

BARNWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT 45

Education – The Key to Our Future



Memorandum

To: Parents of K-12 Students
From: Mr. J.H. Grissom, Superintendent and Ms. Crissie Stephens, Director of Curriculum
Date: January 15, 2015
Subject: Changes in Testing

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) recently announced new ELA and mathematics assessments that will be used to test students in grades 3 through 8, and grade 11, beginning in spring 2015. With the exception of students who are eligible for alternate assessments, The ACT battery of assessments in reading, English, writing, and mathematics must be administered to all students in grades 3–8 and grade 11.

The ACT Aspire English language arts (writing, English, reading) and mathematics tests will be administered statewide to students in grades 3 through 8 for the first time in spring 2015. South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) will be administered to students in grades 4-8 for science and social studies. The End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) assessments will be administered for students enrolled in English I, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History and the Constitution high school courses.

The ACT Plus Writing and the ACT WorkKeys jobs skills assessment will be administered statewide to 11th grade students. SCDE has defined an eleventh grade student as a student in the third year after their initial enrollment in the ninth grade.

Please note, ACT Aspire, The ACT, and the ACT WorkKeys tests are timed tests, which will be a significant change for our students. Our previous state assessments have not been timed. Prior to the holiday break, we met with teachers in each school to discuss the different format of these new assessments. We have asked our classroom teachers to practice timing various assignments and assessments, thus making students aware of the timed component. Teachers will not penalize students for not finishing in the time frame, however they will ensure that students are staying on task and working diligently. Students will be given additional time, if needed, to complete in-class assessments. By providing opportunities in class to practice completing timed assessments or tasks, the purpose is to alleviate student anxiety about taking assessments that are timed.

Although these assessments may be different, students with disabilities will still be allowed accommodations as determined appropriate by Individualized Education Plans and ACT guidelines.

If you have any questions regarding these assessments, please contact your child's school or the district office. We thank you in advance for your support.

Practice tests and sample test questions are available from ACT. Actual test items are not released.

Grades 3-8: ACT Aspire: <http://www.discoveractaspire.org/assessments/test-items/>

Grade 11: The ACT Plus Writing: <http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/>

Grade 11: ACT WorkKeys: <http://www.act.org/workkeys/assess/sample.html>

Assessment dates and test formats are outlined below.

ACT Aspire - Grades 3–5

ACT Aspire	Test Dates	Testing Times in Minutes
Writing, 1 prompt	Tuesday, April 28	30
English, 32 questions		30
Reading, 31 questions	Wednesday, April 29	60
Mathematics, 31 questions	Thursday, April 30	55

ACT Aspire - Grades 6 and 7

ACT Aspire	Test Dates	Testing Times in minutes
Writing, 1 prompt	Tuesday, April 28	30
English, 45 questions		35
Reading, 31 questions	Wednesday, April 29	60
Mathematics, 41 questions	Thursday, April 30	60

ACT Aspire - Grade 8

ACT Aspire	Test Dates	Testing Times in minutes
Writing, 1 prompt	Tuesday, April 28	30
English, 45 questions		35
Reading, 31 questions	Wednesday, April 29	60
Mathematics, 45 questions	Thursday, April 30	65

The ACT - Grade 11

The ACT	Test Dates	Testing Times in minutes
The ACT English, 75 questions	Tuesday, April 28	45
The ACT Math, 60 questions		60
The ACT Reading, 40 questions		35
The ACT Science, 40 questions (Districts must offer the science.)		35
The ACT Writing, 1 prompt		30

ACT WorkKeys - Grade 11

ACT WorkKeys	Test Dates	Testing Times in minutes
Reading for Information, 33 questions	Wednesday, April 29	45
Applied Mathematics, 33 questions		45
Locating Information, 38 questions		45