

# BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Questions To Ask Your School & Parent Guidelines from Duval County Public Schools

## General Questions To Ask Your School

- What can I do as a parent to help my child succeed in school?
- Is there a parent/student handbook for your school?
- When will report cards go home?
- Who should my child see if additional help is needed?
- How can I be sure that my child is on the right path for promotion or graduation?
- Does your school periodically survey parents to determine satisfaction with teachers, administration, and programs?
- Does the school offer afternoon, weekend, or summer school instruction or programs for students who need extra help?
- When is Open House?
- Will the school have family nights?
- When will you have PTA Meetings?
- Does the school have a website?
- What is the process for volunteering?
- What are classroom visitation policies?
- What extra-curricular activities does the school offer?
- If I am unable to attend PTA meetings, is it possible for me to get the minutes from the meetings?
- How can I partner with the school to ensure student success?
- What is required for my child to be promoted to the next grade?
- What classes does the school offer?
- What kind of technology is available for use at the school?
- What are the library hours?
- Who are the support staff at the school?



## Parent Guidelines

- Provide positive encouragement for your child.
- Make sure your student attends school.
- Make sure that the school has up to date information from you in case you need to be contacted - address, phone number, and emergency phone number. A blue information card will be sent home for you to complete at the beginning of the year.
- Make sure you talk to your child's teacher(s) early and often. Start at the beginning of the school year. Get acquainted and show your interest.
- Monitor your student's schoolwork. Even at the upper grades, this is vital for success.
- Make sure you provide the required supplies for all classes or let the teacher know if you cannot.
- Tell the teachers what they need to know about your child.
- Learn everything that you can about your child's school. The more you know, the easier your job as a parent will be.
- Reports cards are an indication of how your child is doing. You also need to know how things are going between report cards.
- To get the most out of parent/teacher conferences, be prepared to listen as well as to talk.
- If you do not agree with school rules or assignments, set up a meeting to talk about issues.
- Stay involved in your child's school activities by attending school events. Sports events, concerts, awards meetings, plays, etc. are great ways to show you are involved.

**Children benefit when you help them bridge their two most important worlds - home and school.**



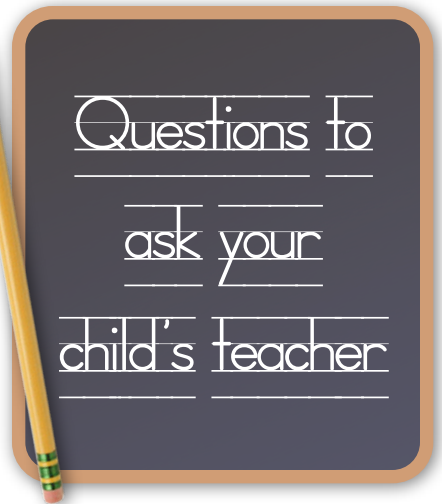
- Sometimes everything does not make it home, how can I make sure I receive progress reports and other correspondence from the school?
- What is your work make up policy in the event of an absence?

## Helping Your Child with Test Taking

- Talk to your child about testing. It is helpful for children to understand why schools give tests and to know the different kinds of tests they will take.
- Explain that tests are yardsticks that teachers, schools, school districts and even states use to measure what and how they teach and how well students are learning what is taught.
- All tests determine how well a child is doing in the areas measured by the tests.
- Do not place so much emphasis on your child's test scores that you lose sight of her well being. Too much pressure can affect test performance.

- What is your parent communication plan?
- What do you need and expect from me as a parent?
- How can I help my child at home?
- Would you inform me if my child is falling behind academically?
- How soon am I notified if my child is having a problem with his/her grades?
- How can I contact you? phone? email?
- Are you available after school for questions or individual help?
- When are progress reports sent home?
- How frequently do you provide progress reports?
- Can I request a progress report at any time?
- How can I go about scheduling a parent conference?
- Do you provide a schedule regarding the assignments that are due each week?
- What are your grading policies?
- Do you have a website?

- Tell your child that occasionally, he will take "standardized" tests. Every student takes the same test according to the same rules.
- Encourage your child. Praise her for the things that she does well. If your child feels good about herself, she will do her best on a test. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes.
- Meet with your child's teacher as often as possible to discuss his progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and to improve your child's understanding of schoolwork.
- Make sure that your child attends school regularly. Remember, tests reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy your child puts into learning, the more likely it is that he will do well on tests.



- Are there any resources, print or digital, available for my child?
- Are there any major test dates - ie. FCAT, PSAT, Benchmarks that I should know about?
- Are there any opportunities for my child to be on a faster track if he is an advanced learner?
- What are your classroom rules and routines?
- What is your classroom like for students?
- May I sit in your class and observe?

- Provide books and magazines for your child to read at home. By reading new materials, a child will learn new words that might appear on a test. Ask your child's teacher for a list of books for outside reading or get suggestions from your local library.
- Don't get upset because of a single test score. Many things can influence how your child does on a test. She might not have felt well on test day or she might have been too nervous to concentrate. Remember, one test is simply one test.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home and make sure your child is well rested on school days and especially on the day of a test. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.