

Career Ladder Messenger

WRUSD AEPA & SEI Work Session

All AEPA study session will be at the Scouts Academy in room 810 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Participants who would like to get their NAU study accounts need to come to an AEPA study session. If you have tutoring after school you still need to attend so come as soon as you can.

In addition, SEI will be held at the Scouts Academy in room 810 from 4:15 PM to 7:15 PM. This is only for participants who have been attending the SEI trainings since last October. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Deborah at her extension 6731 or email her at deborahm@wrschool.net.

CLP Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30 AM – 4:30 PM

CLP Staff

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Tyrone Barlow, HR Director | 729-6702 |
| Virginia Tulley, CLP Coordinator | 729-7810 |
| Deborah Mayher, District Mentor | 729-6731 |
| Heather Kee, CLP Secretary | 729-7811 |

Career Ladder Website:

<http://www.wrschool.net/clp/>

CLP IN-SERVICE

Deborah Mayher and Virginia Tulley will have *Classroom Management* training sessions this month for teachers who are interested in improving classroom management skills. Join colleagues in a discussion of effective techniques used in the classrooms. Harry Wong and Marzano's materials will be utilized for these in-services. If you have any questions please contact Deborah or Virginia.

Governor Napolitano



Pictured from left to right: Virginia Tulley (AzTEP participant), Governor Janet Napolitano, Mary Phillips (NBCT & Master Teacher), Deborah Mayher (Master Teacher)

The Arizona K-12 Center and the Office of the Governor of the State of Arizona invited participants to attend a special celebration and photo opportunity with Governor Janet Napolitano honoring The Arizona Teacher Excellence Program (AZTEP) at the Arizona Capitol on the morning of January 7, 2009 at 10:30 pm. It was quite an honor to be part of this great celebration. This photo event with Governor Janet Napolitano was in celebration for 2008 Master Teachers, New National Board Certified Teachers and AZTEP participants. This was one of the last events Janet Napolitano attended as Governor of our state. Not all AzTEP participants and NBCT from our district were able to attend.

March's Highlights

March 3

Classroom Management In-service

March 4

AEPA Study Session

March 5

SEI

March 8

Daylight Savings Begins (Set your clocks one hour forward)

March 10

Career Ladder Steering Committee Meeting

March 11

½ Day PD

March 12

SEI

March 16

Classroom Management In-service

March 17

ST. PATRICKS DAY!



March 19

SEI

March 20

AEPA Study Session

March 23

AEPA Study Session

March 26

SEI

March 30

Classroom Management In-service

Top Test-Taking Tips

There are a lot of things you'd rather be doing than preparing for the AIMS standardized tests.

However, they are part of the reality of teaching. Getting yourself and your students prepared well in advance will be worth every minute spent. The following tips are adapted from Kelli Roell, writer for www.About.com.

1. Use the IDEAL New section: Content-Rich Support Materials link from the Arizona Department of Education website. This site will give you tips and sample questions for any grade level of the AIMS test. Once on the homepage, you will need to create a password. The web address for the ADE is: www.ade.state.az.us/.
2. Pay close attentions to directions. Have students practice reading directions. Spend time looking for clues such as "least," "greatest," which one is "**not**" a cause. Many errors are caused by misreading the directions. Give students a highlighter on worksheets and have them highlight the prompt or question stems and/or circle key words. If possible, read the directions twice.
3. Teach students how to bubble in answers completely and how to track the test item number with the answer sheet number.
4. Show students how to eliminate wrong answers. Cross through the ones that are known to be incorrect. Answers containing words such as "never," "always," and other extremes, generalizations, and anything that seems "off" can usually be eliminated. Play "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" type games with multiple-choice worksheets.
5. Have students practice answering questions in their heads with the choices covered. Then uncover the choices and see if any answers match what they thought the answer might be.
6. For math tests where scratch paper is to be used, show students how to fold paper several times to make boxes and sections on the paper. Have them write the problems down in each box so they can

keep better track of their work. It is easier for them to go back and check answers if they can find them on their scratch paper.

7. Teach students to work out every math problem, even the ones they think they can do in their heads. Chances are they will be more accurate.
8. First instincts are usually right. Unless they see a good reason to change an answer, tell them to stick with their first choice.
9. Have students read all their choices before selecting an answer. Often students see an answer that is partly correct and don't read further to find the more completely correct choice. Practice together by making students read aloud all the choices.
10. Students need a good protein-filled breakfast and lots of water on test day. These two things will help students stay sharp throughout the whole day of testing. Hunger can interfere with concentration, and so can the noise of a rumbling stomach.
11. Teach students to tackle the easy questions first. Skip over any questions they're not sure about. Make sure they mark it with a star or dot so they can come back to it later. Sometimes answers come clear to you later, after you take a second look at the question. (Sometimes, the answers even appear in the essay question or elsewhere!)

Testing Key Words

- ✦ Analyze
- ✦ Persuade (argue, convince)
- ✦ Compare
- ✦ Contrast
- ✦ Summarize
- ✦ Demonstrate
- ✦ Describe
- ✦ Explain
- ✦ Interpret
- ✦ Infer

Dear Miss Wise One:

Dear Miss Wise One:

Whenever my school colleagues start to talk about the AIMS Test, my heart starts racing, my head pounds, and my eye starts to twitch. I am really afraid of Standardized Tests—my friends laughed at me, but several agreed. What can I do to improve my attitude? I am afraid it will affect my student's test scores.

— *Twitching Teacher*

Dear Twitching:

I think I can help you—first; I want you to take a deep breath and relax.

Some teachers do indeed share your concerns, and this can be passed on to students in an offhand remark, a lack of enthusiasm, the tone of your voice, or your facial expressions. So let's begin by getting rid of "excess baggage." Write down on a piece of paper every word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the word "standardized testing." When you are finished, say all your words out loud, then crumple up the paper and throw it away. Leave your "baggage" in the trash and seriously undertake the challenge of changing your attitude for the sake of your students.

As educators, we know that test results matter in our students' lives so we have to do what we can to help them do their best.

Good Luck!

Anxiety Tips That Really Work

Test anxiety can play a big part in test performance. The best way to help your students deal with stress is to have them focus and feel ready to meet the challenge.

Here are a few practical tips to deal with test-taking stress.

1. Talk about test anxiety. Let students write privately in a journal about what happens to them during a test.
2. Discuss with your students the difference between the "thinking" part of the brain and the "emotion" part of the brain. Remind them that anger, excitement, anxiety, and other emotions will push forward and take over the brain so that the "thinking" part cannot do its job. Recognition is the first step in helping students' keep the "thinking" part of their brain active.

3. Practice breathing and stretching exercises to help get oxygen to the brain cells and to create a more relaxing frame of mind.
4. If feeling unfocused or distracted,
 - ✦ cross your right arm over your left arm, and then your left arm over your right arm. This gets synaptic impulses jumping from one side of the brain to the other and creates a need for the brain to "wake up" and focus.
 - ✦ Close your eyes and take five to ten deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. This is like pushing the brain "reset" button.
5. If your school allows it, let your students chew gum or mints. Students appreciate the novelty of having permission to do something that's typically discouraged. The simple movement of chewing may calm students and help the kinesthetic learner focus. Peppermint candy is recommended because of its reputation for aiding concentration and mental clarity.
6. If at all possible, students should take tests in their own classroom.
7. Take the edge off test day by creating a supportive, comfortable atmosphere. Play soft classical music before the test and rearrange desks so everyone has sufficient space. Students should not face each other. Allow plenty of room for you to walk around and monitor testing. Your presence will keep students on task and working harder.
8. Think about taking the test and crossing the finish line to success! Visualize yourself taking the tests and doing wonderfully. Detailed visualizations can help you feel like you're really experiencing something, and visualizing yourself doing well is a way to 'practice' success in a way that can actually help you perform better.

Tips are adapted from Mesa Public School CLP.