

A note from the Principal's Desk: The Pro's & Con's of Student Testing

As the old saying goes, "As long as there are tests, there will always be prayer in school." At OLG, we pray in many ways and for a variety of intentions. We also test in many ways and for a variety of reasons. In Texas public schools, "testing" has become a term with many negative connotations that often raises concern amongst parents and students.

At OLG, we do not formally administer the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) that is required by our public counterparts. Instead our focus is on performing a variety of diagnostics to determine the academic strengths and needs of each student and to monitor growth. We do not utilize a one time, end of year evaluation where everything rides on one test.

Testing Benefits

At OLG, we perform a series of diagnostics starting with the interview process before the student ever attends our school. This helps us to determine whether we can support the student's academic needs with our current resources. We also have all students 1st through 8th grades take the Iowa Test of Skills at the beginning of each school year, to determine each student's current academic strengths across all core subjects (excluding Religion). This allows our teachers to develop academic plans for their overall classes and specific academic action plans for specific students as needed.

We then routinely test students reading and math skills through the Renaissance Learning diagnostic tools to monitor growth, set up tutorials, acquire Title funded teaching specialists for our students and also to request Special Services support from CCISD as needed. And of course, our teachers utilize a variety of testing methods such as written, hands-on demonstrations and verbal, to determine students' mastery within the curriculum.

Thus to say we do not "test" at OLG would not be a correct statement. We do test. Testing information is a powerful tool. We use it to adjust teaching approaches so to ensure every student reaches their academic potential in all subjects. We also use it to partner with parents on how they can help their children succeed. As students mature, we use testing to help students track their own academic progress and take ownership in their education.

Testing Concerns

As with any powerful tool, care must be taken to not abuse it. At OLG we believe that a one-time test should not be allowed to determine a student's growth and accomplishments over an entire year. The teaching emphasis should always be on the growth of the students; it should not be on the test. Test results should be shared to allow teachers to partner with parents to help address individual student needs. Test results should not be used to instill panic or guilt in hopes that it will improve student learning. And, just as students have different learning styles, they also have different testing styles that need to be taken into account when performing tests and analyzing the results.

"What gets measured, gets improved."

As an engineer, I truly believe in the above statement. Testing is an important tool in our school but it is not the only tool. Testing comes in a variety of styles and just like teaching techniques, textbooks, technology, etc., it should be used to promote the growth of the student. That is the goal of everything we do.

Giving of their time: Home & School Association

In 2013-2014, volunteer time totaled over 4,000 hours! This is our second year in a row to have such incredible support from our families and community volunteers. Our school is very blessed indeed.



In May, the OLG Home & School Association (HSA) held its 2nd Annual Volunteer Banquet to recognize several parents and community members for their service to our school. The spaghetti dinner was served by teachers and the evening included a performance of the Bronze Mariners Bell Choir, Middle School Choir and Band. In addition to recognizing the volunteers, teachers received service recognition and the HSA coordinators were also recognized. The new coordinators for the 2014-15 school year are:

RECOGNITION COORDINATOR — Wendy Beck
 OUTREACH COORDINATOR— Jennifer Wright
 FUNDRAISING COORDINATOR— Ruben Servantes
 COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR— Jessica Garza

Congratulations to our Graduates!



Hannah Rose (2010) – 2014 Salutatorian of Refugio High School and will be starting school at Mary Hardin-Baylor this fall. She received a Presidential Scholarship for the Honors College Program at Mary Hardin-Baylor where she will be majoring in Bio-Chemistry/Pre-med.



Zane Herrera (2010) – 2014 Magna Cum Laude graduate of St. Joseph High School, received the Presidential Merit Scholarship from St. Edward's University in Austin, which is the highest merit scholarship offered, and the DeLeon Scholarship. Zane also made a perfect score on the reading portion of the SAT.



Kevin Holdgraf (2010) – 2014 honor graduate of Industrial High School, entering Texas A&M University Corpus Christi this fall. He received a scholarship from the Industrial Athletic Booster Club to help pay his expenses.



Natalie Lyssy (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and honor graduate of Calhoun High School. She received a scholarship from Calhoun Sports Medicine.



Dillon Janecka (2010) – 2014 honor graduate of Calhoun High School. In addition to leading the Robotics Team to great success over the past few years, he is also a 2014 Texas Scholar.



Darbi Dowell (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and honor graduate of Calhoun High School is headed for Blinn College with scholarships from the Calhoun Co. Daybreak Rotary Club, Calhoun Co. Fair Assn., and Calhoun Co. Youth Rodeo Assn.



Harley Desoto (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and honor graduate of Calhoun High School, entering Sam Houston State University, Huntsville. She received scholarships from the CHS Choir Boosters and the Calhoun Co. Civic Chorus.



Mason Elgin (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and honor graduate of Calhoun High School is headed for Blinn College. He received scholarships from the Calhoun Co. Fair Assn. and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court.



Hannah Armstrong (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and graduate of Calhoun High School and will attend Victoria College this fall.



Michael Chen (2010) – 2014 Texas Scholar and honor graduate of Calhoun High School headed for Texas A&M Kingsville.



Tristan Phillips (2010) – 2014 graduate of Calhoun High School and will attend Victoria College this fall.



Stephanie Johnstone (2010) – 2014 graduate of Calhoun High School



Chad Carmichael (2010) – 2014 graduate of Calhoun High School

Send us your alumni news. If you know about one of our Mariners, we would love to hear from you. Where are they now? What are they doing? Let's brag on these young adults and tell about their successes.

Congratulations to the winners

New this year, middle school students competed in their first Solo & Ensemble competition on May 21st. The event was judged by St. Joseph High School Choral Director Mike Petrisky. Students competed in three separate areas: choral medium ensemble (A), bell choir medium ensemble (B) and solos (C). The Bronze Mariner Bell Choir received a Superior rating as did the Middle School Choral Ensemble. The four soloists also received Superior ratings. All of the students were taught and directed by Mr. Leonard Pokulda and Mrs. Theresa Dent.



Pictured left to right:

Erin Dent (A,B); Martin Hernandez (A,B); Lucia Hernandez (A,B,C); Aidan Holford (B); Reilly Low (B); Jenny Pham (B); Derek Servantes (A); Melbourn Motl (A); Ben Chen (A,B,C); Manuel Ortiz (A,B); Elizabeth Silvas (A,B); Jenna Weaver (A,B,C); Gabrielle Anderson (A,B,C).



Also new this year, the Academic Invitational Meet (AIM) was held in March at St. Philip's Catholic School, El Campo. Forty-three OLG students from 1st to 8th grade participated in 49 events and earned a total of 80 medals at this competition.



Elizabeth Ann Seton Award



Ruben and Rosa with Bishop Fellhauer.

Ruben and Rosa Servantes were chosen for the 2014 Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton Award. Together, Ruben & Rosa have generously given over 140 hours of volunteer time this school year alone. They are part of an incredible team that helps prepare fundraiser and appreciation meals for the Home and School Association. They are also active volunteers at the annual Church Festival and representatives of our school during the annual Calhoun County Fair and Parade. In addition to all this, Ruben helped repaint St. Matthew Hall prior to the start of school this year and Rosa provides a warm welcome to students each morning through her work with the Breakfast Program. Together and individually, they generously share their time and talents within the Mariner Family and are a blessing to our community.

Giving of their treasures:

Thank you to our financial donors for their gifts and memorials to our school

We appreciate the support shown by the following since December:

In Honor of Rhonda Cummins
Sather Financial Group, Inc.

In Memory of David Smith
Wanda McGrath

In Memory of Helen Weaver Gibson
Mary Kaspar
Bruce Kaspar
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Weaver

In Memory of Juan C. Rodriguez
Linda C. Rodriguez

In Memory of William Riley
Howard & Sharyl Peters
Mary Jones
Richard & Dolores Miller
R.E. & L.B. Laws

In General Support of the School:
Herbert Wittliff
Leo & Jeannine Kainer
Vernon & Karen Lyssy
Catholic Daughters

Scholarships
Knight of Columbus #3253

Brick to Honor Edwin & Kathy Anderle
for their 25th Wedding Anniversary
Tim & Theresa Dent family

Brick in Memory of "Mac" Benavides
Juanita Benavides

Other Bricks
Billy & Georgia Mikosh

Spaces are still available on the school sign to honor a loved one or event. Be a part of Mariner history with a brick of your own. Call the school office for details.

In Support of the New Gym/Band Hall

Pauladene Schoener
Ruben & Rosa Servantes
Andrew & Christine Lee family
Catholic Daughters
Mary Kasper
Robert & Marilyn (deceased) Hochstein
John & Jennifer Wright
Vernon & Karen Lyssy
Hector & Olda Flores
Robert Meyer
Ralph & Minnie Cormier
Fabian Balboa
Mary Joyce Parker
Knights of Columbus #3253
David & Maria Ramirez
Kun-Ming & Lucy Chen
Gloria Balajka
Wanda McGrath
Ishmael & Dorothy Torres
Scott & Gail Grantland
Jose & Yolanda Galindo

For the Gym in Memory of David Hernandez
Craig & Tina Carney
Randle & Lori Hernandez
Cyndi Hernandez

Scoreboard by Lynn & Associates



Sponsors are still needed for various interior items of the gym and band hall. If you would like to memorialize or honor a loved one, celebrate a milestone, or perhaps even advertise for your company, please contact the church pastor, Fr. Tommy Chen or the school principal, Mrs. Theresa Dent to discuss the list of needed items. Either may be reached by calling the church/school office by phone at 361-552-6140. Remember, the school is a non-profit and thus all donations are tax deductible.

The Outdoor Classroom and Nature Trail

The Outdoor Classroom at Little Chocolate Bayou Park is an ongoing project between OLG and the Calhoun County Extension Office. This was the third year for our 8th grade students to work service hours assisting the County Marine Agent on the restoration and improvement of the land. The Alcoa Foundation joined in our efforts this year as they strive to restore our planet. Other partners in this effort include: Calhoun County, Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and the Texas Sea Grant College Program.



@ Little Chocolate Bayou Park

Celebrating our commitment to our community.

Welcome to Little Chocolate Bayou Park Nature Trail

Wetlands are links between land and water which provide habitat for birds, turtles, crabs and fish to eat, breed, and raise their young. Wetlands also help humans by cleaning pollutants from the water, lessening the destruction of storms and providing a beautiful place for us to enjoy.

