

# Here's how one Redlands school helped students ease stress before state testing

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Posted: Friday, May 12, 2017 6:51 p.m. PDT

(REDLANDS, CA) McKinley Elementary School knows its students will “blow state testing out of the water.”

On Friday, the school held a pep rally to get its third- through fifth-graders motivated to do their best when Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium testing begins next week.

With help from Kyle Schweikhard of [Drum Sync Academy](#) in Rancho Cucamonga, McKinley's entire student population helped ease any anxiety or stress by dancing, drumming and cheering their fellow classmates on during the event, which lasted for about 45 minutes.

Each pep rally held at the school has a different theme.

This year, students were invited to come dressed in their favorite beachwear.

And they did.

Some wore hats and sunglasses, while others really got into the theme by wearing flip-flops and Hawaiian-style skirts.

“Our students have been working hard all year, and this is a way to help them unwind and be excited about being proud of what they have learned this year,” said Kelly Napoletano, a McKinley third-grade teacher and rally organizer.

Teachers got into the spirit as well, and dressed up too. They also created posters for the occasion, many of which were hung around campus.

The party went on despite some technical issues. When music wasn't playing over the loudspeakers, students were still dancing around and interacting with one another. Others joined Schweikhard for drumming exercises using plastic buckets that sat in front of two drum sets.

When the music was working, Schweikhard showed off his skills as hits from Michael Jackson and Justin Timberlake played.

“This is very exciting for us to kick off state testing in this fashion,” said McKinley Principal Marc Aponte. “This is to remind them that we want to see them try their personal best, and that's all we are looking for.”

SBAC testing begins Monday and continues through May 26. Science-based testing for Redlands Unified School District fifth-graders takes place May 30-31.

The SBAC test is intended to support high-quality teaching, improve learning for all students, and help youths prepare for life after high school. To learn more about the test, go to [www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org).