

MENDOTA

TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

2300 WEST MAIN STREET • MENDOTA, ILLINOIS 61342 • PHONE (815) 539-7446 • FAX 538-2026 • DISTRICT #280

January 3, 2012

Dear Parents and Guardians of MHS Juniors,

Upcoming Test Dates and Test Prep at MHS with possible exam exemption earned—Important Information for all Juniors

In today's educational world, it is not enough to show improvement for one year or two when students of all ability levels are expected to achieve continual growth. To meet this more demanding requirement, our students need to confront high-stakes tests. One goal at MHS is to **take control of the test and the test results by becoming proactive.**

A comprehensive plan for the improvement of test scores includes several components. At the core of improvement is skills mastery; and, we will always focus on academic preparation. Over the years, our students have been asked to take more rigorous curriculum in order to meet the mastery level and much more rigorous Common Core Learning Standards. However, academic preparation is unfortunately, not sufficient. First, **students need to be motivated.** Second, they need to feel **comfortable** or "at home" in the standardized testing environment. Students need not only to be able to bubble scantron sheets or computer tests but also to translate the concepts and skills they acquire into the terms of the multiple-choice format. Standardized test success requires students to understand and be familiar with the demands and weaknesses of the test. Students should be aware of the test's time limits, the necessary pacing, and how to use strategies. Implementation of a plan for test success needs to begin as soon as possible.

Our students are asked to prepare for college and career readiness. One portion of the college readiness task is to prove mastery of learning on college placement exams. All of our juniors are expected to take the ACT exam on April 24, 2012; and, the ACT exam is a college-entrance exam. The ACT test score becomes part of the student's permanent transcript record and is scored separately and then combined with the PSAT state exam. Not only are colleges looking at ACT scores, but many vocational schools are also asking for ACT records to determine student skills. Your student will receive an ACT score that predicts college readiness benchmarks for future success.

Another college entry exam our students are frequently exposed to is the Accuplacer test required by Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC). This year, we will provide the Accuplacer test with IVCC right here at MHS for Juniors. The Accuplacer is an internet-based test in a secure test setting. Scoring is immediate. It means the Accuplacer will provide immediate placement reports, allowing advising, counseling, and enrollment professionals to predict course enrollment assignments. (For example, if your son/daughter is interested in enrolling in IVCC dual-credit courses through the E2C program; placement levels will be revealed immediately.) Another advantage to testing our students with the Accuplacer is to provide MHS and students with useful information about academic skills in math, English, and reading. The results of the assessment, combined with the overall academic background, goals, and interests, may be used by counselors and families to help guide future course selection. It is a guide and reference for

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students to choose coursework that may offer remediation or developmental skills as well as courses that may offer both high school and college credit.

All Accuplacer test scores have a range of 0-120. The score a student receives is a placement and not a grade or percent. Classes at IVCC that begin with “0” are considered developmental courses. This means that students may need to take some courses that are below the College Level. Classes that start with a “10” or “20” are College Level Courses. The math test has a couple of indicators. If a student score on the Elementary Algebra test is 99 or below, then the student places into a developmental math course. If a score is 100 or over on the Elementary Algebra test, then they are asked to take the College Level test. On the College Level test, if a student scores above a 35, he/she may qualify to take Math 1005, Pre-Calculus course.

***For both the Accuplacer and the ACT tests, students are able to retest if they are not happy with their scores. Since the tests will be given in January and February, there is also ample time to take additional review coursework before retaking the test.

When will testing occur?

The Accuplacer test will be given to all juniors in the computer labs in a morning or afternoon session. Students will be assigned to a date of either February 2nd or 3rd, 2012 and a time. It is our hope that students will complete the test within one morning or one afternoon setting. However, we understand students may need additional time to complete the test. We will schedule accommodations where needed.

The ACT pre- test will be given on January 13th to all Juniors. Results will be scored by Cambridge Educational Services and returned within 5-10 days to the high school and the student. Students and teachers will receive results early to incorporate data-driven lesson plans that match student needs over the next three months of ACT review. For example, a 3rd period American Literature class may show a high percentage of students who need to work on subject-verb agreement. The teachers will have the opportunity to provide student instruction and strategies to provide some of this skill review. However, the most intensive review will be available during the supplemental ACT Review class in the evenings. **ACT Review is available!** The ACT pre-assessment test will be given on January 13th. Evening sessions will be available from 6:00-9:00 PM beginning on February 15th. The weekly sessions will run through March 23rd when an ACT post-assessment will be administered to measure student growth. The results will be reviewed with students on April 18th. The “real” PSAT and ACT test will be administered on April 24th and 25th, 2012. *****Students may earn an exam exemption for successful completion of Cambridge Review.**

How do I sign up? Please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to the Principal’s Office by Friday, January 27, 2012. Your materials check for \$75.00 should also be included with the registration.

Questions about the sessions may be directed to Mr. Horsch at shorsch@mendotahs.org or 815-539-7446 ext 502. You may also contact Mrs. Aughenbaugh at daughenbaugh@mendotahs.org.

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Resources: Cambridge Educational Services and MHS teachers
Total Hours: 18 hours of direct instruction with additional Pre-Post Assessments for another six hours.
Cost: \$75.00 Materials Fee
Incentive: Growth as measured on the ACT Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment AND a possible exam exemption to be used in the Spring of 2012.

Dates of Attendance:

January 13, 2012 Pre-Assessment from 8:10 AM to 11:30 AM in the Auxiliary Gym of Mendota High School
 (All juniors will be tested on the pre-assessment and excused from regular classes.)

February 15, 2012	Session #1	6:00-9:00 pm
February 22, 2012	Session #2	6:00-9:00 pm
February 29, 2012	Session #3	6:00-9:00 pm
March 7, 2012	Session#4	6:00-9:00 pm
March 14, 2012	Session #5	6:00 – 9:00 pm
March 21, 2012	Session #6	6:00 – 9:00 pm
March 23, 2012	Post Assessment	MHS
April 18, 2012	Results Review	6:00 – 7:00 pm

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- **Please return bottom portion with \$75.00 materials fee to the Principal's Office. A receipt for cash payments may be provided.**

Mendota High School ACT Test Preparation

I'm interested in participating in the ACT preparation sessions offered through Cambridge Educational Services and MHS.

Student Name (Print)	Parent Name