

### **What scores do students get from the PSAE?**

Students receive four PSAE scores, one for each of the tested subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and writing. In addition, if they test under standard conditions or with ACT-Approved accommodations, they receive the bonus of ACT scores that they can report to colleges or universities and WorkKeys scores in reading and mathematics.

### **What is a Prairie State Achievement Award?**

A Prairie State Achievement Award is recognition of excellent performance on the PSAE. A student can earn an award in each of the four subjects that are tested. (There is no composite score or overall award for the PSAE.) Students receive a certificate in their senior year that indicates each subject in which they earned an award.

### **Must PSAE scores appear on transcripts as part of the student permanent record?**

Yes. Student transcripts must include scores for each of the four PSAE subjects and indicate the subject(s) in which a student earned a Prairie State Achievement Award. Scores for the individual tests that constitute the PSAE, including the WorkKeys scores, may be included on the student temporary record but not the permanent record.

### **Must ACT scores be placed on student transcripts?**

No. Schools should not **automatically** place ACT scores generated by taking the PSAE on transcripts. These scores should be included on transcripts only with a student's permission (or a parent's or guardian's permission if the student is younger than 18 years old).

### **Do colleges and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) accept ACT scores from the PSAE?**

Yes. Colleges and universities throughout the United States and ISAC have indicated their willingness to use college-reportable ACT scores from state testing.

### **Does the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) accept ACT scores from the PSAE?**

In 2006, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented rules changes that allow the use of state college-reportable ACT scores in determining initial eligibility for participation in Division I and Division II sports. These changes were effective January 9, 2006, for Division II and August 1, 2006, for Division I. As a result, students entering college on or after August 1, 2006, can use state college-reportable ACT scores for both Division I and Division II initial eligibility. Questions may be directed to the NCAA Eligibility Center at 877/262-1492.

### **Where can I find more information about the PSAE?**

Call your local high school for more information, or contact the State Board of Education using the information given below. A test-preparation booklet for students that includes questions and answers about the PSAE as well as sample test questions is posted on the ISBE Web site.

**Student Assessment Division  
Illinois State Board of Education**  
100 North First Street, E-216  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001  
Phone: 217/782-4823 Fax: 217/782-6097  
E-mail: [psae@isbe.net](mailto:psae@isbe.net)  
[www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm)

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## **Prairie State Achievement Examination**

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### **2009–2010**



### **Questions & Answers for Parents of Illinois Students**

Illinois State Board of Education

## **What is the Prairie State Achievement Examination, or PSAE?**

The PSAE is the state achievement test for grade 11 public high school students. Current state legislation requires that students take the PSAE to receive a regular high school diploma, unless they are exempt. Therefore, some grade 12 students also participate in the PSAE for this purpose. Please visit [www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm) for more information concerning the PSAE diploma requirement. In spring 2010, the PSAE will test four academic subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and writing.

## **What is the purpose of the PSAE?**

The PSAE assesses the progress of both high schools and individual students in meeting the Illinois Learning Standards.

## **What are the Illinois Learning Standards?**

The Illinois Learning Standards are descriptions of the specific knowledge and skills that students should learn in Illinois public schools.

To develop the Illinois Learning Standards, thousands of Illinois citizens—teachers, parents, school administrators, employers, community leaders, and representatives of higher education—contributed ideas about what students need to know and be able to do at five benchmark levels from the early elementary years through late high school.

Thus, the Illinois Learning Standards have a real connection to entry-level jobs and post-high school education.

## **Where can I find more information about the Illinois Learning Standards?**

Contact your local high school or visit your local library to review a copy of the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Copies of the *Illinois Learning Standards* are also available for download and printing at [www.isbe.net/ils](http://www.isbe.net/ils).

## **When do students take the PSAE?**

Students take the PSAE on a Wednesday and Thursday in April. The test dates this spring are April 28–29, 2010. Makeup tests for students who are not in school on one or both April test dates are two weeks later on May 12–13, 2010.

## **How is the PSAE administered?**

Students are tested over two days. On Day 1 they take the ACT® Plus Writing, which includes multiple-choice English, mathematics, reading, and science tests and an essay writing test.

On Day 2, they take a science test developed by the State Board of Education with assistance from Illinois teachers and two ACT-developed WorkKeys® tests, *Applied Mathematics* and *Reading for Information*.

## **Should students with disabilities take the PSAE?**

Students with disabilities must take the PSAE unless they have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that identifies regular state testing as being inappropriate for them, even with accommodations.

Decisions about participation and any need for accommodations that students with disabilities may have are made on an individual basis by each student's IEP team.

Testing for students with accommodations may occur between April 28 and May 12, 2010, for Day 1, and April 29 and May 13, 2010, for Day 2.

## **Should students with limited English proficiency take the PSAE?**

Students with limited English proficiency must take the PSAE. As necessary, they may receive accommodations during testing to assist them in understanding the tests. However, ACT scores from these accommodated administrations cannot be reported to colleges or universities.

## **Why does the PSAE include different kinds of tests?**

The State Board of Education wants the PSAE to have value for individual students, so tests that will be useful to them are included.

The WorkKeys tests measure skills in mathematics and reading that employers believe are critical to job success. The college-reportable ACT scores may be used for college admissions.

## **Why include tests that measure workplace skills on the PSAE?**

Many employers use WorkKeys test scores to determine whether an applicant is suited for a particular job. High school students may use their WorkKeys scores to identify the reading and mathematics skills they have and those they need to acquire to qualify for different jobs.

## **Why should students who are not planning to go to college take the ACT?**

The Illinois Learning Standards are for all Illinois students, not just those who plan to go to college. Taking the ACT, which is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards, gives students a measure of their academic strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, students who do not want to attend college immediately after high school graduation may decide to go back to school after they have worked for a time. The need for learning in the workplace is continuing; most high school graduates will eventually have to continue their education to achieve career or life goals.