



Autism Awareness Day: April 2nd, 2026
Spring Break: April 3rd - April 10th 2026
Special Olympics: April 17th, 2026

Building Thinking Skills Outside of School

Strong thinking and communication skills grow in everyday life — not just in class. Here are ways families can help strengthen these skills:

Talk About Real-World Issues

Ask your child:

- “What’s your opinion about that?”
- “What evidence supports your thinking?”
- “Is there another side to that issue?”

Encouraging students to support their ideas with reasons builds critical thinking.

Discuss Shows, Movies, or Social Media

After watching something, ask:

- “What was the main message?”
- “Why do you think that character made that choice?”
- “What do you think the author or creator wanted the audience to understand?”

This strengthens analysis and interpretation skills.

Talk Through Decisions

When making decisions about purchases, schedules, or plans, ask:

- “What are the pros and cons?”
- “What factors should we consider?”
- “What would you choose and why?”

Explaining reasoning builds stronger communication.

Ask Them to Explain What They’re Learning

Even in high school, a simple prompt works:

- “Walk me through what you’re working on.”
- “How does this connect to what you learned before?”
- “Why is this important?”

If they can explain it clearly, that’s a strong sign of understanding.

Reflect on Challenges

If your child struggled with something, ask:

- “What part was confusing?”
- “What strategy did you try?”
- “What could you do differently next time?”

This helps students think about their own thinking — a powerful learning skill. When students regularly explain their thinking at home and at school, they become more confident, independent learners.

Mathematics

Title: March Mathness: Talk Moves That Increase Learning

Focus: Math discourse

Message Core:

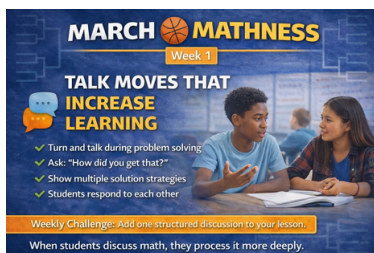
Student learning increases when students explain their thinking, question each other, and justify their reasoning.

Teachers are Encouraging:

- Turn and talk during problem solving
- Asking: "How did you get that?"
- Multiple solution strategies
- Students responding to each other (not just the teacher)

Why it matters:

When students talk about math, they process it more deeply—and engagement (and behavior) improves.



Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Career and Technical staff and students have been super busy this semester:

- Future Farmers of America (FFA) Students have participated in workshops and competitions,
- Distributive Education Club of America (DECA) students traveled to Greensboro for a 3 day competition and many earned special honors,
- Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCLLA) students traveled to Charlotte.
- 38 students traveled to Charlotte to participate in Marketing activities and then watch a Charlotte Hornets NBA basketball game.
- Upcoming CTE event March 25th- Our Health Occupational Student Association (HOSA) students traveling to Greensboro to compete in the state competition. This will include HOSA students from Hoke County High School, SandHoke Early College and Sandy Grove Middle School.

CTE Student surveys were shared out with 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Grade students. This will help us in planning for next year! We are so excited about the number of students that completed the survey - thus far, almost 1000 responses!!

It is Career Fair season! First Health is partnering with Hoke County Schools to provide and facilitate a First Future Career Fair for all 8th Grade students. This will be held at East Hoke Middle School on March 12th. The CTE Team will be hosting a Non-Traditional Career Fair on March 26th at Hoke County High Schools for all Juniors and Seniors. This will be an opportunity for our students to meet with potential employers and continue to get ready for the workforce and other post-secondary opportunities!

Even our elementary schools are hosting their own career fairs to get students thinking about their future careers. CTE has been invited to support each of these fairs which is another great opportunity for CTE staff to promote CTE programs and pathways!

- We are super excited to invite our 5th Grade students to tour the high school campus and visit our CTE classes. We want to prepare our 5th Graders to be successful CTE concentrators!

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Preparing NC parents to support the "whole child" for standardized tests involves focusing on emotional stability, physical health, and academic readiness. Key strategies include maintaining a positive attitude, ensuring adequate sleep and nutrition, and reducing anxiety through open communication. Parents should create a quiet study space, review material, and emphasize that tests do not define a child's value.

Supporting the Whole Child Approach

- **Emotional Well-being:** Keep a positive attitude about testing to reduce student anxiety. Encourage relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, and remind them that test results are only one measure of their ability.
- **Physical Preparation:** Ensure your child gets enough sleep the night before the test and eats a healthy breakfast.
- **Environmental Factors:** Create a quiet, well-lit area for studying with minimal distractions.
- **Routine Stability:** Maintain regular routines as much as possible during the week of testing.

Academic and Test-Taking Preparation

- **Encourage Reading:** Promote reading non-fiction materials to build comprehension skills.
- **Review Practice Tests:** Utilize sample test questions available on the [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website](#).
- **Understand Formats:** Familiarize your child with the test format (often multiple-choice or online) and teach them how to use the computer programs required, such as the [North Carolina Virtual Academy](#) guidelines.
- **Test Skills:** Teach practical skills like managing time, skipping hard questions, and checking work before moving forward.

Communication and Engagement

- **Talk to Teachers:** Reach out to teachers about concerns and ask about available NCDPI test resources.
- **Understand Accommodations:** Discuss any necessary accommodations for your child with school staff ahead of time.
- **Review Results:** Use Individual Student Reports to identify areas for growth.

NC-Specific Resources

- **NCDPI Testing Information for Families:** Provides information on why tests are given, types of tests, and how to understand results.
- **[NC Personalized Assessment Tool](#):** A system that provides immediate feedback throughout the year.
- **[Time4Learning NC Prep](#):** Offers additional information on how North Carolina measures student performance