

Tips for Motivating Students During Testing Season

-From a former teacher

One of my biggest frustrations around testing was kids that did not do their best work. This reflected poorly on both me and the student, and it was not an accurate reflection of either of us. Obviously, telling students how important the testing was and stressing them out is not the best option. Instead, it is better to motivate students and make them excited to do their best work.

There are so many different ways to do this, and the teachers surveyed had some great ideas!

The most popular idea was to give the test-takers motivational notes written by parents, teachers, administrators, and other students. One teacher mentioned that, instead of notes, she would take pictures of teachers holding up encouraging signs and show them to her students. Another teacher would collect notecards with notes from different people and put it on a ring. They called it their "championship ring."

In some schools, EVERYBODY gets involved, even students and teachers that are not required to participate in state testing. They decorate the school and hold pep rallies to cheer the students on.

Many teachers talked about providing breakfast for their students every day during testing. This got the upper elementary students excited and helped every student get a healthy breakfast. For teachers at low-income schools, this can be particularly important.

Here are some more great ideas from teachers all over:

- "We host a "Spring Training" baseball themed motivational month of preparation before the test. Students earn their way around the bases for attendance, positive attitude, giving their best, completing quick review at home." Brenda Peters - Grade 3
- "Motivation week. Sock it to the test and they wear socks to school. Shine on the test and they wear sunglasses, etc." Tina Martinez
- "We do some exercises to pump us up. Then they go around and give 10 other students a positive comment as well as telling them they can do this! We end with a "power pose" to send positive energy and confidence into ourselves."
- "Walk the [Red Carpet](#). Make it a dress up day and treat it like the Oscars." Michele Stewart 4th grade

- "Not a lot of prep, it's high stakes enough without me adding extra hype. Always make sure they have breakfast, though, and lots of mints to help stay alert!"
- "We have a big rally and watch funny you tube videos. We wear sweats or pajamas so we are super comfy."
- "I have them pick an inspirational person and then I write a quote for each of them from the perspective of that person that encourages them to do their best."
- "We have motivational chants and songs that we sing prior to testing. I also hand out motivational erasers with the quote "mistakes are proof that you are trying" to relieve stress from students. We also take physical activity breaks and deep breathing techniques to help release some pent up energy before testing."