Happy Earth Day everyone!

As your child has probably mentioned or if you’ve checked our online calendar ([www.mrschiffler.weebly.com](http://www.mrschiffler.weebly.com)) you probably know that MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) testing is upon us! This is a great opportunity for our class to show how much we have really learned this year! Every third grade student across the country will be taking a form of this test in the next few weeks. **We are scheduled to take READING APRIL 23-24 and MATH APRIL 29-30.** Your child will receive their reading scores sometime over the summer (they score them by hand) and math scores immediately (taken and scored on computer).

I am extremely excited that our class finally gets their crack at the test! We have studied and prepared the best we could all year long and I am very confident in all their abilities. Now it’s time to rock!

Quick notes

Test: What to expect

Your child will be given all the time in the world they need to finish the test. We have talked about showing our work, highlighting information and rereading directions several times. Nobody needs to rush because as soon as they finish they are expected to quietly read or work independently at their desk until everyone is finished, so why not be the last one!?

* Students may bring water bottles, snacks (healthy), activity books or sheets and or gum to chew during the test.
* The reading test is taken paper/pencil in our classroom over 2 days, 2 sections per day.
* The math test is taken in our elementary computer lab over 2 days as well. If students do not finish they may finish in our classroom the preceding days.

Scoring: What all those numbers mean

The main number you want to focus on is a number in the 300’s (3 stands for 3rd grade). A “Meeting State Standards” (passing) score is equivalent to 350 and above.

301 – 339 – Does not meet state standards

340 – 349 – Partially meets state standards

**350 – 364 – Meets state standards**

**365 – 399 – Exceeds state standards**

Test Day Stress: How to Conquer

Sometimes, it all comes down to the big day. Maybe you thought you had everything under control but now, just hours before a test, you're totally freaking. Or you have such a sense of nervousness and dread about this day that you don't even want to go to school.

These types of feelings can sometimes erase all the hard work and studying you've done. But here are some ways boost your confidence and keep the panic under control:

**Get a good night's sleep.** Getting a full night of sleep before a big test can be a HUGE help. You'll feel better, think clearer, and be in a better mood to tackle anything the test can throw at you. This is one of the best reasons not to put off studying until the last minute: you've got to go to bed on time the night before the exam.

**Eat a healthy breakfast.** Food is the fuel for your body and brain, so eat a balanced breakfast on the morning of the test. Load up on protein, but avoid junk food, too much sugar, or anything that might make you "crash" during the test.

**Avoid caffeine.** You may be tempted to gulp down coffee, cold coffee drinks, caffeinated sodas, or "energy drinks" before a test. Although these drinks can make people alert, they might also cause jitters and make you nervous at a time when you want to be cool and relaxed.

**Forget the consequences.** It's important to know how important a test is, how much of your grade it will account for, and what might happen if you fail. These things will let you know how hard you should be studying and how seriously you must take the test. But once the day of the test arrives, you should try to put all this information out of your mind. Worrying and stressing about things like, "If I fail this test, I fail the whole class!" will just distract you from the task at hand -- and that's doing the best you can on each and every question. Try to keep your mind on the test itself-not on what the test means to your future.

**Just breathe.** In the days before the test, practice taking deep breaths, especially at times when you feel stressed. Feel the air flow through your lungs and the calm move through your body. This is a skill you can use when you're sitting down for a test. Breathe in. Breathe out. Keep a level head.

**Think of something peaceful.** Have a picture in your head of something that makes you calm, relaxed, and happy. It might be your bedroom, or the ocean, or somewhere you once hiked in the mountains. If you feel yourself start to stress, close your eyes, go to this mental picture, and try to chill.

**Think positive.** Say things to yourself that will boost your confidence. Tell yourself that you know the material and you know what's coming. This test can't scare you and you're totally prepared to ace it. Push negative thoughts out of your head. If you think confident, you'll BE more confident.

**Don't "cram."** It's important to start studying long before the morning of the test, because rushed, last-minute "cramming" won't help much and will probably just make you panicky and nervous. If you know your stuff, just relax and concentrate on getting into a calm mindset before the test begins. Stay away from other students who are freaking out about the test, as their super-stressed attitude might rub off on you.

Breakfast: What should I eat?

There have been many studies conducted that show the positive impact eating breakfast has on a students test score. “Students who ate school breakfast attended an average of 1.5 more days of school than their meal-skipping peers, and their math scores averaged 17.5% higher. The report, which was funded in part by Kellogg's, went on to share that these students with increased attendance and scores were 20% more likely to continue on and graduate high school.” (Study done by Kellogg) If they already know the material let’s make sure we do our part to help them have one less thing to worry about during the test.

**Protein**

Eat foods that are high in protein to stabilize blood sugar levels and prevent decreased energy levels and concentration. Protein also has a satiating effect on the appetite, which prevents sudden feelings of hunger, leading you to think of food instead of the task at hand while taking a test. Protein-rich foods include eggs, nuts, cottage cheese and yogurt. Alternatively, consider a lean protein such as chicken or salmon on a whole-wheat bagel or toast.

**Complex Carbohydrates**

Complex carbohydrates such as whole grains and vegetables are nutrient-rich foods that contain several vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin B and iron that aid in optimal brain function. Whole grain foods are also a source of dietary fiber, which keeps the body satisfied and delivers a steady stream of energy, as they take longer to digest. Complex carbs should be paired with protein food sources for optimal mental performance. Good food sources to eat for breakfast include oatmeal with almonds, whole-grain bread with peanut butter or cottage cheese, whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk, or even a bowl of brown rice with green, leafy vegetables such as spinach mixed sprinkled with nuts and seeds.

Read more: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/370711-what-to-eat-for-breakfast-before-a-test/#ixzz2RD1XWqS9>