

ACT Becomes State Test for All Juniors



The Nebraska Department of Education has chosen the ACT to replace the NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability Assessment) for all **Juniors** beginning in the 2016-17 school year. Each 11th grader in the state will be taking the ACT test this spring. SCNUSD#5 has elected to give the traditional paper/ pencil test to the class and then do any make up testing with the online version. The ACT is slated for, **Wednesday, April 19th** as the date for the ACT to be administered. Please mark your calendars to ensure all Juniors are in school on this date.

Lots of questions regarding this change have been asked; here is a list of the most commonly asked questions:

Q: Will the students have to pay for the test?

A: No, this test will be provided free of charge.

Q: Will this score be a valid score to send to colleges?

A: Yes, the scores will be treated the same as any other National test date.

Q: Does my student need to register online?

A: No, the State uploaded the student information to ACT based on the information the schools already provided them. Students will then have the opportunity to complete information and choose colleges where they want the scores reported.

Q: Where will the students test?

A: The students will test in the 6th grade portable at Lawrence/Nelson and the Elementary Gym at Sandy Creek.

Q: When will they test?

A: April 19, 2017. The ACT requires that we start the test on time so parents need to ensure their son/ daughter arrives to school on time the day of the test.

Q: What is different about the ACT than the NeSA?

A: This is a different test in many ways. The NeSA was an untimed, criterion referenced test where the ACT is a strictly timed, normed reference test. The NeSA was taken in segments over the course of several days and the ACT will be given in one setting on April 19th. The subject areas are similar; students will take Reading, Math, English, Science Reasoning and Writing.

Q: How can my child prepare for the ACT?

A: There are multiple ways your child can prepare for the ACT. Here are several recommendations:

* The school is providing the 12 session John Baylor Test Prep during the school day. Students who benefit the most from the test prep, are attentive during the lessons and complete all assignments. Students can individually access additional resources through the John Baylor Test Prep site. They will need to talk to an administrator or the counselor to login to the site.

* The state provides ACT prep through the ACT website itself <https://onlineprep.act.org/login> . To login the student uses their school email and Password is: abcd and their lunch number (if their lunch number is one digit they must put a 0 in front) Students can also access an app they can download and utilize on their mobile device.

*Take a practice test: All juniors will be given a practice test on March 22nd at Lawrence/Nelson and March 29th at Sandy Creek. Students can also take a practice on their own using the John Baylor Test Prep or see Mrs. Porter for an ACT practice test.

Q: What happens if my child cannot take the ACT on April 19th for an unavoidable reason?

A: Makeup testing will be available but it is discouraged due to the restrictions we are given by the ACT. ALL Juniors will be required to test.

Q: My child has an IEP will they be able to get accommodations on the test?

A: Yes, if accommodations are allowed in the student's IEP, those requests have been submitted for ACT for approval on the test. If approved by ACT as an allowable accommodation, such as extended time, the student will be tested separately from the group and given the appropriate accommodations. However, if the accommodations are not approved by ACT, the student can choose to get accommodations anyway and have the score become "not college reportable" or choose to take the test without accommodations so the scores can be used for college. Our first choice would be to try to obtain the approval for accommodations.

Previously the ACT has only been taken by those intending to go to college, specifically four-year colleges. Now all students, regardless of future plans will take this test. As a district, we may see a drop in score averages due to the change in the inclusiveness of all students testing. However, we hope over time our preparation leads to increased scores for all students. If you have questions about this new process or how else parents can help, please contact Mrs. Searle, Mrs. Porter, or Mrs. Epley.