

Paw PRINTS

April /May 2021 Edition

Thinking Test-y Thoughts

by: Piper Battaglia, Dylan Fitzgerald, Mia Alima., Emily Einhorn, and Rebecca Hilbert

This year, the FSA is just one of the things students are stressing about, but what really goes on in a students' brain while testing? While overall most students are stressed, we each have a different way of working through it and coping. Some may practice breathing exercises to relax, while others may use their imagination to distract themselves. Here, we get to dive deep into how some students at IRMS really feel about the FSA.

Many students are worried about testing and are nervous because it has been two years since Florida public school students last took the FSA. This was due to the lock down that happened last March and the most students have not tested since the 2019 school year. FSA stands for the Florida Standards Assessment, and every year around springtime all public-school students in Florida must take it. Students are always nervous about the test, but this year there is a lot more to be nervous about. The rules for this year's testing are the same as in the past such as no phones, no eating, and no drinking. Also, a new rule of course is to keep your mask on and stay safe while taking this important test.

Eden Kadoch, a 7th grader at Indian Ridge says that language arts gives her the most anxiety out of all her classes. She says, "Not only do my teachers give me a lot of work, they do not give us a lot of time to do it while I also have five other classes to manage. When I take tests, I think how it will impact my grade based on how I do on this test so therefore I try to focus on doing the best I can and not on what will happen if I do bad." According to Test Anxiety Symptoms, Causes, and Treatments by Kendra Cherry, "Many people experience stress or anxiety before an exam. In fact, a little nervousness can help you perform your best. However, when this distress becomes so excessive that it interferes with performance on an exam, it is known as test anxiety."

Andrew Gittleman, a 7th grade student, is in the minority when it comes to being a fan of the FSA. "The FSA is there for a reason; it sees how much you know about what you learned in your classes." Although he gets hard work from his classes, he feels it will prepare him for the FSA. Due to COVID-19, we had to do e-learning, and some students still are, which made it a lot different from traditional classroom learning. "It's easier to do your work online but it's good to be in person so you can learn better." He feels that the unusual learning environment this year could be another cause of stress among students taking the FSA.

The FSA can be a very stressful time for many students, but it's important that we all stay focused. With all that is happening around us, it's easy to not want to center our attention around our work, especially with the worry of staying safe. The pandemic has made it harder to learn than previous years but staying prepared could help. Not taking the FSA or EOC in two years has taken its' toll but it is important we all stay calm. As always, good luck and stay safe.

Administration

Ian Murray, Principal

Irene Gonzalez, 8th grade

Karen Birke, 7th grade

David Greenfield, 6th grade

Happy Earth Day

By: Paige Hill, Ella Brennan, Shayla De La Cruz, Layla Buchheit and Chloe Kegley



Earth Day is celebrated all over the world and is recognized as a day to help spread awareness of environmental protection. Sometimes the holiday is just swept under the rug, but with recent events like the ongoing pollution problem, acknowledging Earth Day is becoming more and more necessary. Recycling, reusing, and repurposing are great ways people can help the environment, but there are still so many questions surrounding this international holiday and the ways it affects us today!



Earth Day is a very important holiday that was first celebrated on April 22, 1970. This day is used to get the masses to become more aware of the importance of climate change and global warming. On this day, people are encouraged to help clean up their environment. Mrs. Hazza, 7th grade science teacher at the Ridge said, “I think we all need to be aware of our own carbon footprint and make changes to reduce it. Living close to where you work avoids long commutes and the associated gas emissions, taking your own reusable grocery bags to the store, using refillable water bottles instead of disposable plastic water bottles, and finding ways to make your home more energy efficient are things that can all make a difference.”

The most common ways people help are by recycling, collecting garbage, planting trees, and helping our planet. This day is important to participate in so that we can improve habitat loss, environmental protection, and climate change. “Individuals can all make small changes in their lives that will have an impact,” says Ms. Hazza, “but it will also require governments around the world to put effective policies in place and make strong commitments to invest in green technologies that reduce resource usage and incorporate renewable resources.” In spring 1970, Senator Gaylord Nelson created Earth Day to put climate change on the national agenda. Nowadays, this holiday is well known and celebrated by 192 countries in the world.

Our Earth is a beautiful creation and has even more beautiful creatures on it. All kinds of animals and all their habitats are all around us. Quinn McFadden, 8th grader at Sunrise Middle School, recycles and is frustrated by, “people who throw their garbage on the floor or not in a trash can.” But Earth Day is supposed to be happy, right? Unfortunately, the Earth everyone lives on is slowly falling apart because of all the trash everywhere. McFadden also said that, “when more animals become extinct, people will realize that others should help the planet be cleaner.” She also thinks that there is more trash in the ocean and seas than on land. Even though some people recycle, most of that trash still ends up in the habitats of other animals. Earth day should be a happy day to celebrate the Earth and the many wonders of it, but now it’s a day that reminds some of us that we need to clean up and keep the environment around us clean and safe to live in. How will you help?

Survey Time!



1. Do you recycle? **88%**
2. How often do you recycle? **97%**
3. How convenient do you find recycling? **98%**
4. Do you think recycling will make a difference in our environment? **95%**
5. Do you think recycling will improve or worsen the amount of pollution? **100%**

Lori Brennan, parent of seventh grade Ella Brennan, loves Earth day! She says that it is so important! It can remind people to recycle and take care of planet Earth. “I think that everybody is responsible for the amount of trash on Earth.” Lori says that one way we could help the environment is to use reusable containers. “Instead of plastic bags, people can use reusable bags while shopping. Plastic water bottles are also being wasted and reusable water bottles can help the Earth.” Another way to help the Earth is to recycle plastic, cans and other things. Lori says that she would love to clean up at the beach. “It is so important that the marine life does not come in contact with any plastic.” She agrees that if the Earth was taken better care of, then less animals would die. “People litter because they are lazy.” Lori talks about how easy it is to get up and throw a piece of trash away, instead of littering. “I believe that the most trash is contained on the land even though many animals die in the ocean because of trash.” She thinks if the younger generations are more conscious of waste and recycling then the world can become cleaner. “The Earth can become cleaner as long as we keep teaching and showing awareness.”

Earth Day is a world-renowned holiday and is spreading awareness of Earth's trash problem. It's widely celebrated and is the reason for most of the recyclers out there. Without Earth Day no one would know about the troubles of littering or the harm fossil fuels have on the air we breathe. It's such an important day and hopefully will be an ongoing celebration!



Spring's Challenges

Put a nice note on someone's car

Write Down a Friends Best Qualities (and Give it to Them)

Bring Toys to the Homeless Shelter

Take 15 Minutes to Really Listen to Someone

Car

Donate stuff animal

Tell someone you love them

Donate Your Clothes

Send Some Nice Comments on Social Media

Pull up your neighbors' trash can

Donate Used Books to a Library

Buy School Supplies for a Teacher

Reconnect with an Old Friend

Leave a surprise in your mailbox for your mail carrier

Plant a Tree

Give someone a Compliment

Wash Someone's Dishes

Make Someone Laugh

Donate Towels or Blankets to the Animal Shelter

Do Someone a Favor

Send a Care Package to a Soldier

Leave a Nice Note on Someone's Car

Give Someone a Hug

Text Someone Good Morning or Goodnight

Copy this link for a digital dice

<https://www.tteacherled.com>

[/resources/ols/dice/](https://resources/ols/dice/)

Buy Local Products from a Small Vendor

Pick Up Litter at the Park

Thank a Teacher

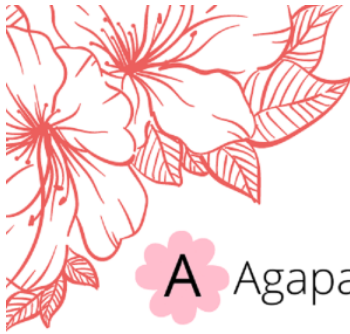
Send Flowers to Someone for no Reason

Start

End

What's Your Flower Name?

By: Aisha Naveo



A Agapanthus

B Buttercup

C Clove Pink

D Daisy

E Enchanter's Nightshade

F Foxglove

G Gardenia

H Hibiscus

I Iris

J Jasmine

K Kaffir Lily

L Lotus

M Mayflower

N Nymphaea

O Orchid

P Polyanthus

Q Queen's Cup

R Rose

S Snowflake

T Tiger Lily

U Ursinia

V Violet

W Windflower

X Xeranthemum

Y Yellow Bell

Z Zephyranthes



Florida

Bright Futures Scholarship Changes



By Yaryna Bednarchak, Cate Andrews, Sophia Espinoza, and Mya Sankar

Bright Future Scholarships are an expected part of starting one's time in college. They give students a sense of security, knowing that whatever choices they make for their classes and major, that scholarship will be available for them. Putting any limitation on the Bright Future Scholarship would harm many students who have planned on receiving the scholarship and have worked hard to achieve the requirements. On April 8th, a bill to limit the majors supported by Bright Future Scholarships has been passed by the senate and is far from an improvement in education. Isabella Pandey, a 7th grader, says "This in no way helps the students in those majors. All it does is take away from students who are equally deserving. They're using this as a mask to hide the fact they're only doing this to save money, not to benefit others." Supporters of the bill may believe that the fact that money is being saved is a good thing, but outside of the people spending the money, no one is being helped and no one's education is being improved.

It's important to apply to the Bright Futures future scholarship because it goes a long way in decreasing the costs of college tuition. Some requirements are GPA and SAT scores, afterwards students fill out the FFA as well as FAFSA. It is strongly encouraged that everyone that meets the requirements should apply. Renzo Espinoza, 19-year-old, former student of Indian Ridge Middle School and Western High School says, "I disagree with the changes because its discriminating based on personal interest and this could create a negative impact where students are choosing majors that will provide them with scholarship funds rather than what they're interested in."

Bright Futures Scholarships can be very helpful for those who will be attending college; however Bright Futures are now requiring the SAT test scores of students to be higher. This new change can become a challenge for many students. Varesha Singh who is a senior at South Plantation High School and will be attending college this year does not agree with the raised test scores. Varesha states, "The standards were raised for my class (c/o 2021) and beyond. I don't agree with it because the test itself is already a grueling test that is meant to examine your performance across a few areas. Varesha believes that "raising the score only makes it harder for students to earn the scholarship which defeats the purpose of helping them." Along with the current pandemic, some SAT tests have been canceled which can create a disadvantage when it comes to getting a higher score.



Spring Word Scramble

Unscramble the spring words

1. fofdaild
 2. ucaoaint
 3. efcrnaagr
 4. dyoucl kys
 5. htresaef
 6. rdalniac
 7. nishunnes
 8. elulmba
 9. dludpes
 10. rerhyc ososlbm
 11. leopcips
 12. eercsnuns
 13. wriaonb
 14. noneas
 15. fyberttul
- 

word key

cardinal
cherry blossom
season
Popsicle
daffodil
fragrance
rainbow
butterfly
cloudy sky
sunshine
sunscreen
puddles
raincoat
umbrella
feathers



How can you Reduce and Handle Stress?

By: Brynn Feller, Colby Hicks, Ella Hollaway, Samantha Zimmerman, and Gianna Castro

Stress is a struggle for many kids right now because they are dealing with school, the pandemic and just every-day life. It can be hard to find a way to handle this stress and anxiety. But, luckily for you- there are many kinds of ways to reduce your amount of stress. These strategies and tricks may work differently for everyone, but for some, it may be what gets you through the day!

A popular way people reduce and or distract themselves from stress is finding a hobby. The top hobbies most people do to reduce stress are listening to music, doing yoga, dancing, or meditating. All three can give you positive energy and put you in a good mood. Meditation can be used for many things, not only stress. “I 100% believe that meditation works. Meditation is good for reducing stress and anxiety but is helpful in so many other ways. Meditation helps boost emotional health, can lower a person’s blood pressure, and naturally improve a person’s sleep pattern.” said Nicole Nortmann, a 7th grade civics teacher an Indian Ridge Middle. You could also pick up a notebook and start journaling about why you have stress and, metaphorically, get everything out of your head. Many people feel that writing about their feelings helps them to make more sense of what’s going on and put things into a better perspective.

Lindsay Brasner, A 7th grade student at Indian Ridge Middle schools says, “Lately my schoolwork has been pretty stressful and overwhelming. Some of the main causes of my stress are school or even my friends.” Everyone can be stressed at points in time, and I recommend that you find a way that works best for you to reduce it. Lindsay says that when she gets stressed, “I try finding the reason I am stressed and try my best to fix it and I have found it works well for me. I would recommend trying this whenever you get stressed because it works almost every time. To help avoid getting stressed I try my best to get all my work in in time and I try not to argue with my friends.” Next time you get stressed, stop and think about what is going on and what you can do to solve it. Otherwise, the problem will resurface later on without ever having been resolved.

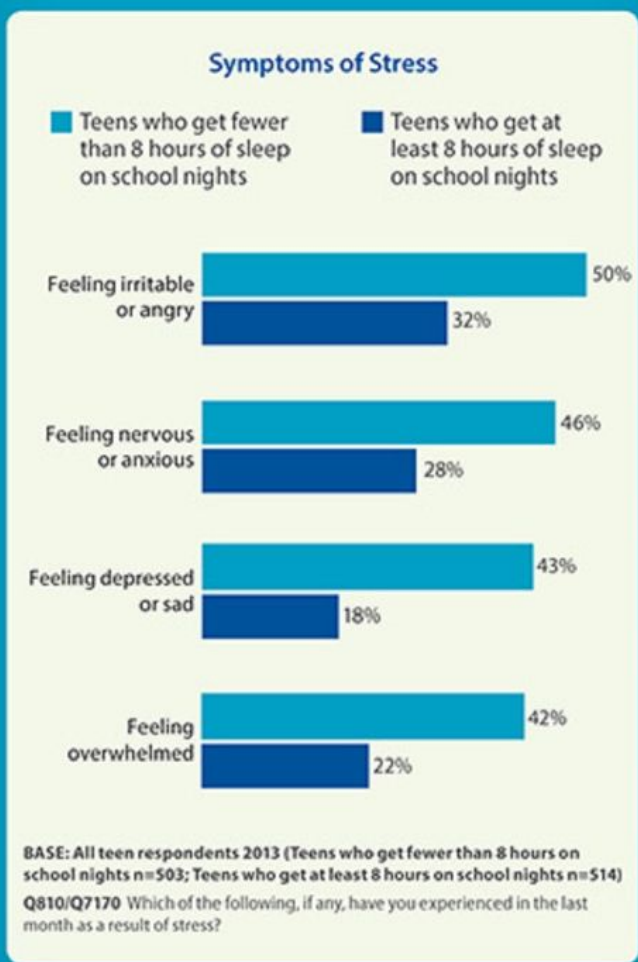
How can you Reduce and Handle Stress?



Yawning. Worries. Stress. Tiredness. Instead of being anxious and stressed out, why not trying to get a good amount of sleep every night? Having a full eight hours of sleep is something that can help reduce stress. 7th-grader Bridgette Barney says, “Getting a good amount of sleep does help me throughout the day and makes it so I am not cranky or stressed.” The study from the American Psychology Association indicates that “Many reports show that their stress increases when the length and quality of their sleep decreases. When they do not get enough sleep, 21 percent of people report feeling more stressed.” If you are every feeling stressed or overwhelmed, getting a full eight hours of sleep could really help reduce it. Trouble falling asleep? Scents like lavender, and even white noise can help you to turn off your brain for the night, long enough to fall asleep. It’s also important to “disconnect” from technology about an hour before bedtime.

Another idea is to listen to Ms. Escobar, a 7th grade science teacher at Indian Ridge Middle School who says that focusing on breathing is how she handles her stress. Ms. Escobar said, “Focused breathing has helped me with my reactions to stress. In a situation where I would get very upset and react a certain way, focused breathing allows me to respond to the stress or the situation at hand in a more positive manner.” Some of the things that makes her feel better when she finds herself stressed are self-help audio books, focused breathing, counting, list making, her dog Daisy, and her daughter Luciana. She has many great options to help her feel better about some of the stress she has. Ms. Escobar said she would recommend breathing to her students. She also said, “In class we use Inner Explorer to help with Mindfulness and it teaches us breathing strategies to use daily. It also teaches breathing strategies to help when we are in stressful situations. Most of my students respond positively to Inner Explorer and even request it from time to time. If I notice a student is stressed or having a hard time, I will usually suggest taking a few deep breaths. I use this strategy with my 6-year-old at home as well.” Inner Explorer is an excellent choice to help breathing. This website teaches kids the practical techniques to appropriately handle difficult emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger and more. They offer programs for all age-groups (PreK-12) that helps students. Another great website you could always use is YouTube, on YouTube you can search for breathing guides and lessons. Focused breathing helps calm and slow down the emotional turbulence in your mind. There are studies that show breathing can help treat depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Breathing can help you reach a deeper state of mind.

TEENS WHO SLEEP FEWER THAN EIGHT HOURS ON A SCHOOL NIGHT ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF STRESS.



The main source of stress this year has been because of school. The hardship of keeping a life as well as grades is hard. Having to please everyone around you as well as yourself can get out of hand. Students feel obviously burdened and many will lose the will to do anything if it gets worse. This year has been especially hard since COVID hit and schools were forced to go online. And while having to balance self-care and assignments is difficult, learning how to find the sources of stress and handling them can help you indicate when to ask for help. Your stress does not have to come from school, Megan Miller, a 7th grader at Indian Ridge says, “I am stressed because of my family, since we moved so much has been happening and I can't keep up with it.” The feeling of being overwhelmed can spring up on you so fast, it is hard to see it coming. You can relieve your stress with many ways that you can choose. Remember that you are not in this alone, you are never alone! If you ever feel that you might be reaching your breaking point, reach out to the school counselors through Canvas, or by emailing them directly. There’s always someone there to help!

What's The *Movie*?

By: Aisha Navco



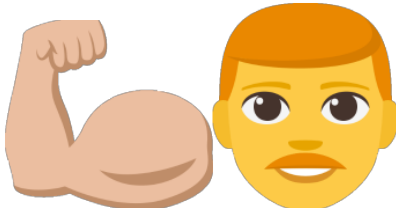
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