

SECOND DAY OF PSAE TESTING EARNS STUDENTS A NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE



When students are making post-graduation plans, it seems a lot of emphasis is put on the ACT exam. This test has influence on whether or not a college or university will grant a student admittance, which can be quite intimidating when one's collegiate plans depend on it.

However, the ACT, which is part of the two-day Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), isn't the only test that influences success after graduation. The WorkKeys Assessment, which takes place on day two of PSAE testing, is composed of three different tests – Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. Emphasizing the importance of the WorkKeys Assessment, the State of Illinois will issue a National Career Readiness Certificate based on test results.

“This is the first time that Illinois is making this certificate available to students, and we're excited to offer it to our students,” said Terri Busch, assistant superintendent for instruction. “The ACT is an important test for our students. They take it seriously and they know that doing well on it can open doors – it's a life changer. I don't think our students saw any significance on the second day of tests. Now that they see this test can mean something to an employer, day two has significance, too.”

Traditionally, the WorkKeys Assessment consisted of mathematics and reading only. In November, the Illinois State Board of Education approved the addition of the Locating Information exam. This addition measures the skill people use when they are asked to find information or insert information into a graphic.

In order to help students recognize the importance of the exams, National Career Readiness Certificates will serve as a standard for career readiness after graduation. These certificates provide employers with specific information about one's ability to perform common tasks. More than 35 states are implementing programs that use the National Career Readiness Certificate, or a similar model of it.

The certificate is broken into four different categories: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. To receive a Bronze certificate, students must score 3 out of 6 on each of the tests. This certificate tells employers the student has the necessary skills for 16 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database. A silver certificate is issued if a student scores 4 or better on each of the tests. This represents that the student has

the skills necessary for 67 percent of the jobs in the database. Gold consists of scoring 5 or better on each of the tests. This certificate states the student has skills capable of 93 percent of the jobs in the database. The highest certificate, platinum, requires that a student scores a 6 on each of the tests. This certificate represents that the student has skills capable of 99 percent of the jobs in the database.

Although day two of PSAE testing is nothing new, Busch said the District is helping students aim high on not only the ACT, but also the WorkKeys Assessment for a well-rounded score.

“Nationwide, there is an emphasis on each high school graduate being college and career ready,” Busch said. “The ACT measures college readiness and now Illinois is in line to measure career readiness. Our goal is to have all of our students who take the PSAE earn a National Career Readiness Certificate.”

For more information about the PSAE please visit the [website](#).