



ROSEVILLE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

# The Raider's Den

THE HEARTBEAT OF 623

## News for the week of April 24th - 28th.

### MCA Testing

Students will be taking the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests in the following weeks. The schedule is as follows:

- April 25 - Math MCA test school-wide STAR through period 3
- April 26 - Math MCA test school-wide STAR through period 2
- May 2 - Science MCA test 8th grade only STAR through period 3

A few notes for families to grab hold of:

- Make sure that your student is well rested and has breakfast (we will serve breakfast at school as we do every morning and each student will receive a snack on the first day of each MCA test).
- [Make sure your student brings his/her school iPad each day fully charged \(check with them Monday and Tuesday evenings\).](#)

Students cannot have a phone or any personal device in their possession in the classroom at all during the MCA test.

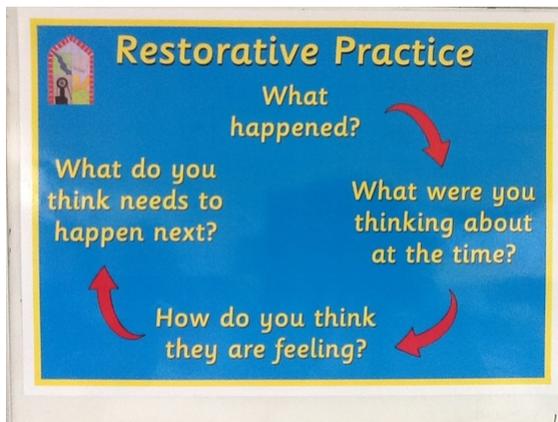
- Encourage your student to leave their phone and/or personal devices at home or make sure they know to lock them in their locker during MCAs (Staff have been directed to collect any devices in the morning before test begin).

Students can choose to wear headphones during the Math and Science MCA tests to have the questions read aloud.

- Encourage your student to bring a pair of headphones as many students prefer to wear their own.

Thank you so much for your support.

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During STAR on Mondays, teachers are asked to run community building Circles to transition students back to school from the weekend. Here are some examples of the kinds of questions we have asked students to talk about in their STAR Circles throughout the year:

“Our relationships mirror the structure of power in our society that is operating all the time. Schools are organized as strong hierarchies. The Circle is non-hierarchical. It is a space of equality. Circles challenge practices around power. An authority figure cannot control the process but must instead share power with all the participants. Circles only work if everyone in the Circle cooperates without the power-based intervention of the authority figure. This shift in responsibility takes some practice and challenges the strong need felt by authority figures, such as teachers and principals, to control the process, outcome, and the participants.

Circles ask for everyone to behave towards one another in an equally respectful manner. This means that adults in the Circle comply with the same guidelines as young people. Adults must sit in the Circle just as youth do. The adults cannot leave the room and then come back in. They must stay throughout the conversation and listen just as much as they are listened to.

## Keys to Happiness

Julie Scelfo reports on what psychologists say about cultivating lasting well-being and happiness. “Psychology is generally focused on how to relieve the negative emotions of depression, anger, and worry,” says Martin Seligman (University of Pennsylvania). “Freud and Schopenhauer said the most you can ever hope for in life is not to suffer, not to be miserable, and I think that view is empirically false, morally insidious, and a political and educational dead-end. What makes life worth living is much more than the absence of the negative.”

Scelfo summarizes Seligman’s more positive philosophy: “[W]ell-being consists not merely of feeling happy (an emotion that can be fleeting) but of experiencing a sense of contentment in the knowledge that your life is flourishing and has meaning beyond your own pleasure.” The key is cultivating the components of well-being, which include engagement, good relationships, accomplishment, and purpose. Four strategies that Seligman and other psychologists have found

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to be effective:

- **Identify signature strengths.** Write down a story about a time when you were at your best and re-read it every day for a week, asking, What personal strengths did I display when I was at my best? Creativity? Good judgment? Kindness? Loyalty? Courage? Passion? Forgiveness? Honesty? Writing down key qualities “puts you in touch with what you’re good at,” says Seligman. Then you can think about how to use those strengths to your advantage, intentionally organizing and structuring your life around them.

- **Find the good.** Set aside ten minutes before going to bed, write down three things that went really well that day, and ask with each, Why did this good thing happen? This exercise “turns your attention to the good things in life, so it changes what you attend to,” says Seligman. “Consciousness is like your tongue: It swirls around in the mouth looking for a cavity, and when it finds it, you focus on it. Imagine if your tongue went looking for a beautiful, healthy tooth.”

- **Make a gratitude visit.** Think of someone who has been especially kind to you and hasn’t been properly thanked, write a letter describing something he or she did that benefited your life, and then get together and read the letter out loud. Seligman reports that when people do this, there are often tears of joy: “It puts you in better touch with other people, with your place in the world.”

- **Respond more strongly.** The next time someone you care about shares good news, go beyond the regular “That’s nice” response and express genuine excitement, prolong the conversation, and encourage the person to tell others or engage in a celebratory activity.

These strategies can and should be used by parents with their children. [I encourage you to try one strategy with your child.](#)

“The Happy Factor: Practicing the Art of Well-Being” by Julie Scelfo in The New York Times Education Life, April 9, 2017.

For more information about Roseville Area Middle School and the Raider's Den, contact Dr. Brookins, Principal at [tyrone.brookins@isd623.org](mailto:tyrone.brookins@isd623.org) or 651.482.5280.

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