STRATEGIES TO PREPARE BEFORE THE EXAM

General Skills
- Engage in regular physical exercise and maintain a balanced diet
- Check vision and hearing
- Use good study habits and strategies
- Manage your time effectively
- Organize material to be studied and learned
- Use a step by step approach to build a strategy and not get overwhelmed
- Manage outside pressures (success/failure consequences, peer pressure, competitiveness, etc.)
- Reviewing your past performance on tests to improve and learn from experience
- Prepare by taking practice exams

Week Before
- Map out a routine
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep a night
- Review practice questions
- Simulate exam to help better manage test anxiety

Day Before
- Approach the exam with confidence (view the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the work you've done)
- Be prepared (use a check list to review material and organize what you will need for the test tomorrow)
- Give yourself enough time that morning (attend to things you need to do before the exam and try to get to the exam site a little early)
- Avoid thinking you need to cram just before the test
- Try to achieve a relaxed state of concentration
- Avoid speaking with people who express negativity or who will distract your preparation
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam
- Do not take the exam on an empty stomach (have an energizing snack, i.e. fresh fruits and vegetables, and try to stay away from heavy/processed foods)
Skills to Use during the Exam:

- Be on time
- Go to bathroom prior
- Do not drink too much coffee
- Stay relaxed; you are in control (take slow, deep breaths and use relaxation techniques)
- Focus on present, not past or future
- Prepare for some anxiety (anxiety is a reminder that you want to do your best and it can provide energy and motivation)
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit" (it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed)
- Focus on questions, not fears (pause and think about the next step and keep on task, step by step)
- Use positive self-talk (use positive reinforcement for yourself: acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best)
- Challenge negative thoughts
- Take breaks if possible
- Manage your test taking time
- Read directions and entire questions carefully (e.g. twice, aloud, silently)
- Identify and mark clues (i.e. qualifiers and absolutes)
- Approach each question as a separate test
- Make an educated guess and go with first answer
- Organize your ideas
- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind
- Don't panic when other students start finishing their tests. There's no reward for finishing first
- Proofread at the end

Strategies to Use after the Exam:

If you prepared well and passed the test
- Reward yourself (celebrate with friends/family, get yourself a present, etc.)

If you did not get the results you expected
- Be proud of yourself for trying and for being on the road to overcoming this obstacle
- List what worked and hold onto these strategies (it does not matter how small the items are: they are building blocks to success)
- Identify what did not work
- Ask questions for clarification and review any available feedback related to your performance on the test
- Make specific plan for improvement (e.g. get tutoring, use a study group, attend workshops on topics tested on the exam, organized your time effectively)