

# **RISE AND SHINE INITIATIVE 2026**

## **GCCSA Raising our NH SAS Test Confidence and Scores**

### **What is the Rise and Shine Initiative?**

**Our goal is to help students feel confident and familiar with the format of the assessment so they can successfully show what they know.** At Gate City Charter School for the Arts, our mission has always been to nurture creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning. Our arts-integrated approach allows students to grow as thinkers, artists, and collaborators. At the same time, we know that the *NH SAS assessment measures student learning in a specific format* that does not always naturally align with the creative ways our students demonstrate knowledge in the classroom.

However, these assessments remain an important part of how schools are evaluated and affect decisions for continued operation. Participation and growth on the assessment helps demonstrate the strength of our programs and the progress our students are making.

**Our goal is not to change who we are as a school.** This initiative is about confidence, familiarity, and opportunity to practice thinking in the way the assessment asks students to demonstrate learning. **All members of our community will be asked to participate in efforts to support our students during testing.**

### **Our Culture Shift**

Instead of viewing state testing as something stressful or disconnected from our work, we will approach it the way artists approach a performance:

- ★ **Artists rehearse.**
- ★ **Scholars practice.**
- ★ **Thinkers grow stronger with experience.**

Over the next four weeks, we will work together as a school to help students build familiarity with test language, question formats, and strategies for explaining their thinking. We will work together as a community to prepare for the performance (testing) and celebrate our students for their efforts, learning, and successes!

### **Why This Matters:**

1. **Familiarity improves performance:** Students who regularly see the format of questions and tools perform significantly better.
2. **Confidence changes outcomes:** When students believe they can navigate the test, anxiety drops and performance rises.
3. **Small consistent practice works:** We are not doing hours of test prep. Instead we are using **short, consistent exposures.**

### **This initiative is not:**

- Test drilling.
- Changing curriculum.
- Increasing pressure on students or teachers.

\*\*\*It is about building confidence and familiarity with the tools students will encounter to promote confidence and success.\*\*\*

### **Rise & Shine Initiative Summary:**

- ★ Build student familiarity with NH SAS question formats and language
- ★ Practice digital testing tools
- ★ Reinforce test-taking stamina and focus
- ★ Celebrate effort and growth