



TRMS School Counseling Newsletter



Finding Balance with Smarter Balanced: Help Your Student Manage Anxiety

Quarter 3
Winter/Spring 2017

Smarter Balanced testing in Language Arts and Math is coming! For many students, standardized testing is more than a just test of achievement. Parents can help students manage test anxiety by making them familiar with and allowing them opportunities to practice the strategies below. Students can then decide which strategies work best for them "in the moment."

* Positive Self-Talk

Does our anxiety make us say negative statements to ourselves, or it is the other way around? Positive self-talk helps to break this cycle by creating positive and realistic statements *in advance* that students can then repeat to themselves during anxiety-producing situations. Examples of

positive self-talk include, "I can do this," "I've practiced this before," and "I know I can figure this out."

* Visualization

Our mindset going into a potentially stressful situation can have a big impact on our perception. Students can call up in their brains a mental image of a place, real or imagined, that is both relaxing and safe. They can also imagine what they are trying to achieve, such as confidently finishing the test. Students can close their eyes, calm their breath, and think about the details of what they see/smell/touch/hear in their mental image in order to "set the tone" for testing.

* Controlled Breathing

Whether we realize it or not, most people take shallow, short breaths

when we experience anxiety. Practicing controlled "Square breathing" is a simple yet powerful way to combat this natural tendency. Students can sit comfortably, breath in through their nose for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, breath out (like blowing out a candle) for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, and then repeat as needed.

* Muscle Relaxation

Anxiety has a physical component too! Relaxing the body relaxes our minds at the same time. Students can begin at their toes, tightening or clenching each muscle group and holding for 3-5 seconds. Once students have moved through their bodies (from toes to torso to arms and finally to the head), they can take a few deep breaths.

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Blizzard Bag Online Learning!

'Tis the season for Blizzard Bag days! Many students and their families are familiar with this practice, which the district started 2 years ago. When you are alerted by the SAU that it will be a Blizzard Bag day, please support your student with completing the assign-

ments found on each teacher's Google Classroom. This includes whatever UA (Unified Arts) classes your student has as well! Completion of Blizzard Bag requirements means that we are able to use up to 5 "snow" days as online learning that does

not have to be made up at the end of the year. If you do not have computer access, please have your student request paper copies so that (s)he is marked "present" and his/her work is counted toward the 80% completion needed for the district.



Respect, Responsibility, and Right Choices

Ask your student what the 3 Core Values are at TRMS and (s)he will tell you that they are Respect, Responsibility, and Right Choices. Our Core Values are central to our learning community. We believe in teaching and nurturing the “whole child” so that our students grow up to be successful, socially conscious adults. Parents can also teach and reinforce the importance of self-respect and responsibility for their students at home and in the community by:

- Setting a good example
- Talking with your student(s) about the feelings of others

- Helping your student(s) to own their own feelings
- Encouraging your student(s) to express their own needs to you
- Giving your student(s) an opportunity to make things better
- Assist your student(s) in solving their own problems
- Using fair and logical consequences
- Catching them being good
- Expecting good behavior



PowerSchool and the Honor Roll

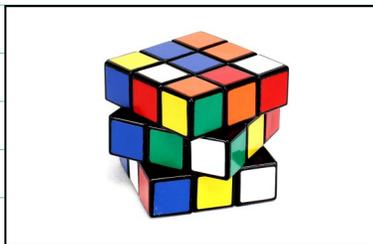
The use of online grading/assessment systems such as PowerSchool has provided both students and parents/guardians with more “real-time” feedback on student progress than ever before! Please be aware that, as Progress Report and Report Card marking periods close, teachers are given a window of time to finish inputting grades and listing comments. Even

though a teacher might have updated your student’s information, what is listed on PowerSchool is not official until the day that the Progress Report or Report Card is released to the public. Achieving the Honor Roll at TRMS is, well, an honor! We want to acknowledge the hard work of your student throughout an academic quarter. Please be

aware that the Honor Roll is publically posted on our website a couple of weeks after grades close. This window of time allows us to correct any mistakes and students may be using this opportunity to finish assignments or complete relearns. If you have any questions once grades have been officially released, please do not hesitate to contact TRMS staff.

After School Activity Offerings

We want our students to be involved in our school community — and that includes after school! For a list of the current after school clubs, please go to the TRMS home page. A description of each club and when and



where it meets is available. These clubs can change during the school year, so please check back to see if there is something new to try! The “late bus” is available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and

Thursdays if your student needs a ride home after his/her club. What if your student has a sport that is about to end or might start a new sport or activity at some point during the school year? No problem! All clubs are “drop in,” which means your student can try them out and attend whenever they have time.

Maintaining Connections

Getting Along with Friends, Changing Friendships and Conflict Resolution



Middle School is a time of change...of interests, moods, hobbies and tastes. It is also a time when middle schoolers start to define and understand what friendship means to them.

Conflicts, disagreements, and changes within friendships are common.

Scenes from every Middle School everywhere:

You and your best friend try out for a school sports team. You both make two rounds of cuts, but when the final team list is posted, your friend's name is there, but yours isn't. You're sad about not making the team and a little angry and jealous of your friend because she made the team. You're worried that your friend will dump

you and hang out with her team friends. What do you do?

A friend tells you something, then makes you promise not to tell anyone else. You accidentally tell someone else. When you come into school the next day, it seems like the whole school knows what your friend told you. Your friend is really angry and it seems like everyone else is too! What do you do?

Your class schedule is changed, and you are no longer with your best friend. This means that you don't see each other that much during the day. This morning while waiting to go to advisory, your friend walks by you and sits with a whole new group of friends, and doesn't invite you.....what do you do?

More often than not, middle schoolers lack the communication and problem-solving skills to be able to effectively handle these issues. Unlike the student in first scenario, most students are not aware of how they really feel and avoid dealing with the issue because it's uncomfortable. Parents can help by encouraging discus-

sion about these situations and listening. The following are a few helpful tips for students to use when dealing with conflict and friendship issues:

*Don't react immediately – give yourself a chance to cool off before you act or say anything; resist the urge to put the situation out on social media

*Think about what you're really feeling (what are you angry, sad, or nervous about)

*Talk the situation out with an adult to get a different point of view

*Speaking directly to the other person/s, don't speak about them to others

*Speak assertively, honestly, and kindly

*Be willing to listen to others

*Take time to think about solutions

*Talk to an adult – chances are they've probably been in the same situation and can help you talk it through

Resources for conflict resolution (From the website: classroom.kidshealth.org/6to8/personal/growing/conflict_resolution.pdf)

Conflict Resolution Resources for Tweens/Teens

Dealing with anger:

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/deal-with-anger.html

5 Ways to (Respectfully) Disagree:

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/tips-disagree.html

Talking to Your Parents— or Other Adults:

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/talk-to-parents.html

Managing Your Emotional Reactions:

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/emotional-reactions.html

Apologizing:

TeensHealth.org/en/teens/apologies.html

See the School Counseling website for updated information and new links to resources on diversity, anxiety, community supports, and more!

Smarter Balanced testing will be taking place on the following days:

6th grade: March 29th thru the 31st (English/ Language Arts) April 5th thru 7th (Math)

7th grade: April 12th thru the 14th (English/ Language Arts) April 19th thru 21st (Math)

8th grade: April 12th thru the 14th (English/ Language Arts) April 19th thru 21st (Math)

How to Beat the Third Quarter Blues

We hear from both students and parents that the third quarter of the school year is a time when performance starts to slip. The days are short and cold, the excitement of starting a new school year is gone and summer seems a long, long way off. Students are tired and restless and academic fatigue sets in. Keeping students engaged and motivated can be a real challenge. Think about **refreshing** the school work routine:

***refresh** and review your academic expectations/rules

***refresh** at-home work spaces and supplies

***refresh** and set new academic goals for the end of the year

***refresh** your perspective of

this time of year by finding ways to enjoy the slower, cozy pace of winter

***refresh** physically by getting exercise and getting outside in the sunshine!

