

The Parent Times

KEEPING NEWTON COUNTY PARENTS INFORMED AND ENGAGED

WINTER/SPRING 2011

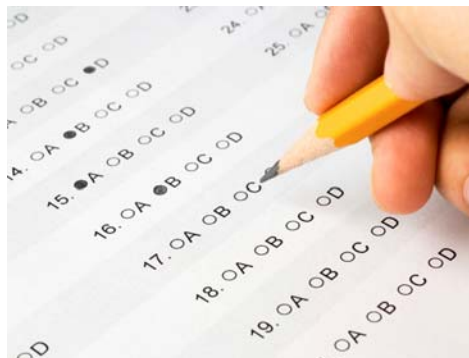
Making the Most of Standardized Tests

Odds are your child will have to take at least one standardized test each academic year and, considering the bills in the U.S. congress, standardized test will become high-stakes tests. A high-stakes test is a standardized test tied to a major education decision, such as whether a student will advance to the next grade, enter a preferred program, or receive a high school diploma. High-stakes tests could also be tied to district or school funding, and teachers' and administrators' salaries.

Whether or not you find a particular standardized test appropriate, your child still needs to perform at his or her best. Consider the following test-taking suggestions from the U.S. Department of Education's Educational Resources Information Center on Assessment and Evaluation:

- Make sure your child is well-rested and eats a well-rounded breakfast.
- Encourage your child to listen carefully to test-taking directions and ask questions about any instructions that are unclear.
- Don't be overly anxious about test scores, but encourage your child to take test seriously.
- Tell your child the best way to prepare for tests—whether they're teacher made or standardized—is to study and know the subjects.
- Make sure your child arrives at school on time the day of the test. Feeling rushed only adds to the anxiety of test day.
- Make sure your child gets a regular amount of sleep before the test and is well rested.

Article provided courtesy of FamilyEducation.com



Resources Available In The Parent Resource Center To Prepare For CRCT Testing

- GA Test Prep Book—Grade 3
- GA Test Prep Book—Grade 4
- GA Test Prep Book—Grade 5

- Spectrum GA Test Prep Book—Grade 3
- Spectrum GA Test Prep Book—Grade 4
- Spectrum GA Test Prep Book—Grade 5
- Spectrum GA Test Prep Book—Grade 6

- Spectrum Test Practice Book—Grade 1
- Spectrum Test Practice Book—Grade 2
- Spectrum Test Practice Book—Grade 8

All materials are available for check-out at the Parent Resource Center for a period of 2 weeks.



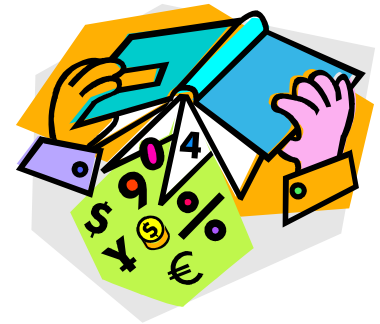
Parent Involvement Activity Spotlight.....

Parent Center to Present Middle School CRCT Workshop.....



For more information on parent involvement events, please contact Debbie Carlisle, Parental Involvement Coordinator at 770-787-1330 X3345.

On Thursday, March 17, 2011 from 6pm-7:30pm at NCSS Board of Education a workshop on “**How can I help my middle school student pass/exceed the CRCT?**” will be presented. This workshop is being presented by Lynn House, a certified master math teacher and NCSS Title I Secondary Instructional Coach. You will learn skills, concepts and test-taking strategies for your middle school student to prepare for the upcoming CRCT test. If you plan to attend please RSVP to Debbie Carlisle at 770-784-2934, extension 3345 by Monday, March 14th.



Please Join Us!

What Families Can Do: Ideas to Help Your Child Succeed in and Enjoy Mathematics

1. Be Positive

If you have a negative attitude about mathematics, chances are your child will, too. Help your child have a “can do” attitude by praising your child’s efforts as well as his/her accomplishments. Acknowledge the facts that mathematics can be challenging at times and that persistence and hard work are the keys to success. Relate mathematics learning to other endeavors that require hard work and persistence, such as playing a sport. Struggling at times in mathematics is normal and is actually necessary to, and valuable in, understanding mathematics.

2. Link Mathematics with Daily Life

Every day, people face situations that involve mathematics, such as deciding whether one has enough money to purchase a list of items at the store, reading a map to find out where one is, building a budget, deciding on the shortest route to a destination, developing a schedule, or determining the price of an item on sale. Help your child realize that mathematics is a significant part of everyday life.

3. Make Mathematics Fun

Play board games, solve puzzles, and ponder brain teasers with your child. Your child enjoys these kinds of activities while enhancing the mathematical thinking. Point out the mathematics involved, and have your child discuss strategies he used.

4. Learn about Mathematics-Related Careers

Mathematics is foundational to a wide variety of interesting careers. Research different careers with your child, and find out what he/she should be doing now to prepare for these options. Help your child understand that school courses he/she takes now and the grades he/she earns will effect his/her future. One source of information on the many career possibilities that involve mathematics is Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Math by Diane Lindsey Reeves.

5. Have High Expectation

Traditionally, in North America the belief that only some students are capable of learning mathematics has prevailed. For example, tracking has consistently disadvantaged groups of students through classes that concentrate on remediation and do not offer significant mathematical substance. Many students, especially those who are poor, nonnative speakers of English, disabled, female, or members of racial-minority groups, have become victims of low expectations. Today we are guided by a vision of mathematics for all. You would not expect your child to read; similarly, you should not expect your child not to do mathematics. Your attitude and expectations are crucial to influencing the future opportunities for your child. Communicate high expectations to your child and his teachers, counselors, and administrators. Make sure your child is getting the same opportunities in mathematics as everyone else, and is taking challenging mathematics classes each year, all the way through high school.

Article provided courtesy of National Council of Teachers of Mathematics



Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) - The Basics

What is the purpose of the CRCT?

The CRCT is designed to measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The assessments yield information on academic achievement at the student, class, school, system, and state levels. This information is used to diagnose individual student strengths and weaknesses as related to the instruction of the GPS, and to gauge the quality of education throughout Georgia.

What content areas and grade levels are tested?

Georgia law, as amended by the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000, requires that all students in grades one through eight take the CRCT in the content areas of reading, English/language arts, and mathematics. Students on grades three through eight are also assessed in science and social studies. The CRCT only assesses the content standards outlined in the GPS.

Due to budget constraints, the CRCT will not be administered in grades one and two in spring 2011.

When was the CRCT implemented?

The CRCT was implemented in spring 2000. That year, summative, end-of-year assessments in reading, English/language arts, and mathematics were administered in grades four, six, and eight. Assessments in science and social studies (grades three through eight) were administered for the first time in spring 2002. Additionally, assessments in reading, English/language arts, and mathematics were administered in grades one, two, three, five, and seven in spring 2002.

How is content tested?

Currently, the mandated end-of-year assessments contain selected response items only; however, a small number of constructed-response items may be included in subsequent years.

How does the CRCT differ from a norm-referenced test (NRT)?

Criterion-referenced tests, such as the CRCT, are designed to measure how well students acquire, learn, and accomplish the knowledge and skills set forth in specific curriculum or unit of instruction. The CRCT, therefore, is specifically intended to test Georgia's performance/content standards outlined in the GPS. Norm-referenced tests (NRT), such as the IOWA Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), measure instructional standards commonly taught throughout the entire United States of America. Additionally, NRT's highlight differences between and among students across an achievement continuum.

Are state, system, and school reports of CRCT results provided?

Yes. The contractor provides paper and electronic disaggregated reports at the state, system and school levels. These reports provide student performance information for the following categories: All Regular Program Students (subcategories include Section 504, Limited English Proficient, and All Others), All Special Education Students (subcategories include primary classification/disability—i.e., visual impairment, learning disabilities, etc.), Gender, and Race/Ethnicity. These data are reported for grades one through eight in reading, English/language arts, and mathematics, and grades three through eight in science and social studies.

What steps did the state take to ensure the age appropriateness of the CRCT for grades 1 and 2?

In order to obtain the most reliable and accurate test results from younger students, the state looked at how other states assessed students in early grades and at the procedures identified by education research as the most important to follow. Key factors taken into consideration include number of answer choices, breaks during testing, and having certain aspects of the assessments read to the students by the teacher.

As part meeting federal requirements for the state standards and assessments systems, the CRCT was peer reviewed by a team of external experts in the fields of standards and assessments. This team was convened by the US Department of Education and considered evidence in the following areas: content and academic achievement standards; technical quality; alignment; inclusion; and scoring and reporting. The CRCT was found to meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards for assessment programs.

Copied from the Georgia Department of Education website www.gadoe.k12.ga.us. For more resources and information on the Georgia CRCT test please go to the GaDOE website.



DATES TO REMEMBER



- March 11, 2010 - End of third 9 weeks
- April 4 - 8, 2011 - Spring Break
- May 26, 2011 - Last Day for Students 2010-2011

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM MISSION is to provide educational excellence for **ALL** students!
OUR NON-NEGOTIABLE GOALS are increased student achievement and more effective teaching.

To submit an article or for more information contact Debbie Carlisle, Parental Involvement Coordinator at 770-787-1330 x 3345.

This publication is developed by Newton County School System's Parent Involvement Team.

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Newton County School System Testing Calendar 2010-2011

Mar. 2	5th Grade Writing Test
Mar. 3	5th Grade Writing Test - Make-ups
Mar. 7-11	EOCT Mid-month-HS-All Courses
Mar. 12	SAT
Mar. 15-Apr.1	Elem. OAS Benchmark 3- Grade 1-5
Mar. 21	GHSGT Main Administration-HS Science
Mar. 22	GHSGT-HS - Math
Mar. 23	GHSGT-HS - Social Studies
Mar. 24	GHSGT-HS - English/LA
Mar. 25	GHSGT-HS-Make-ups
Mar. 21-Apr.1	3rd Grade Writing Assessment
April 9	ACT
April 13-15	CRCT-M - Grades 3-8
April 18-22	CRCT - Grades 3- 8
May 2 - 13	AP Exams-High School
May 4 - 18	EOCT- High School
May 7	SAT
May 2-20	DIEBELS/mClass Math/STEEP-K-5

What should you do if your child is involved in a bullying situation?

Bullying is a growing problem that families and schools must address together. Today experts recognize the serious effects of bullying, including problems with emotions and school work.

Bullying involves cruel actions or words. It can happen in person (such as at school) and from afar (such as online).

Here are some ideas of things to do, whether your child is a bully, victim or a bystander.

- **Let your child know** you will not condone bullying in any form. That includes the writing of nasty comments on the Internet or in text messages. Follow through with severe consequences if you discover your child is bullying.
- **Encourage supervision** and the buddy system. Bullying is most likely to happen when one person can get another person alone. At school, encourage your child to stay in areas where adults can supervise. When no adults are present, your child should always be with at least one other child.
- **Tell your child** that simply watching while someone is bullied is nearly as bad as doing the bullying. He should report bullying situations to an adult. Your child can support the victim by inviting him to join his group, by standing next to him or just putting a hand on his shoulder.
- **Give your child** anti-bullying strategies. He can walk away. It's harder to bully someone who won't stand still to listen. He can also practice comebacks such as "Stop it. I don't like that."

Source: J. and R. Sommers-Flanagan, "The Buzz on Bullying," American School Counselor Association.

