

# Testing: do the students care?



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Most people have usually heard it over and over that "It's never too early to consider thinking about your future!"

In high school, that usually means that you need to start hammering the ACTive Prep program into your head, and during your junior year sit down in front of a computer and become one with the work keys program.

Then at the end of your 11<sup>th</sup> grade year of high school, you will have the sole responsibility of upholding your high school's educational reputation in the state as you dedicate two full days of school to the ACT and Work Keys tests.

Both days, many conclusions have been drawn from your scholastic career that will pave the way for your future. What if one day the great state of Illinois BOTCHED the scores causing mass calamity and thwarting many opportunities for school improvement?

Maybe that last question was a little too rhetorical, but it just so happens that Harcourt Assessment Inc., the company responsible for grading the Illinois standardized tests, messed up on the

grading of several tests causing a massive delay in getting the results back to the schools.

Due to the costly error, schools were denied the opportunity to identify and improve weaknesses in student scores and also receive free tutoring for struggling students.

Despite these errors, it doesn't even seem to matter to most seniors. This massive impact is just dragging down everyone's opinion of standardized testing.

As if taking it isn't a big enough pain, it loses its effectiveness on students and decreases their motivation to do well on standardized tests.

Because they have already taken the tests, a portion of the senior class stated that they didn't feel they were adequately prepared for either of the April tests.

In terms of motivation, the ACT proved to have greater influence over the testers than the Work Keys Test.

The main incentive behind succeeding on the ACT is the wider availability of collegiate possibilities and scholarship availability.

I know that we should give a big "shame on you" to the seniors for not caring about the their Work Keys efforts, but the driving force of good test results for the school in the eyes of the state is a



Vast arrays of students mull over the numerous bubbles of practice scantron sheets. As you can see, the levels of intensity amidst the students vary... (Photo by Ravi)

little weak.

Some possibilities of reward for good test scores are being mulled over like not having to take finals as a senior, or days off as a senior. Regardless, most seniors did not feel compelled to do well on the tests.

For the juniors, the prospective test takers, their outlook on the "April experience" was resoundingly positive.

This interests me because although this select group of surveyed juniors says they are going to try their hardest on both

tests, they don't feel that they have been prepared well by their teachers.

True, every student throughout MHS has been through at least one of the monotonous November prep tests (PLAN, EXPLORE, and practice ACT), but it's those two crucial days in April for all of the juniors to show that Moline High School doesn't mess around when it comes to quality education.

We'll just have to see if the junior class treats testing like anything more than a joke.

# Let's take a look at the polls!

After surveying 76 juniors and 76 seniors, the seniors' opinion of standardized testing was unanimously negative in comparison with the juniors.

These surveys were taken from junior and senior

advisory classes revealing a wide range of opinions amidst students. In each graph, the lighter color represents the junior opinions and the darker color represents the senior views.

As previously mentioned, the test that motivates the students most is the ACT and the students' reaction to the Work Keys test was much less positive.

The results speak for themselves.

