

BUNKER HILL
HIGH SCHOOL

2009 PSAE
HANDBOOK

March 20, 2009

Dear Bunker Hill High School Juniors and their parents,

Greeting! As the school year comes to a close, I realize many of you are looking forward to summer vacation and time with family and friends. By now, you have made decisions about classes for next year which will lead you to the college and professions you desire. Hopefully, your senior year will be a challenging and rewarding time for you here at Bunker Hill High School.

However, before we close out this year, you have a very important test coming up in the near future. I am sure you have heard of the PSAE, yet I am sure there are things you aren't sure about concerning the PSAE. This handbook has been put together to inform the students, as well as the parents, of this year's PSAE. The information has been compiled to answer your questions and help you understand all the aspects of the test.

Please take the time to read over the material. If you have any questions or comments please contact the high school office (618-585-3232).

Sincerely,

Doug Daugherty
BHHS Principal

Jodie Zipprich
Guidance Counselor

THE PRAIRIE STATE EXAM: WHAT IS IT?

On Wednesday, April 22 and Thursday, April 23, all juniors throughout the state of Illinois will be taking the PSAE. This two day test is mandated by federal and state law. All Bunker Hill High School juniors will be taking this important exam at the Bunker Hill Community Center.

The PSAE measures the achievement of junior students across the state relative to the Illinois Learning Standards for reading, math, science and writing. The PSAE includes three components: First, the ACT Plus Writing, which includes the ACT battery of four multiple-choice tests (English, math, reading and science) and a 30-minute constructed response writing test with a single prompt question; second, an ISBE developed science assessment; and third, two Work Keys assessments in Applied Mathematics and Reading for Information.

WHY SHOULD THE PSAE BE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- You can earn incentives for meeting and/or exceeding on the test!
- Your PSAE results are printed on your transcript meaning that colleges, universities and potential employers will see your scores. These scores could have either a positive or negative impact on your future.
- The PSAE scores are a reflection of your school and you as a student. The better you do, the better our school looks to the community and state and the better you look to post-secondary schools
- It's a free ACT test! The PSAE saves you \$45.
- You can be recognized at the annual Honors Convocation with a Prairie State Achievement Award from the state of Illinois.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING WITH YOU FOR THE TEST

On both test days, all students need to bring the following items with them:

- Several number 2 lead pencils (NO PENS OR MECHANICAL PENCILS)
- A Calculator
- Wear a watch without an alarm so you can keep track of remaining time
- Comfortable clothes should be worn for the test
- A great attitude!
- Cell phones, pagers, I-Pods and book bags are NOT ALLOWED!

IMPORTANT TEST TAKING TIPS

- Be sure you are rested and comfortable. Make sure you have a good night's sleep
- Be sure to eat a good breakfast the morning of the test. Breakfast will be provided free of charge in the school cafeteria
- Know what to expect. Read this guide so you are informed
- Arrive on time to avoid last minute pressure. Make sure you arrive at the school by 7:45 to eat and catch the bus to the community center
- Expect some anxiety. Being concerned will help you do your best on the test
- Keep a positive attitude. Decide to do your best and focus on the material you know and stay focused when taking the test.
- Concentrate on the test
- Pay close attention to one question at a time. This kind of concentration reduces anxiety
- Relax as much as you can. If you are too nervous to think or read carefully, try to slow down and take several slow, deep breaths

HELP ON THE TEST!!

In order to help you do your best on the test, the teachers have organized this afternoon dedicated to PSAE assistance. In the weeks to come, you will be doing activities in your classes to assist you on your PSAE. Be sure to talk to your teachers for help whenever needed, not just today but at any time.

You can also get extra help on the test at the following websites:

Actstudent.org

Number2.com

Testprepreview.com

Other sites can be found by doing a search for Free ACT Prep.

TEST TIMELINE

Wednesday, April 22nd

- 8:15 a.m. Depart from the high school parking lot
- 8:30 a.m. Begin testing
- 8:45 a.m. Test #1—English—75 questions—45 minutes
- 9:30 a.m. Test #2—Math—60 questions—60 minutes
- 10:30 a.m. 15 Minute break—snacks provided
- 10:45 a.m. Test #3—Reading—40 questions—35 minutes
- 11:20 a.m. Test #4—Science—40 questions—35 minutes
- 11:55 a.m. 5-minute break
- 12:00 p.m. Writing test—30 minutes
- 12:35 p.m. Lunch provided at Community Center
- 1:10 p.m. Depart from Community Center
- 1:20 p.m. Students released or return to 7th hour

Remember those who attend the study session on March 20th, will be released to go home at 1:20

Thursday, April 23rd

- 8:15 a.m. Depart from the high school parking lot
- 8:30 a.m. Begin testing
- 8:45 a.m. Test #1—Science—45 questions—40 minutes
- 9:25 a.m. Test #2—Math—33 questions—45 minutes
- 10:10 a.m. 15-minute break—snacks provided
- 10:25 a.m. Test #3—Reading—33 questions—45 minutes
- 11:15 a.m. Lunch provided at the Community Center
- 11:45 a.m. Depart from Community Center
- 11:50 a.m. Students released or return to class

THE EFFECT OF YOUR RESULTS

The PSAE is the test used to measure whether a school is making what is called, "adequate yearly Progress" (AYP). That seems appropriate but what is being measured is what the juniors in our school do in those two mornings of testing. The effectiveness of the school is determined by looking at how many students from our school score above a certain number. As the graph on the next page shows, this year, 70% of our juniors must score at or above the state standard for our school to be ruled to be doing adequate yearly progress. If fewer than that percent reach the score, we are ruled not to be making adequate yearly progress.

You might be wondering how your score can affect the school district. Through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws, AYP has an impact on school funding from both the federal and state government. If a school continually fails to meet AYP the government can and will implement special programs of study which students must take. In other words, we would be mandated to require more math, English and science, which leaves no time for electives such as work program, computers, or ag classes. In addition, school money would be limited and go towards new programs to teach the material, instead of towards some of the extra-curricular activities we all enjoy.

Naturally, this is a scenario we want to avoid. As the second graph illustrates, the students at Bunker Hill High School over the past three years have been above the state standards and one of the top schools in the county. This couldn't have been achieved without hard work and dedication from the past juniors as well as the faculty at BHHS. We plan to continue this trend as we continue to work hard and achieve to our highest potential.

FAQ's

Do I *really* have to take this?

Yes! If you are classified as an 11th grader, you must take it.

No PSAE, no graduation. It's state law.

How can I prepare?

Use the materials and information handed out to you by the guidance and counseling staff.

Attend the free study session at the school.

Use the online review sources listed above.

Get your rest, arrive on time, be prepared, and do your best!

What happens if I miss all or part of one or both days of testing?

You must then take that entire day's testing on the make-up day(s).

I have an appointment scheduled. What do I do?

Re-schedule the appointment if at all possible. Otherwise you're on make-up testing.

I have an IEP. Do I still take the PSAE?

Students with special accommodations regarding testing written into their IEP's will be testing in different rooms. Resource teachers will inform their students of special accommodations. The "rules" (dates, start time, prohibited/allow items, etc.) are the same for all students.

May I use the calculator on my cell phone?

No. No cell phones in the testing room.

I already signed up for the ACT given earlier in April. Now what?

It is fine if you take the ACT given on a Saturday in early April. You will still need the ACT given at the school. Many students take the ACT twice for the sake of having more than one score. Colleges use the best score.

Does this ACT include the Writing portion?

Yes! The Writing section is included.

Will colleges accept my scores?

Yes, colleges do accept the ACT scores from this testing. Be sure you know which schools you wish to receive your scores.

I hope to play college sports. Will the NCAA accept this ACT score?

Yes! The NCAA *does* accept the scores from state testing. This is a recent change to their policy.

I already took or signed up for another ACT date. Now what?

It's fine to have more than one ACT score. Colleges use your best score. Do your best on all test dates.