

Guidance & Counseling Program, NEWSLETTER

3RD QUARTER
YEAR 2008-2009
PARENTS' EDITION



COUNSELING is a process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behavior. *School Counselors* work with all students, school staff, families and members of the community as an integral part of education program. *School counseling programs* promote school success through a focus on academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, advocacy, social/emotional, and career development.

— American School Counselor Association, 1997.

CHARACTER
EDUCATION
TRAIT
OF THE MONTH

January:
INTEGRITY

February:
RESPECT

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GETTING READY FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

During the months of February and March, all 2nd-5th grade students will take standardized tests according to different grade levels requirements. These test results will show acquired academic skills in reading, writing, math and science. Parents can rest assured that teachers have been preparing students for these tests since very early in the school year with the purpose of making them familiar with the format of the tests and the competencies assessed by them. In order to assist students in preparing for these tests, parents should continue encouraging their children to try their best in all school tasks; monitoring the completion of their home learning assignments; and, following up with the suggestions from teachers such as taking advantage of additional

resources (e.g. tutoring at school, Reading Plus at home, FCAT Explorer, and other existing programs).

When you have conversations with your child about the upcoming tests, try to keep a light tone discussing how to prepare for them, but try not to overstress the importance of the tests. This will avoid creating unnecessary apprehension. Although in 3rd grade, Florida State's regulations determine that students must pass the FCAT Reading test with a minimum level of 2 to be promoted to 4th grade, there are other options to consider if the child ends up not meeting that criterion. Ask your child's teacher about other options that may apply to your child.

TEST ANXIETY

Most children feel some kind of pressure when taking tests. It is a normal reaction that we all may experience as human beings. To feel a little bit of tension is actually a state of mind that helps the student be more interested, alert, and ready to do his/her best on the test.

However, some children may experience higher than typical nervousness to the point that their test performance may be affected. Parents can help their children by

encouraging them to:

Think good, positive thoughts

Get enough sleep

Eat a hearty breakfast

Think about showing what they know on the test

Stay relaxed during the test: taking slow, deep breaths can help.

Not to worry about other students finishing first, but keep track of the time left.

Keep busy. If they get stuck on a question, come back to it later.



*Don't handicap
your children
by making
their lives easy.*

*~Robert A.
Heinlein*

DEVELOPING CHARACTER: INTEGRITY

Helping children develop integrity is an important priority of families, communities and schools. **Integrity** means standing up for your beliefs about what is right and what is wrong and resisting social pressure to do wrong. It includes:

Expressing one's conviction in a group of peers although it may not be popular with the majority.

Not cheating on assignments or tests.
Not joining students who are breaking

the rules of the school.

Resisting peer pressure to skip classes or do other inappropriate activities.

Not joining fellow students who are abusing drugs when "everyone" is doing it.

Parents can help their children by establishing consistent rules at home, closely monitoring their behavior, and having high expectations of proper conduct followed by positive or negative consequences as appropriate.

DEVELOPING CHARACTER: RESPECT

Respect is demonstrated by showing regard for the worth and dignity of someone or something, being courteous and polite, and judging all people on their merits.

Respect takes three major forms: respect for oneself, respect for other people, and respect for all forms of life and the environment.

Parents can encourage children to show respect by reinforcing the following behaviors:

Following rules at home and at school.

Practicing acceptable manners in the school cafeteria.

Using respectful language when solving conflicts with peers.

Not damaging or defacing property (graffiti) belonging to someone else.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

The importance of consistent school attendance and punctuality can never be underestimated. Children who are absent or tardy numerous times miss important activities at school. It is not the same to complete missed assignments at a later time!!

As a parent of an elementary-age child, you have the responsibility to make sure that your child attends school

regularly. If you are experiencing unusual circumstances that interfere with your responsibility of bringing your child to school, please contact your school counselor or school social worker for assistance. Also, please let the teachers know if your child has a medical condition that is impacting his/her attendance. You need to bring the appropriate medical documentation.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

It is of great importance that parents and teachers confer regularly about the child's academic and behavior progress. Teachers can provide you with insight about how your child functions in the different school settings (sometimes you can be positively or negatively surprised by the way your child behaves in class, cafeteria, PE, and special area classes). Children may behave differently at home and at school, and you would want to know if

your child is getting along with others; keeping up with the assignments; cooperating with the teachers; demonstrating self-control; and participating fully in the school environment. Come prepared to ask questions that can answer above-mentioned issues. Parents can use the obtained information to address those significant problems pointed by the teacher in order to help the child develop the needed skills to be successful at school.