

Options for Tomorrow

Transition planning for the future ...
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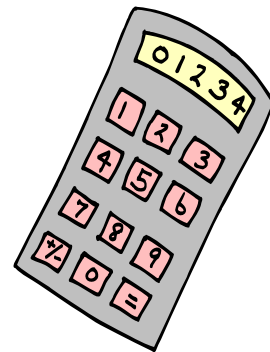
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Proficient or Not Proficient

Now that the fall HSGQE scores are out, there are only 2 outcomes: proficient or not proficient. For those who passed, congratulations! Your dedication, hard work and use of test taking skills has held you in good stead. For those who didn't pass, we encourage them to never give up.

If your student is a senior, s/he still has one more chance this school year to take the test. Juniors will have, at a minimum, 3 more chances. So what things can s/he do to be successful next time? Here are some suggestions for juniors and seniors:

1. Ask your counselor about classes at school that are specifically designed to help prepare for the exam. Take advantage of any seminars, "blitz" sessions or other similar opportunities that are offered at school for test preparation.
2. Make sure that any accommodations that are in the IEP for HSGQE are available and offered during the actual testing period.



To Order this Free Newsletter!

Any parent, teacher, agency representative or student who wishes to receive this newsletter can email us at step@asdk12.org or call 742-3872. All email addresses will be used for this newsletter subscription only and will be held confidential.



Proficient or Not Proficient, cont'd

4. If a Modified HSGQE Application has been completed and approved, perhaps an amended application would be appropriate to add accommodations not previously offered to the student for testing.
5. Use the results of your previous test scores to help narrow down where weaknesses exist in each academic area that needs improvement.

Taking the HSGQE for the First Time?

For sophomores, this spring will be the first exposure to the HSGQE.

Suggestions for them include:

1. Take the practice HSGQE which can be found on the State of Alaska, Department of Education website to become familiar with the look of the test - <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/hsgqe.html>.
2. Learn and practice good test taking skills. You can find some examples on the ASD website at <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/study.asp>.
3. Remember, the HSGQE is a test to measure your knowledge after having completed 12 years of school. As a sophomore, if you pass any or all portions of the test, that could be considered exceptional. If you don't pass, it would be considered normal. Sophomores may not have yet been exposed to some of the information requested on the test.



Some good advice comes from Josh Kahler, a senior who has passed all portions of the exam this year after having failed the exam previously. He says, "No matter what you get for scores, never give up. Stay in school. Use a calculator if it's part of your accommodations. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Use all of your accommodations." Good advice from a student who has had to concentrate on passing the test after having not been successful before.

Regardless of your test results, remember, there will be another opportunity to take and pass the HSGQE. Preparation, advocating for what you need and a positive attitude will go a long way to ensure success the next time.

Ten Ways Parents Can Support Students During Test Taking?

1) Make sure your student is eating healthy foods all year long. Eat a good breakfast (lunch, dinner), including simple sugars (fruit juice), complex carbohydrates (cereal or toast), and protein (milk, eggs, meat, cheese). This will help blood sugar stay at a stable level.

2) Make sure your student gets enough sleep especially during high stakes testing days. Make sure that your child is well rested on school days and especially the day of a test. Students who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.

3) Make sure your student is studying each night rather than cramming the night before a test. Space studying over days or weeks. (Real learning occurs through studying that takes place over a period of time.) Understand the information and relate it to what is already known. Review it more than once. (By doing this, the student should feel prepared at exam time.)

4) During the scheduled study time, ask your child what material he or she thinks might be on the test. Go over questions at the end of each section or the end of the chapter. Look at words that are in bold, refer to class notes. Pay special attention to diagrams, charts, and maps.

5) Provide a private, personal area for studying with good lighting and comfortable seating.

6) Help your student if they initiate the request because they are "stuck". Work together to develop routines, checklists, strategies and systems. Break tasks into smaller, more workable sub-units and show how the parts work as a whole.

7) Give your student a reasonable time limit on daily studying. They should not be doing homework/studying in all hours of the night. Know how long you can expect your child to concentrate at one time.

8) Reduce the amount of time for TV watching on school nights.

9) Make sure your child attends school regularly. Remember, tests do reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy a child puts into learning, the more likely he/she will do well on tests.

10) Work together to discuss study choices and habits as a family -- involve the student in making decisions about the best way to study.

Test Taking Strategies - Before and During An Exam!

Before an Exam

Students should concentrate on “self care” --

Get a good night's rest the evening before...

Eat a good breakfast

Dress in comfortable clothing - dress in layers so that you can adjust your clothing to meet the temperature of the exam room

Report to the exam site early if you are unfamiliar with the area

Bring a healthy snack with you including a plastic water bottle

Ensure that you have all the requirements you need to take the exam -- do this the night before. Often items include a picture idea, copy of registration confirmation, certain writing utensils

Review information from the testing company or instructor for recommendations on how to prepare for a particular exam.

During the Exam

Students should concentrate on utilizing test taking skills they've practiced...

Read all instructions for the exam - even if they seem pretty straightforward. Be sure to review any examples providing in the instructions.

Ask the proctor if you need clarifications of general directions.

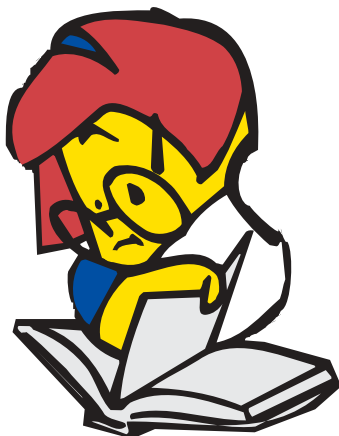
At the beginning, be sure to skim through the entire exam before you begin answering questions.

Have a brief time table in mind so that you feel comfortable taking short breaks for water and relaxing during the exam. Often working on practice exams prior to the exam help you understand how quickly you need to work to complete an exam within the given time.

Remember that some examinations like the HSGQE are not timed -- in such situations, regular relaxation and water breaks can assist you to maintain focus

Always read the entire question before responding!

Dealing with Test Anxiety?



Feeling prepared is the the first step to feeling comfortable. Check out some of these websites for additional information on overcoming test anxiety:

Dealing with Test Anxiety -- Study Guides and Strategies from the University of St. Thomas, <http://www.studygs.net/tstprp8.htm>

How to Keep Calm During Tests -- University of Texas Learning Center, <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/handouts/1305.html>

Why Consider Taking the ASVAB?

What is the ASVAB?

The Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery is a series of tests developed by the Department of Defense in the 1960s. Until recently, the battery consists of 10 individual tests of the following subjects: Word Knowledge, Paragraph Comprehension, Arithmetic Reasoning, Mathematics Knowledge, General Science, Auto & Shop Information, Mechanical Comprehension, Electronics Information, Numerical Operations, and Coding Speed. In December 2002, DOD eliminated Numerical Operations and Coding Speed from the ASVAB, and added a new section titled "Assembling Objects." There are currently three versions of the ASVAB. Results from any one of them can be used for military recruiting purposes.

What is the High School Version of the ASVAB?

The "High School Version" is officially called "Form 18/19." It's a paper-based ASVAB commonly given to juniors and seniors in high school through a cooperative program between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education. The test is offered at more than 13,000 high schools and post secondary schools in the United States. The primary purpose of this test is not for enlistment in the military (although the test scores can be used for military enlistment). The primary purpose of this test is to help school counselors and students discover where a student's basic aptitude lies. Approximately 900,000 students take Form 18/19 ASVAB each year.



Why do counselors recommend students consider taking the ASVAB?

This is an optional test which does not obligate you to enter the military. This test gives you 3 academic and 4 occupational composite scores which provide a great deal of information for you in helping to plan your career.

What are some additional resources to learn more about the ASVAB?

The best place to begin is with a discussion with your parents and high school counselor. Online study materials and other study guides are easily available, however, students should determine make choices based upon the reason they are taking the test.

Scholarship Watch

This newsletter article is dedicated to helping parents and students who are planning to graduate high school and enter a postsecondary educational institution.

Microsoft Scholarships

Microsoft is committed to building the pipeline of future computer scientists. Our scholarships are designed to encourage students to pursue studies in computer science and related technical disciplines. Students from across the United States, Canada, and Mexico will be awarded scholarships in recognition of their passion for software, academic excellence, and ability to make a difference in the software industry.

They offer four types of technical scholarships to current undergraduate students: General Scholarship, Women's Scholarship, Underrepresented Minority Scholarship, and Scholarships for Students with Disabilities.

For additional information, go to <http://www.microsoft.com/college/scholarships/>.

Scholarships for Hispanic Students with Disabilities

The National Education Association sponsors online access to the Hispanic Scholarship Directory of more than 1000 scholarships! The website is located at: <http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org/>.

Office of PostSecondary Education

Most student assistance from the U.S. Department of Education is in the form of grants, loans, and work-study to help pay the cost of attending a postsecondary institution. The Department's Federal Student Aid Office has information on these student financial assistance programs. Learn more about OPE and their resources on their website: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/students.html>.



For high school juniors -- this is a great time to begin. Here's a place to start...

The Anchorage School District STeP Center maintains a web topic on “**Transition to Adult Life**”. This topic has information for the parents and students preparing for transition from high school to adult life, includes articles on transition planning, links to governmental agencies involved in the transition process and websites of additional interest. You can locate this particular section of the STeP website at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/step/disability/transition.asp>