeed!

The warm weather makes us think of summer! However, we still have a few more months of school, and it's important to encourage students to stay focused and continue to work hard every day. Next month, we will begin our final round of MAP benchmark testing to give teachers up-to-date data which they will use to identify students who need additional support to achieve mastery. Then, in mid-April, we will begin our state testing for grades three and up. Your student has spent the school year focusing, *preparing*, and *learning* new concepts and ideas. Now, as we move toward the end of the school year, it's time for your student to demonstrate that they are *succeeding* by mastering these new learning challenges on the Ohio State Tests. Please review the upcoming test dates on the **District Testing Calendar**. This can be found on the district website by clicking the "*District / Testing Calendars*" icon or by scanning the QR code with your smartphone and clicking on the "*2022-2023 District Testing Calendar*." Also, please take a moment to review the 8 Tips to Help Your Child Prepare for State Tests below. Let's finish the year strong, and As Always ... Go Rockets!



### 8 Tips to Help Your Child Prepare for State Tests

No matter what your personal feelings on state testing are, there is no escaping the reality that these assessments will be an important part of your child's academic experience. And, everyone wants to see their student experience success in the classroom. So, what's the best way to help your child prepare for state tests—and keep a healthy mindset while doing so? Here's eight simple tips for parents to help your student perform his or her best on testing days.

#### 1. Prioritize attendance and homework

Tests are ultimately intended to be a measure of how well students have learned the material being taught in class. With that in mind, what is the best (and most straightforward) piece of test-prep advice for caregivers is to do what you can to ensure that your child is fully engaged with his or her classwork throughout the year. Set aside dedicated homework time each night to make sure that your child is completing their assignments consistently throughout the year. It's also a good idea to periodically reflect on your family routine, and make sure you and your student are keeping a schedule that gets them to class on time every day. If your student is absent for a day, or has to miss a class period, check in with them to make sure they can make up what they missed. *Please try to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments or family vacations on test days.*

## **2. Communicate with teachers**

Regular communication with your child's instructor can help you gain insight into his or her progress. Make a point of meeting or talking with your child's teacher on an ongoing basis to understand what your child is working on, what he or she will be tested on, and the areas that he or she is excelling or struggling in. Your child's teacher is also a great resource for test-preparation practice or strategies you can use with your child at home. Plus, they can keep you up to date on group study sessions or other opportunities for additional review that your child may benefit from.

## **3. Talk to your child about test taking**

The purpose and goals of testing are not always obvious, even to the students who take them. Especially with new test-takers, it's easy to be intimidated by testing or simply not feel motivated to put forth a lot of effort. Have open, ongoing conversations with your child to explain the benefits of testing, focusing on how it helps them, their teacher, their school, and other educators understand their strengths and weaknesses and figure out the most effective ways to teach. You can also use this opportunity to ask your students how they feel about testing, and offer reassurance or perspective if they have any anxiety around exams.

## **4. Offer positive reinforcement**

A little encouragement can go a long way in helping students walk into testing days feeling confident—which, in turn, can have a huge effect on their performance. Praise your child for the work that he or she does to prepare for testing, and share in his or her excitement when he or she has success with a new concept or skill. Similarly, when he or she is struggling with a topic, point out the progress that he or she has made and encourage him or her to continue working. Having already experienced success with the material that he or she will be tested on will help your child avoid test anxiety and perform to the best of his or her ability on testing day.

## **5. Support healthy habits**

Sleep and nutrition can have a huge impact on your child's ability to focus and retain information. One of the most helpful things that you can do as a parent is focus on supporting these basic needs. Well-rounded meals and a regular sleep schedule will help your child succeed in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. On testing days, it's especially important to make sure that your child gets a good night's sleep, starts the day with a filling breakfast, and goes to school with a water bottle to help stay hydrated.

## **6. Give your child a study space**

A comfortable, dedicated space for homework and studying can work wonders for your child's productivity. Make sure that your child's space is quiet, well lit, and stocked with the right materials, like a writing surface, pens, pencils, highlighters, scratch paper, a calculator, and any other tools that he or she might need.

## **7. Keep testing in perspective**

No single test is *that* important. Avoid putting too much emphasis on your child's test scores—doing so can make your child feel pressure that will ultimately only affect his or her performance negatively. It's also important to not be upset by a single test score. Low test scores can occur for any number of reasons; it may have just been an off day for your child. While we want students to always put forth their best effort, the priority is on student growth from year to year.

## **8. Debrief after the test**

After testing day has come and gone, talk with your child about how he or she felt while taking the test. By discussing his or her answers, thought processes, and feelings, you can gain further insight into what he or she is struggling with and excelling at and then help him or her better prepare next time. Talking about testing can also help your child process the experience and overcome any anxiety that he or she might have had.