

# PIN OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELING CORNER



VOLUME 7  
APRIL 2025



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ACCESS OUR  
COUNSELING  
RESOURCES

## STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

Stress is normal. It is the body's autonomic nervous system reacting to the environment around us, thus "fight or flight" taking over. Although everyone experiences stress, it is imperative that we regulate our stress levels in order to avoid long-lasting physical and emotional negative effects. As April is Stress Awareness Month, and the beginning of testing season, this newsletter highlights the importance of stress regulation and other helpful resources. Do not hesitate to have your student reach out to a trusted adult if he/she is experiencing signs of stress.

### SIGNS OF STRESS

Our bodies naturally react to stress in different ways and its signs can be specific for each individual. Below are some symptoms that show that you may be experiencing stress. Signs and symptoms are not limited to the ones below.

- Upset stomach
- Trouble breathing
- Headache
- Chest pains
- Dizziness
- Heartburn
- Muscle pain
- Aches and cramps
- Trouble concentrating
- Changes in sleep habits
- Change in appetite

### MINIMIZE AND COPE WITH STRESS

The best way to approach managing stress is by finding out what is causing your stress. If one needs support in doing so, we encourage the individual to seek help from a trusted adult, school counselor, or health care provider. There are many different kinds of stress, such as happy, traumatic, and daily stress. It does not hurt to try various strategies to accommodate to each type of stress in one's life, such as practicing mindfulness and meditation, engage in consistent physical exercise, including daily positive affirmations, getting mental health support from a licensed health provider, maintaining nutrition, and having a healthy social life.

With just over two months of the school year left, there is much excitement in the air. With that also comes the pressure and stress of testing season and successfully completing the school year on a high note. In this month's newsletter, you can find resources on identifying and regulating stress. Remember, stress is part of every day life, but it is imperative that we regulate it, just like any other health aspect of our lives. On the back of the newsletter, you can find a stress inventory or self-assessment to help identify your student's cause of stress and what actions they can take to take a hold of their distress. You can also find guidelines for identifying and managing test anxiety as April is the beginning of testing season. Don't hesitate in reaching out to your student's teachers and school counselors for support in your child's academics and mental health.

### Upcoming Events

- April: Stress Awareness Month
- April 26th: Charger Fest and Book Fair
- April 4th: Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Day - Wear Blue
- April 7th: 8th Grade Panoramic
- April 18: Spring Holiday
- April 10th: STAAR RLA
- April 16th: STAAR Science - 8th
- April 29th: STAAR Math/Algebra
- April 25th: Report Card Distribution
- April 30th: Dance Spring Showcase

# UPCOMING STAAR TESTING DAYS

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

- 10 Reading (6-8)
- 16 Science (8 Only)
- 23 U.S. History (8 Only)
- 29 Math / Algebra (6-8)

## COPING WITH TEST ANXIETY

There are a plethora of reasons why students might endure test anxiety. Besides students with diagnosed learning disabilities, other factors such as pressure of timed tests, maintaining exceptionally high performance standards, pride, and/or competitiveness may be causes of test anxiety. Finding the source of your students' test anxiety is helpful in finding possible solutions. Below are helpful ways to manage one's test anxiety:

- **Boost confidence:** positive self talk and thoughts are simple and effective. Begin the day with affirmations to set a positive tone.
- **Study on your own terms:** take ownership of your studying habits to discover which methods are most successful for you.
- **Ask questions and get help:** Don't assume if you are unsure. Asking questions to a trusted adult is your biggest resource.
- **Reflect after tests:** reflect on your testing experience and think about aspects that were successful and ones that need to be worked on.

## TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

Below are strategies that can help students feel confident and safe during testing:

- **Be familiar with the format of the test:** this will limit anxiety of the unknown
- **Time management:** don't spend too much time on one question; come back to it later
- **Cross out technique:** cross out multiple choice answers that you know are definitely not correct
- **Break things up:** give yourself a mental break every 10 questions
- **Pick it & stick to it:** stick to your first chosen answer
- **Calming techniques:** meditate; take breathing breaks
- Don't assume if you are unsure. Asking questions to a trusted adult is your biggest resource.
- **It's okay if you do not know the answer to every question.**
- **Reflect** on your testing experience and think about aspects that were successful and ones that need to be worked on. [CLICK HERE](#) for sources.

# CHARGER FEST APRIL 26, 2024 @ POMS

*You're Invited!*

**Pin Oak Middle School**  
HISD's Premier Foreign Language Magnet  
MS invites you to

## CHARGER FEST!

April 26th 12:00-4:00pm  
Parents Must Attend With Students

The poster features a colorful illustration of a fairground with a red and white striped tent, a blue bus, a red and white striped trailer, and a person in a yellow shirt. There are also balloons and musical notes.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT INVENTORY



**CLICK HERE**

Click on the image above to complete a self-assessment on what your stress triggers are, where they come from, and how to manage them. Knowing the root cause of one's stress is very helpful in coping and controlling stress levels that may become detrimental for your student's academic and emotional well-being.

Source: <https://www.changetochill.org/stress-factor-quiz/>