



# Success

---

Timely tips for OSBA student achievement liaisons

April 2008

---

## Coaching produces more effective teachers

Coaching teachers is six times more effective than class-size reduction, according to an article written by Harry & Rosemary Wong, published by the *Teachers.Net Gazette* (<http://teachers.net/wong/MAR08>). The Wongs liken teacher training to a baseball team, with coaches for each position. Coaches (baseball and academic) are charged with using their specialties to bring out the best in their players (teachers).

---

## “Nation at Risk” turns 25

It was 25 years ago this month when the National Commission on Excellence in Education released its “Nation at Risk” report. This report prompted greater involvement by the U.S. government in state and local education. To read the entire landmark report, go to [www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html).

---

## Get high-risk students involved in activities

Students who participate in after-school activities tend to do better in school. Research shows that neighborhoods and families influence students’ involvement in school activities. To get students from high-risk families and neighborhoods active in your programs, offer more comprehensive and long-term programs and recruit those high-risk students. To read the research from “Child Trends,” visit [www.childtrends.org/Files//Child\\_Trends-2008\\_02\\_05\\_Risks.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_02_05_Risks.pdf).

---

## Share the joy of learning

Celebrate the fun of learning. Too often we focus on the problems of public education. Everyday, in every classroom, teachers and students enjoy teachable moments. Invite teachers from each building to a board meeting to share their favorite joyful learning experience as a teacher.

---

## Rockin’ and rollin’ in Cleveland

Toddler Rock is a program that helps 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds learn letter recognition, rhyming and alliteration at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. In one of the most unlikely of learning settings, inner city preschoolers work on their literacy skills. To read the story, visit [www.cleveland.com/newsflash/cleveland/index.ssf?/base/entertainment-0/1205078352277620.xml&storylist=cleveland](http://www.cleveland.com/newsflash/cleveland/index.ssf?/base/entertainment-0/1205078352277620.xml&storylist=cleveland).

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief to share with fellow board members.

## Help students shine during testing: decrease test anxiety

Most of us get nervous or anxious at one time or another. In small amounts, we see these basic emotions as a “good thing.” They help us to avoid true danger and keep us “on our toes.” However, for some students, high levels of test anxiety often keep them from meeting their assessment potential. Research shows that many students with superior knowledge and intellect perform poorly during assessment due to high test anxiety. Testing situations involving formal processes such as timed response periods, unknown proctors and unfamiliar testing rooms can add to students’ distress.

Test anxiety comprises three major areas: affective, behavioral and cognitive. Affective symptoms occur when students show physical signs of discomfort, such as nausea, dizziness, cold hands or increased perspiration. Students experiencing these symptoms naturally find it more difficult to concentrate, focusing on their physical symptoms, rather than on test material. Behavioral test anxiety symptoms include those things that add up to inefficient study practices and poor preparation. Study avoidance, procrastination and disorganization lead to an inability to maximize performance in the testing situation. Cognitive problems associated with test anxiety involve students’ inability to quickly and logically organize accumulated knowledge into “blocks” for demonstration or to decipher information quickly enough to manage exam questions.

Parents, school administrators, counselors and teachers can help students in managing test anxiety.

- Encourage students to create manageable schedules at home and school that allow them to feel in control of time periods leading up to the test. Allow ample time in the schedule for study, rest, meals and physical exercise.
- Assist students with open communication between home and school to ensure that everyone is aware of test dates and content, and is ready to help the student in whatever way possible.
- Eliminate unnecessary distractions in the days before major assessments. Try not to schedule unnecessary appointments, travel or other “unusual” activities.
- Teachers should explain to students, to the extent possible, not only what content will be tested, but the formats that will likely be used (multiple choice or essay, for example) and what the physical environment may feel like.
- Do whatever is possible and allowable to make students comfortable for test-taking. Allow them to wear comfortable clothing, take a break and have a drink or snack handy during longer tests.
- Make study skills and successful test practices an active and enjoyable part of the curriculum. Lessons can include test-taking strategies, relaxation techniques and note-taking.
- In extreme cases, students with test anxiety should be referred to professional counseling and alternative testing methods (i.e., un-timed testing, oral versus written) should be considered.

### **Success**

April 2008

**Success** is published monthly for student achievement liaisons by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Scott Ebright, APR, deputy director of communication services, editor; Cheryl Ryan, education management consultant, assistant editor. **Success** is distributed only to student achievement liaisons, so please share with fellow board members and district staff.