



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2011-084

TO: District Superintendents
Assessment Coordinators
Junior High/Middle School Principals
Junior High/Middle School Counselors
High School Principals
High School Counselors

FROM: Sean Moore, Hathaway Scholarship Consultant
Educational Quality and Accountability Division

DATE: May 23, 2011

SUBJECT: ACT EXPLORE TEST MOVED TO 9TH GRADE IN 2011-2012

IMPORTANT: PLEASE SHARE

During the 2011 legislative session, the Wyoming Legislature passed Senate File 70, also known as Enrolled ACT 90, the “Wyoming Accountability in Education Act”. This law requires the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) to establish baseline college readiness benchmarks in grades 8 and 11 during school year 2011-12. The information will be combined with other assessments to compute a “combined school score” to measure school improvement from year to year.

In response to the requirements outlined in this new law, all districts are now required to administer the ACT EXPLORE assessment to **all 9th grade** students in Wyoming. The purpose of moving this test from 8th grade to 9th grade is to assess student performance based on a full year of 8th grade content. Furthermore, while this test could have been administered at the end of the 8th grade year, counselors across the state indicated that 8th grade students are already tested very heavily and expressed a strong interest in having the ACT EXPLORE test moved to 9th grade. The assessment will be administered in the fall, and schools will have a window from early September until the end of October to administer the test. During this window, schools can set their individual test dates for students as they see fit. Funding for the 9th grade assessment will be covered by the WDE.

On Wednesday, August 24, 2011 2:00pm the WDE will conduct a WEN presentation that will cover **state ordering information and testing logistics**. This session will be recorded and accessible via the WEN server, however, please reserve your WEN room as soon as possible.

Please note that **ACT allows for a one or two day test administration only**. The Department suggests that you discuss these options with your school or district administration, assessment staff, and faculty well in advance of your EXPLORE testing.

The **Student Information and other non-cognitive components of the test should be administered first**, followed by the academic tests (English, mathematics, reading, and science). Because of the time required to complete the non-cognitive portions of EXPLORE, some schools prefer to administer EXPLORE over a two-day period. In this case, **the non-cognitive portions should be administered on day one and the academic tests on day two**. If your schedule allows, this option may increase the

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students' focus and minimize testing fatigue. However, care must be taken to ensure that students have the correct answer folder on day two. **In no case should the cognitive portion of EXPLORE be administered prior to the non-cognitive portion.** Doing so increases the risk of students filling in random bubbles on the test sections if they did not complete a section of the test or otherwise making extraneous marks that can affect scoring.

The graph below indicates test items and time needed for each test.

ENGLISH TEST (40 items, 30 minutes testing time)		READING TEST (30 items, 30 minutes testing time)	
CONTENT/SKILLS COVERED BY TEST	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CONTENT/SKILLS COVERED BY TEST	NUMBER OF ITEMS
Usage/Mechanics	25	Prose Fiction	10
Punctuation	6	Humanities	10
Grammar and Usage	8	Social Sciences	10
Sentence Structure	11	TOTAL	30
Rhetorical Skills	15	SCIENCE TEST (28 items, 30 minutes testing time)	
Strategy	5	CONTENT/SKILLS COVERED BY TEST	NUMBER OF ITEMS
Organization	5	Data Representation	12
Style	5	Research Summaries	10
TOTAL	40	Conflicting Viewpoints	6
MATHEMATICS TEST (30 items, 30 minutes testing time)		TOTAL	28
CONTENT/SKILLS COVERED BY TEST	NUMBER OF ITEMS	Note: The content areas (Earth/Space Sciences, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences) all are represented in the test; there are three units in the life sciences, two units in the physical sciences, and one unit in the Earth/Space sciences.	
Pre-Algebra	10	Total number of EXPLORE test items = 128	
Elementary Algebra	9	Total testing time for four tests = 120 minutes	
Geometry	7		
Statistics/Probability	4		
TOTAL	30		

Other Key EXPLORE Components

- Needs Assessment—provides information about a student's perceived needs in seven areas.
- Plans and Background Information—addresses questions about high school coursework plans in five subject areas, educational and career plans after high school, and other demographic information.
- Exploring Career Options—helps students explore personally relevant career options based on UNIACT Interest Inventory results.
- Coursework Planner—provides guidelines to help students develop a high school coursework plan based on their EXPLORE test results and future educational and career plans.

If you have any questions about the ACT EXPLORE Test, or **would like to sign up for periodic email updates**, please contact Sean Moore at smoore@educ.state.wy.us.

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