

IMPORTANT ISTEP+/GQE INFORMATION FOR SOPHOMORE CLASS OF 2010

For this year's **Class of 2010 Sophomores**, the ISTEP+ is also the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE).

By state law, an Indiana student must pass both sections of the graduation exam as well as complete high school course requirements in order to receive a high school diploma. As a state accredited high school, Memorial is bound by this state law. While you may have heard of alternative methods available for some students who meet certain criteria, those methods are a "last resort" and most will receive a diploma by passing the ISTEP+.

The Grade 10 ISTEP+ Graduation Qualifying Exam will be administered throughout the state on **Tuesday, September 18, Wednesday, September 19, and Thursday, September 20. Students should be in their assigned testing room no later than 7:30 a.m. each day. Tuesday's testing will last all day, Wednesday's testing will be from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., Thursday's testing will be from 10:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** An additional required math grid practice test will be given **during SRB on Friday, September 17.** To ensure test security, the Department of Education has mandated which sections of the exam must be given on a certain day. Furthermore, **no make-up times** will be allowed for the Graduation Qualifying Exam. Regardless of the reason, students who miss any subtest will have to retake that subtest during the next testing session available to **Sophomores**, which will be the Fall of 2008.

Obviously, we feel it is extremely important that students be present during all testing times unless a serious illness or major conflict occurs. It is also imperative that students arrive on time to school each day. Please do not make appointments that will require a student to arrive late or leave early.

To "pass" the Graduation Qualifying Exam, a student must score above proficiency standards as set by the state. These proficiencies are primarily in the areas of Language Arts (English, Reading and Writing) and Mathematics. Students not meeting these standards will be given four more opportunities to take the Graduation Qualifying Exam, once each semester during the junior and senior years. A student who is unable to meet the state proficiency standards will not receive a high school diploma. While the alternate methods are allowed in some cases, the requirements for these seem no easier to achieve than passing the proficiency standards.

IMPORTANT ISTEP+ INFORMATION FOR FRESHMAN CLASS OF 2011

All **Freshmen** will participate in the ISTEP+ at the same time as the **Sophomores** as listed above. Although the freshman ISTEP+ is not a graduation exam and will not affect graduation status, it is an excellent opportunity for freshmen to try the ISTEP+ with the standards and format that will be used their sophomore year. As with the sophomore test, this ISTEP+ is required by both the State of Indiana and Memorial High School. Students will be expected to be at school unless a serious illness or major conflict occurs.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FOR PARENTS OF BOTH FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORES

Teachers at Memorial are currently working to prepare students for the freshman ISTEP+ and sophomore ISTEP+ Graduation Qualifying Exam. As their parents, you can help too by being sure your child is present at school at all times during the testing days and by preparing your student both physically and psychologically; insist on a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast each day, encourage a good lunch and stress the importance of the test without creating undue pressure and test nervousness. This can be done by encouraging your child to do his/her best rather than worrying about failing. It is important to keep self-esteem strong even if not passing is a possibility. Because students rarely do poorly on the ISTEP+ on purpose or through lack of trying, if your child has not passed when scores are returned, stressing the positive (4 more times to take the test, you'll know more the next time, we know you tried hard, etc.) will be helpful.

Both tests involve a long testing period with students and families having much at stake. We want each student to do his or her best and appreciate the support we know we will receive from home during this time.

New for this year: NO mechanical pencils are allowed, only regular #2 pencils are to be used.

If you have any questions, please contact *Mrs. Suzanne Farney*, Freshman/Sophomore Counselor / ISTEP+ Test Coordinator