

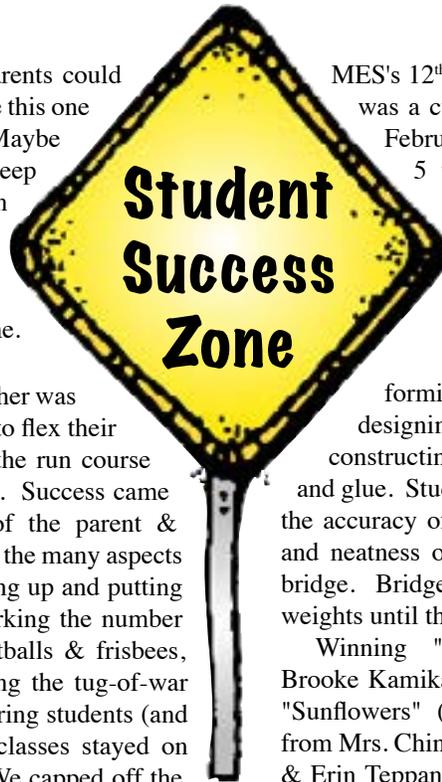
HO'OLAULIMA I MOANALUA

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

Vol. XXV, No. 5

April - May 2019

Wouldn't it be awesome if schools and parents could have large, bright, clearly-marked signs like this one that point the way to student success? Maybe someday...but until then, we'll just have to keep up our joint efforts to prepare our children with the academic, social, technology, life and character skills they'll need to succeed when they've left school and the safety, comfort and shelter of their family and home.



MES's 12th annual Junior Engineers Night held on March 6th was a culmination of events that actually began early in February with lessons that provided students in Grade 5 with an overview of some of the many ways engineering affects our daily lives and provided them with the information they would need to consider such as function and materials as they designed their decks, spans and trusses that would withstand an anticipated load.

Student teams were tasked forming an engineering "Company," designing, drawing to scale, then constructing a bridge using popsicle sticks and glue. Students were rated on their design, the accuracy of their drawing, their use of materials, aesthetics and neatness of their project and, finally, the strength of their bridge. Bridges were subjected to stress tests and loaded with weights until they broke.

Winning "Companies" were "MBA" (Melia Reincke, Brooke Kamikawa and Abigayle Asano) from Ms Salas's class; "Sunflowers" (Ashley Mospens-Cantero & Jessica Patterson) from Mrs. Chinen's class; "Bridge Corporation" (Rosario Ferreira & Erin Teppang) from Mrs. Isaac's class; "JK Builders" (Kira Fujimoto & Jzayla Dumbrigue) from Ms Bayudan's class. JK Builders were also the overall winners with the highest total scores in all categories -- scaled drawing, budget, aesthetics and loading and will get their name engraved on the perpetual trophy! Congratulations to all our budding engineers!

Students from all grades had a blast at the Junior Engineers Night activity interactive STEM stations, staffed by engineers from Austin Tsutsumi & Associates and volunteers from the ASCE (American Society of Civil Engineers) University of Hawaii Chapter and the ASCE Younger Members Forum. We sincerely thank our MES PTO and the sponsoring companies for their generosity providing all the supplies and materials, prizes and awards! Thanks, too, to the many parent and community volunteers who made the evening's events so much fun. Students are already looking forward to next year's event! **Success!**

I'm amazed at how quickly time is flying by... this is the last issue of "*Ho'olaulima i Moanalua*" for this school year! But, if you check the *News & Notes* on page 5, you'll find there's still lots happening during the last quarter of this school year.

Pre-sale order form & info for
Na Makamae of Moanalua (yearbook)
and summer skill workbooks are in this issue!
Pre-order deadline is May 3rd!

Susie

Success! The weather was perfect for students to flex their fitness mindsets at the run course and activity stations. Success came from the support of the parent & community volunteers who assisted us with the many aspects of an event of this magnitude entailed -- setting up and putting away the tent used on the run course, marking the number of laps students completed, throwing footballs & frisbees, running basketball skill stations, overseeing the tug-of-war and the wacky races in the courtyard, cheering students (and staff) on, delivering water, making sure classes stayed on schedule -- in other words... everything! We capped off the day with an assembly to recognize students who brought in the most donations and were treated to an awesome Latin Dance performance, amazing basketball skills and a fun & energizing Zumba demonstration.

Thank you, families, for your support of our technology fundraiser -- over \$19,000 in donations -- ensures that MES teachers and students will continue to have access to the most current educational tech resources!

MES is about to embark on the annual standardized testing period -- the Smarter Balanced Assessments -- which is administered to all students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 attending Hawai'i's public schools. While the SBA Testing directly affects our students in grades 3 through 6, there may be an occasional "ripples" that may affect our primary grade students (K, 1 & 2) in the timing of recess, implementation of "quiet" zones, etc.

Mr. Jay Nakasone, MES Counselor & Testing Coordinator, will conduct our annual "**Test Success**" interactive evening workshop for parents on Thursday, April 18th. This workshop is a "Standardized Testing 101" for parents of students taking the Smarter Balanced Assessments for the first time and provides information about the reason for the assessments, testing dates & schedule, as well as an opportunity to experience part of a practice test. Go to page 4 to see the flyer and RSVP form.





What's So Bad About Teaching to the Test?



If teaching content standards is considered "teaching to the test," it may not be such a bad thing. It depends on the test and the teacher. If the test measures the skills students are expected to be learning and teachers prepare students by teaching those skills, then teaching to the test is a good thing.

The federal "No Child Left Behind" law (NCLB) which went into effect in 2002, caused schools to "be accountable," which translated into focusing a lot of attention on state standardized testing and results and required all schools to test students in reading, math and science. States chose their own test and standards of proficiency. Schools that didn't show students making "adequate yearly progress" towards achieving proficiency were subject to federal sanctions and, in worst-case scenarios, a complete restructuring of the school. Currently, Hawai'i State Assessments (HSA) employs Smarter Balanced Consortium's (SBAC) computer-adaptive testing to assess student learning.

Critics of the law say that the emphasis on testing in reading and math means other subjects such as social studies and the arts, are getting less attention. Some schools have even done away with or cut back on recess time because of the pressure to spend more school time preparing students to pass state tests.

On the positive side, students around the country (particularly in the lower grades) have made progress in basic skills in reading and math, but studies show that the improvements don't necessarily hold up in middle school and beyond, when the tests get more complex and critical thinking skills are necessary.

In the wake of the now-defunct NCLB, there is much talk about aligning instruction, curriculum, standards and assessment. This basically means that teachers and students have a clear idea of what they are expected to learn.

When students spend time preparing for tests, they learn valuable skills. Time management, understanding reading passages, following directions, knowing when certain answers can be eliminated -- these are all important test-taking skills that students need to know as they progress through school and their career paths.

Matthew Matera, a middle school teacher in the Boston area, says he "teaches to the test" by teaching test-taking strategies. But he says that doesn't interfere with teaching his core curriculum. He integrates test strategies into his lessons. "It's a part of the instructional program, not a separate thing," he says. "Standardized tests ask students to demonstrate reading passage comprehension, to derive the meaning of words from context, to pull out facts where needed and to draw connections. These are all skills of a good reader and they are required in professional life, too."

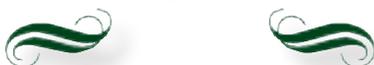
Some argue that students need to learn how to take tests, regardless of whether they are aligned to state standards, because tests are a part of life, both in school and beyond. Leif Fearn, a teacher educator at San Diego State University in California says, "We teach to the driving license test and the bar examination for attorneys in every state. Medical students pay heavily for preparation courses before their medical examinations, and most real estate brokers take courses that prepare them for their licensure examinations."

There's obviously a need for both teaching the skills necessary to succeed on tests, and preparing students to think and engage in learning. Jonathan Raymond, chief accountability officer for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina, says, "We need to teach children to problem-solve and provide a solid foundation for success beyond high school. We want to prepare our students to succeed in meaningful jobs in the 21st century."



Meditations for Parents Who Do Too Much

by Jonathan and Wendy Lazear



©1993 Fireside/Parside Books (simon & schuster)

Choice is tyranny. -- Jonathan Lazear

Of course our children need choices. But if we give them too many, we may be inviting disaster.

Was it simpler when we were kids or does it just seem that way? Did we have as many options as we've given them? Our children need us to keep the umbrella over their heads -- at least for a while. We should offer them a choice, but make the choice clear.

"Do you want to do this -- or that?"

Not "What do you want to do?"

If we remember what it was like to be children, it will make it easier for us to be parents. We will remember the safety of boundaries, the reassurance of limits. We will recall how thrilling it was to be free -- when we knew our parents were waiting around the corner.



My children need me to provide reasonable choices for them to make; they also need me to set reasonable limits.

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PCNC link on [Parents] tab

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Susie Okumura
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HOME & SCHOOL CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS

POSITIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP YOUR KIDS



Raising a Successful Student

by Maya Cohen

<http://school.familyeducation.com/parent-and-teacher/education-and-parents/51325.html?page=1>

Numerous factors contribute to a child's success in school., but research groups such as the Harvard Family Research Project agree that parental involvement and influence weigh heavily among the. Knowing how to wield your influence is very important, because you don't want to put too much pressure on your child or overemphasize the importance of grades. The key is to make learning an enjoyable activity rather than a chore.

Develop educational habits outside of school

It's important to remember that learning is not something that happens exclusively within the walls of schools. Educational experiences can arise anywhere, and can be fun and informal. Remember that children learn everywhere. Heather Weiss, director of the Harvard Family Research Project,¹ says, "Parents provide a strong influence and help children make choices on how to spend out-of-school time." Think about productive and beneficial ways your child can spend his time and develop habits within your household that provide intellectual stimulation.

Integrate some of these

healthy habits into your regular routine:

1. **Make reading an integral part of your home life.** Read aloud to your children or set aside quiet time each day in which your family can sit together and read silently. Instead of flipping on the television, turn to books during downtime.
2. **Use your daily time with your children wisely.** When you are in the car or walking to school, talk to your kids about what they are learning in school, or prompt a conversation about a topic they find interesting and intriguing.
3. **Know what interests your children,** and encourage them to explore those subjects.
4. **Provide a quiet & comfortable learning environment** for your children. Try to find some space where your children can do homework, read, study, or think in comfort and without distractions from television and video games.
5. **Keep a positive attitude about school.** Never refer to school as a drag, or make it seem like attending class is a chore. Keep your kids excited about learning, and eager to share their daily discoveries.

¹ Harvard Family Research Project was founded in 1983 by the Harvard Graduate School of Education

Tips to Help Your Child Prepare for Tests

<http://www.familyeducation.com>

1. The best way to prepare for tests is to study and know the work.
2. Make sure that your child is in school during the testing sessions. Do not plan any vacations, doctor or dental appointments on test dates.
3. Make sure that you are aware of your child's performance and that you can help interpret the results when they become available. Remember to keep well-informed about your child's tests.¹
5. If there are major differences between standardized test scores and school grades, find out why.
6. Encourage your child to study over a period of time rather than "cramming" the night before.
7. Encourage your child to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and to ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
8. See that your child gets his/her regular amount of sleep before the tests and is well-rested.
9. Make sure that your child eats breakfast on the day of the test. Hunger can detract from a good test performance.
10. Encourage your child to do his or her best.

¹ schools usually receive students' SBA test scores in late summer so watch the August-September 2019 issue of this newsletter for information about our HSA Test Results Interpretation workshop for parents that will be scheduled in September.



Smarter Balanced
Hawaii State Assessments
at Moanalua Elementary:

May 2 - 24

for test success...

- be well-rested
- be well-nourished
- be at school on-time



S smarter **B**alanced **A**ssessments

Test Success

Parents' Workshop

Thursday,

April 18th
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Moanalua Elementary School's
Library Computer Lab

sign up by April 12 - use the RSVP form,
call 305-1210 or email mes_pcnc@yahoo.com

Informed parents are a
cornerstone to a student's success.
Every student whose parents attend
this workshop will receive a treat to say,
"Thanks!" for staying involved.

Standardized assessments are a fact of life for all students beginning in grade 3. The tests our children are taking now are quite different than those you took when you were in school. Relatively speaking, those were pretty straight-forward -- multiple choices, matching, fill in the blanks, and an occasional short answer question...right? Join us for this parent workshop -- you'll see, first-hand, what the tests look like now, get hands-on access to an online resource where you can find "practice" tests and get some hints on how to help your child stress less and score better.

Still not sure if you should attend?

Use the checklist below to see if you should attend

My child...

- is in grade 3, 4, 5 or 6 this year 
- is a military dependent; we moved this year
- transferred to Moanalua Elementary from a private school
- has been here a while but I've never attended this workshop before

if you checked one or more boxes above, you really should sign up to attend!



R.S.V.P.

Complete and return to MES PCNC



Parent's Name: _____ E-mail address: _____

Phone#(s): _____ Best time to call: _____

Child's Name(s): _____ Gr. (s): _____ Rm(s): _____

Please call me, I have Questions Suggestions Concerns regarding:

I can help with teacher support (copying, laminating, etc.)

I can help with student support (tutor, mentor)

The best day(s) and time(s) for me are: _____

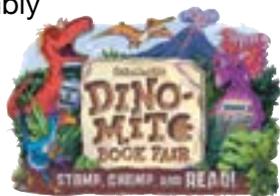
Yes! We will attend "HSA Test Success" on April 18 (RSVP by Apr. 12)



M.E.S. News & Notes

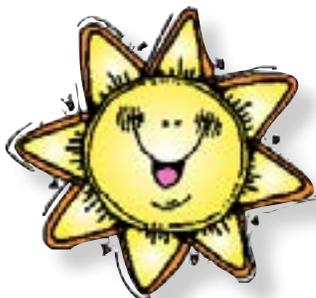
April - Month of the Military Child
National Poetry Month
Mathematics Education Month
National Youth Safety Month
School Library Month

- 3-5: Grade 4 trip to Hawai'i island
- 8: Report cards going home with students
- 8-19: iReady Spring Assessments - all grades
- 13: MES Summer Enrichment Program Registration
- 18: **"Test Success" workshop for Parents**
- 19: **Good Friday Holiday - school closed**
- 22: Earth Day
- 23: **P/D Day - no school for students**
- 24: **"Purple Up" Day at MES**
Q3 GLO-getters assembly
Library Book Fair
Dino-Mite begins
- 26: Arbor Day



May - Military Appreciation Month
National Physical Fitness & Sports Month

- 2. Last day of Library Book Fair
- 3: **Pre-Order deadline!**
 - Na Makamae o Moanalua
 - Summer Math Skills/Lang. Arts Review
- 4: MES & MMS Aloha Aina Day: 9 - noon
Regal Fundraiser pick up: 9 - noon
- 5: Cinco de Mayo (Mexico)
Children's Day (Japan)
- 6-10: Teacher Appreciation Week
- 10: Service Groups' Field Trip
- 12: Mother's Day
- 14: PTO General Meeting & Talent Show
- 21: MES Chorus & Orchestra Spring Concert
- 27: **Memorial Day holiday - school closed**
- 29: Grade 6 Promotion ceremony
Students Dismissed at 2:10 p.m.
- 30: Awards Assembly
- 31: **Students' Last Day - dismissal at 1:20 p.m.**

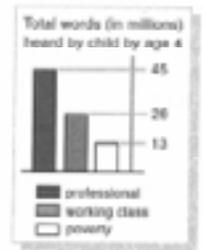


To: MES PCNC

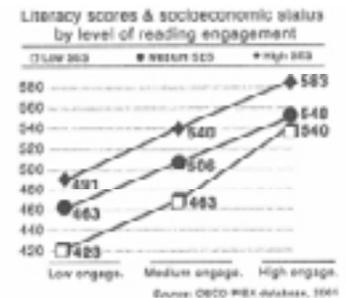


When my daughter was less than a year old, I read a book titled “The Read-Aloud Handbook” by Jim Trelease. Jim Trelease, author of this book that have sold over a million copies, was also a lecturer who traveled across the country to explain the importance of reading aloud to kids. His writing is very engaging and the information he presents completely transformed how I view children’s books and reading in our lives.

In a chapter titled “What are the Skills a Child Needs for Kindergarten?” he wrote that “There is one prekindergarten skill that matters above all others, because it is the prime predictor of school success or failure: the child’s vocabulary before entering school...the words he or she already knows determines how much of what the teacher says will be understood. And since most instruction for the first four years of school is oral, the child who has the largest vocabulary will understand the most, while the child with the smallest vocabulary will grasp the least.” (Trelease 13). He explains how this “word gap” occurs, citing a study conducted at the University of Kansas. The goal of this study was to determine why certain children are more advanced than others at age 4, when they started school. They found that while the instincts of good parenting was consistent among families of all socioeconomic level, there was one critical difference among these families. “When the daily number of words for each group of children is projected across four years, the four year old child from the professional family will have heard 45 million words, the working-class 26 million, and the welfare child only 13 million. All three children will show up for kindergarten on the same day, but one will have heard 32 million fewer words. If No Child Left Behind expects the teacher to get this child caught up, she will have to speak 10 words a second for nine hundred hours to reach the 32-million mark by year’s end.” (Trelease 15).



We should acknowledge the significance of a potential word gap in a child’s future and remedy it by encouraging reading as much as possible. Trelease cites a 2002 study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, which showed that when a fifteen-year old from a low socioeconomic background becomes a highly motivated reader, “...they scored higher than students from the highest income levels who were poorly engaged readers and very close to the most engaged middle income students. Thus high reading engagement is capable of vaulting the lowest SES student to significantly higher scores and overcoming family culture.” (Trelease 95). Such a simple act of reading for fun can help a child improve their literacy score, regardless of his or her socioeconomic status.



As “engagement” levels increase, so also do reading scores, even for students at the lowest income levels.

Here at Moanalua Elementary School, we are fortunate to have the Reading as Partners Program (RAP). Every month, students are invited to complete a RAP report and turn it in for reading prizes. Parent volunteers read and choose some of the best RAP reports for display on the bulletin board, the web, and the library shelves, so that students can be proud of their work. The RAP committee works hard and donate their time because they genuinely believe that it is important to encourage our students to become readers. RAP is a program that used to exist at many public schools but have long since been eliminated over time. We are fortunate that Moanalua PTO has supported the program financially throughout the years and that many teachers, parents and grandparents have given their time to ensure that this program continues to survive.

I highly encourage parents to use the monthly RAP deadlines as a reminder to take the time to read to your child, or ask your child about the book that they are reading. Time flies, as all parents know, and reading is a great way to connect with your child, away from all the digital distractions. Take a break from all the usual problems and responsibilities that comes with being an adult. Bring out your inner child and find a book that you would like to read with your child. Help them discover that taking the time to read is rewarding and will open many doors.

Anne Lee
RAP Committee Co-Chair