

Quick Tips

Communicating Assessment Information with Families

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How to use these assessment quick tips

Giving families strategies to help their child prepare for state assessments is a great way to involve them in their child's educational success. Contained in this document are easy to use tips that when shared can help increase families awareness and understanding of assessments as well as provide ideas on ways for families to support their child.

For the families:

Assessment tips can be inserted into newsletters, flyers, agendas, emails, posted on bulletin boards or shared via other communication tools. An electronic copy of this document can be found on the USD 259 Family Engagement portal site.

Definitions

What Does it All Mean?

When talking about State Assessments, there are many terms that are used that parents may or may not be familiar with. Here are definitions of terms every parent should know.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – Each year the State of Kansas sets performance goals in reading and math. The goal stated in No Child Left Behind is that 100% of students will pass their state's assessment by 2014.

State Assessments – The State of Kansas has developed tests that will be given to all students in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school. These standardized tests are used to compare schools to each other and identify those that need extra help to improve. How schools perform on the State Assessments determines whether or not the school meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Title I – The U.S. Department of Education provides Title I funds to states to give to school districts based on the number of children from low-income families in the district. The funds are used to support learning of the students in Title I schools.

Facts About Assessments

Students across Kansas in grades 3-8 and once in high school are required to take the Kansas State Assessments. These tests are administered the same across the state, so that students in each school and district are being measured against equal criteria. This enables the State of Kansas to evaluate how students across the state are meeting the state learning standards.

Student performance is scored based on a proficiency scale that includes five categories:

- Exemplary
- Exceeds Standard
- Meets Standard
- Approaches Standard
- Academic Warning

Each proficiency level is based on a range of scores. The score range that defines each proficiency level vary by grade, subject and type of assessment. A student is considered proficient when his/her score falls into the range that classifies performance as "meets standards" or higher.



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Conquer Your Calendar

Because it is important that your child has an opportunity to show what he or she knows on State Assessments, please make sure your child attends school during testing. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Avoid scheduling routine health appointments to doctor or dentist offices.
- Look for correspondence from the school that outlines test dates.
- Frequently check your child's agenda for updates on state testing.

Feel free to ask the school for information about testing dates or other questions you might have!

A Little Perspective About State Tests

State Assessment results only reveal a piece of your student's educational picture.

Test time offers an opportunity for your child to show what he or she knows. Testing is ONE tool for discovering what pieces of your child's learning is strong and intact. Testing also helps identify where your child's education could be stronger. Other tools to measure your child's learning include grades, attendance, health and motivation to learn, among other factors.

While tests are important, they do not stand alone when it comes to capturing a picture of your child's education.

What Should I Ask My Student's Teacher....

Before the Test:

- Which tests will be administered during the school year and for what purposes?
- How will the teacher or the school use the results of the test?
- What other means of evaluation will the teacher or the school use to measure your student's performance?
- How will the results of the tests be shared with the students and families?
- Should your student practice taking tests?

What Should I Ask My Student's Teacher....

After the Test:

- How do students in your child's school compare with students in other school systems in your state and across the country?
- What do the test results mean about your student's skills and abilities?
- Are the test results consistent with your student's performance in the classroom?
- Are any changes anticipated in your student's educational program?
- What can you do at home to help your child strengthen particular skills?



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Assessment Success

Top 5 Tips on What Families Can Do To Help

1. Mark your calendar

Make note of when assessments are scheduled. Dates may be published in the school or classroom newsletter, flyers may be sent home, etc. Reschedule dentist or non-critical doctor appointments if they are scheduled during assessments.

2. Investigate

If you don't know the assessments your student is taking and how the results are used, ask your student's teacher or school administrator. The results of some assessments may actually determine classroom placement for the following year.

3. Encourage

There is no way to cram for assessments. Encourage students to take his or her time and do his or her best. Tell students that the assessments can be hard, but that taking them provides a chance to show what he or she knows.

4. Good Night / Rise and Shine

Make sure your student gets a good night sleep. Have your student get up early enough to avoid hurrying and still be on time.

5. Order-Up

Have your student eat breakfast either at home or at school.

Show What You Know!

State Assessments Are Here!

We are so proud of all the hard work that has gone into student learning this year! Our students, families and staff have done an amazing job. Please make note on your calendar of the following dates for upcoming State Assessments. The hard work is done—now it is time to Show What You Know!

Testing Information:

