

TOP 10 TIPS FROM KAPLAN'S SCORE! TUTORING TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR MANDATORY STATE ASSESSMENTS

- Strategies for Parents and Kids for the Upcoming Regional Tests -

Chicago, February 27, 2006 – SCORE! Educational Centers, Inc., a leading provider of after-school learning programs and a subsidiary of international educational services provider Kaplan, Inc., offers 10 tips for student success on the upcoming standardized tests in each state this Spring.

"There is a lot of anxiety with taking these state assessments," said Justin Serrano, president of SCORE!. "By following some simple strategies, both students and their parents can be fully prepared for success on test day."

As required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, all public school students in grades 3-8 must take annual standardized assessments in reading and math to measure academic progress. Some states also require students to take assessments in writing, science and social studies.

The following tips can help parents teach their children some basic test-taking strategies for these important – and stressful - upcoming tests:

Tip #1: Read all directions carefully! Oftentimes in test-taking environments, the adrenaline gets pumping and students read through instructions too quickly. Taking the extra time to slow down and make sure they understand the question not only saves them from making wrong answers, but also saves time in the long run. A good guideline is to read each written directive at least twice.

Tip #2: Underline key words in the directions. This is a good strategy for kids in 5th grade or higher. At the younger grade levels, kids might get too bogged down in actually identifying the words and miss the greater question. Good key words to remember are: "Compare," "Contrast," "Define," and "Explain."

Tip #3: Listen attentively to the teacher or proctor. It's very easy for your child to let anxiety and adrenaline take over when they are sitting in the room with the test in front of them, waiting for the teacher to start the exam. Talk to your child about taking a deep breath and not getting distracted from the directions the teacher might be giving. Otherwise, your child might miss some very important information!

Tip #4: If the directions are confusing, ask! Your child's teacher is there to help explain unclear directions, and he will tell your child if a question is asking for too much information. It is always better for your child to ask and be told by the teacher that they can't answer the question than to not ask at all.

Tip #5: Learn how to skim. This is most relevant for students in older grades as they will be reading longer passages. Teach your kids how to skim through a passage quickly to get the basic idea and then read the questions that correspond with that passage. Then, when they go back into the paragraph, they'll know what information they need to be looking for.

Tip #6: Process of elimination. A portion of the test might contain multiple-choice questions, so knowing how to eliminate wrong answers will help your child make an educated guess, if necessary. Getting four options down to two means they have doubled the likelihood of choosing a right answer!

Tip #7: Manage time well. Good time management is critical to good test taking. It doesn't matter if your child is in 3rd grade or graduate school, no one wants to run out of time on a test. Every question gets equal weight, so it is in your child's best interest to skip questions that are

particularly difficult, and save them for the end. And if your child finishes early, answers should be double checked!

Tip #8: Answer some easy questions first. By attacking a few easy questions right off the bat, your child will build confidence and manage their time well. Starting off an important test with the right attitude can make all the difference!

Tip #9: It's OK to take a break. Time management is important, but not if it means that your child is going to burn himself out before the end of the test. If your child says that tests feel overwhelming and exhausting, tell him that it's OK to put his pencil down and close his eyes, stare out the window for a moment or just take a few deep breaths. Just don't lose track of time!

Tip #10: Take a practice test! Kids always perform better when they are more comfortable with the content and format of a test. Each state's department of education has a website devoted to student assessment. These websites are great resources for parents and students and often include test information as well as sample tests.

About SCORE!

SCORE! Educational Centers, Inc. (www.escore.com), a division of Kaplan, is a leading provider of after-school learning programs for children in grades pre-K through 10. With the goal of helping children reach their academic potential in math, reading, spelling and writing, SCORE!'s program includes personal coaching, positive reinforcement and a customized curriculum that adapts to each child's pace and learning needs. SCORE! serves 82,000 students annually in 165 centers located in 11 states across the country. Kaplan is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO).

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