

Prairie State Achievement Examination



Teacher's Handbook 2003 – 2004

Illinois State Board of Education

Making Illinois Schools *Second to None*

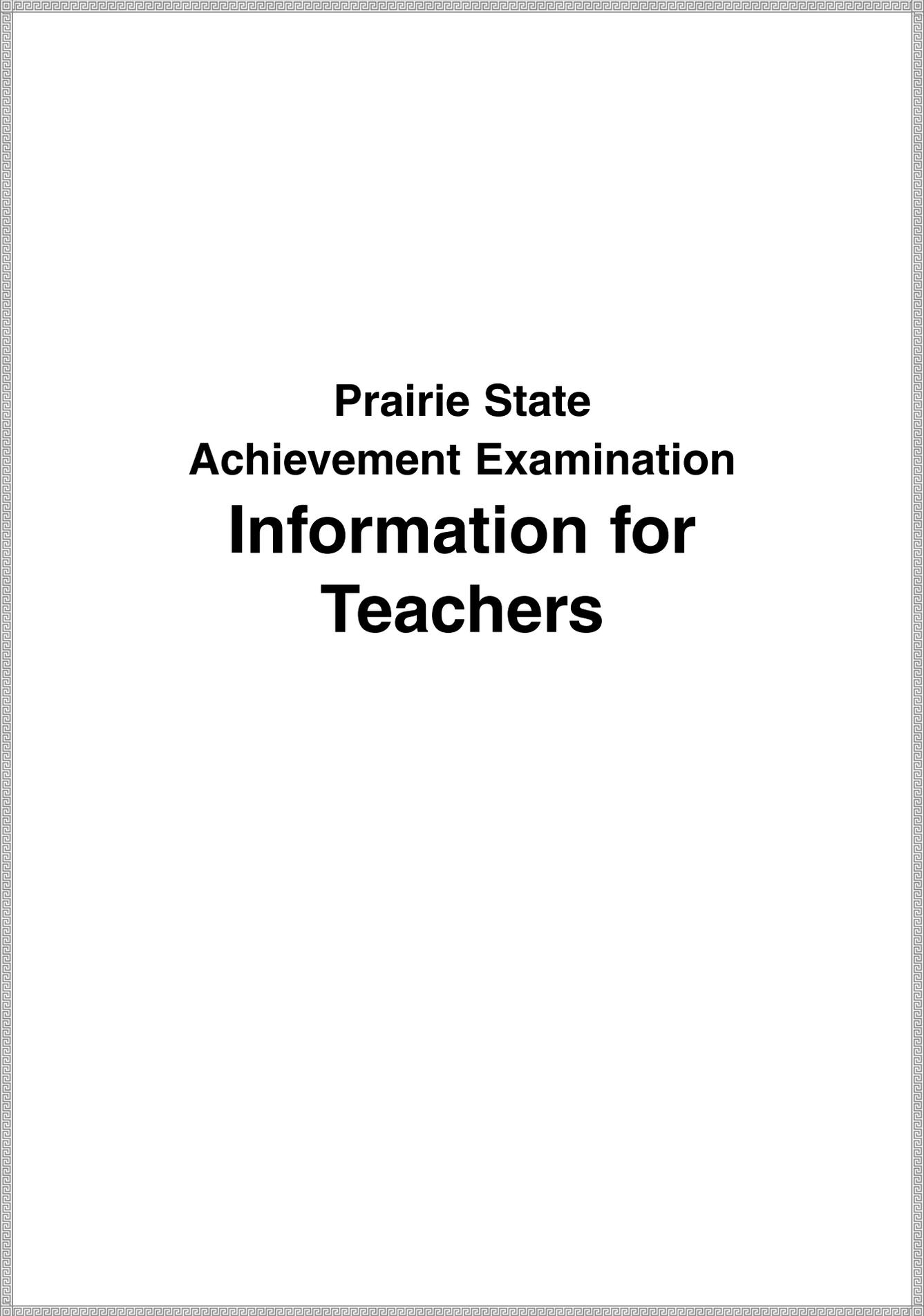
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Prairie State Achievement Examination Teacher's Handbook

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
Information for
Teachers**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

General Information

This handbook contains information for high school educators—teachers, curriculum coordinators, counselors, and principals—as they prepare students to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE). This introductory section explains the purpose of the PSAE, gives timelines and test-day schedules, and shows how the PSAE is constructed. The rest of the handbook provides an overview of each subject test (including keys that give answers to each item and identify the Illinois Learning Standard(s) that the item covers) and five appendices that contain, respectively, the text of the Illinois law that mandates the PSAE, performance-level definitions for each PSAE subject, a report on the process that was used to set standards for the PSAE following its first administration, and the Day 1 and Day 2 student test-preparation booklets (*Preparing for the ACT Assessment* and the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2*). As in previous years, the Day 2 booklet for grade 11 students contains sample test questions, answer keys, a writing prompt, and scored and annotated writing responses from a previous PSAE administration. The PSAE writing test section of this handbook contains additional prompts and one annotated sample response.

Additional information is available on the Web site maintained by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE): www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm.

What is the PSAE?

The PSAE is a statewide high school achievement test for grade 11 students. It is the only statewide academic assessment that Illinois law (see Appendix A) requires public high school students to take.

The PSAE is a two-day test. Students take the ACT Assessment® on Day 1. It comprises tests in four subjects: English, mathematics, reading, and science.

On Day 2, students take three tests developed by ISBE in collaboration with its test-development contractors and Illinois teachers and two WorkKeys® tests developed by ACT™. The ISBE-developed tests are in writing, science, and social science. The WorkKeys tests assess reading and mathematics.

What is the purpose of the PSAE?

The PSAE shows the progress that students in schools, districts, and the state have made toward meeting the Illinois Learning Standards in five subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social science. In addition, it measures the academic achievement of individual students with respect to the Illinois Learning Standards and provides an opportunity for them to receive recognition for excellent performance.

What are the Illinois Learning Standards?

The Illinois Learning Standards are statements of the specific knowledge and skills that every public school student should learn in school. Thousands of Illinois citizens—teachers, parents, school administrators, employers, community leaders, and representatives of higher education—identified what they believe students need to know and be able to do after they graduate from high school. The PSAE assesses student achievement in five of the subjects covered by the Illinois Learning Standards. (There are also Illinois Learning Standards for physical development and health, fine arts, and foreign languages. Physical development and health and fine arts are tested on a voluntary basis at grades 9 and 10. Foreign language is not assessed statewide.)

Whether students intend to go directly to a job or plan to attend a vocational or technical school, junior college, or four-year college or university, those who meet the Illinois Learning Standards have the academic background they need to compete successfully.

For printed copies of the Illinois Learning Standards, call 217/782-4321. The complete text of the Illinois Learning Standards is available on the ISBE Web site: www.isbe.net/ils/.

How do student scores relate to the Illinois Learning Standards?

Scores on the PSAE fall into four performance levels: Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Below Standards, and Academic Warning. Score reports for individual students show the percentage of student scores in each performance level for the school, the district, and the state. Appendix B contains the performance-level definitions, which describe what students know and can do at each performance level.

How were the performance levels set?

Following the first administration of the PSAE in spring 2001, panels made up of Illinois educators and representatives of the business community and of higher education met for three days to establish the relationship between performance on the PSAE and mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards, a process referred to as standard setting.

The panelists first studied performance-level definitions that describe what students know and are able to do at the four performance levels: Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Below Standards, and Academic Warning. After studying the performance-level definitions, panelists participated in a number of exercises to get a clear understanding of the minimal performance that is required for a student to achieve each level. Panelists then judged what percentage of students who just meet the minimal requirements of a given performance level would get an item correct. Those judgments were used to compute the cut points that define the score range for each performance level.

Appendix C contains a report on the standard-setting process.

Do students with disabilities take the PSAE?

Students with disabilities must take the PSAE unless they have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that identify this assessment as inappropriate for them. Students with disabilities for whom the PSAE is appropriate may take it with or without accommodations, as determined by a student's IEP team or Section 504 placement team. Students with IEPs for whom the PSAE is not appropriate, even with accommodations, must participate in the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA). However, in accordance with state law, these students nevertheless have the option of taking the PSAE and must be allowed to do so with approved accommodations that address their respective disabilities.

Accommodations for the ACT Assessment (Day 1 of the PSAE) are approved by ACT. A request form must be submitted to ACT for each student eligible under IDEA or Section 504 who wishes to request an accommodation. ACT reviews the information provided and informs the school of approved accommodations for the ACT Assessment.

School personnel may use ACT's approval as a guideline for accommodations to be provided on Day 2 of the PSAE. However, the decision for Day 2 is ultimately a local one based on accommodation determinations documented in a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. For specific information, check with your school's PSAE Test Accommodations Coordinator.

Do students with limited English proficiency take the PSAE?

Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) must take the PSAE, except for students who have been in a state-approved Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) for less than three cumulative academic years and whose lack of English would keep them from understanding the PSAE tests. These students may take the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) instead. Prior to this year, students who had been in a TBE or TPI program for three or more cumulative academic years were required to take the PSAE. However, state legislation enacted in August 2003 allows school districts to determine on a case-by-case basis if students should be assessed using IMAGE for a period that does not exceed two additional consecutive years.

LEP students who do not have a disability must take the PSAE without accommodations, and you may not translate any PSAE instructions or items for students for whom English is a second language.

Why does the PSAE include different kinds of tests?

The PSAE was designed to measure progress toward meeting the Illinois Learning Standards in five academic subjects and also to provide students with broad achievement information. For these reasons, the PSAE incorporates tests that measure the Illinois Learning Standards and that also measure workplace skills and readiness for college.

The ACT Assessment includes four tests that measure what students have learned in English, mathematics, reading, and science, four of the five subjects that must be included on the PSAE. The two WorkKeys tests add depth and breadth; they also address the “Applications of Learning” that are part of the Standards for every academic area, and they increase the range of skills in reading and mathematics that are assessed. Comprehensive coverage of the Illinois Learning Standards for PSAE subjects is accomplished by the inclusion of ISBE-developed tests in writing, science, and social science.

Except for social science, for which there is only one test, the PSAE score in each subject is based on two tests. For example, PSAE writing comprises ACT Assessment English (which measures mastery of writing conventions and editing skills) and the ISBE-developed writing prompt (which allows a student to demonstrate his or her ability to write an essay). The pullout chart on page 13 of this handbook shows how the tests that make up the PSAE fit together to assess each subject.

What are WorkKeys tests?

WorkKeys is a job analysis and assessment system developed by ACT. In recent years, members of the business community as well as the general public have been concerned that American workers, both current and future, lack the workplace skills needed to meet the challenges of rapidly evolving technical advances, organizational restructuring, and global economic competition. ACT designed WorkKeys to solve this problem. In developing the WorkKeys assessments, ACT listened to employers, educators, and experts in employment and training requirements to find out which skills are crucial in most jobs. Each WorkKeys skill scale describes a set of skill levels. For both the WorkKeys reading and mathematics assessments, there are five skill levels, with Level 3 requiring understanding of the least complex concepts and Level 7 requiring understanding of the most complex concepts.

Test items simulate the characteristics of the workplace and are taken from actual workplace materials. Scores reflect the level of skill a student has achieved rather than his or her performance in relationship to that of others taking the test. WorkKeys scores help students identify their strengths and weaknesses with respect to their education and career goals.

Why are WorkKeys tests included on the PSAE?

ISBE decided to incorporate two WorkKeys tests, *Reading for Information* and *Applied Mathematics*, into the PSAE for three reasons:

1. WorkKeys tests assess whether students can apply what they have learned in the classroom to non-classroom situations, as required by the “Applications of Learning” sections of the Illinois Learning Standards.
2. WorkKeys tests give students a set of scores that they can use to identify the workplace skills they have mastered and those they need to acquire.
3. WorkKeys scores are used by many employers as part of the process of determining whether a job applicant is suited for a particular job just as the ACT Assessment is used by college officials as part of the college admissions process. Students may include their WorkKeys scores in their portfolio and present them when they seek employment.

PSAE Results and Score Reports

Must PSAE scores appear on student transcripts?

Yes. State law requires students' PSAE scores to be recorded on their transcripts. Transcripts should indicate subjects in which students earned a Prairie State Achievement Award. If students wish to raise their PSAE scores, they have one opportunity to retake the PSAE in grade 12. ***To earn new PSAE scores, students must retake the entire PSAE*** (both Day 1 and Day 2) during the October administration.

After the results of the grade 12 retake are known, Pearson Educational Measurement sends schools a set of labels for transcripts that list only the higher PSAE score (from either the grade 11 spring administration or the grade 12 October administration) in each subject for each student. These final PSAE scores must be recorded on student transcripts.

What is a Prairie State Achievement Award?

The PSAE legislation provides that students can receive a Prairie State Achievement Award in each PSAE subject by earning a score that is at the Exceeds Standards performance level. Students receive a certificate listing the subjects in which they earned an award.

Should ACT Assessment scores appear on student transcripts?

ACT Assessment scores generated by taking the PSAE should not automatically be placed on student transcripts. These scores should be placed on a student's transcript only with permission of the student (or permission of the student's parent or guardian if the student is younger than 18 years old).

Is the state-administered ACT Assessment accepted by colleges and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)?

Yes. Colleges and universities throughout the United States and ISAC have indicated their willingness to use ACT Assessment scores reported from state testing. (Note: The U.S. Air Force Academy and Air Force ROTC are exceptions; they do not accept state-administered ACT Assessment scores because of athletic eligibility requirements.)

Is the state-administered ACT Assessment accepted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)?

No. ISBE asked the NCAA to consider allowing state ACT Assessment scores to be used for initial eligibility, but the NCAA has declined to change its eligibility rules.

How and when are PSAE scores distributed?

In August, Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM) will send to principals score cards with PSAE results for individual students printed on them. Schools should distribute these to students as soon as possible so that students can decide if they wish to register for the grade 12 retake. A schedule for the return of scores from the spring test administration is provided below.

Test	From	To	Date Sent	Report(s)
ACT Assessment	ACT	Student (home address)	May/June	Individual Student Report
ACT Assessment	ACT	High School Director of Guidance	May/June	High School Report ¹ (paper) and two score labels for each student, High School List Report ^{2, 3}
ACT Assessment	ACT	Colleges listed by students on student answer folder	May/June	College Report for each student who listed that college to receive ACT Assessment scores
PSAE	PEM	High School Principal	August	Score cards for individual students
PSAE	PEM	High School Principal	Late Summer	Reports for individual students
<i>WorkKeys Reading for Information & Applied Mathematics</i>	ACT	High School Principal	Late Summer	Rosters Reports for individual students
ACT Assessment	ACT	High School Principal	October	High School Profile Report ⁴ Standards for Transition reports ⁵
ACT Assessment	ACT	District Superintendent	October	District Profile Report

¹ ACT mails reports as they become available for reporting. Most schools receive more than one group of results, usually one group from the initial test date followed by smaller groups of results for students from the makeup testing and students tested with accommodations.

² Lists students included in the group for whom results are being reported.

³ If a school or district has ordered electronic reporting of ACT Assessment results on diskette as an extra-cost service from ACT, the scores from state testing are included on the diskette generated after the June national test date.

⁴ Based solely on the state testing results from the previous spring.

⁵ Based solely on the state testing results from the previous spring.

Schedules: Test Dates and Test Administration

When do grade 11 students take the PSAE?

In 2004, grade 11 students take the PSAE on the fourth Wednesday and following Thursday in April. Makeup tests are given two weeks later for students who are not in school on one or both of the initial test dates in April. Dates that have been set for spring 2004 follow.

Initial Test Dates

April 28–29, 2004

Makeup Test Dates

May 12–13, 2004

What should schools do if their spring-break dates conflict with the test dates?

If a school's 2004 spring-break dates conflict with the initial PSAE test dates in April—and changing those spring-break dates would violate a teachers' contract or deny a community tradition—the school will be allowed to test all students on the makeup test dates in May. The school will not have an opportunity to conduct additional makeup testing in the spring, although students will have an opportunity to take the PSAE in grade 12 even if they did not take the PSAE in grade 11.

What is the 2004 test administration schedule?

Day 1

*Wednesday,
April 28, 2004*

ACT English – 45 minutes (75 questions)

ACT Mathematics – 60 minutes (60 questions)

[required 15-minute break]

ACT Reading – 35 minutes (40 questions)

ACT Science – 35 minutes (40 questions)

Day 2

*Thursday,
April 29, 2004*

ISBE-Developed Writing – 40 minutes (one prompt)

ISBE-Developed Science – 40 minutes (45 questions)

[required 15-minute break]

WorkKeys *Applied Mathematics* – 45 minutes (33 questions)

WorkKeys *Reading for Information* – 45 minutes (33 questions)

[required 15- to 60-minute break]

ISBE-Developed Social Science – 60 minutes (65 questions)

Makeup testing will follow this schedule and be administered on May 12 (Day 1) and May 13 (Day 2).

*The Day 1 accommodations window is April 28–May 12, 2004,
and the Day 2 window is April 29–May 13, 2004.*

What are the procedures for students who wish to take the grade 12 retake in October?

Day 1 of the PSAE grade 12 retake, the ACT Assessment, is administered at a national test site on the October national test day. Day 2 is administered at high schools on Tuesday of the following week. Students can earn new PSAE scores only by taking both Day 1 and Day 2 tests during the October 2004 retake. Any grade 12 public school student may take the grade 12 retake, **even if he or she did not take the PSAE in spring 2004.**

Day 1 testing: In July, ACT will send a mailing addressed to “Director of Guidance” at each school that participated in PSAE testing in spring 2004. This mailing will include an initial supply of PSAE Day 1 Vouchers (based on 25 percent of the school’s grade 11 enrollment) for distribution to students who choose to participate in both days of the retake.

To register for the ACT Assessment at state expense, students must complete a paper registration folder and mail it to ACT with the completed and signed PSAE voucher as payment of the basic \$26 fee. Students may not use the vouchers to register via the Web or telephone or for any test date other than October 23, 2004. Each school is responsible for informing students of this option and for signing vouchers in time for students to meet ACT’s regular registration postmark deadline of September 17, 2004.

Day 2 testing: In August, the principal at each school that participated in PSAE testing in spring 2004 will receive a PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake enrollment request form from Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM). Schools should use this form to indicate the total number of students who will be taking the PSAE Day 2 tests during an in-school session on Tuesday, October 26, 2004. The enrollment request form must be faxed to PEM no later than September 17, 2004.

Accommodated Testing

PSAE Day 1 Grade 12 Retake with ACT-Approved Test Accommodations

In July, ACT will distribute to each school’s PSAE Test Accommodations Coordinator a supply of application forms. Students who wish to participate in the retake but need to apply for test accommodations such as extended time or alternate formats on Day 1 of the PSAE retake must submit a request for accommodations **postmarked by September 17, 2004**. Materials will highlight a streamlined process for students who were approved for test accommodations for grade 11 PSAE testing and who request the same accommodations for the grade 12 retake.

PSAE Day 2 Grade 12 Retake with School-Approved Test Accommodations

The PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake enrollment request form that principals will receive in August will also ask for the number of alternate format materials needed for Day 2 of the PSAE grade 12 retake. A two-week Day 2 accommodations testing window for *in-school testing* is scheduled October 26–November 9, 2004. Decisions regarding accommodations for Day 2 of the PSAE grade 12 retake are to be made locally based on a student’s IEP or 504 Plan.

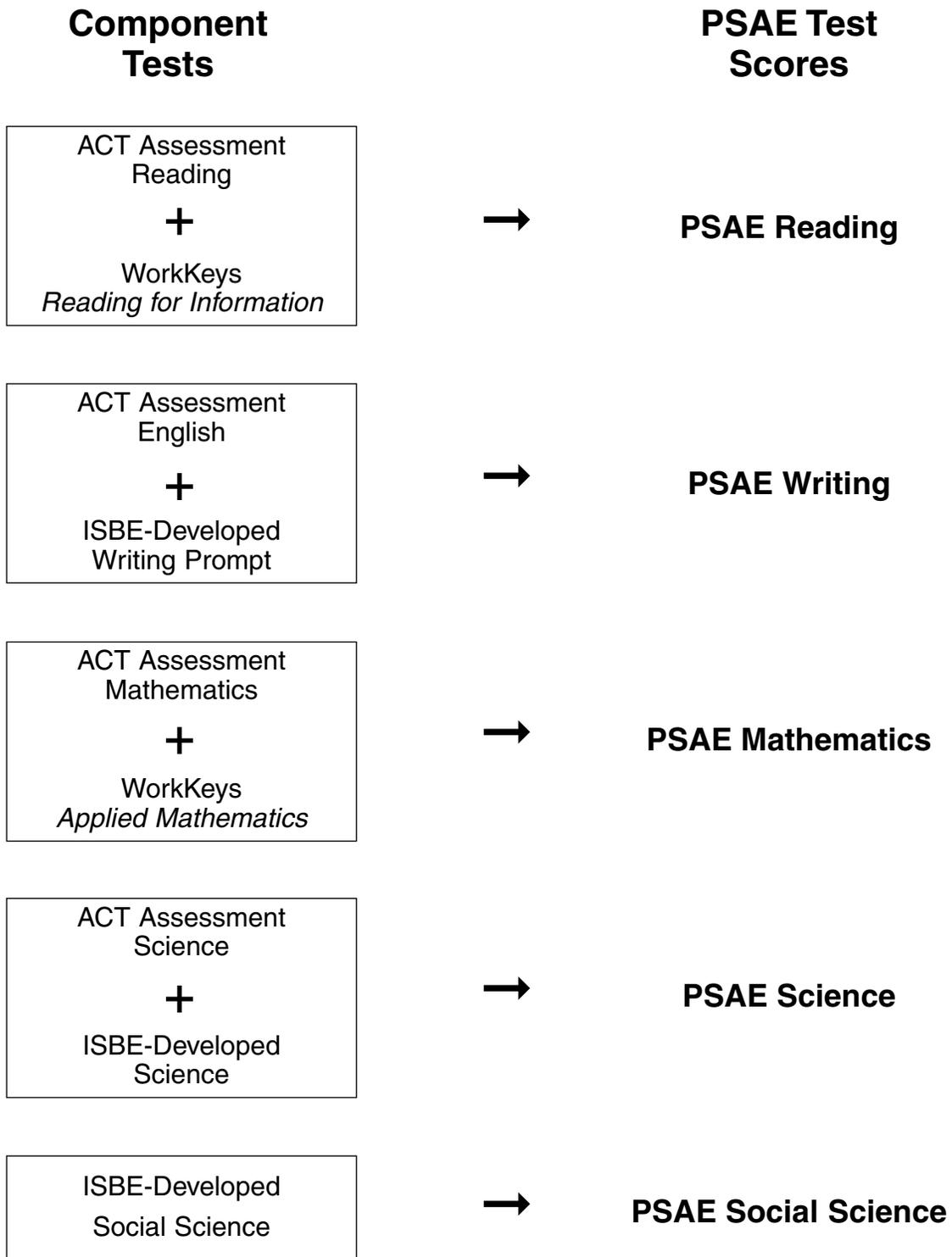
Prairie State Achievement Examination 2003–2004 Timeline

December 2003	December 15: Deadline for ISBE to receive completed requests for off-site testing arrangements from schools. See ISBE Web site for request form: www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm .
February 2004	Copies of Day 1 student test-preparation booklets for grade 11 students and teachers shipped to principals by ACT. February 2: Deadline for ACT to receive requests from schools for Day 1 test accommodations for individual students. February 23: Deadline for Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM) to receive Day 2 pre-ID label files from schools.
February 23–March 5, 2004	Training workshops for Test Supervisors, Back-up Test Supervisors, and Test Accommodations Coordinators. (Recommended but optional for staff trained in 2001, 2002, or 2003; ACT ships training packets to previously trained testing staff.)
March 15–19, 2004	ACT ships to schools Day 1 nonsecure test materials (supervisor’s manuals, answer folders, bar-code labels, and student pre-test materials). PEM ships to schools Day 2 supervisor’s manuals.
March 22–April 27, 2004	Window for schools to conduct supervised sessions for all students to complete identifying and non-test portions of the ACT Assessment; these may <i>not</i> be completed on or after the test day.
March–April 2004	Day 2 student test-preparation booklets for grade 11 students and copies of Teacher’s Handbook (this book) shipped to principals by PEM.
April 2004	Test Supervisor and Back-up Test Supervisor train Room Supervisors and Proctors; Test Accommodations Coordinator trains staff assigned to accommodations testing. Week of April 19–23: Schools receive shipments of secure test materials, including alternate format materials. Day 1 shipment comes from ACT, and Day 2 shipment comes from PEM. Early shipments to accommodate spring-break schedules will be arranged. April 27: Teachers remind students to bring acceptable ID, pencils, and approved calculators on test days. April 28: Day 1 test date. School staff pack completed answer documents and all (used and unused) test booklets for return to ACT. <i>Retain uncompleted answer documents for makeup testing.</i> April 29: Day 2 test date. School staff pack completed answer documents and all (used and unused) test booklets for return to PEM. <i>Retain uncompleted answer documents for makeup testing.</i> April 29: Schools fax orders for Day 1 makeup materials to ACT. April 30: Schools fax orders for Day 2 makeup materials to PEM. April 30: UPS picks up Day 1 and Day 2 shipments of packed test materials.
April–May 2004	Accommodations Testing Window April 28–May 12, 2004: Day 1 accommodations testing window for each student approved for accommodations by ACT. Approved students may use only the materials assigned to him or her; all materials packed for return pickup on May 14. April 29–May 13, 2004: Day 2 accommodations testing window; all materials packed for return pickup on May 14.
May 2004	May 7: Schools receive makeup test materials by this date, if deadlines for faxing orders to ACT and PEM were met. May 12: Day 1 makeup test date for students absent on April 28. School staff pack all Day 1 makeup materials for return to ACT.

Prairie State Achievement Examination 2003–2004 Timeline (continued)

May 2004 (continued)	<p>May 13: Day 2 makeup test date for students absent on April 29. School staff pack all Day 2 makeup materials for return to PEM.</p> <p>May 14: UPS picks up Day 1 and Day 2 shipments of makeup test materials and test accommodations materials.</p> <p>Late May: ISBE sends information about grade 12 retake procedures to schools.</p>
May–June 2004	ACT mails ACT Assessment score reports from PSAE administration to students at their home addresses and to each school's director of guidance.
July 2004	ACT sends annual shipment of ACT Assessment national registration packets to each school's director of guidance.
August 2004	<p>PEM sends score cards for individual students to high school principals. These cards will include PSAE scores from tests returned by May 14.</p> <p>PEM sends PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake enrollment request form to schools.</p> <p>ACT sends a supply of PSAE Day 1 grade 12 retake vouchers to school's director of guidance; ACT sends instructions for requesting test accommodations on the Day 1 grade 12 retake to each school's PSAE Test Accommodations Coordinator.</p>
Late Summer 2004	<p>PEM sends PSAE score reports for individual students to schools.</p> <p>ACT sends WorkKeys score reports to schools.</p>
September 2004	<p>September 17: Last day for schools to fax completed PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake enrollment request forms to PEM.</p> <p>September 17: Postmark deadline for students to mail completed ACT Assessment paper registration folder with completed PSAE voucher to register for October 23, 2004, national test date or to request test accommodations for Extended-Time National Testing or Special Testing.</p>
October 2004	<p>October 1: Late postmark deadline for students to mail completed ACT Assessment paper registration folder with PSAE voucher to register for October 23, 2004, national test date or to request test accommodations for Extended-Time National Testing or Special Testing.</p> <p>October 23: PSAE Day 1 grade 12 retake (ACT Assessment) national test date at established national test centers only.</p> <p>October 26: PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake for grade 12 students.</p>
October–November 2004	<p>Accommodations Testing Window for Grade 12 October Retake</p> <p>October 23–November 6: PSAE Day 1 grade 12 retake accommodations period for students approved by ACT for in-school Special Testing; all materials shipped back to ACT.</p> <p>October 26–November 9: PSAE Day 2 grade 12 retake accommodations period; all materials shipped back to PEM.</p>
November–December 2004	ACT mails ACT Assessment scores from October testing to students, high schools, and colleges listed by students.
January 2005	PEM sends PSAE scores from the grade 12 October retake to schools.
February 2005	<p>PEM sends PSAE score labels for student transcripts to schools. For students who took the grade 11 PSAE and the grade 12 October retake, these labels will list only the higher score for each subject.</p> <p>PEM sends schools individual student certificates for students who earned a Prairie State Achievement Award in one or more subjects.</p>

How Component Tests Combine to Produce PSAE Scores



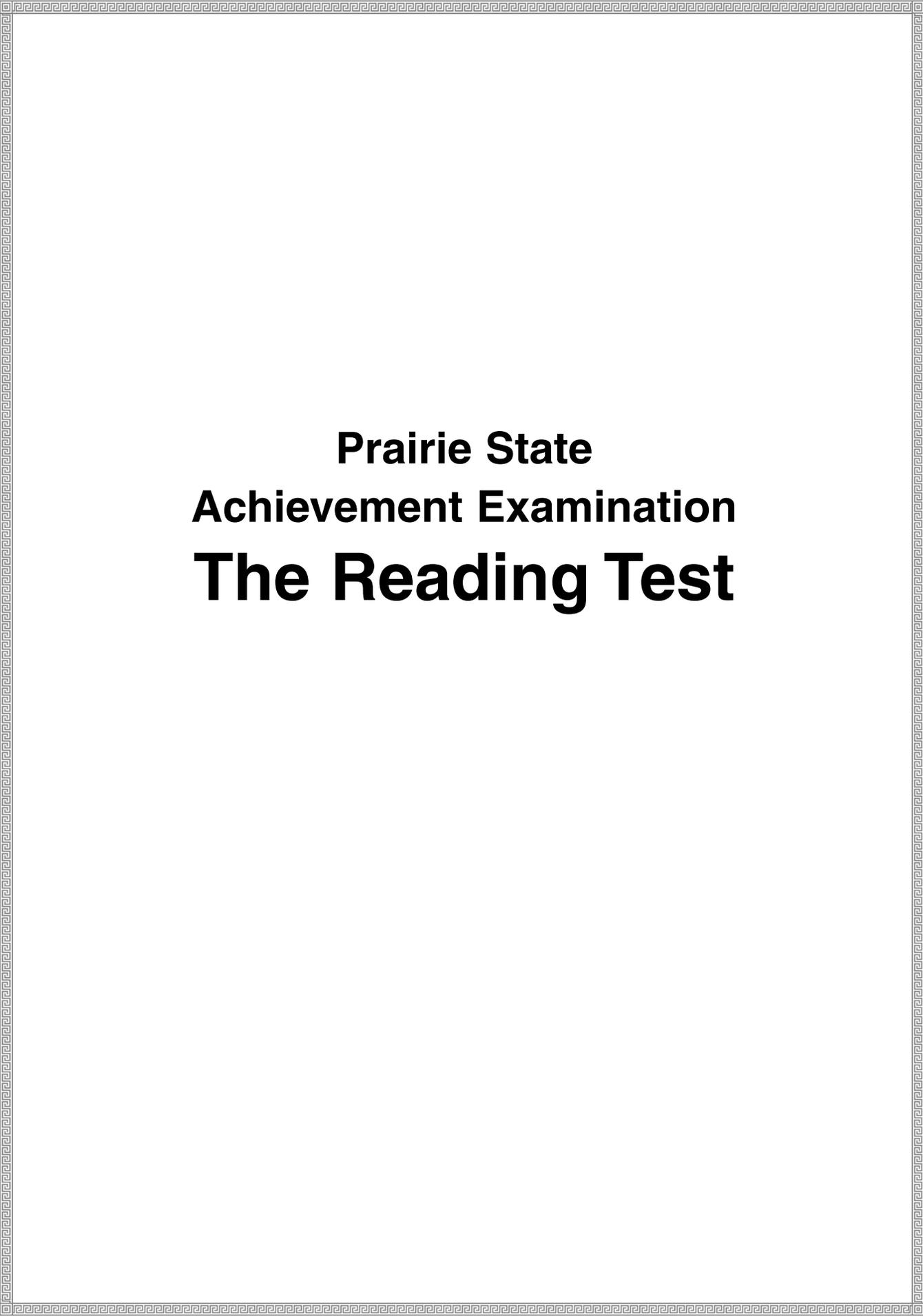
How the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) Measures Student Progress Toward Meeting the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS)

PSAE Tests	What the Standards Require ²	How the PSAE Measures the Standards	What is in Each Test ³
Reading	Ability to read with fluency and understanding and to comprehend a broad range of reading materials (ILS 1A – C), including literature representative of various societies, eras, and ideas (2A, B). Ability to evaluate and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems, and communicate ideas (5A – C).	Provides comprehensive assessment of reading skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic reading passages that include prose fiction, humanities, social science, and natural science • Work-related informational pieces, such as policies, bulletins, letters, manuals, and governmental regulations • Multiple-choice questions that require students to reference the text and think critically 	ACT Reading + WorkKeys <i>Reading for Information</i>
Writing	Ability to communicate in writing for a variety of purposes (ILS 3B, C) and to compose coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences using correct grammar and mechanics (3A).	Assesses writing skills in more than one way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple-choice questions that target editing for conventions of written English (including punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure) and for effective writing (including strategy, organization, and style) • One expository or persuasive essay written on a given topic and assessed for clarity, coherence, and the extent to which ideas are developed 	ACT English + ISBE-Developed Writing
Mathematics	Understanding and ability to apply knowledge of number sense, estimation, and arithmetic (ILS 6A – D; 7A, B; 8C); algebra (8A – D); geometry and trigonometry (9A – D); measurement (7C); and data organization and probability (10A – C).	Provides comprehensive assessment of mathematics knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses mathematical skills acquired in courses taken through grade 11 • Academic and work-related content assessed through increasingly complex tasks • Multiple-choice questions require mathematical reasoning to solve practical problems • Approved calculators may be used, and complex formulas are provided 	ACT Mathematics + WorkKeys <i>Applied Mathematics</i>
Science	Understanding and ability to apply knowledge of experimental design (ILS 11A) and technological design (11B), including how to conduct controlled experiments and analyze and present the results; life sciences (12A, B), chemistry (12C), physics (12D), Earth science (12E), and space science (12F); laboratory safety, valid sources of data, and ethical research practices (13A); and historical interactions between science, technology, and society (13B).	Measures scientific knowledge and its application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills • Science inquiry; life, physical, and Earth and space sciences; and science, technology, and society • Multiple-choice questions that assess the ability of students to use critical thinking skills to evaluate information provided on the test 	ACT Science + ISBE-Developed Science
Social Science	Understanding of U.S. political systems, including the basic principles, and structure and functions of government (ILS 14A – F); of economic systems (15A – E); of world geography and the effects of geography on society (17A – D); of how social systems develop, including cultural traditions and the roles of individuals and groups (18A – C). Comprehension of the events, trends, individuals and movement that shape the history of the United States and the world (16A – E).	Provides comprehensive assessment of social science knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government, economics, geography, U.S. history, and global perspectives • Interpretation of maps, charts, and original documents, such as newspaper articles, treaties, and pictures • Multiple-choice questions that assess social science concepts and principles as well as problem-solving skills necessary for effective citizenship 	ISBE-Developed Social Science

¹ Copies of *Illinois Learning Standards* are available from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Call the ISBE Information Desk, 217/782-4321, or access the ISBE Web site at <http://www.isbe.net>.

² Not all standards are assessed by the PSAE. Some are difficult or impossible to test using statewide, paper-and-pencil tests. For example, ILS 4A, “Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience,” is more appropriately assessed at the classroom level.

³ The PSAE is constructed using three components: (1) ISBE-developed writing, science, and social science assessments; (2) the ACT Assessment, which includes reading, English, mathematics, and science; and (3) two WorkKeys assessments (*Reading for Information* and *Applied Mathematics*).

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
The Reading Test**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Reading Introduction

What will be on the test?

The reading section of the Prairie State Achievement Examination consists of two components: ACT Assessment Reading, taken on Day 1, and WorkKeys *Reading for Information*, taken on Day 2. These components assess the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) for reading. They test students' ability to read literary and informational texts with understanding and fluency.

ACT Assessment Reading **(35 minutes, 40 multiple-choice items)**

This component comprises four 750-word passages each followed by 10 multiple-choice questions. Two of the passages are literary texts: one fiction and one nonfiction. The other two passages are informational texts: one social science and one natural science.

Across texts the difficulty ranges from uncomplicated, to challenging, to complex. Questions assess students' explicit and inferential understanding and the following reading skills: determining main ideas and significant details, identifying comparative and cause-effect relationships, determining meanings of words, making generalizations and drawing conclusions, and determining author's tone.

More information about the passages and questions can be found in the *Standards for Transition: ACT Assessment Reading Guide*.

WorkKeys Reading for Information **(45 minutes, 33 multiple-choice items)**

This component includes 15 reading samples that range in length from about 50 up to 300 words followed by one, two, or three multiple-choice questions each.

The samples include memos, policy statements, procedures, government regulations, and other such business texts and are arranged in five levels of increasing difficulty. Across texts the questions assess student achievement in identifying main ideas and significant details, understanding word meanings, and applying instructions, information, and reasoning.

More information about the passages and questions can be found in the *WorkKeys Reading for Information Target for Instruction*.

ILS/Answer Keys

A sample ACT Reading Test and sample WorkKeys *Reading for Information* questions can be found in the two booklets provided for students this year: *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* and the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2* (Appendices D and E). Answer keys that give the correct answer for each item in the student PSAE reading sample materials and identify the Illinois Learning Standard(s) assessed by the item are on page 19.

Key to ACT Assessment Reading Sample Test

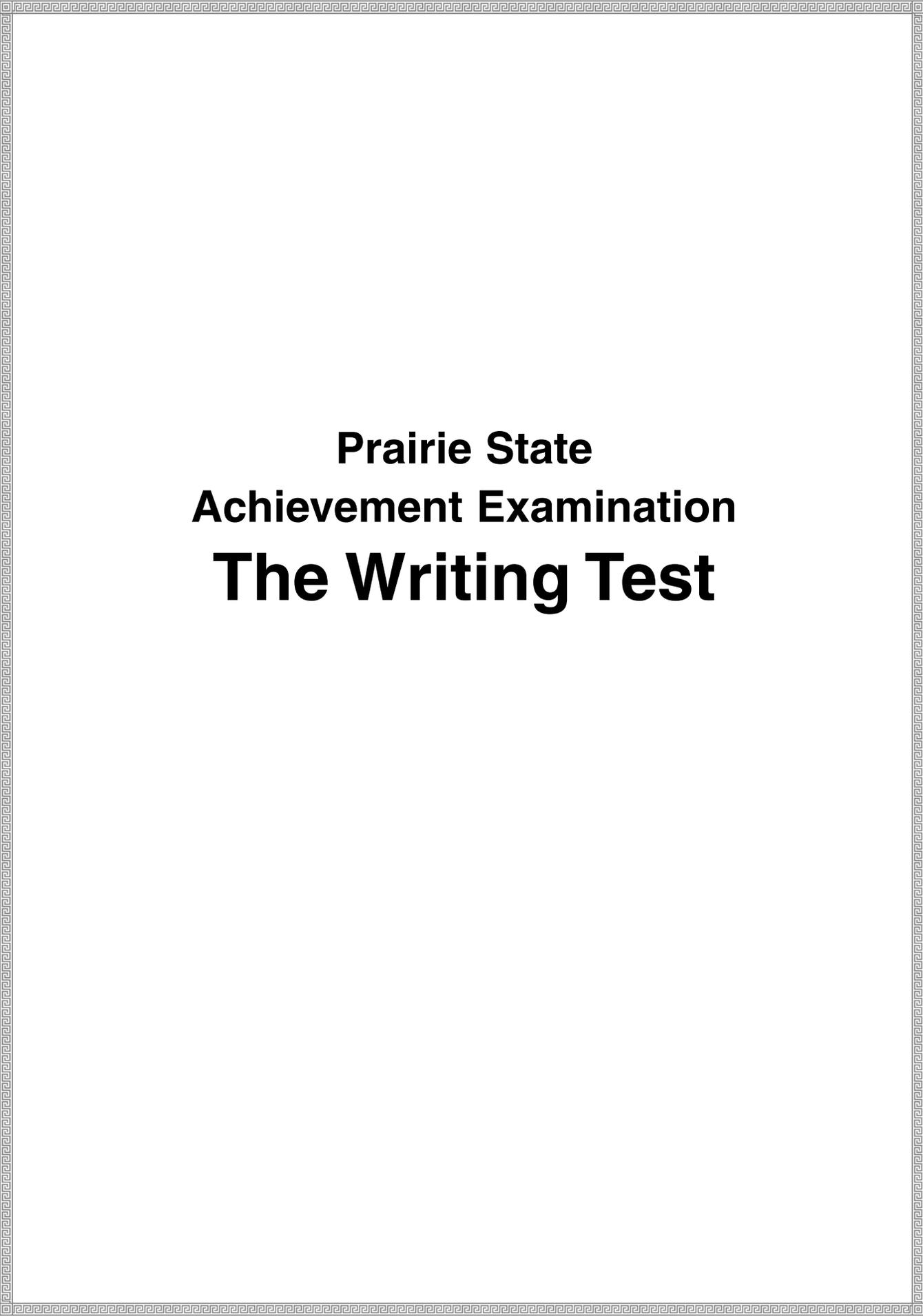
Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	1B, 1C, 2A, 2B	D
2	1B, 1C, 2A, 2B	F
3	1B, 1C, 2B	C
4	1B, 1C	G
5	1B, 1C	A
6	1B, 1C, 2B	H
7	1B, 1C	A
8	1C	G
9	1B, 1C	B
10	1A, 1B, 1C, 2A	H
11	1B, 1C, 2B	A
12	1B, 1C, 2B	F
13	1B, 1C	C
14	1B, 1C, 2B	J
15	1A, 1C	A
16	1C	G
17	1C	D
18	1B, 1C	H
19	1B, 1C	D
20	1C	G

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
21	1B, 1C, 2A	C
22	1C	G
23	1B, 1C, 2B	A
24	1B, 1C, 2B	G
25	1C	D
26	1C, 2A	G
27	1B, 1C	D
28	1B, 1C	G
29	1A, 1C	D
30	1C	H
31	1B, 1C, 2B	D
32	1B, 1C, 2B	F
33	1B, 1C	B
34	1A, 1C	J
35	1B, 1C	A
36	1B, 1C	H
37	1B, 1C	C
38	1B, 1C, 2A	G
39	1A, 1C	D
40	1A, 1C	H

Key to WorkKeys Reading for Information Sample Items

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
	Level 3	
1	1B, 1C	B
2	1B, 1C	E
3	1B, 1C	B
	Level 4	
1	1A, 1B, 1C	A
2	1B, 1C	E
3	1B, 1C	D
	Level 5	
1	1B, 1C	D
2	1B, 1C	B
3	1A, 1B, 1C, 5B	B

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
	Level 6	
1	1B, 1C, 5B	C
2	1B, 1C, 5B	B
3	1B, 1C, 5B	C
	Level 7	
1	1B, 1C, 5B	B
2	1A, 1B, 1C, 5B	E
3	1B, 1C, 5B	A

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
The Writing Test**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Writing Introduction

What will be on the test?

The writing section of the Prairie State Achievement Examination consists of two components: ACT Assessment English, taken on Day 1, and production of a writing sample in response to a prompt, written on Day 2.

These components assess the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) for writing, including the use of correct punctuation, grammar, and structure (ILS 3A) and the ability to compose coherent writing and communicate for a variety of purposes (ILS 3B, 3C).

ACT Assessment English **(45 minutes, 75 multiple-choice items)**

The ACT Assessment English Test measures two aspects of standard written English:

- (1) 40 questions test conventions (punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure), and
- (2) 35 questions test rhetorical skills (strategy, organization, and style).

The test comprises five prose passages, each followed by several multiple-choice questions. Different types of passages are included so that a variety of skills are assessed. More information about the passages and questions can be found in the *Standards for Transition: ACT Assessment English Guide*.

ISBE-Developed Writing **(40 minutes, one writing prompt)**

Two genres of writing are tested by the PSAE: expository and persuasive. Students are given a single prompt, either persuasive or expository, and write one response in the 40-minute test period. The PSAE answer document contains six pages for the writing response.

ILS/Answer Key

A sample ACT English Test can be found in the student booklet *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* (Appendix D). An answer key that gives the correct answer for each item in that booklet and identifies the Illinois Learning Standard(s) assessed by the items is on page 25.

Sample Writing Prompts and Rubrics

The two writing prompts used for the initial and makeup PSAE administrations in spring 2002 are on page 27. These are followed on pages 28–30 by a prompt from an earlier administration of the PSAE and an appropriate one-paragraph response to that prompt along with its annotation. This sample response and those in this year’s student booklet, the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2* (Appendix E), are included to show some of the possible approaches students can use. ***No sample should be taken as a model for students to copy exactly.***

The official scoring rubric is presented in its entirety on pages 33–37. The rubric adapted for high school students is in Appendix E, on pages 38 and 39 of the Day 2 student booklet.

Key to ACT Assessment English Sample Test

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	3B, 3C	B
2	3A	F
3	3A	D
4	3A	G
5	3A	B
6	3A, 3B	J
7	3B, 3C	A
8	3A	G
9	3A	C
10	3A	H
11	3A	D
12	3A	G
13	3B, 3C	A
14	3B, 3C	H
15	3B, 3C	C
16	3A	F
17	3A	C
18	3A	G
19	3B	A
20	3A	J
21	3B, 3C	D
22	3A	H
23	3A	C
24	3A	F
25	3A	B
26	3A, 3B	J
27	3B, 3C	A
28	3A, 3B	J
29	3A	C
30	3A, 3B	F
31	3A	D
32	3B, 3C	F
33	3A	B
34	3A	J
35	3B, 3C	C
36	3B	H
37	3A	A
38	3B	J

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
39	3A	D
40	3A, 3B	G
41	3A	C
42	3B	F
43	3A, 3B	D
44	3A	F
45	3B, 3C	D
46	3A, 3B	G
47	3A	C
48	3A	F
49	3B	B
50	3A, 3B	F
51	3A	C
52	3B, 3C	J
53	3A, 3B	A
54	3B, 3C	F
55	3B	A
56	3A	J
57	3A	C
58	3A	G
59	3A	C
60	3B, 3C	J
61	3B, 3C	A
62	3B, 3C	G
63	3B	C
64	3B, 3C	G
65	3A	A
66	3A	H
67	3A	D
68	3A	H
69	3B, 3C	B
70	3A	F
71	3B, 3C	A
72	3A, 3B	J
73	3A	B
74	3A	G
75	3B	C

Sample Writing Prompts

Persuasive Prompt for April 2002

Change is generally considered either an improvement or a change for the worse. Most people resist changes because they feel the old ways are working, so changes are not necessary.

Write a persuasive paper presenting one change you feel is needed. Discuss a change that relates to your school, your community, the state, or the world. Include examples and evidence to support why the change is needed.

You should:

1. Take a few minutes to plan your paper by making notes.
 2. Choose one change that you think is needed.
 3. Give specific reasons that explain why this change is needed.
 4. Organize your ideas carefully.
 5. Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.
-
-

Persuasive Prompt for May 2002 (Makeup Test)

An employer believes that an employee's right to privacy is secondary to the safety of the company's workforce. The employer plans to start routine drug testing to be certain that employees are not working under the influence of illegal drugs. Some employees think this is the right approach, but others are concerned because they believe routine drug testing invades their right to privacy.

Write a persuasive paper telling whether you agree or disagree that routine drug testing should occur in the workplace. Give specific support for why you think as you do.

You should:

1. Take a few minutes to plan your paper by making notes on the previous page.
2. State whether you believe routine drug testing invades an employee's right to privacy or whether you believe that the safety of the workplace is more important.
3. Give reasons and explain why you think as you do.
4. Organize your ideas carefully.
5. Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.

Appropriate One-Paragraph Response (Prompt & Annotation)

At the dawn of a new century, there are still many major problems that have not been solved during previous centuries. What problem do you believe is the most important challenge facing the world in the twenty-first century? How would you solve that problem?

You should:

1. Take a few minutes to plan your paper by making notes on the previous page.
 2. State what you consider to be the greatest problem facing the world at the dawn of the twenty-first century.
 3. Explain how the plan for solving this problem would work.
 4. Organize your ideas carefully.
 5. Check that you have correct sentences, punctuation, and spelling.
-

Focus Score: 6

- The writer introduces the topic of overpopulation within the context of technological advancement and other existing problems.
- The body of the paper is a well-integrated explanation of the problem and a possible solution.
- The conclusion unifies the piece by again touching on technology and the future, then ends with a projection into the future and the immediacy of this issue.

Support Score: 6

- The writer develops each point fully and evenly with in-depth specifics and multiple strategies, including a description of the origin of the problem. [Our species grows at a rate not balanced by any predator or disease.]
- Further support is added with rhetorical questions that advance the argument. [How long will it last before they may have the same problem?]
- The writer includes the pertinent example of the Japanese solution, strengthening that example by acknowledging, “This does seem a bit tyrannical for the USA.” In the end, the writer addresses the question of scarcity of resources.
- Word choice enhances specificity [unspoken doom, asteroid impact, becomes critical, spotted and stopped, resources once used for expansion, already existing society].

Organization Score: 6

- The writer presents a well-woven argument that begins by praising mankind’s gains in technology, then moves to overpopulation, which overshadows these gains.
- The writer uses more sophisticated cohesive devices. One of these is movement from general [unspoken doom] to specific [our species grows at an exponential rate].
- Transitions engage the reader [while at the current time, the whole idea seems silly, I urge you...] and move the argument forward.
- Problem and solution are melded at the top of page 2 by the asking and answering of a rhetorical question [how long will it last before they may have the same problems].
- The writer uses many subtle techniques to connect ideas, thus avoiding overt transitional words.
- This response demonstrates the ability to intertwine many details in a logical, unified, convincing argument that progresses smoothly from beginning to end.

Conventions Score: 2

Integration Score: 6

Overall Strengths

- This response demonstrates a clear organizational structure and is an example of an appropriate one-paragraph response.

Possible Focus for Instruction

- Organization: Students could discuss why the one paragraph structure is appropriate for this response.

About 30 years ago, when man landed on the moon, the year 2000 seemed distant. Technology's pace at the time promised many advancements, some of which were brought to us, including some which were then thought to be impossible. Our society has also improved greatly over the 3 decades of social evolution. The year 2000 came and went, and nothing bad happened. However, all is not well at the present time. We still hold with us the problems of the last 100 years as we race into the next. While pollution, crime, and unhappiness in general would rank high on most people's list of problems, I find the problem in the fact that there are just too many people. Overpopulation is the unspoken doom of the civilization next to the more imaginative nuclear war or super virus and asteroid impact. Our species grows at an exponential rate, and more importantly is not balanced by any predator or disease and not confined by any habitat, while at the current time, the whole idea seems silly. I urge you, however, to look at the situation played out in third world countries. The population is increasing with 1-9 children per-family while the economy has already been over-taxed. People now don't have work there. They can't

buy land or food. Starvation is somewhat battled by the charity of larger nations, but how long will it last before they may have the same problem? In my opinion the time to consider this is now. The quicker a problem is confronted, the better chance you will have of solving it before it becomes critical. In my suggestion I would like to refer to the current state of the Japanese nation. Overpopulation was spotted and stopped by a birth control law. Yes, this does seem a bit typical for the USA at this time but if growth continues in other places of the world at the current rate, the world will not be the world in 50 years. The laws I propose, like that of the Japanese government, would limit family size to two children. However, the people wishing a larger family would be allowed to adopt a child in need. The population count would remain at safe levels under the new order and the resources once used for expansion would then be available for improvement of the already existing society. We would be able to easily fight world hunger without the problem doubling every 3 years. Society in general would have time to catch up

(continued on p. 30)

with technology and obtain the real family behind the "imagined future". So with population under control by my proposed order, we would be effectively be securing our well-being for the not-so distant future.

Persuasive/Expository Guidelines for Scoring

Types of Writing Assignments

The persuasive assignment requires students to take a position and develop one side of an argument. The expository assignment requires students to explain, interpret, or describe something based upon background experiences or information provided in the prompt.

Basis for Scoring

Test papers are scored on the basis of how well they achieve the features of writing that make up an essay: Focus, Support, Organization, Conventions, and Integration.

Features of Writing

Text-Level Features of Writing:

Focus – the clarity with which a paper presents and maintains a clear main idea or point of view

Focus is more than a thesis statement and/or a listing of subordinate points. This feature examines whether the subject/issue/position is clear and whether the central purpose is maintained throughout the paper. Multiple positions are focused only if there is an umbrella statement. The writer must maintain a clear position/logic throughout with an effective conclusion. Titles are not considered part of Focus.

Support – the degree to which the main point or position is supported and explained by specific details and reasons

Support focuses on the quality of the detail or support illustrating or explaining the reasons and subpoints. The quality of Support depends on its specificity, depth, accuracy or credibility within the writer's framework, and sufficiency. Depth can be detected by outlining or diagramming the details. The more subtopics or branches, the greater the depth. There is no required number of supporting points; depth of detail is required for more developed papers. The most developed Support is balanced across all points. Word choice enhances specificity.

Organization – the extent to which ideas flow logically and are coherent and cohesive

Organization examines whether the composition exhibits a clear structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and whether the points are logically related to each other. Organization has a vertical dimension (coherence) indicated by the use of paragraphing and transitions to signal the plan or text structure. Organization also has a horizontal dimension (cohesion) evidenced by the connection of one sentence to the next. The writer may employ varied methods to achieve coherence and cohesion (repetition, pronouns, synonyms, parallel structure, connectives, and transitions). Sentence variety and word choice also contribute to cohesiveness.

Conventions – use of standard written English

Evaluation of the use of Conventions should take into account the following: how seriously the errors interfere with communication; whether the errors are major or minor; and the number of errors in relation to how much is written (for example, three major errors in three sentences is significantly different from three errors in three paragraphs). For the PSAE, Convention scores will be assigned on the basis of 2 for a developed score and 1 for a developing score. The evaluation of Conventions also takes into account the paper's proximity to a final draft in the writing process. For example, if a student had three weeks to do an assignment with multiple drafts, more stringent criteria would be used in assigning a Conventions score than for an on-demand writing or timed assignment. The PSAE writing sample is scored as a first draft; hence, the plus (2) or minus (1) designation.

Holistic Feature of Writing:

Integration – evaluation of the paper based on a focused, global judgment of how effectively the paper as a whole uses the four other features of writing to fulfill the assignment

The purpose of this rating is to provide a general evaluation of how clearly the paper achieves the

assigned task for a specific grade level. The holistic rating assumes that the effectiveness of the paper depends upon the skill with which the student orchestrates the fundamental features to complete the assignment. The judgment is limited to the combination of features and does not include other factors such as humor, originality, or style. It reflects the view that the paper is a total work; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Scoring Procedure

For state assessment, each feature except Conventions is rated on a six-point scale for each grade level. The number indicates the level of the paper's development. In general, the scores may be interpreted as follows:

A score of 1, 2, or 3 (or 1 in Conventions) indicates that the feature is absent or in the developing stages. A score of 4, 5, or 6 (or 2 in Conventions) signals that the feature is basically, adequately, or fully developed.

Each feature is rated independently with the exception of Integration. Integration is tied to the other scores. For example, it is possible for a paper to receive an undeveloped score—that is, a score of 3 or less—in one or more of the other features and still receive a developed score in Integration if the remaining features are strong.

To calculate the score for a paper, add the scores for each feature (to emphasize the holistic nature of good writing, the Integration score is doubled). For example, a paper with scores of Focus = 4, Support = 3, Organization = 4, Conventions = 2, and Integration = 4 will have a total score of 21.

High School: Persuasive/Expository

FOCUS

The Focus is more than a thesis statement and/or a listing of subordinate points. This feature examines whether the subject/issue/position is clear and whether the central purpose is maintained throughout the paper. Multiple positions are focused only if there is an umbrella statement. The writer must maintain a clear position/logic throughout with an effective conclusion. Titles are not considered part of the Focus.

HS – FOCUS p/e	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective opening (may or may not include specific preview) which displays sophistication through the use of anecdotes, quotations, definitions, personal appeals or other effective strategies; may develop the Focus inductively • Writing is purposeful with logic maintained throughout • Effective closing which relates to opening and unifies the writing (may invite exploration, raise relevant questions or use other devices/ideas)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly sets purpose of paper through thematic introduction, specific preview, or successful, more sophisticated introduction; may develop the Focus inductively • Maintains clear position/logic throughout that advances purpose of paper • Effective closing (attempts to unify)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets purpose of paper through thematic introduction or specific preview • May attempt a more sophisticated introduction (with varying degrees of success) • If previewed, paper develops only previewed points • Maintains clear logical subject/position • Clear closing (may be a restatement)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject/position (or issue) identified by only brief, general opening statement or established somewhere in the paper • If previewed, paper develops more or fewer points than previewed • Minor Focus drift or lapses in logic (not really separate ideas – repetitious) • Closing is absent or only a verbatim reiteration of the introduction • Lacks sufficiency to demonstrate a developed Focus
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject/position is vague or prompt-dependent; may launch with no unifying statement anywhere <u>or</u> repeats prompt or a portion of it as the only focusing statement • Unrelated or illogical ideas that drift from Focus; paper may consist mostly of repetitions and redundancies • Off-mode response that does NOT serve persuasive/expository purpose • Multiple subjects/positions without a unifying umbrella statement • May be insufficient writing to determine that subject/position (or issue) can be sustained
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject/position (or issue) is unclear • Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met

SUPPORT

This feature focuses on the quality of the detail or Support illustrating or explaining the reasons and sub-points. The quality of Support depends on its specificity, depth, accuracy or credibility within the writer's framework, and sufficiency. Depth can be detected by outlining or diagramming the details. The more subtopics or branches, the greater the depth. There is no required number of supporting points; depth of detail is required for more developed papers. The most developed Support is even or balanced across all points. Word choice enhances specificity.

HS – SUPPORT p/e	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All major points fully developed and supported evenly by specific detail throughout the paper Extensive, in-depth development of Support using multiple strategies (e.g., explanation, evidence, and example) Word choice enhances specificity
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All major points developed evenly by specific detail (to the same degree of specificity) Most Support developed through multiple strategies (e.g., explanation, evidence and example) Word choice enhances specificity
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most major points developed by specific detail All key points supported, some key points may be more developed than others (not even or balanced) Word choice may enhance specificity
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some main points are developed by specific detail (e.g., second-order ideas beyond major point), some may be general Some elaboration of key points but lacks depth Lacks sufficiency to demonstrate developed Support
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Support is general or consists of repetition/redundancy Simple list of specifics that may have some extensions May be insufficient writing to determine that the Support can be maintained
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support may lack clarity Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met

ORGANIZATION

This feature examines whether the composition exhibits a clear structure or plan of development (beginning, middle, and end) and whether the points are logically related to each other. Organization has a vertical dimension (coherence) indicated by the use of paragraphing and transitions to signal the plan or text structure. Organization also has a horizontal dimension (cohesion) evidenced by the connection of one sentence to the next. The writer may employ varied methods to achieve coherence and cohesion (repetition, pronouns, synonyms, parallel structure, connectives, and transitions). Sentence variety and word choice also contribute to cohesiveness.

HS – ORGANIZATION p/e	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is clear, appropriate, and effective • All paragraphs are appropriate and purposeful* • Coherence and cohesion are demonstrated throughout with effective and varied devices • All points logically presented and interrelated • Varied sentence structure and word choice produce cohesion
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is clear and appropriate to purpose • All points are appropriately paragraphed* • Coherence and cohesion are demonstrated by effective and varied transitions and/or other devices • All points are logically presented and interrelated • Varied sentence structure and word choice produce cohesion
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is clear • Most major points appropriately paragraphed* • Coherence (paragraph to paragraph) and cohesion (sentence to sentence) demonstrated with appropriate transitions and/or other devices; a variety of transitional devices may be present in more developed essays • Most points logically presented and organized • Some varied sentence structure and word choice produce cohesion
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is evident • May have inappropriate or intrusive transitions that disrupt the progression of ideas (e.g., “Firstly,” “Secondly,” “Lastly” used <u>within</u> paragraphs) • Some major points appropriately paragraphed* • Has coherence but lacks cohesion • May have a minor digression • May lack sufficiency to demonstrate developed Organization
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is noticeable, but the reader must infer it • Limited evidence of appropriate paragraphing* • Little structure within paragraphs (e.g., little purposeful ordering of sentences) • Lacks appropriate persuasive or expository structure • May have a major digression • May be insufficient writing to determine that Organization can be sustained
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure is attempted; the reader must work hard to infer it • Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met

* A well-developed one-paragraph paper may receive a 4, 5, or 6.

CONVENTIONS

Evaluation of the paper's use of Conventions should take into account the following: how seriously the errors interfere with communication; whether the errors are major or minor; and the number of errors in relation to how much is written (e.g., three major errors in three sentences is significantly different from three errors in three paragraphs). For the purposes of the PSAE, Convention scores will be assigned on the basis of 2 for a developed score and 1 for a developing score. The evaluation of Conventions also takes into account the paper's proximity to a final draft in the writing process. For example, if a student had three weeks to do an assignment with multiple drafts, more stringent criteria may be used in assigning a Conventions score than for an on-demand writing or timed assessment. The PSAE writing sample is scored as a first draft; hence, the plus (2) or minus (1) designation.

HS – CONVENTIONS p/e	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mastery of sentence construction• Very few run-ons or fragments in proportion to amount written• Mastery of verb tense and subject/verb agreement• Correct use of pronouns• Mastery of punctuation/capitalization• Few minor and very few major errors in proportion to amount written

Major Errors:

Sentence Construction

Incorrect subject/verb agreement
Run-on(s)
Fragment(s)
Omitted words that interfere
Incorrect usage
Incorrect use of common words
Incorrect pronoun reference
Confusing tense shifts

Punctuation/Capitalization

Omission of initial caps
Common proper nouns
Lack of or incorrect ending punctuation
Missing or misplaced apostrophes

Paragraph Format

Using titles to delineate paragraphs
Numbering paragraphs
Mixed or inconsistent paragraph formats

Spelling

Misspelled common words (same word misspelled is considered only once)

Minor Errors:

Sentence Construction

Incorrect use of connectors between clauses
Omitted words that do not interfere

Punctuation/Capitalization

Missing periods for abbreviations

Usage

Commas in a series, for opening or clauses
Awkward or odd use of words/phrases,
but meaning is still clear
Homonyms - its/it's, there/their, to/two/too

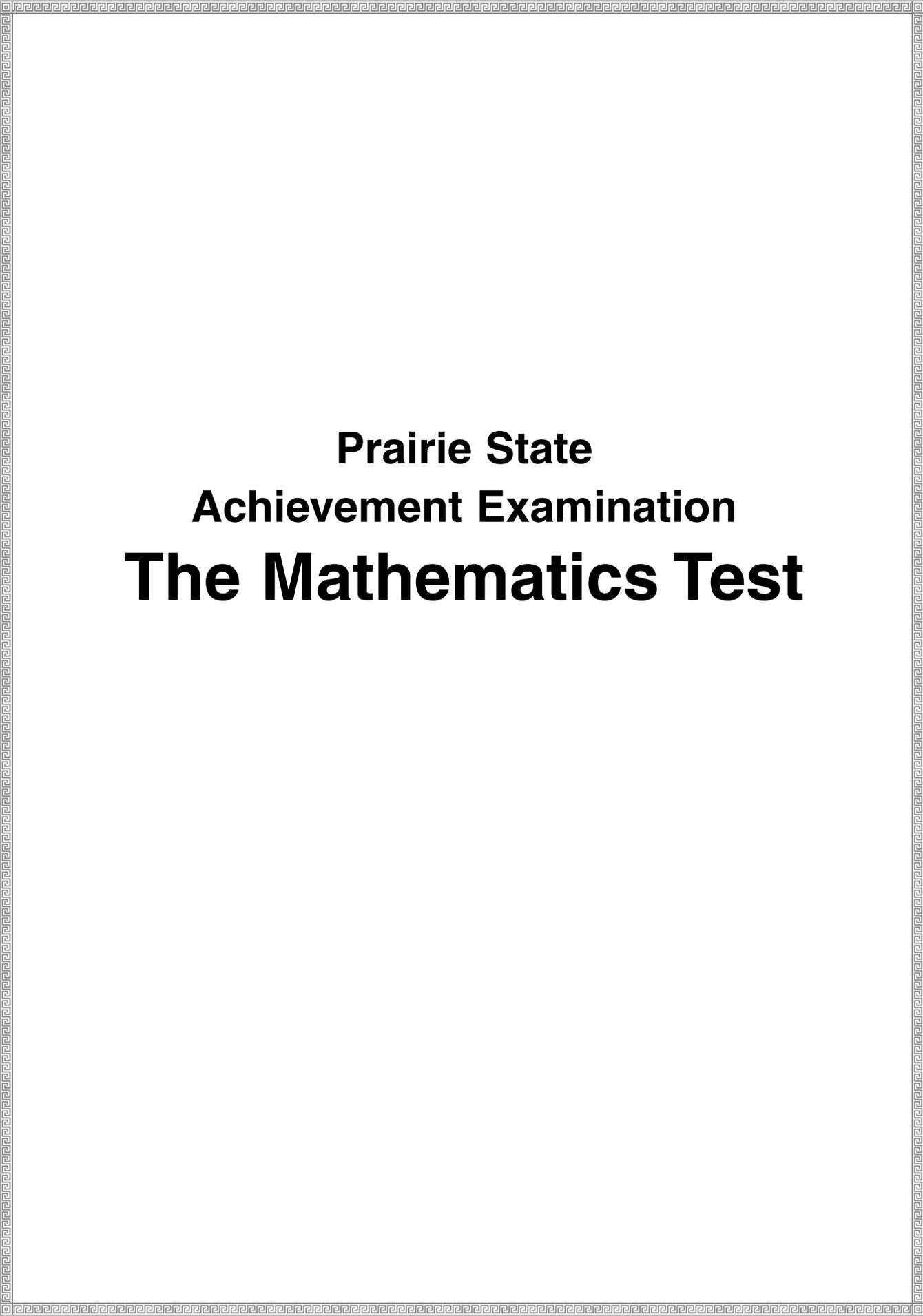
Spelling

Inventive spellings for unusual or less frequently used words

INTEGRATION

The purpose of this rating is to provide a general evaluation of how clearly the paper achieves the assigned task for a specific grade level. The holistic rating assumes that the effectiveness of the paper depends upon the skill with which the student in a particular grade orchestrates the fundamental features to complete the assignment. The judgment is limited to the combination of the four basic features and does not include other factors such as humor, originality, or style. It reflects the view that the paper is a total work; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The Integration score is not an arithmetic average, although it often resembles that. For example, it is possible for a paper to receive an undeveloped score in one or more of the other features and still receive a developed score in Integration if the remaining features are strong.

HS- INTEGRATION p/e	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully developed for grade level • Clear and purposeful Focus; in-depth balanced Support; lines of reasoning identified and developed coherently and cohesively throughout
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed for grade level • All features are developed but not equally well developed throughout
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bare-bones-developed paper for grade level • Simple and clear, presents nothing more than the essentials • Limited depth
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially developed • Some (or one) of the feature(s) may not be sufficiently formed, but all are present • Inference is usually required
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to address the assignment, but only rudiments of techniques for forming Focus, Support, and Organization can be detected • Some confusion and/or disjointedness • Lacks appropriate persuasive or expository structure • May be insufficient writing to determine that features can be maintained
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not fulfill the assignment; barely deals with the topic; or does not present most or all of the features • Insufficient writing to show that criteria are met

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
The Mathematics Test**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Mathematics Introduction

What will be on the test?

The mathematics section of the Prairie State Achievement Examination has two components: ACT Assessment Mathematics, taken on Day 1, and WorkKeys *Applied Mathematics*, taken on Day 2.

The items on both components are closely aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) for mathematics. The two components assess problem-solving skills and critical thinking in mathematics.

ACT Assessment Mathematics (60 minutes, 60 multiple-choice items)

Questions require the use of reasoning skills to solve practical problems in mathematics in six areas: pre-algebra (23%), elementary algebra (17%), intermediate algebra (15%), coordinate geometry (15%), plane geometry (23%), and trigonometry (7%).

Though all problems can be solved without using a calculator, certain types of calculators may be used during the test. However, other types of calculators are prohibited, and ACT regularly updates information about which ones are not allowed. For the latest information, visit www.act.org or call 1-800-498-6481 for a recorded message.

Computational skills and knowledge of basic formulas are assumed, but extensive computation and knowledge of complex formulas are not required. More detailed information about the questions can be found in the *Standards for Transition: ACT Assessment Mathematics Guide*.

WorkKeys Applied Mathematics (45 minutes, 33 multiple-choice items)

This component measures a student's skill in using mathematical reasoning to solve work-related problems. Students set up and solve problems like those that actually occur in a workplace. Students may use a calculator; a formula sheet is provided. The questions in this component come in five levels of increasing difficulty.

More information about the questions can be found in the *WorkKeys Applied Mathematics Target for Instruction*.

ILS/Answer Keys

A sample ACT Mathematics Test and sample WorkKeys *Applied Mathematics* questions can be found in the two booklets provided for students this year: *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* and the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2* (Appendices D and E). Answer keys that give the correct answer for each item in the student PSAE mathematics sample materials and identify the Illinois Learning Standard(s) assessed by the item are on pages 43 and 44.

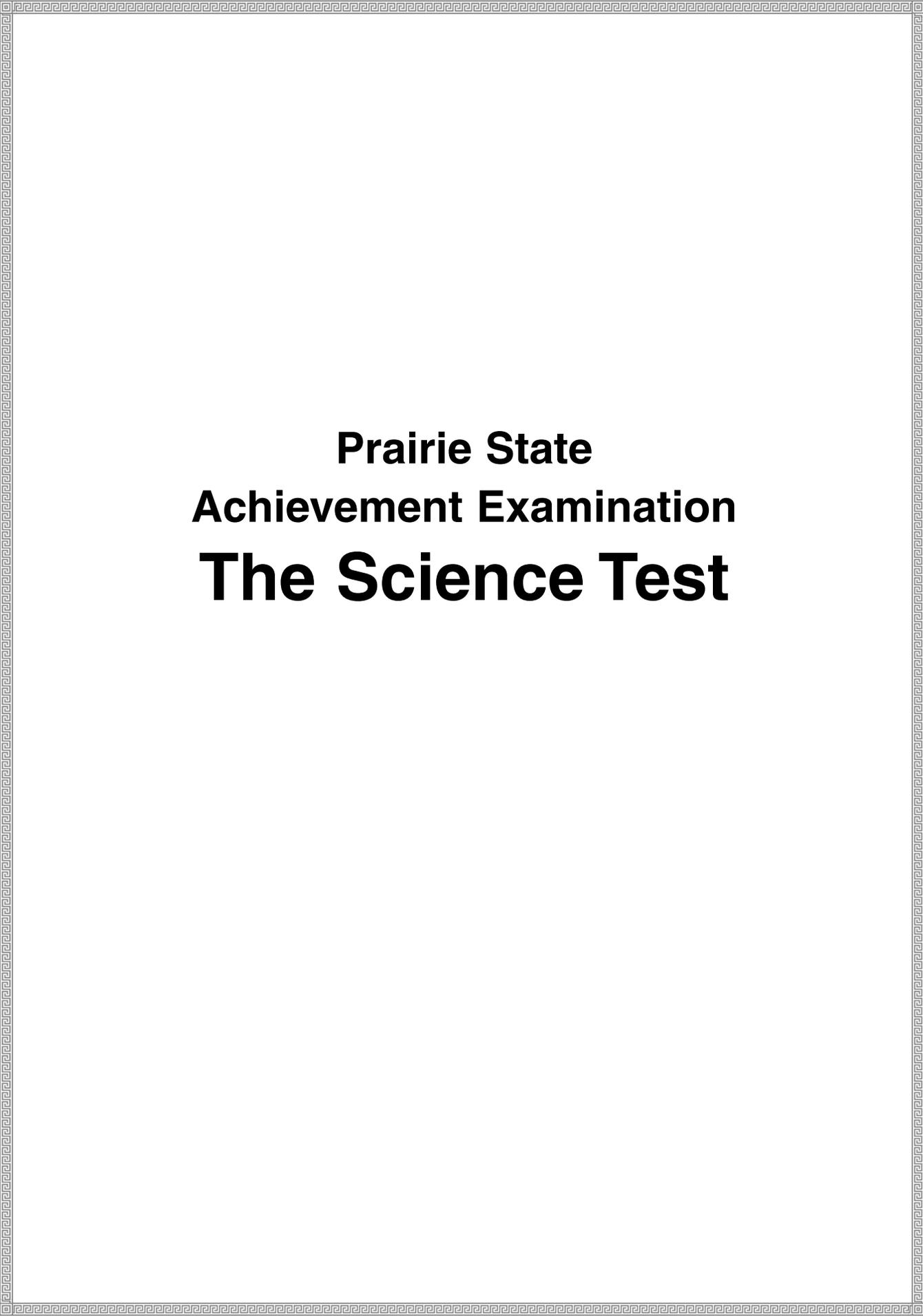
Key to ACT Assessment Mathematics Sample Test

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	6B, 6C, 8A	B
2	6B, 6C, 6D	J
3	6B, 6C, 6D	B
4	8C, 8D	G
5	6B, 6C	C
6	9A	F
7	6A	B
8	8A	H
9	8B	C
10	6B, 8A	F
11	6B, 8A	B
12	9A	G
13	9A	E
14	10C	H
15	8A	D
16	8B, 9A	G
17	9A	D
18	8A	G
19	8C, 8D	D
20	9A	F
21	6A	C
22	8C, 8D	G
23	7A, 9A	C
24	6D, 9B	K
25	9A	A
26	9A	K
27	8A	A
28	8C, 8D	G
29	8A, 8B	C
30	10A	J
31	7A, 7C	D
32	6D, 9B	G
33	6D, 7C, 9A	D
34	9D	K
35	8B, 9A	A
36	9A	F
37	9A	D
38	8B, 9A	G
39	6A	A

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
40	7C, 8D	F
41	6A, 8C, 8D	C
42	6B, 6C, 10A	H
43	6B, 6C, 10A	D
44	6B, 6C, 6D, 10A	G
45	8D, 9A, 9D	B
46	8C, 8D	J
47	8C, 8D	E
48	8C, 8D	K
49	6B	A
50	9D	F
51	6D	D
52	9D	H
53	8B, 8C	D
54	7C, 8A, 8C, 8D	K
55	8B, 9A	C
56	8B, 8C	K
57	8B, 8C, 9A	E
58	9A	K
59	8C, 8D	E
60	7C	K

Key to WorkKeys *Applied Mathematics* Sample Items

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
	Level 3	
1	6A, 6B, 6C	D
2	6A, 6B, 6C	B
3	6A, 6B, 6C	B
	Level 4	
1	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	C
2	6A, 6B, 6C, 7A	A
3	6A, 6B, 6C, 10A	C
	Level 5	
1	6A, 7A	B
2	6A, 6B, 6C	A
3	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	C
	Level 6	
1	6A, 6B, 6C, 7A	E
2	6A, 6B, 6C, 7A	E
3	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	C
	Level 7	
1	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	C
2	6A, 6B, 6C, 6D	D
3	6A, 6B, 6C, 7A	D

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
The Science Test**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Science Introduction

What will be on the test?

The science section of the Prairie State Achievement Examination has two components: ACT Assessment Science, taken on Day 1, and an ISBE-developed science test, taken on Day 2. These components assess the Illinois Learning Standards for science which comprise science inquiry; the life, physical, and Earth and space sciences; and science, technology, and society.

Both components measure critical thinking skills, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving, required in the natural sciences.

The use of calculators is not permitted on either of the science tests administered as part of the PSAE.

ACT Assessment Science **(35 minutes, 40 multiple-choice items)**

The ACT Assessment Science Test presents seven sets of scientific information in the form of reading passages and data summaries, each followed by a series of multiple-choice questions. The content includes biology, chemistry, physics, and Earth and space sciences. More information about the passages and questions can be found in the *Standards for Transition: ACT Assessment Science Guide*.

ISBE-Developed Science **(40 minutes, 45 multiple-choice items)**

The ISBE-developed science test presents scientific information in the form of data summaries and short prompts with each usually followed by one multiple-choice question. Test questions are distributed across the Illinois Learning Standards.

ILS/Answer Keys

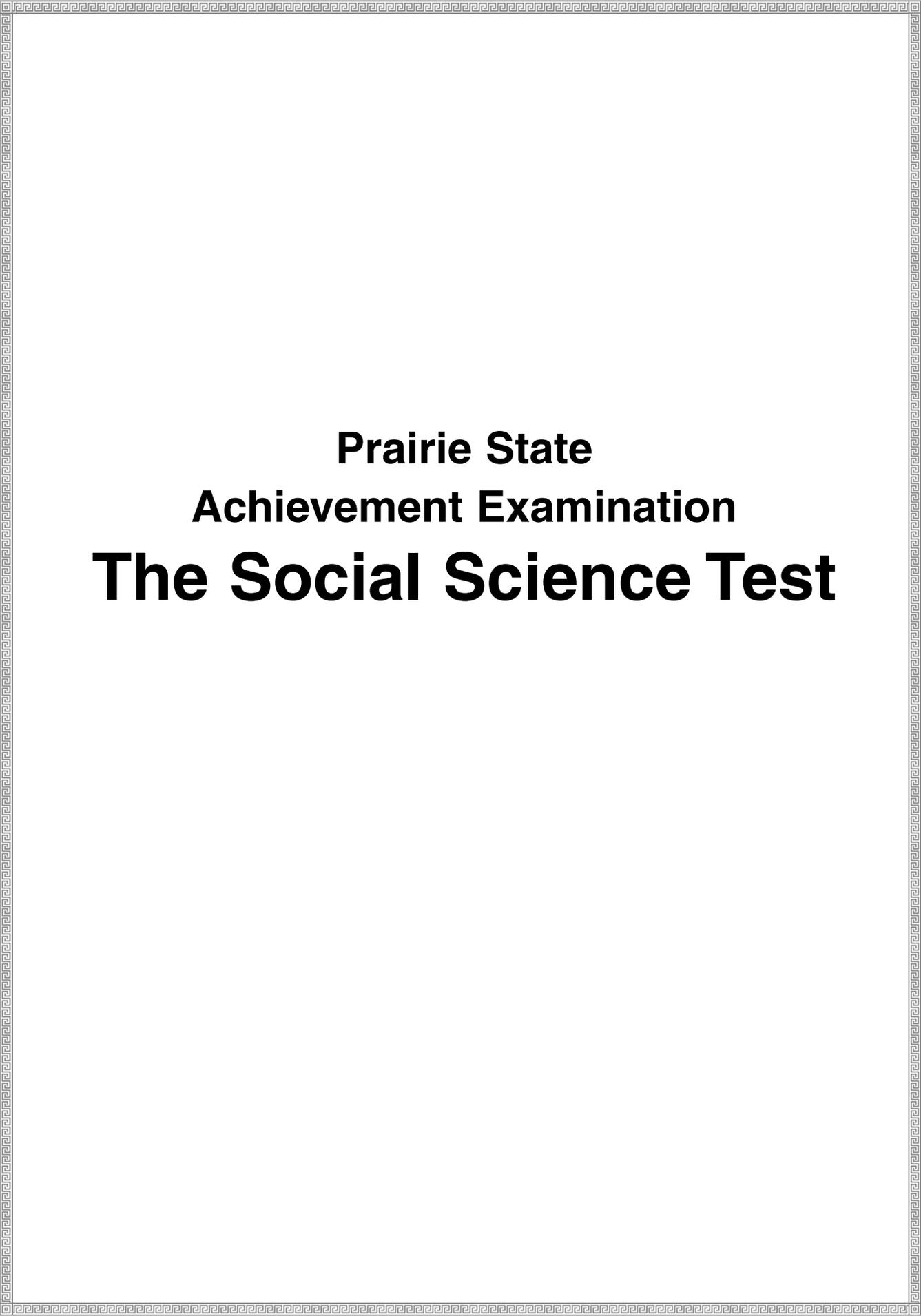
A sample ACT Science Test and sample ISBE-developed science questions can be found in the two booklets provided for students this year: *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* and the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2* (Appendices D and E). Answer keys that give the correct answer for each item in the student PSAE science sample materials and identify the Illinois Learning Standard(s) assessed by the item are on pages 49 and 50.

Key to ACT Assessment Science Sample Test

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	11A, 12E	C
2	11A, 12E	J
3	11A, 12E	C
4	11A, 12E	J
5	11A, 12E	A
6	11A, 12F	J
7	11A, 12F	B
8	11A, 12F	G
9	11A, 12F	D
10	11A, 12F	H
11	11A, 12F	A
12	11A, 12F, 13A	G
13	11A, 12A	A
14	11A, 12A	G
15	11A, 12A	C
16	11A, 12A	G
17	11A, 12A, 13A	C
18	11A, 12A	J
19	11A, 12D	A
20	11A, 12D	G
21	11A	A
22	11A	G
23	11A, 12D	A
24	11A, 12D	F
25	11A, 12C	B
26	11A, 12C	F
27	11A, 12C	D
28	11A, 12C	H
29	11A, 12C	A
30	11A, 12C	H
31	11A, 12C	A
32	11A, 12C	G
33	11A, 12C	D
34	11A, 12C	F
35	11A, 12C	D
36	11A, 12A, 12C	F
37	11A, 12A, 12C	B
38	11A, 12A, 12C	J
39	11A, 12A, 12C	A
40	11A, 12A, 12C	G

Key to ISBE-Developed Science Sample Items

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	11B	A
2	12A	A
3	12B	D
4	11A, 12A	C
5	11A, 12A	C
6	12A	D
7	12A	A
8	12B	C
9	12C	B
10	12C	B
11	12C	A
12	11A, 12C	C
13	11A, 12D	C
14	12D	B
15	11A, 12D	B
16	11A, 12C	B
17	12C	B
18	11A, 12E	D
19	11A, 12E	A
20	12E	B
21	11A, 12F	A
22	12F	A
23	12A, 12E	A
24	13A	B
25	13A	A
26	13B	A
27	13A	D
28	13B	A
29	13B	D
30	12E, 13B	B
31	11B	D
32	12C	B
33	12E	B
34	12B	A
35	12D	B

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
The Social Science Test**

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Social Science Introduction

What will be on the test?

The social science section of the Prairie State Achievement Examination has one component: an ISBE-developed multiple-choice test taken on Day 2.

All questions included in the PSAE social science test are based on the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) for social science. The questions are distributed relatively equally across the social science standards. Many questions address more than one standard.

Questions are grouped into three major categories: social science disciplines, geography, and history.

ISBE-Developed Social Science (60 minutes, 65 multiple-choice items)

Social Science Disciplines. The social science disciplines comprise political systems, economic systems, and social systems. The content covered by the political systems standards includes the basic principles and traditions of the U.S. government, the structure and functions of government, the election process, and foreign policy.

The economics standards require a student to have knowledge and understanding of economic systems and the nature of the U.S. economy, including choices people make in the production and distribution of goods and services and the relationship of governments to trade and economic practices.

The social systems standards require students to compare characteristics of cultures; language, literature, arts, use of technology, and the nature of institutions. The items also assess students understanding of the roles of individuals and groups in society and the development of social systems over time.

Geography. The geography standards require students to be able to locate places, regions, and features; to know characteristics of the earth's physical system and the relationship between geographic factors and society; and to understand the historical significance of geography.

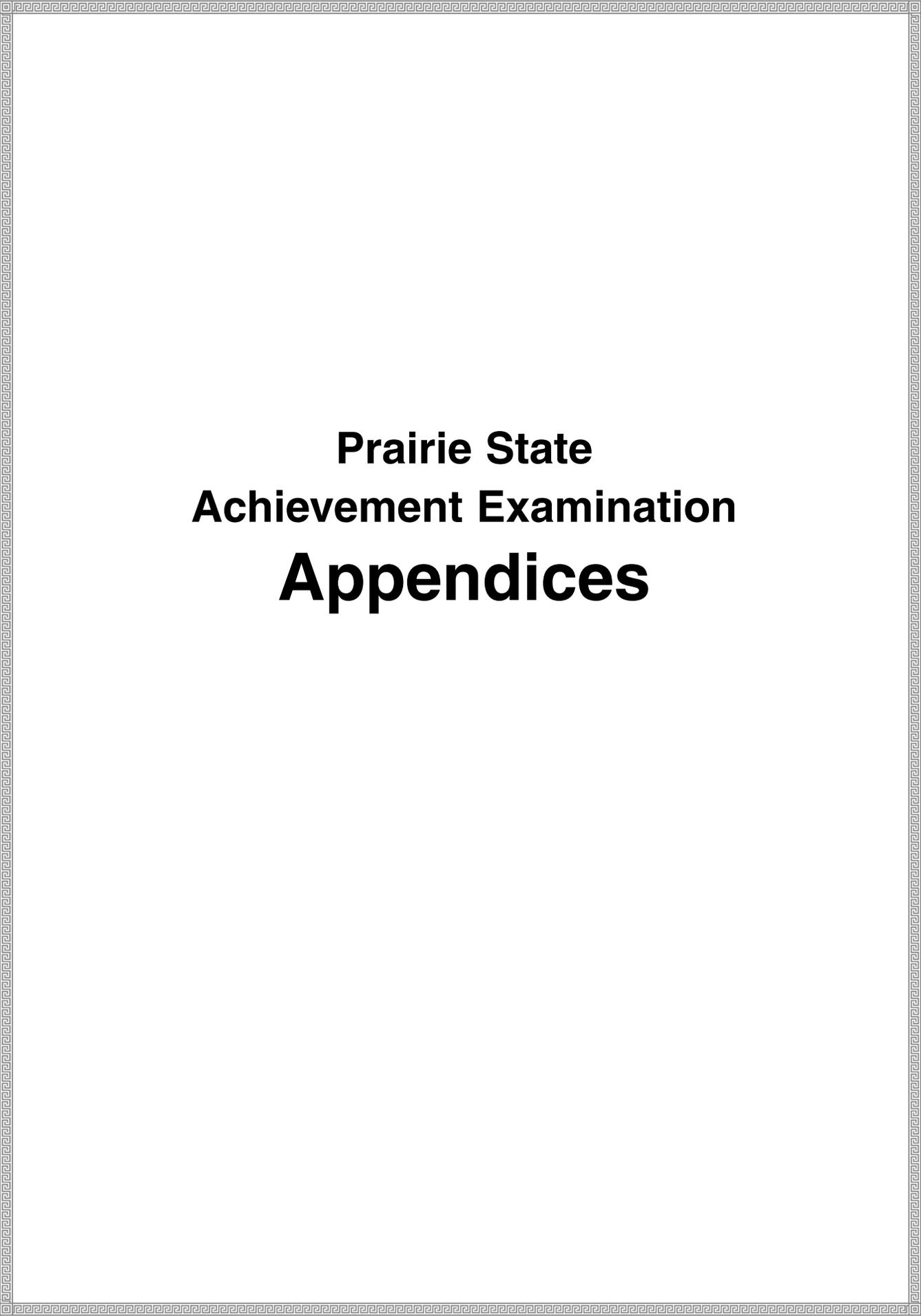
History. The U.S. and world history standards require students to use historical skills and analysis, understand historical events, and have knowledge of the development of political systems, economic systems, and social systems.

ILS/Answer Key

Sample ISBE-developed social science questions can be found in the booklet provided for students this year: the *Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2* (Appendix E). An answer key that gives the correct answer for each item in the student PSAE social science sample materials and identifies the Illinois Learning Standard(s) assessed by the item is on page 55.

Key to ISBE-Developed Social Science Sample Items

Item Number	Standard(s)	Correct Answer
1	14B	C
2	14B	B
3	14B	C
4	14A	C
5	14A	B
6	14F	C
7	15A, 15E	A
8	15D, 15E	C
9	15A	B
10	15E, 16A, 16B	C
11	15E, 16A, 16B	D
12	15C	C
13	14B, 16B	A
14	14B, 16A, 16B	A
15	14D, 14F, 16B	D
16	16B, 16E	B
17	16A, 16B	C
18	16A, 16B	B
19	15C, 16C	B
20	16D	D
21	16C, 16D	A
22	16B, 16C	A
23	18A, 18B	C
24	18A	D
25	17A, 18A, 18B	C
26	17A, 18A	C
27	17C	B
28	17C	B
29	18C	C
30	14E	C
31	14C	B
32	16D, 15B	C
33	17A	B
34	16C, 15E	D
35	16C, 15E	A

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**Prairie State
Achievement Examination
Appendices**

Appendix A

105 ILCS 5/2-3.64 State goals and assessment

Illinois School Code

§ 105 ILCS 5/2-3.64 State goals and assessment

Sec. 2-3.64. *State goals and assessment.*

(a) Beginning in the 1998-1999 school year, the State Board of Education shall establish standards and periodically, in collaboration with local school districts, conduct studies of student performance in the learning areas of fine arts and physical development/health.

Beginning with the 1998-1999 school year until the 2005-2006 school year at the latest, the State Board of Education shall annually test: (i) all pupils enrolled in the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades in English language arts (reading, writing, and English grammar) and mathematics; and (ii) all pupils enrolled in the 4th and 7th grades in the biological and physical sciences and the social sciences (history, geography, civics, economics, and government). The maximum time allowed for all actual testing required under this paragraph shall not exceed 25 hours, as allocated among the required tests by the State Board of Education, across all grades tested.

Beginning no later than the 2005-2006 school year, the State Board of Education shall annually test: (i) all pupils enrolled in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in reading and mathematics; (ii) all pupils enrolled in 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 8th grades in writing; (iii) all pupils enrolled in the 4th and 7th grades in the biological and physical sciences; and (iv) all pupils enrolled in 5th and 8th grades in the social sciences (history, geography, economics, civics, and government). The State Board of Education shall sample student performance in the learning area of physical development and health in grades 4 and 7 through the science tests and in the learning area of fine arts in grades 5 and 8 through the social sciences

tests. After the addition of subjects and grades as delineated in this paragraph and including whatever other tests that may be approved from time to time no later than the 2005-2006 school year, the maximum time allowed for all State testing in grades 3 through 8 shall not exceed 38 hours across those grades.

The State Board of Education shall establish the academic standards that are to be applicable to pupils who are subject to State tests under this Section beginning with the 1998-1999 school year. However, the State Board of Education shall not establish any such standards in final form without first providing opportunities for public participation and local input in the development of the final academic standards. Those opportunities shall include a well-publicized period of public comment, public hearings throughout the State, and opportunities to file written comments. Beginning with the 1998-99 school year and thereafter, the State tests will identify pupils in the 3rd grade or 5th grade who do not meet the State standards.

If, by performance on the State tests or local assessments or by teacher judgment, a student's performance is determined to be 2 or more grades below current placement, the student shall be provided a remediation program developed by the district in consultation with a parent or guardian. Such remediation programs may include, but shall not be limited to, increased or concentrated instructional time, a remedial summer school program of not less than 90 hours, improved instructional approaches, tutorial sessions, retention in grade, and modifications to instructional materials. Each pupil for whom a remediation program is developed under this subsection shall be required to enroll in and

attend whatever program the district determines is appropriate for the pupil. Districts may combine students in remediation programs where appropriate and may cooperate with other districts in the design and delivery of those programs. The parent or guardian of a student required to attend a remediation program under this Section shall be given written notice of that requirement by the school district a reasonable time prior to commencement of the remediation program that the student is to attend. The State shall be responsible for providing school districts with the new and additional funding, under Section 2-3.51.5 or by other or additional means, that is required to enable the districts to operate remediation programs for the pupils who are required to enroll in and attend those programs under this Section. Every individualized educational program as described in Article 14 shall identify if the State test or components thereof are appropriate for that student. The State Board of Education shall develop rules and regulations governing the administration of alternative tests prescribed within each student's individualized educational program which are appropriate to the disability of each student.

All pupils who are in a State approved transitional bilingual education program or transitional program of instruction shall participate in the State tests. Any student who has been enrolled in a State approved bilingual education program less than 3 cumulative academic years may take an accommodated State test, to be known as the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE), if the student's lack of English as determined by an English language proficiency test would keep the student from understanding the regular State test. If the school district determines, on a case-by-case individual basis, that IMAGE would likely yield more accurate and reliable information on what the student knows and can do, the school district may make a determination to assess the student using IMAGE for a period

that does not exceed 2 additional consecutive years, provided that the student has not yet reached a level of English language proficiency sufficient to yield valid and reliable information on what the student knows and can do on the regular State test.

Reasonable accommodations as prescribed by the State Board of Education shall be provided for individual students in the testing procedure. All test procedures prescribed by the State Board of Education shall require: (i) that each test used for State and local student testing under this Section identify by name the pupil taking the test; (ii) that the name of the pupil taking the test be placed on the test at the time the test is taken; (iii) that the results or scores of each test taken under this Section by a pupil of the school district be reported to that district and identify by name the pupil who received the reported results or scores; and (iv) that the results or scores of each test taken under this Section be made available to the parents of the pupil. In addition, in each school year the highest scores attained by a student on the Prairie State Achievement Examination administered under subsection (c) of this Section and any Prairie State Achievement Awards received by the student shall become part of the student's permanent record and shall be entered on the student's transcript pursuant to regulations that the State Board of Education shall promulgate for that purpose in accordance with Section 3 and subsection (e) of Section 2 of the Illinois School Student Records Act. Beginning with the 1998-1999 school year and in every school year thereafter, scores received by students on the State assessment tests administered in grades 3 through 8 shall be placed into students' temporary records.

The State Board of Education shall establish a period of time, to be referred to as the State test window, in each school year for which State testing shall occur to meet the objectives of this Section. However, if the schools of a district are closed and classes are not scheduled during any week that is

established by the State Board of Education as the State test window, the school district may (at the discretion of the State Board of Education) move its State test window one week earlier or one week later than the established State test window, so long as the school district gives the State Board of Education written notice of its intention to deviate from the established schedule by December 1 of the school year in which falls the State test window established by the State Board of Education for the testing.

(a-5) All tests administered pursuant to this Section shall be academically based. For the purposes of this Section “academically based tests” shall mean tests consisting of questions and answers that are measurable and quantifiable to measure the knowledge, skill, and ability of students in the subject matters covered by tests. The scoring of academically based tests shall be reliable, valid, unbiased and shall meet the guidelines for test development and use prescribed by the American Psychological Association, the National Council of Measurement and Evaluation, and the American Educational Research Association. Academically based tests shall not include assessments or evaluations of attitudes, values, or beliefs, or testing of personality, self-esteem, or self-concept. Nothing in this amendatory Act is intended, nor shall it be construed, to nullify, supersede, or contradict the legislative intent on academic testing expressed during the passage of HB 1005/P.A. 90-296. Nothing in this Section is intended, nor shall it be construed, to nullify, supersede, or contradict the legislative intent on academic testing expressed in the preamble of this amendatory Act of the 93rd General Assembly.

The State Board of Education shall monitor the use of short answer questions in the math and reading assessments or in other assessments in order to demonstrate that the use of short answer questions results in a statistically significant improvement in student achievement as measured on the State assessments for math and reading or on other

State assessments and is justifiable in terms of cost and student performance.

(b) It shall be the policy of the State to encourage school districts to continuously test pupil proficiency in the fundamental learning areas in order to: (i) provide timely information on individual students’ performance relative to State standards that is adequate to guide instructional strategies; (ii) improve future instruction; and (iii) complement the information provided by the State testing system described in this Section. Each district’s school improvement plan must address specific activities the district intends to implement to assist pupils who by teacher judgment and test results as prescribed in subsection (a) of this Section demonstrate that they are not meeting State standards or local objectives. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, summer school, extended school day, special homework, tutorial sessions, modified instructional materials, other modifications in the instructional program, reduced class size or retention in grade. To assist school districts in testing pupil proficiency in reading in the primary grades, the State Board shall make optional reading inventories for diagnostic purposes available to each school district that requests such assistance. Districts that administer the reading inventories may develop remediation programs for students who perform in the bottom half of the student population. Those remediation programs may be funded by moneys provided under the School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant Program established under Section 2-3.51.5. Nothing in this Section shall prevent school districts from implementing testing and remediation policies for grades not required under this Section.

(c) Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, each school district that operates a high school program for students in grades 9 through 12 shall annually administer the Prairie State Achievement Examination established under this subsection to its students as set forth below. The Prairie State

Achievement Examination shall be developed by the State Board of Education to measure student performance in the academic areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social sciences. The State Board of Education shall establish the academic standards that are to apply in measuring student performance on the Prairie State Achievement Examination including the minimum examination score in each area that will qualify a student to receive a Prairie State Achievement Award from the State in recognition of the student's excellent performance. Each school district that is subject to the requirements of this subsection (c) shall afford all students 2 opportunities to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination beginning as late as practical during the second semester of grade 11, but in no event before March 1. The State Board of Education shall annually notify districts of the weeks during which these test administrations shall be required to occur. Every individualized educational program as described in Article 14 shall identify if the Prairie State Achievement Examination or components thereof are appropriate for that student. Each student, exclusive of a student whose individualized educational program developed under Article 14 identifies the Prairie State Achievement Examination as inappropriate for the student, shall be required to take the examination in grade 11. For each academic area the State Board of Education shall establish the score that qualifies for the Prairie State Achievement Award on that portion of the examination. Any student who fails to earn a qualifying score for a Prairie State Achievement Award in any one or more of the academic areas on the initial test administration or who wishes to improve his or her score on any portion of the examination shall be permitted to retake such portion or portions of the examination during grade 12. Districts shall inform their students of the timelines and procedures applicable to their participation in every yearly administration of the Prairie State Achievement Examination. Students receiving special education services

whose individualized educational programs identify the Prairie State Achievement Examination as inappropriate for them nevertheless shall have the option of taking the examination, which shall be administered to those students in accordance with standards adopted by the State Board of Education to accommodate the respective disabilities of those students. A student who successfully completes all other applicable high school graduation requirements but fails to receive a score on the Prairie State Achievement Examination that qualifies the student for receipt of a Prairie State Achievement Award shall nevertheless qualify for the receipt of a regular high school diploma.

(d) Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, all schools in this State that are part of the sample drawn by the National Center for Education Statistics, in collaboration with their school districts and the State Board of Education, shall administer the biennial State academic assessments of 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics under the National Assessment of Educational Progress carried out under Section m11(b)(2) of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C. 9010) if the Secretary of Education pays the costs of administering the assessments.

(e) Beginning no later than the 2005-2006 school year, subject to available federal funds to this State for the purpose of student assessment, the State Board of Education shall provide additional tests and assessment resources that may be used by school districts for local diagnostic purposes. These tests and resources shall include without limitation additional high school writing, physical development and health, and fine arts assessments. The State Board of Education shall annually distribute a listing of these additional tests and resources, using funds available from appropriations made for student assessment purposes.

(f) For the assessment and accountability purposes of this Section, "all pupils" includes those pupils enrolled in a

public or State-operated elementary school, secondary school, or cooperative or joint agreement with a governing body or board of control, a charter school operating in compliance with the Charter Schools Law, a school operated by a regional office of education under Section 13A-3 of this Code, or a public school administered by a local public agency or the Department of Human Services.

(Source: P.A. 91-283, eff. 7-29-99; 92-604, eff. 7-1-02; 93-426, eff. 8-5-03.)

Appendix B

Prairie State
Achievement Examination
Performance-Level Definitions

Prairie State Achievement Examination

Performance-Level Definitions

Introduction

The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), which was administered to Illinois grade 11 public school students for the first time in April 2001, assesses the high school benchmarks defined by the Illinois Learning Standards. Student performance on the PSAE is evaluated relative to four levels: Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards, Below Standards, and Academic Warning.

The work of students at each performance level is summarized in the following profiles:

- Exceeds Standards – Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.
- Meets Standards – Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- Below Standards – Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in the subject. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.
- Academic Warning – Student work demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in the subject. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.

The definitions in this document describe each of the four performance categories for the five subjects that are assessed by the PSAE. Examples are provided only as guidance and are not meant to be exhaustive.

Reading

The PSAE reading test consists of two components: ACT Assessment reading and WorkKeys *Reading for Information*. The components assess the Illinois Learning Standards for reading contained in State Goals 1 and 2: ability to read literary and informational texts with understanding and fluency.

Exceeds Standards

Readers at the Exceeds Standards level demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in reading. They creatively apply knowledge and skills in comprehending a variety of complex literary and informational texts.

Readers who exceed the Standards identify and understand abstract themes and ideas in the text and support their ideas with relevant information from the text and their coursework in other subjects. They make connections among ideas. These readers analyze both the meaning and structure of the text to understand and apply important information. They infer implicit main ideas and draw logical conclusions based both on evidence in the text and their own knowledge.

These readers understand the broad meanings that underlie a text and recognize multiple perspectives and interpretations. They use clues in the text to understand complex character traits and motives. They use context clues to determine the appropriate meaning of words that have multiple meanings and of words in figurative contexts.

Readers who exceed the Standards interpret and evaluate the use of a range of literary devices, including word choice, language structure, figurative language, and point of view.

Meets Standards

Readers at the Meets Standards level demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills in reading. They effectively apply knowledge and skills in comprehending a variety of challenging literary and informational texts.

Readers who meet the Standards demonstrate a general understanding of the important ideas in the text and support their ideas with relevant information from the text and sometimes from their own knowledge and experience. These readers use knowledge of text structure to recall and understand important information. They make connections between explicit main ideas and some implicit main ideas. They draw conclusions using evidence in the text and their own knowledge.

These readers understand theme and author's purpose. They use clues in the text to understand character traits and motives. They apply word analysis skills to recognize words and use strategies to determine the meaning of words in the text.

Readers who meet the Standards understand the use of a range of literary devices, including word choice, language structure, figurative language, and point of view.

Below Standards

Readers at the Below Standards level demonstrate basic knowledge and skills in reading. Although they have gaps in their learning, readers at this level apply their knowledge and skills in comprehending literary and informational texts having a clear purpose, simple language, and familiar style and structure.

Readers who are below the Standards demonstrate a basic understanding of the important ideas in the text and support their ideas with general information from the text and from their own experience. These readers identify and relate aspects of text structure to its overall meaning, recognize interpretations, and relate ideas in the text to their own experiences. They sometimes rely more on their own knowledge and ideas than on the text. They identify some explicit main ideas and important details and make simple generalizations about the main points.

Reading

Readers at the Below Standards level understand basic character traits and motives in uncomplicated literary passages. They order simple sequences of events and explain the relationships among the events. They apply word analysis skills and use context clues to determine the meaning of words in the text.

Readers who are below the Standards recognize basic literary elements and devices, including setting, point of view, conflict, foreshadowing, and flashback.

Academic Warning

Readers at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge and skills in reading. Although readers at this level have major gaps in learning and apply knowledge and skills ineffectively, they demonstrate a general understanding of short, uncomplicated literary and informational texts that use basic vocabulary.

Readers at the Academic Warning level identify uncomplicated key concepts and simple details. They locate basic details at the sentence and paragraph level. They recognize basic text structures, such as memos, letters, poems, narratives, and instructions. They identify some explicit main ideas and locate some important details in the text.

These readers identify explicit character traits. They recognize the proper placement of items in a sequence of events and recognize simple cause-and-effect relationships. They detect the meaning of words defined within the text and infer the meaning of simple words not defined within the text.

Readers at the Academic Warning level recognize a few basic literary elements, such as setting, conflict, and plot.

Writing

The PSAE writing test consists of two components: ACT Assessment English and production of a single writing sample in response to an assigned prompt. These components assess the Illinois Learning Standards for writing contained in State Goal 3: usage, structure, grammar, and punctuation and the ability to compose coherent writing for specific audiences and for a variety of purposes.

The ACT Assessment English component uses a multiple-choice format in which students are expected to use standard English to edit documents for clarity, style, subject-verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement, verb tense, and word choice and to proofread for correct usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

The writing assignment requires students to write one essay that is either a persuasive essay in which they take a position on a given issue or an expository essay in which they explain an assigned topic. All students write to the same prompt. The resultant writing sample is evaluated on how effectively the writer integrates focus, support, and organization to produce an effective paper. Focus is the clarity with which a paper presents and maintains a clear idea or point of view. Support is the degree to which the main point is backed up by specific reasons and details. Organization is the clarity of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan. Organization has a vertical dimension, coherence, indicated by the use of paragraphing and transitions to signal the plan or structure of the text and a horizontal dimension, cohesion, evidenced by the connection of one sentence to the next.

Exceeds Standards

Student work at the Exceeds Standards level demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in writing. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results that contribute to the development of focus, support, and organization in writing and editing.

Focus/Topic Development. Students who exceed the Standards demonstrate advanced knowledge of topic development by analyzing the influence sentences have in effectively developing, supporting, and maintaining the focus of the text or in reaching a more difficult purpose. They determine if the result of adding new sentences will accomplish a specific purpose, such as providing explanations or descriptions, and they determine when it is necessary to delete unrelated material that interferes with the focus of the text. Students apply knowledge of focus and purpose to a variety of texts of varying degrees of complexity. Students evaluate writing to determine if the sentences they use effectively maintain the focus and logic of the writing and successfully carry out its desired purpose and goal. They produce writing that displays sophistication in developing and maintaining focus and logic throughout through use of literary elements such as anecdotes.

Organization/Coherence. Students who exceed the Standards apply a complete understanding of how effective use of transitions influences organization and coherence of the text. For example, they include transitions that successfully maintain the logic of the text and improve sentence fluency. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the writing task and successfully employ strategies, such as repeating words or phrases or supplying transitions, to develop and support their ideas in a sophisticated way that creates strong overall coherence and cohesion. They apply these skills to develop writing that effectively incorporates strategies, such as examples, concrete details, facts, summaries, or quotations, to develop introductions, succeeding paragraphs, and closings that unify the writing.

Support/Word Choice/Sentence Structure. Students who exceed the Standards generate documents that display extensive depth of detail, enhanced word choice, and varied sentence structure.

Writing

They produce writing that demonstrates sophisticated use of analytical and evaluative thinking by successfully including material that is consistent in subject and voice. They produce documents that exhibit a comprehensive understanding of the successful use of sophisticated writing techniques, such as explanations and evidence that are appropriate to purpose and audience, and apply these techniques to develop and maintain clarity of focus, logic, and organization. They successfully use techniques, such as varying sentence structure, for stylistic effect.

Conventions/Usage/Punctuation. Students who exceed the Standards produce and edit a variety of texts in a way that reflects comprehensive knowledge of sentence structure, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. For example, they apply their knowledge of punctuation to maintain the flow of sentences in the text. They apply basic rules of standard English in sophisticated ways to edit documents for clarity, subject-verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement, and verb tense. They creatively apply these elements to create stylistic effect and organizational power in their writing.

Meets Standards

Student work at the Meets Standards level demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in writing. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills that contribute to the development of focus, support, and organization in writing and editing.

Focus/Topic Development. Students who meet the Standards demonstrate firm knowledge of topic development by including sentences that appropriately develop and support focus of the text, such as expressing meaning through connotation. They apply their knowledge of focus by using sentences that support and maintain a general goal in the text. They avoid using sentences or phrases that interfere with the clarity, development, or unity of the writing. These students produce documents that contain an adequate quality and quantity of support of the topic. They apply knowledge of focus to a variety of texts that are both familiar and unfamiliar in structure and that use more challenging vocabulary. They produce texts that maintain clear logic throughout.

Organization/Coherence. Students who meet the Standards proficiently apply knowledge of effective transitioning between sentences and paragraphs to produce cohesion and coherence. For example, they use key words, repeated pronouns, or transitions to sufficiently build coherence and cohesion. They demonstrate an understanding of the writing task and appropriately use a variety of strategies, such as repeating words and phrases to provide appropriate support and develop coherence and cohesion. They produce introductions that set the tone of the writing and develop closings that bring it to a logical conclusion.

Support/Word Choice/Sentence Structure. Students who meet the Standards use specific details, varied sentence structure, or word choice that is consistent with the tone and purpose of the essay. They produce documents that exhibit a proficient understanding of a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic, and organization. They use compound or complex sentences to reorganize the sentences in a variety of texts. They attempt to apply this knowledge to create effect. For example, they use compound or complex sentences for varied sentence structure.

Writing

Conventions/Usage/Punctuation. Students who meet the Standards produce and edit work in a way that reflects well-defined knowledge of sentence structure, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. For example, these students apply consistent verb tense between sentences and maintain pronoun agreement in the text. They demonstrate accurate use of standard English to edit a piece of writing for clarity, subject-verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement, and verb tense. They effectively apply the basic rules of standard English to maintain logic throughout a variety of texts. They demonstrate the ability to present ideas clearly, but they do so with less control than do students at the Exceeds Standards level.

Below Standards

Student work at the Below Standards level demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in writing. However, because of gaps in learning, students use knowledge and apply skills that contribute in limited ways to the development of focus, support, and organization in writing and editing.

Focus/Topic Development. Students who are below the Standards demonstrate a basic understanding of topic development by avoiding the use of sentences that clearly interrupt the focus of an essay. They demonstrate logic in ordering sentences in a simple piece of writing. They produce and edit texts that have a clear purpose, simple language, and familiar style and structure. These students demonstrate knowledge of focus in a limited way, such as by determining or maintaining the basic theme or topic of a simple piece of writing or including repetitious statements rather than separate ideas.

Organization/Coherence. Students who are below the Standards apply a basic understanding of the effect transitions have on coherence. They generate paragraphs using simple organizational patterns that may have inappropriate transitions but are coherent. For example, they maintain a simple beginning, middle, and end to the text. They use basic transitions between paragraphs to create coherence. They may use repetitious transitional words within paragraphs. Their writing often lacks cohesion.

Support/Word Choice/Sentence Structure. Students who are below the Standards identify general support and the context of an essay. For example, they produce writing that contains limited detail and support and is often general in nature. They form ideas in a short and direct manner lacking specific details. They revise simple material to make it more readable, select logical conjunctions, and correct noticeable disturbances of sentence fluency and structure. They produce documents that include basic transitions between paragraphs and add transitional markers within the paragraphs of a straightforward essay. They produce writing that exhibits a basic understanding of the use of varied sentence structure to produce cohesion, such as using prepositions to begin a sentence.

Conventions/Usage/Punctuation. Students who are below the Standards demonstrate a general understanding of the basic rules of standard English, such as using commas to separate clauses in a compound sentence, editing a simple piece of writing for clarity, subject-verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement, and verb tense. They apply basic conventions of language in a simple manner. They produce writing that contains errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure, but these errors are not so substantial that meaning is completely obscured. They convey their ideas, but do not successfully apply grammar, usage, or mechanics to maintain complete logic in the text.

Writing

Academic Warning

Student work at the Academic Warning level demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in writing. Because of major gaps in learning, students use knowledge and apply skills ineffectively in writing and editing.

Focus/Topic Development. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited understanding of topic development. They add sentences to the writing that results in a drift from the focus or presents unrelated or illogical ideas. They produce and edit short, uncomplicated texts that contain simple vocabulary. They apply knowledge of focus in a simple manner to determine and maintain the basic theme or topic of a straightforward text.

Organization/Coherence. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate the ability to apply a limited knowledge of paragraphing, the use of transitions, and the structure of an essay. They organize ideas in simple formats such as lists, outlines, or summaries with limited and ambiguous support. They produce writing that exhibits poor organization or has serious omissions that results in a lack of coherence and cohesion.

Support/Word Choice/Sentence Structure. Students at the Academic Warning level provide support that often includes a list of specifics with little support, or they include additional information that interferes with the focus of the text, or they include support that consists of repetitions or lacks clarity. These students use simple, everyday vocabulary to describe their ideas.

Conventions/Usage/Punctuation. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge with regard to usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure, but they provide appropriate punctuation in straightforward situations such as use of commas in a series and basic subject-verb agreement in simple sentences. These students may produce insufficient writing to demonstrate their abilities. They demonstrate a limited understanding of basic rules of standard English and use the language only in straightforward situations to edit writing for clarity, subject-verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement, and verb tense, although they make an attempt to present their ideas. They apply this limited knowledge ineffectively resulting in confusion, lack of logic in the text, and obscure overall meaning.

Mathematics

The PSAE mathematics test consists of two multiple-choice assessments: ACT Assessment mathematics and WorkKeys *Applied Mathematics*. The test measures the Illinois Learning Standards for mathematics contained in State Goals 6 through 10: number sense, measurement, algebra, geometry, and probability, statistics, and data analysis.

Exceeds Standards

Student mathematical work at the Exceeds Standards level demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in mathematics as described in the following paragraphs. These students creatively apply their knowledge and skills to solve routine and non-routine problems and evaluate the results. They demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of the mathematics found in the five State Goals.

Number Sense. Students whose number and operation work exceeds the Standards demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of number, operations, and number sense. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the concepts, properties, and operational skills of both the real and complex number systems. These students represent real and complex numbers using coordinate and matrix forms. They apply mental mathematics skills and number facts and relationships in simplifying and evaluating numerical computations, as well as in making reasonable estimates and approximations involving multi-step real number computations. They easily compare and order real numbers in any form, including radicals and powers-integral or rational.

Students whose number and operation work exceeds the Standards determine appropriate use of roots, exponents, and logarithms in representing and computing with real numbers in symbolic and applied settings. These students extend non-routine numeric patterns, including arithmetic and geometric sequences, and produce applicable expressions and formulas to model the sequences, sums of terms, and related patterns.

Students whose number and operation work exceeds the Standards are fluent in their ability to deal with all forms of percentage problems, including exponential growth and decay in both business and scientific applications. They appropriately use graphing calculators and technology to investigate mathematical ideas. These students demonstrate highly developed problem-solving skills and the ability to use mathematical models to model and identify solutions for non-routine problems.

Measurement. Students whose measurement work exceeds the Standards construct and identify solutions for proportions in a wide variety of non-routine settings. They demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of measurement. They know, apply, and modify formulas in a wide variety of theoretical and applied measurement applications involving perimeter, area, volume, angle, time, temperature, mass, speed, distance, density, and money. These students choose appropriate units and scales, including nonlinear ones, for problem situations involving scale drawings. They use units of measure (dimensional analysis) to set up problems and determine the appropriate unit for the answer. They convert measures within and between the standard and metric systems of measurement.

Students whose measurement work exceeds the Standards determine numerical answers having appropriate degrees of accuracy. They determine the area and perimeter of regular and irregular two-dimensional figures. They find the volume and surface area of regular and irregular three-dimensional figures.

Students whose measurement work exceeds the Standards use ratio and proportion, including trigonometric ratios, to describe the measures of geometric figures. They determine the effect of a change in one measure (for example, side length) on other measures (such as area, volume, angle measure) in the same or related figures in two and three dimensions.

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Algebra. Students whose algebraic work exceeds the Standards demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of algebra. They use appropriate numerical, graphical, and algebraic representations to illustrate their work. They recognize and represent patterns with variables and develop and use expressions to find solutions for non-routine problems. They manipulate a wide range of equations, inequalities, and systems, both linear and nonlinear, in solving problems represented in algebraic form. They recognize, manipulate, simplify, and evaluate algebraic expressions involving both polynomial and rational forms.

Students whose algebraic work exceeds the Standards distinguish between relations and functions and perform appropriate operations on functions, including finding inverses and composition. They productively use tables, graphs, and algebraic expressions to represent functions and their related equations. They interpret the relative rates of change involved in linear, quadratic, and exponential settings.

Students whose algebraic work exceeds the Standards recognize, model, and apply direct ($y = kx$) and inverse ($y = k/x$) variation in representing and solving real-world problems. They model such real-world problems using logarithmic, exponential (growth and decay), and trigonometric functions and matrices.

Geometry. Students whose geometric work exceeds the Standards demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of geometry. They know and apply the properties and theorems that characterize segments, angles, and lines in polygonal or circular figures in two and three dimensions. These students understand and apply theorems that describe the measures of congruent or similar figures in both two and three dimensions. They construct formal proofs and logical arguments for geometric statements.

Students whose geometric work exceeds the Standards use trigonometric relationships to determine measures in both right and non-right triangles. They apply coordinate geometry in non-routine problems to find distances, prove properties of geometric figures, and describe congruence or similarity in two- or three-dimensional settings. They use transformations to describe and investigate figures and relationships between them.

Probability, Statistics, and Data Analysis. Students whose analysis of data and chance settings exceeds the Standards demonstrate a comprehensive, flexible, and widely applicable command of probability, statistics, and data analysis. They correctly determine the probability or odds of events using counting principles, combinations, and permutations.

Students whose analysis of data and chance settings exceeds the Standards collect, organize, analyze, describe, and make predictions based on raw data. They formulate well-designed questions and describe appropriate data collection methods, gather and analyze data effectively, and communicate their findings concisely and clearly. They understand the role of randomization in surveys and models. They calculate and interpret appropriate measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and variation (range, variance, and standard deviation). They find, graph, and interpret a line of best fit for a given set of data and analyze the relationship between the predicted and observed data. They distinguish between correlation (events that are unrelated) and causation (events that are related).

Meets Standards

Student mathematical work at the Meets Standards level demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in mathematics as described in the following paragraphs. These students effectively apply their knowledge and skills to solve mathematics problems in the five State Goals.

Number Sense. Students whose number and operation work meets the Standards demonstrate a proficient command of number, operations, and number sense and apply it in a variety of settings. These

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students know and use the operational skills and the related properties of real numbers. Their capabilities with mental mathematics skills and recall of number facts in simplifying and evaluating algebraic number forms is strong, especially when supported by the use of technology. They make reasonable estimates involving one-step real number computations and make appropriate approximations for the basic operations. They compare and order real numbers in fraction, decimal, or radical form.

Students whose number and operation work meets the Standards form numerical representations for real numbers and real number operations using powers, square and cube roots, scientific notation, absolute value, and various forms of fractional and decimal formats. They extend simple number patterns and find general terms based on arithmetic or geometric sequences.

Students whose number and operation work meets the Standards construct and identify solutions for proportions in a variety of settings, including most forms of percentage problems. They use graphing calculators and other technology to investigate mathematical ideas. These students apply problem-solving skills to familiar situations or situations that moderately extend what they have seen before.

Measurement. Students whose measurement work meets the Standards demonstrate a proficient command of measurement and apply it in a variety of settings. They select and apply appropriate formulas in a variety of contextual measurement situations involving perimeter, area, volume, angle, time, temperature, distance, and money when all the necessary information is provided. These students choose appropriate linear units and scales for problem situations, including the setting up and identification of solutions for problems involving scale drawings. They find numerical answers for measurement problems to a stated degree of accuracy. They convert measures within the metric and standard systems of measurement.

Students whose measurement work meets the Standards determine the area and perimeter of common two-dimensional geometric figures in the plane. They calculate similar measures for irregular figures composed of common regular figures. They compute the volume and surface area of common three-dimensional figures when the relevant formulas are provided.

Students whose measurement work meets the Standards use ratio and proportion to describe how a change in one measure (for example, side length) affects other measures (such as area or volume) in similar shapes or solids.

Algebra. Students whose algebraic work meets the Standards demonstrate a proficient command of algebra and apply it in a variety of settings. They construct and identify solutions for linear equations, inequalities, and systems of linear equations using appropriate numerical, graphical, or algebraic methods. These students simplify and evaluate linear and quadratic algebraic expressions. They identify solutions for quadratic equations through the use of numerical and graphical approaches, factoring, or the quadratic formula. They also identify solutions for simple exponential equations.

Students whose algebraic work meets the Standards identify and use linear, quadratic, and exponential functions in familiar settings. They describe functional relationships using tables, graphs, and algebraic symbolism. Given a tabular, graphical, or algebraic representation of a linear function, they determine its slope and intercepts.

Students whose algebraic work meets the Standards identify and apply direct and inverse variation. They create an algebraic expression or equation to model and identify solutions for contextual problems similar to those they have seen before.

Geometry. Students whose geometric work meets the Standards demonstrate a proficient command of geometry concepts and properties and apply them in a variety of settings. These students know and apply theorems involving segment lengths and angle measurements in triangles, special quadrilaterals (squares, rectangles, rhombuses, and parallelograms), circles, and regular polygons. They also apply

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theorems relating the measures of congruent or similar figures in the plane. They apply knowledge about the slopes of parallel and perpendicular lines. They construct convincing inductive or deductive arguments for generalizations involving concepts from the geometry and algebra curricula.

Students whose geometric work meets the Standards use the Pythagorean theorem, special triangles (for example, 30° - 60° - 90° and 45° - 45° - 90°), and the basic trigonometric functions (sine, cosine, and tangent) to determine measurements in right triangles. They use coordinate geometry to find the midpoint of a segment and the distance between two points in the plane. These students identify and perform straightforward geometric transformations (for example, slides, reflections, and rotations).

Probability, Statistics, and Data Analysis. Students whose analysis of data and chance settings meets the Standards demonstrate a proficient command of probability, statistics, and data analysis and apply it in a variety of settings. They understand and apply basic counting principles. These students determine the probability of simple, dependent, independent, and compound events. They determine the odds for simple events and detect when outcomes do not match expected patterns.

Students whose analysis of data and chance settings meets the Standards represent data graphically using a variety of methods: scatter plots, stem-and-leaf plots, box-and-whisker plots, histograms, circle graphs, line graphs, and frequency tables and make predictions from such representations. They formulate questions, design data collection methods for specified problems, gather and analyze data, and communicate findings. These students make predictions and form conjectures from organized data. These students calculate and interpret measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and dispersion (range). They find and graph a line of best fit using technology when appropriate. These students make decisions based on data, determining if the relationship of cause and effect applies or not.

Below Standards

Student mathematical work at the Below Standards level demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in mathematics. However, because of gaps in their learning, students apply their knowledge and skills to solve mathematics problems in limited ways in the five State Goals.

Number Sense. Students whose number and operation work is below the Standards demonstrate basic knowledge of number, operations, and number sense and apply that knowledge only in routine problems. Their number sense and operational skills are limited to common fractions and decimals (common real numbers). They demonstrate basic mental mathematics skills, and their recall and use of number facts is insufficient for consistent simplification and evaluation of algebraic number forms. They compare and order numbers in decimal and fraction form but have difficulty doing this when the fractions have unlike denominators.

Students whose number and operation work is below the Standards form reasonable estimates that involve common fractions and decimals. They identify equivalent numerical representations of common fractions and decimals. However, their ability to extend simple number patterns is limited to finding additional terms of the patterns.

Students whose number and operation work is below the Standards construct proportions to fit simple contextual settings. They identify solutions for direct one-step percentage problems but demonstrate difficulty dealing with percents of increase and decrease. They use calculators to investigate simple patterns but demonstrate limited knowledge of special function keys and how to interpret scientific notation output. They demonstrate a basic understanding of problem solving and only apply such skills in situations where explicit instruction has been provided.

Measurement. Students whose measurement work is below the Standards demonstrate basic knowledge of measurement and apply that knowledge only in routine problems. They apply a given formula in common measurement situations involving perimeter, area, time, temperature, and money

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when all the necessary information is provided. These students demonstrate difficulty choosing appropriate linear units for simple problem situations involving measurement and demonstrate a limited ability to identify solutions for problems involving scale drawings, ratio, and proportion. They demonstrate difficulty determining answers to a stated degree of accuracy and converting basic measures within the metric and standard systems of measurement.

Students whose measurement work is below the Standards compute the area and perimeter of common two-dimensional geometric figures in the plane when the formulas are given. However, they may confuse the concepts of area and perimeter. Their ability to compute either the volume or surface area of common three-dimensional figures when the formulas are given is limited. In many cases, they may confuse the concepts of volume and surface area.

Students whose measurement work is below the Standards may recognize that changing one measure in a figure (for example, side length) affects other measures (such as area) in similar shapes, but are unable to describe the exact numerical nature of the change.

Algebra. Students whose algebraic work is below the Standards demonstrate basic knowledge of algebra and apply that knowledge only in routine problems. They identify solutions for some simple two-step linear equations (for example, $2x + 4 = 8$) and most one-step equations (for example, $x + 4 = 8$) whose coefficients are positive integers. However, they demonstrate a limited ability to identify solutions for one- or two-step equations when the coefficients are negative integers, fractions, or decimals.

Students whose algebraic work is below the Standards may use linear functions as models but demonstrate a limited ability to apply quadratic functions. They determine the general sign (positive or negative) of the slope of a line from graphical representations but demonstrate a limited ability to compute the slope when given the coordinates of two points on the line. These students evaluate simple algebraic expressions. They also identify simple linear relationships from tables, graphs, or algebra using technology when appropriate.

Students whose algebraic work is below the Standards recognize simple direct and inverse variations but demonstrate difficulty determining the constant of variation. They do not create algebraic models for contextual problems beyond those that they have studied and drilled on in their classes.

Geometry. Students whose geometric work is below the Standards demonstrate basic knowledge of geometry and apply that knowledge only in routine problems. They demonstrate a limited ability to apply properties involving angles, segments, polygons, or circular figures. While they identify parallel and perpendicular lines, they demonstrate difficulty describing their properties in either geometric or algebraic (slope) terms. These students state the major theorems about the corresponding measures of congruent or similar figures but demonstrate difficulty applying them. They follow a simple, logical argument but demonstrate a very limited ability to construct a convincing argument involving a geometric or algebraic situation.

Students whose geometric work is below the Standards use the Pythagorean theorem to find the hypotenuse of a right triangle; but demonstrate limited ability using it in other settings. Their knowledge of coordinate geometry and their use of ordered pairs to represent geometric concepts is limited to little more than plotting or locating points on a coordinate grid.

Probability, Statistics, and Data Analysis. Students whose analysis of data and chance settings is below the Standards demonstrate basic knowledge of probability, statistics, and data analysis and apply that knowledge only in routine problems. They determine the probability of straightforward, simple events (for example, a single coin toss). However, they do not deal with compound or conditional events. They detect cases in which simple outcomes do not match expected patterns.

When given specific directions, these students gather, describe, and analyze a set of data. They interpret data presented via a simple bar, circle, or line graph. They form and communicate direct

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inferences from a set of displayed data. They calculate the mean, median, mode, and range for a simple data set but demonstrate difficulty comparing and contrasting the meanings of such measures.

Academic Warning

Student mathematical work at the Academic Warning level demonstrates limited knowledge of concepts and skills in mathematics. Because of major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematics, they apply their knowledge and skills to solve mathematics problems ineffectively in the five State Goals.

Number Sense. Students whose number and operation work is at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge of number, operations, and number sense and do not apply that knowledge in solving problems. These students have major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of number sense. Their operational abilities with numbers are limited to the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, common fractions, and familiar decimals. Their mental mathematical skills and recall of number facts in simplifying and evaluating algebraic number forms is limited. They compare and order whole numbers, fractions with like denominators, and decimals rounded to the same place value.

Students whose number and operation work is at the Academic Warning level do not form or recognize reasonable estimates involving fractions or decimals. They do not determine appropriate numerical representations or equivalencies for common fractions or decimals. These students are limited in their ability to extend numeric patterns to those based on addition and subtraction.

Students whose number and operation work is at the Academic Warning level demonstrate difficulty constructing proportions or completing one-step percentage problems. Their ability to solve a simple proportion is limited. They need the assistance of calculators or other technology to perform calculations beyond the most basic of computations. Their problem-solving skills are limited to the most basic of daily life applications of number, operation, and number sense.

Measurement. Students whose measurement work is at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge of measurement and do not apply that knowledge in solving problems. These students demonstrate major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of measurement. They apply a given formula in simple contexts involving the perimeter or area of rectangles and right triangles when all the necessary information is given. However, such students experience difficulty using other formulas or dealing with measurements involving volume, time, temperature, and money. They choose inappropriate units or scales for problem situations involving measurement. They do not interpret approximations or round measurements to a stated degree of accuracy. These students recognize units within the metric and standard systems of measurement but do not convert measurements within the systems with any degree of consistency.

Students whose measurement work is at the Academic Warning level confuse area and perimeter of simple two-dimensional geometric figures and demonstrate little concept of the volume or surface area of simple three-dimensional figures. These students also confuse facts related to measurements in polygons and circles.

Students whose measurement work is at the Academic Warning level may fail to recognize that changing one measure in a figure (for example, side length) affects other measures (such as area) in similar shapes.

Algebra. Students whose algebraic work is at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge of algebra and do not apply their knowledge in solving problems. These students demonstrate major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of algebra. They do not evaluate algebraic expressions correctly and make errors of order of operation or with the signs of numbers when they

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attempt to do so. They demonstrate a limited ability to identify solutions for even one-step equations.

Students whose algebraic work is at the Academic Warning level do not consistently identify, interpret, or apply linear functions. They demonstrate little or no ability to interpret or manipulate quadratic expressions or equations. They demonstrate limited ability to work with simple linear relationships using either tables or graphs.

Students whose algebraic work is at the Academic Warning level do not identify or use simple direct and inverse variation. They do not apply algebraic models to represent or identify solutions for a contextual problem.

Geometry. Students whose geometric work is at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge of geometry and do not apply that knowledge in solving problems. These students demonstrate major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of geometry. They recognize parallel or perpendicular lines, but do not state or apply properties concerning them. They demonstrate difficulty identifying or discriminating between congruent or similar figures, especially when asked to find the measures of corresponding parts. They do not follow a simple logical argument.

Students whose geometric work is at the Academic Warning level graph points on a coordinate grid or interpret data presented in such a fashion ineffectively. They are ineffective in using the Pythagorean theorem or any other method to determine indirect measurement or evaluate geometric expressions involving powers or roots.

Probability, Statistics, and Data Analysis. Students whose analysis of data and chance settings are at the Academic Warning level demonstrate limited knowledge of probability, statistics, and data analysis and do not apply that knowledge in solving problems. These students demonstrate major gaps in their conceptual and procedural understanding of probability, statistics, and data analysis. They demonstrate only an informal understanding of the probability of simple events, and they rarely detect when outcomes do not match expected patterns.

Students whose analysis of data and chance settings are at the Academic Warning level interpret data from a simple bar graph. They discuss a data set only when asked simple, direct questions. When given specific directions, they demonstrate, often with great difficulty, how to gather, represent, and interpret data for a simple set of questions. Conclusions that they draw based on a simple set of data and its representations are of mixed validity. These students often do not calculate the mean, mode, median, and range for a simple set of data.

Science

The PSAE science test consists of two multiple-choice assessments: ACT Assessment science and an ISBE-developed science assessment. The test measures the Illinois Learning Standards for science contained in State Goals 11 through 13: scientific inquiry, the life sciences, physical sciences, Earth and space sciences, and concepts that describe the interaction between science, technology, and society.

Exceeds Standards

Student work at the Exceeds Standards level demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in science. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate results.

Scientific Inquiry. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards formulate effective hypotheses and design procedures to test hypotheses. They understand how systematic controlled experiments are designed and properly apply statistical methods to show the accuracy of experimental results. These students identify a design problem, select criteria for a successful solution, and build and test different potential design solutions. They modify or refine a model in a manner that improves its design and identify criteria to evaluate the design solution.

Life Sciences. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards demonstrate an understanding of how genetic combinations and mutations produce visible effects and variations to the physical features and cellular functions of organisms. They recognize the structure and organization of living things and how they respond to external stimuli. They understand the significance of evidence that organisms have evolved over time, including the fossil record, vestigial organs, and phylogenetic trees. They understand and identify the abiotic and biotic factors that lead to extinction and speciation. They understand and predict how life forms adapt to changes in the environment and how adaptation affects the size and stability of a population.

Physical Sciences. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards demonstrate a good understanding of physical science concepts, such as atomic and nuclear theory, force, momentum and its conservation, mass, energy and its transformations, light, and sound. They analyze reactions, the properties of materials, the relative motion of objects, and the effects of the fundamental forces on physical systems. They make connections between classroom activities and real life situations.

Earth and Space Sciences. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards demonstrate an understanding of forces, events, and processes that affect Earth, including the origin and dynamic nature of Earth, such as plate tectonics and the related areas of earthquakes and volcanism; weather and climatic events; and the geologic history of Earth, such as rocks, minerals and fossils. They use these principles to analyze systems in the universe. They identify and describe objects in the solar system, such as the planets, their moons, asteroids, and comets, and make connections among them.

Science, Technology, and Society. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards are well aware of the applications and implications of laboratory safety. They understand the criteria that scientists use to evaluate the validity of scientific claims and theories. These students explain the strengths, weaknesses, and uses of research methodologies. They understand why experimental replication and peer reviews are necessary for scientific claims. These students analyze the political ramifications of scientific and technological advancements, such as nuclear weapons, biological and

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chemical warfare, and biotechnology. With little assistance, these students design environmental impact studies and analyze cost benefits and effects of scientific policies at the local, national, and global levels. These students identify and evaluate the connections between scientific progress and careers, job markets, and other aspects of everyday life, such as the economic impact of these connections.

Meets Standards

Student work at the Meets Standards level demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in science. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Scientific Inquiry. Students who meet the Standards formulate acceptable hypotheses and demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts of design procedures to test hypotheses. They understand how systematic controlled experiments are designed and the basic concepts of applying statistical methods to assess results. These students identify major experimental design problems, select criteria for a successful solution, and choose the best of different potential design solutions. They modify a model to improve its design and identify some criteria to evaluate the design solution.

Life Sciences. Students who meet the Standards demonstrate a basic understanding of how genetic combinations and mutations produce visible effects and variations to the physical features and cellular functions of organisms. They understand how organisms respond to external stimuli and identify basic structures and organization of living things. They understand the significance of evidence that organisms have evolved over time, including the fossil record, vestigial organs, and phylogenetic trees. They identify the abiotic and biotic factors that lead to extinction and speciation. They identify or predict basic mechanisms by which life forms adapt to changes in the environment and demonstrate a basic understanding of how adaptation affects the size and stability of a population.

Physical Sciences. Students who meet the Standards demonstrate a basic understanding of physical science concepts, such as atomic and nuclear theory, force, momentum and its conservation, mass, energy and its transformations, light, and sound. They analyze reactions, the properties of materials, the relative motion of objects or the effects of the fundamental forces on physical systems. They make connections between classroom activities and real life situations.

Earth and Space Sciences. Students who meet the Standards demonstrate a general understanding of most large-scale dynamic forces, events, and processes of Earth's systems (for example, the origin and dynamic nature of Earth, such as plate tectonics and the related areas of earthquakes and volcanism; weather and climatic events, and the geological history of the earth, including rocks, minerals, and fossils). They analyze the systems and components of the universe. They demonstrate a basic understanding of how geologic and astronomical events, such as earthquakes, weathering, meteor impacts, and super novas, occur and the effects of these events. They identify and demonstrate familiarity with common objects in the solar system, such as planets, moons, meteors, and comets, and demonstrate a general understanding of the relationships among them.

Science, Technology, and Society. Students who meet the Standards demonstrate awareness of

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the most basic applications and implications of laboratory safety. They demonstrate a basic understanding of the criteria that scientists use to evaluate the validity of scientific claims or theories. They explain the strengths, weaknesses and uses of uncomplicated research methodologies. They demonstrate a basic understanding of the necessity for experimental replication and peer reviews to support scientific claims. These students demonstrate sufficient knowledge to analyze the political ramifications of familiar scientific and technological advancements, such as nuclear weapons, biological and chemical warfare, and biotechnology. These students understand the basic principles underlying environmental impact studies, cost-benefits analyses, and effects of scientific policies at the local, national, and global levels. These students identify uncomplicated connections between scientific progress and careers, job markets, and other aspects of everyday life.

Below Standards

Student work at the Below Standards level demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in science. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.

Scientific Inquiry. Students who do not meet the Standards demonstrate an understanding of simple hypotheses and design procedures for simple hypotheses. They understand systematic controlled experiments and how to apply statistical methods for simple experiments. They identify some design problems, select some criteria for a successful solution, and identify potential design solutions for simple experiments. They modify a simple model in a manner that improves its design and identify some criteria to evaluate the design solution.

Life Sciences. Students who do not meet the Standards demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of how genetic combinations and mutations produce visible effects and variations in the physical features and cellular functions of organisms. They demonstrate a limited understanding of how organisms respond to external stimuli. They identify the basic structures and organization of living things. They understand the significance of some of the evidence that organisms have evolved over time, such as the fossil record and phylogenetic trees. They identify some of the most common abiotic and biotic factors that lead to extinction and speciation. They describe or predict how life forms adapt to clearly defined changes in the environment and the relationship between these changes and the size and stability of a population.

Physical Sciences. Students who do not meet the Standards demonstrate an elementary understanding of physical science concepts, such as atomic and nuclear theory, force, momentum and its conservation, mass, energy and its transformations, and light and sound. They analyze simple reactions, the properties of common materials, the relative motion of objects, and the effects of the fundamental forces on physical systems. They make rudimentary connections between classroom activities and real life situations.

Earth and Space Sciences. Students who do not meet the Standards demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of large-scale dynamic forces, events, and processes of Earth's systems, such as the origin and dynamic nature of Earth, including plate tectonics and the related areas of earthquakes and volcanism; weather and climatic events; and the geological history of the earth, including an understanding of rocks, minerals, and fossils. They identify objects in the solar system, such as planets, stars, and comets, but do not understand relationships among them. For example, they may have some

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recognition that our solar system is a component of the Milky Way Galaxy but do not explain its position in the galaxy.

Science, Technology, and Society. Students who are below state Standards have a limited awareness of the applications and implications of laboratory safety. They are aware of some of the main criteria that scientists use to evaluate the validity of scientific claims or theories. They can explain some of the main strengths, weaknesses, and uses of research methodologies. They have a rudimentary understanding of why experimental replication or peer reviews are necessary for scientific claims. These students can analyze some of the political ramifications of common scientific and technological advancements, such as nuclear weapons, biological and chemical warfare, and biotechnology. These students have a rudimentary understanding of the basic principles underlying the conduct of environmental impact studies, cost-benefit analyses, and the effects of scientific policies at the local, national, and global levels. These students identify some basic connections between scientific progress and careers, job markets, and other aspects of everyday life.

Academic Warning

Student work at the Academic Warning level demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in science. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.

Scientific Inquiry. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate difficulty trying to formulate simple hypotheses and immense difficulty in designing procedures to test hypotheses. These students have reading difficulties that limit their ability to read for content meaning and usually demonstrate mathematical difficulties that limit their attempts to apply statistical methods. In group-learning situations where a teacher or mentor is guiding the study, these students sometimes identify a design problem, select criteria for a successful solution, or build and test different potential design solutions. If they are prompted numerous times during a systematic, controlled experiment, they are sometimes somewhat successful.

Life Sciences. Students at the Academic Warning level may be able to demonstrate understanding of simple genetic crosses but rarely understand the principles of genetic combinations and mutations that produce visible effects and variations of the physical features or cellular functions of organisms. They describe how organisms respond to external stimuli if they have observed such responses, but these students do not generally provide factual reasons for responses outside the realm of their experiences. Students describe some structural parts of organisms but generally do not attempt to place the total structure or organization of living things in perspective. These students may attempt to identify evidence that organisms have evolved over time but give no conceptual explanation of fossil records, vestigial organs, or phylogenetic trees. These students rarely describe or identify the abiotic and biotic factors that lead to extinction and speciation. While these students may notice observable changes, they do not explain or predict how life forms adapt to changes in the environment that affect the size and stability of the population.

Physical Sciences. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate comprehension of the concept of elements and the ability of elements to combine to form compounds. They describe rudimentary physical phenomena. They observe but demonstrate little understanding of basic physical science concepts, such as atomic and nuclear theory, bonding forces, energy, light, and sound. They do

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not analyze reaction mechanisms, the properties of materials, the relative motion of objects, or the effects of the fundamental forces. It is extremely difficult for these students to make connections between classroom activities and real life situations or to later recall these associations.

Earth and Space Sciences. Students at the Academic Warning level may demonstrate understanding of isolated concepts about phenomena such as eclipses, tornados, earthquakes, or droughts. However, they demonstrate little if any understanding of the connections between large-scale dynamic forces, events, and processes that affect Earth's systems, such as the origin and dynamic nature of Earth, plate tectonics, and the related areas of earthquakes and volcanism, weather and climatic events; and the geologic history of the earth, including an understanding of rocks, minerals, and fossils. They identify pictures of Earth, the moon, and the sun but do not explain the concept of the Milky Way Galaxy, the life cycles of stars or planets, and the place of Earth in the broad picture.

Science, Technology, and Society. Students at the Academic Warning level need constant reminders of the applications and implications of laboratory safety. They do not demonstrate comprehension of the main criteria that scientists use to evaluate the validity of scientific claims or theories. These students do not analyze political ramifications of common scientific and technological advancements, such as nuclear weapons, biological and chemical warfare, or biotechnology. They do not make connections between scientific progress and careers, job markets, and other aspects of everyday life.

Social Science

The PSAE social science test is a multiple-choice assessment that measures the Illinois Learning Standards contained in State Goals 14 through 18: political systems; economic systems; events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations; world geography and the effects of geography on society; and social systems.

Exceeds Standards

Student work at the Exceeds Standards level demonstrates advanced knowledge and thorough mastery of the skills of the social science disciplines. These students creatively apply their knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to solve problems and forge comprehensive, evaluative judgments. They demonstrate well-developed analytic, synthetic, and evaluative skills that can be applied to a variety of contexts.

Political Systems. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards analyze the relationships between the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and national governments and the public goods and services each provide. They explain and compare the purpose of rules and laws and their impact on citizens. Students at this level demonstrate a clear understanding of how rights and responsibilities are grounded in the principle of limited government as expressed by the federal and state constitutions and the Declaration of Independence. They compare how and why the participation of individuals and groups in elections and other public actions has changed over time. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards evaluate the impact of media and lobbyists on public policy at a variety of government levels. They form generalizations about causes and consequences of such activities. They evaluate relationships between the United States and a variety of other nations and between the United States and international organizations. They compare and evaluate the origin of significant political ideas and traditions to those that are found in the United States today. They demonstrate an advanced understanding of the causes of change, such as the dissolution of monarchies, the expansion of participatory democracy, and the extension of civil rights, in political systems.

Economic Systems. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards analyze and explain how national economies vary in the extent that government and private markets help allocate goods, services, and resources. They explain and analyze the relationship between productivity and wages. These students analyze graphs, charts, and other sources of data to draw reasoned conclusions. They identify the meaning and explain the importance of the balance of trade and how trade surpluses and deficits between nations are determined. They analyze reasons why government policies and laws affecting the economy, such as tariffs, taxes, and environmental regulations, have changed over time. They demonstrate an advanced understanding of economic concepts, such as depression, unemployment, inflation, and capital.

History. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards analyze historical events to identify cause-and-effect relationships. They compare and evaluate competing historical interpretations of an event. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry. They analyze and develop the relationships among an event, where it took place, and its time period. They compare and analyze institutions, customs, and traditions that have characterized past societies and the effect of these upon society today.

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Geography. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards use maps, globes, and other geographic representations and tools to answer complex geographic questions. They analyze human interaction with the environment and how the physical and human characteristics of a region change over time. They discern and evaluate the potential consequences of a variety of human interaction with the environment in a geographic context. They analyze and evaluate data that supports appropriate alternative causes and consequences of actions.

Social Systems. Students whose performance exceeds the Standards analyze and evaluate the influence of cultural factors, including customs, traditions, language, media, art, and architecture, in the development of pluralistic societies. These students analyze various forms of institutions and major cultural exchanges of the past. They analyze the influence of worldwide communications on major contemporary cultures.

Meets Standards

Student work at the Meets Standards level demonstrates proficient knowledge and mastery of the essential skills of the social science disciplines. These students apply their knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to identify problems and make limited analytic comparisons and judgments. They are developing analytic, synthetic, and evaluative skills that they apply to a limited number of contexts.

Political Systems. Students whose performance meets the Standards analyze the relationships between the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and national governments and the public goods and services each provide. They explain and compare the purpose of rules and laws. Students at this level demonstrate an understanding of how rights and responsibilities are grounded in the principle of limited government as expressed by the federal and state constitutions and the Declaration of Independence. They demonstrate an understanding of how the participation of individuals and groups in elections and other public actions has changed over time. They identify and explain the impact of media and lobbyists on public policy. They describe relationships between the United States and other nations and between the United States and international organizations. These students explain the origin of significant political ideas and traditions that are found in the United States. They explain the causes of change over time in political systems, such as the dissolution of monarchies, the expansion of participatory democracy, and the extension of civil rights.

Economic Systems. Students whose performance meets the Standards explain how national economies vary in the extent that government and private markets help allocate goods, services, and resources. They identify the relationship between productivity and wages. They demonstrate an understanding of graphs, charts, and other sources of data and draw some reasonable conclusions. These students explain the meaning and importance of the balance of trade, how trade surpluses and deficits between nations are determined, and how government policies and laws affecting the economy, such as tariffs, taxes, and environmental regulations, have changed over time. They demonstrate an understanding of basic economic concepts such as depression, unemployment, inflation, and capital.

History. Students who meet the Standards analyze historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships. They compare competing historical interpretations of an event. Students who meet the Standards explain historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry. They analyze the relationships between an event, where it took place, and its time period. They identify institutions, customs, and traditions that have characterized past societies.

Social Science

Geography. Students who meet the Standards use maps, globes, and other geographic representations and tools to answer complex geographic questions. These students demonstrate an understanding of specific instances of human interaction with the environment and how the physical and human characteristics of a region change over time.

Social Systems. Students who meet the Standards explain the influence of cultural factors such as customs, traditions, language, media, art, and architecture in the development of pluralistic societies. They explain various forms of institutions and major cultural exchanges of the past. They demonstrate an understanding of how major contemporary cultural exchanges are influenced by worldwide communications.

Below Standards

Student work at the Below Standards level demonstrates a basic mastery of the knowledge and skills of the social science disciplines. However, because of gaps in their learning, these students apply their knowledge and skills in limited ways within and across disciplines. They seldom use comparisons and generalizations to form judgments or develop opinions. These students lack the analytic, synthetic, and evaluative skills to apply to a variety of contexts.

Political Systems. Students whose performance is below the Standards differentiate between local, state, and national offices and the public goods and services governments provide, but they do not demonstrate clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each. They explain the function of rules and laws, but demonstrate difficulty in analyzing the purpose of the law. These students identify some of their rights and responsibilities and the sources of their rights, but lack a clear understanding of the principles of limited government expressed in the federal and state constitutions and the Declaration of Independence. Students performing below the Standards do not identify or explain how the participation of individuals and groups in elections has changed over time. They identify the main impact of media and lobbyists on public policy. They demonstrate an unclear understanding of the relationships between the United States and other nations and between the United States and international organizations. Students at the Below Standards level identify the origin of significant political ideas and traditions that are found in the United States. They demonstrate only a rudimentary understanding of the causes of change, such as the dissolution of monarchies, the expansion of participatory democracy, and the extension of civil rights, in political systems.

Economic Systems. Students whose performance is below the Standards identify some of the major mechanisms causing national economies to vary the extent that government and private markets help allocate goods, services, and resources. These students demonstrate only partial and rudimentary understanding of the relationship between productivity and wages. They draw limited conclusions from graphs, charts, and other sources of data. They demonstrate a limited understanding of the meaning and importance of the balance of trade and how trade surpluses and deficits between nations are determined. They identify only well-known examples of how government policies and laws affecting the economy, such as tariffs, taxes, and environmental regulations, have changed over time and of basic economic concepts, such as depression, unemployment, inflation, and capital.

History. Students whose performance is below the Standards identify some historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships. They describe simplistic, competing historical interpretations of an event and identify a few competing historical interpretations of an event. Students performing at

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the Below Standards level identify the relationship between an event, where it took place, and its time period. They identify only a few of the institutions, customs, and traditions that have characterized past societies.

Geography. Students whose performance is below the Standards use maps, globes, and other geographic representations and tools to answer geographic questions. They identify common examples of human interaction with the environment. They demonstrate basic understanding of how the common physical and human characteristics of a region change over time.

Social Systems. Students who are performing below the Standards identify the influence of cultural factors that are personally familiar to them, including customs, traditions, language, media, art, and architecture in developing pluralistic societies. They identify some of the more well-known forms of institutions and major cultural exchanges of the past. Students performing at the Below Standards level identify some of the major contemporary cultural exchanges as influenced by worldwide communications.

Academic Warning

Student work at the Academic Warning level demonstrates limited mastery of the knowledge and skills of the social science disciplines. Because of major gaps in their learning, these students apply their knowledge and skills ineffectively within and across disciplines to solve problems. Comparisons and generalizations are seldom used to form judgments or develop opinions. They lack both knowledge and analytic, synthetic, and evaluative skills.

Political Systems. Students whose performance is at the Academic Warning level do not differentiate between local, state, and national offices and the public goods and services governments provide. They explain the function of some rules and laws but encounter difficulty in explaining the purpose of the law. Students at this level demonstrate knowledge of some of their rights and responsibilities but identify the sources of only some of these rights. They do not demonstrate a clear understanding of how individual and group participation in elections has changed over time. They do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the impact of media and lobbyists on public policy. They describe relationships between the United States and other nations or between the United States and international organizations only in basic, simplistic terms. They identify only a few of the major political ideas and traditions that are found in the United States and do not demonstrate understanding of the origin of most traditions. They demonstrate only a rudimentary understanding of the causes of change, such as the dissolution of monarchies, the expansion of participatory democracy, and the extension of civil rights, in political systems.

Economic Systems. Students at the Academic Warning level demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of how national economies vary in the extent that government and private markets help allocate goods, services, and resources. They do not explain the relationship between productivity and wages. They draw some conclusions from simple graphs, charts, or other sources of data. They identify only a few major examples of economic interdependence, such as investment, trade, and use of technology, in a global economy. Most students performing at the Academic Warning level do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the meaning and importance of the balance of trade and how trade surpluses and deficits between nations are determined. They do not identify basic economic concepts, such as depression, unemployment, inflation, and capital.

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History. Students who perform at the Academic Warning level explain only the most obvious significance of well-known historical events in determining cause-and-effect relationships. They identify few historical and contemporary developments and do not demonstrate an understanding of methods of historical inquiry. They demonstrate only a simplistic understanding of the relationship between well-known historical events, where they took place, and their time period. They identify few institutions, customs, and traditions that have characterized past societies.

Geography. Students at the Academic Warning level use maps, globes, or other geographic representations or tools, but based on their use answer only straightforward geographic questions. They identify some well-known examples of human interaction with the environment. They demonstrate only a rudimentary understanding of how the physical and human characteristics of a region change over time.

Social Systems. Students at the Academic Warning level identify a few everyday examples of the influence of cultural factors including customs, traditions, language, media, art, and architecture in developing pluralistic societies. They do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the various forms of institutions, major cultural exchanges of the past, or major contemporary cultural exchanges as influenced by worldwide communications.

Appendix C

Setting Standards on the Prairie State Achievement Examination

Setting Standards on the Prairie State Achievement Examination

Standard-setting for the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) was conducted in Peoria on June 12–14, 2001, using a process that was designed by ACT in collaboration with staff of the Assessment Division of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). More than 100 educators and representatives of business from throughout the state served as panel members to set standards for one of five subject areas: mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social science. A sample of 10,554 student PSAE records was available for producing feedback to panelists in the process. The overall results of the process appeared reasonable, and most panelists seemed satisfied with the results and recommended their adoption.

This report provides a brief overview of the standard-setting process and findings that provide evidence of the validity of the process that produced the cut scores. State Board members approved the cut scores that were recommended as a result of this process.

Panelist Selection

Approximately 20 people served as panelists in each of the five subject areas included in the PSAE standard-setting process. Data for the panelists are reported in Table 1. The majority of panelists (around 70 percent) were high school teachers in the subject area. The category of *K–12 Educators* includes a few persons who are not high school teachers, such as a school superintendents and curriculum directors. Representatives of the business community (17 percent) and higher education (12 percent) also served on each subject group panel. Persons representing the business community work in companies with ties to the subject area – engineering for mathematics, pharmaceuticals for science, newspapers for writing, and so forth. Faculty who teach introductory or freshmen courses in the subject or education courses in the subject were recruited to serve on the panels to represent higher education.

Panelists were selected to be as equal as possible with respect to gender: 45 percent were males, and 55 percent were females. Regional representation was also a goal, and most subject panels included one or more panel members from each region of the state. Finally, teachers were drawn from schools of different sizes, and the distribution across the variable of school size was relatively even.

Facilitation of the Process

ACT staff served as the process facilitators, and ISBE subject consultants served as subject-matter facilitators. Facilitator outlines and presentation materials were prepared for each facilitator to assure uniform procedures in each subject group. Similarly, all instructions and training for panelists were provided in general sessions to assure uniformity.

The general process facilitator served as the process facilitator for panelists in science, reading, and social science and trained additional process facilitators to work with panelists in writing and mathematics. Training lasted several days and extended over several weeks. Mathematics was singled out for special facilitation because the considerably larger number of assessment items in mathematics required more time for item ratings. Writing was singled out because the inclusion of a writing sample required slightly different training and rating procedures for writing panelists. The entire process was presented to ISBE staff during an in-person meeting, and it was reviewed in conference calls. Subject and process facilitators met together for a full day of training prior to implementing the standard-setting process. Copies of all materials used in the process were reviewed during that meeting to make certain that all facilitators understood the procedures to be implemented, the purposes of each, and the methods to use.

Training Panelists

Training for panelists began before they arrived in Peoria. Panelists were sent a *Briefing Booklet* that described each session in the process, a preliminary agenda, and the performance-level definitions. They were asked to study the performance-level definitions and the *Briefing Booklet*.

On-site training began with a comprehensive overview to inform panelists about what they would be doing throughout the entire process. All instructions were provided in general sessions attended by panelists from all subjects so that all panelists had the same information to use when activities were implemented in the subject groups. Presentations included varied formats, such as printed text and graphics to aid in training panelists.

Panelists took the PSAE in their subject on the first day, and they scored their performance as a reality check on the second day before beginning the first round of item-by-item ratings. Panelists were nearly unanimous in reporting that this was an informative experience and that it helped them to understand what is expected of students.

ISBE subject consultants trained panelists in the Illinois Learning Standards and performance-level definitions. The performance-level definitions are statements of what students *should* know and be able to do at each performance level. Panelists participated in exercises to help them more thoroughly understand the meaning of the definitions. They also developed descriptions of borderline performance for each level. This activity was aimed at helping the panelists prepare for the item-rating process that required estimates of how students at the borderline *would* perform on each item at each performance level. Panelists requested more time than had been scheduled for this activity, and adjustments were made in the agenda to accommodate their needs. Panelists were engaged in approximately 12 hours of training exercises and instructions to prepare them for the task of setting cut points. Additional time was spent in reviewing feedback data to prepare for recommending final cut points.

Panelists' evaluations indicate that the training was successful for each subject group and panelist type. The averages of the panelists' level of clarity regarding their understanding of the performance-level definitions and the extent to which their concepts of borderline performances were well formed were generally higher than 4.0 on a 5-point scale.

Rounds of Ratings

All panelists rated all items on the PSAE for their subject. After training in the performance-level definitions and reaching agreement on descriptions of borderline performance for each level, panelists were ready for training in the rating procedures used to develop cut points. A modified Angoff method was used for the rating process: panelists estimated the percentage of students at the lower borderline of each performance level who would correctly answer each test question. For the writing sample, panelists estimated the average score of students at the borderline of each level for each feature of writing. Panelists participated in the item-by-item rating process two times. They could change their ratings for any or all items at any or all performance levels.

Analyses of data reveal that panelists did make numerous changes in their item ratings. Reading panelists changed the largest proportion of their item ratings, and social science panelists changed the smallest proportion. Reading, writing, and science panel members changed approximately 60 percent of their ratings across all items for the three performance levels combined. The average absolute change in estimates of student performance on the items was generally well below 10 percent. Reading panelists, however, changed their ratings to a greater extent, and most of their changes were to decrease their estimates of student performance and lower the cut points from round 1 to round 2.

Feedback was provided after each round of ratings to inform panelists about their ratings. Following the round 2 feedback, panelists were given the opportunity to adjust their individual cut points. They were told that these would be averaged for all panel members in each group to produce the final cut points for each subject. Panelists were allowed to take as much time as needed to complete their ratings of items, but all panelists completed the task within the amount of time estimated for this purpose.

When given the opportunity to make final adjustments in their own cut points for each performance level, most panelists made some changes. The magnitude of absolute change, however, was relatively

small. The differences in cut points from round 1 to round 2 were greater than between round 2 and the final recommendations. These findings are consistent with those from other standard-setting experiences in which approximately the same procedure was used. Panelists reported a high level of confidence in the ratings they had provided. They judged the process to be highly effective and the outcomes (cut points for each level and percentages of students performing at or above each) to be both defensible and reasonable.

Feedback Data

Panelists were given several types of feedback data to inform them about their ratings and the consequences or impact of their ratings. Cut points were reported on a pseudo-PSAE scale with a range of 500–670. This scale was used so that panelists could not compare cut points for the PSAE with those for other assessments. Feedback data comprised charts, graphs, and tables of data reporting information about the cut points, the percentages of students who scored within and at or above each cut point for each subject, the location of each panelist’s cut points for each level, overall student performance on each test item in the subject, and overall performance on a representative sample of about 30 test items of two students whose scores were right at the cut point set by round 1 ratings for each performance level. Data were updated after each round of ratings and provided to panelists. Following the second round of ratings, each panelist was given data showing the percentage of students who scored within and at or above the cut points set by each panelist in the subject group. Those data aided the panelists in making their recommendations for final cut points for each performance level in their subject.

Panelists were generally positive in their evaluations of the feedback data. They were impressed with the amount of information provided to them, and they found it helpful for evaluating their item ratings and their cut points. They tended to rely on data about how students performed on each item and overall student performance on the PSAE more than on other feedback information. There were no large differences in the understanding of and confidence in using feedback data by panelists of different types. The higher education representatives reported slightly lower levels of understanding and confidence than the other two types of panelists, but the differences were not great.

Evaluations

Panelists completed five process evaluation questionnaires – one each day with additional questionnaires regarding training in the feedback data on the second day and a final, overall process evaluation on the third day. Responses to questionnaires were reviewed on-site to help in monitoring the process. Responses to the questionnaires were analyzed for each subject and by panelist type and racial group for members of each subject panel. In general, the responses were quite positive. The average responses by panelists were higher than 3 on the 5-point evaluation scale, with a score of 5 being most positive.

Panelists’ responses to some questions were collected at several different stages in the process. Their responses reveal that panelists’ understanding of the process and key elements of the process (e.g., student performance relative to the performance-level definitions) increased and their confidence in performing the tasks increased from the first round of item ratings to the point when final cut points were recommended.

In the final process evaluation questionnaire, panelists were asked whether they would be willing to sign a statement recommending the cut points resulting from the process. Most panelists (93 percent) would *probably* or *definitely* sign such a statement.

Final Recommendations

Panelists’ final cut point recommendations were averaged to compute the final cut points for each level in each subject. The consequences of those cut points were shared with panelists, and each panelist was asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating those final cut points and the consequences associated with them. Panelists were told that their evaluations and recommendations would be reported to

members of the State Board to consider in reaching their final decisions to set standards for the PSAE. Most panelists—nearly 60 percent—indicated that the outcomes were what they expected and that they recommended that the State Board adopt the final cut points *as is*. The remaining panelists who completed the questionnaire had various responses, although panelists in each subject group tended to share some agreement about the specific performance level(s) to change and the direction of change (raise or lower cut points). About 40 percent of the panelists would recommend further changes to the cut points: 4 of the 8 science panelists and 5 of the 8 reading panelists recommending further change would raise the cut point for the Below Standards level; 6 of the 8 science panelists recommending further changes would raise the cut point at the Exceeds Standards level; and 4 of the 6 writing panelists recommending further change would lower the cut point for the Meets Standards level, and 3 would lower the Exceeds Standards cut point. Figure 1 represents the recommendations by panelists in each subject group.

Most of the panelists representing the business community (73 percent) recommended that ISBE adopt the cut points resulting from the process. Of the 6 business representatives who would recommend further changes, 3 would raise the cut point at the Below Standards level, 2 would raise the cut point at the Meets Standards level, and 5 would raise the cut point at the Exceeds Standards level. Data are reported in Figures 2 and 3 to show recommendations made by panelists of each of the three types. The graph in Figure 2 shows that only a small number of panelists of each type recommended changes in the final cut points. Because teachers and other K–12 educators accounted for approximately 70 percent of the panel members, it seemed helpful to look at the percentages of panelists of each type making recommendations regarding the final cut points. The percentages of panelists of each type recommending no changes in the cut point for a level, raising the cut point, or lowering the cut point was computed and graphed in Figure 3. In general, the proportion of panelists of each type recommending the cut point for the Below Standards performance level *as is* was about even across the three types of panelist. For the Exceeds Standards level, the highest proportion of recommendations to keep the cut points *as is* was from K–12 educators and the lowest was from business panelists. Both figures show that recommendations to lower the cut points were more frequently made by K–12 educators and that recommendations to raise cut points were more frequently made by panelists who were not educators.

Action by Members of the Illinois State Board of Education

Members of the Illinois State Board of Education adopted the cut points that resulted from the standard-setting process. Once the entire set of student performance data was scored and converted to the PSAE reporting scale, it was determined that the percentages of students scoring within each performance level differed somewhat from those reported to panelists during the process. Table 2 provides both the data that were shared with panelists in the PSAE standard-setting process on the pseudo-PSAE scale using the small sample of student data and the official data showing the cut scores set by the State Board members on the PSAE scale with the actual proportion of all students taking the PSAE who scored within the score range of each performance level.

Table 1

Panelists in the PSAE Standard-Setting Process

Subject	Number on Panel	K-12 Educators	Higher Education	Business Community	Males	Females
Mathematics	21	13	4	4	11	10
Reading	20	14	2	4	5	15
Writing	20	12	4	4	8	12
Science	19	16	1	2	9	10
Social Science	24	19	1	4	14	10
Total Number	104	74	12	18	47	57
% of Total		71	12	17	45	55

Table 2
Final Cut Points and Percentages of Students Scoring Within Each
Based on the Standard-Setting Scale and Sample of Student Performances
Used in that Process
and
The Official Cut Scores and Percentages of Students Scoring Within Each
on the PSAE Scale

Subject	Standard-Setting Cut Points on the Pseudo-PSAE Scale and % of Sample of 10,554 Students Scoring Within Each Level						PSAE Cut Scores and % of Students Scoring Within Each Level					
	Below Standards		Meets Standards		Exceeds Standards		Below Standards		Meets Standards		Exceeds Standards	
	Cut point	% within level	Cut point	% within level	Cut point	% within level	Cut point	% within level	Cut point	% within level	Cut point	% within level
Mathematics	562	35	604	49	651	10	136	37	156	45	179	9
Reading	574	33	604	49	639	13	135	34	155	46	178	12
Writing	556	34	593	51	631	11	133	35	155	50	179	9
Science	558	35	600	45	640	13	136	38	158	39	178	11
Social Science	557	28	599	48	640	18	137	33	154	43	174	15

Figure 1
Recommendations by Subject Groups to ISBE Regarding Final Cut Points

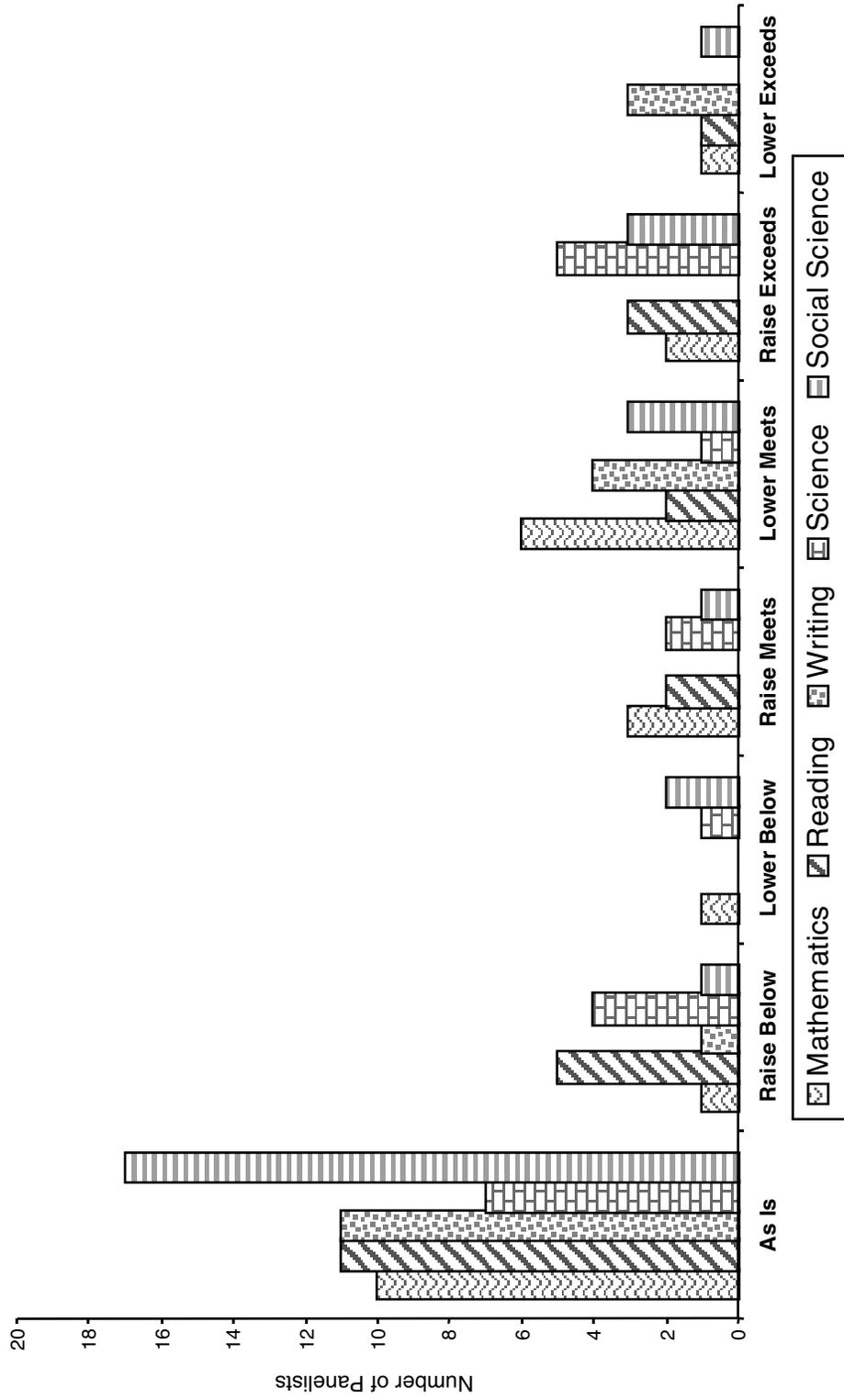


Figure 2
Recommendations to ISBE Regarding Final Cut Points,
by Panelist Type

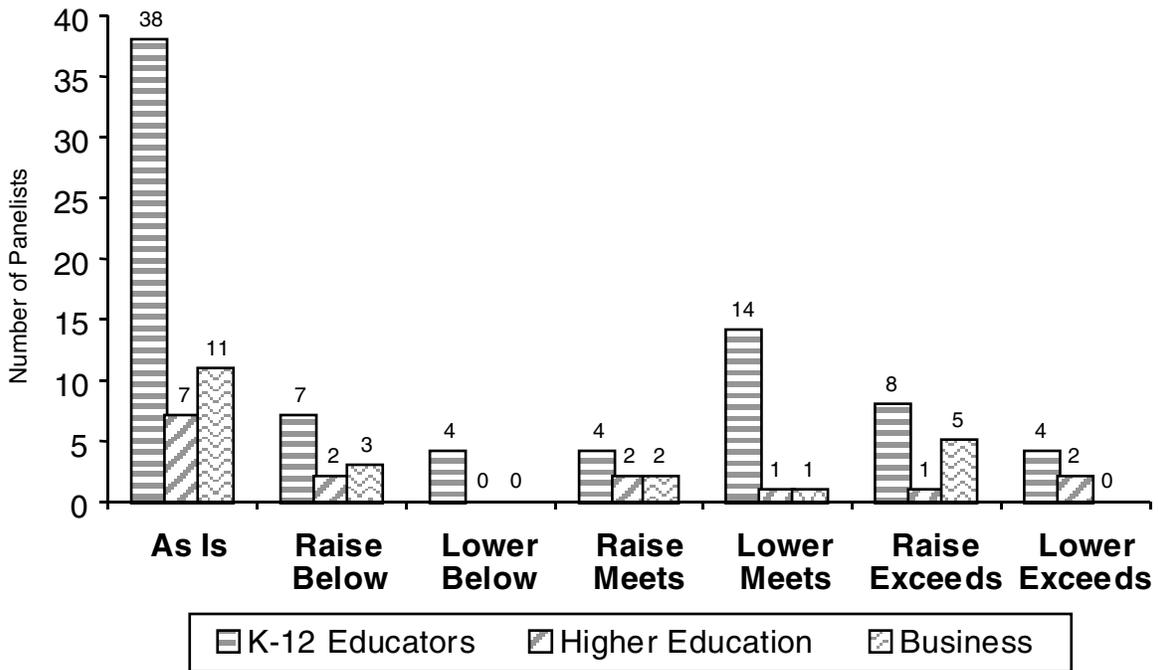
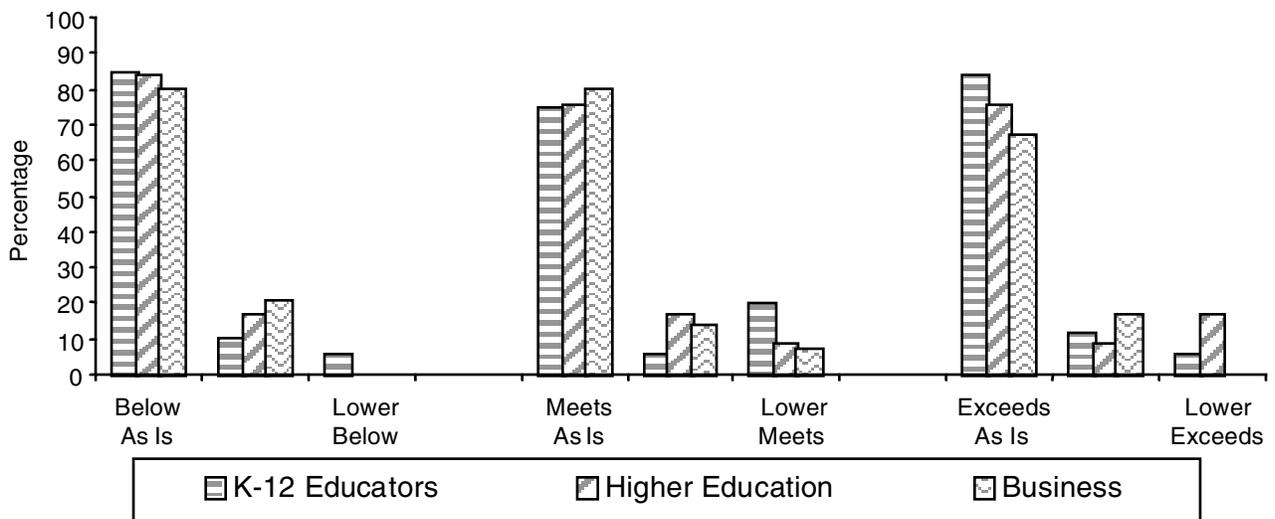


Figure 3
Percentages of Panelists of Each Type Recommending Actions to ISBE
Regarding Cut Points for Each Performance Level



Appendix D

Preparing for the ACT Assessment 2003–2004

Appendix E

Overview and Preparation Guide for PSAE Day 2