



Blackman High School ACT Committee

Purpose of Committee: This committee was founded at the direction of Principal, Leisa Justus. The committee was formed to look at what Blackman High School is currently doing in regards to preparing our students to be more college ready in relation to the ACT test. The committee also was tasked with looking at ways to help improve our students in preparing for the ACT.

Current Initiatives:

- *ACT Prep Classes*
- *ACT Boot Camps* in Science (specifically Chemistry) and Math
- *Close Readings* from the Media Center. Mr. Seadorf (Media Center Specialist) sends out multiple articles to be shared with our students/staff as bell work, close readings, enrichment and etc. Mr. Seadorf finds articles that are current in multiple sources across many different genres.
- *Model annotations/Close reading skills across genres:* All teachers are trained during select in-services on reading skills with an emphasis on teaching these across the curriculum.
- *Individual Practice Test-* Blackman High School will continue to give practice test to multiple grade levels. Special emphasis on making sure the Junior Class is not seeing the ACT for the first time in March. All students are able to self-score and get immediate results.
- *Increase of rigorous courses:* Continued emphasis on higher level classes for students. Especially freshmen with high reading scores on explorer exam when combined with math/science score. Blackman High School currently has 48 Honors courses, 22 Advance Placement courses, and 9 Dual Enrollment courses.
- *Fewer study halls:* Blackman High School administration/counselors eliminated a large number of study halls and put an emphasis on scheduling our students in more rigorous/meaningful classes (beyond core).
- *ACT questions* added to all formative assessments within EOC classes and non-tested classes.
- *ACT parent night.* We will continue to have ACT parent night for Blackman High School parents. More focus on relationship of the ACT score and scholarship money. Less emphasis on GPA.

- *Teaching basic test taking strategies:* breathing techniques, take breaks when offered, stretching, facial exercises, chew gum, roll shoulders
- *Underlining skills:* All teachers are encouraged to teach underlining skills, making notes in margins of papers, books, highlighting passages. This helps on both ACT and EOC. We are asking all teachers to emphasize this across the curriculum.
- *ACT recognition* by level of achievement – bulletin board recognition in main hall, certificates, ice cream coupons, free admission to events at school, and 1 extra college day. Junior challenge picnic for seniors if composite score is higher than the previous year.
- *Teacher in-services* where teachers take the ACT, score it, and then debrief. Teachers then used the time to collect practice items for integrated use as they teach (materials provided by administration). Signs were made to indicate ACT practice in a class on specific days (We are ACTing up today!).
- *Question of the day:* Each day ACTprofile.org has a question of the day that is taken directly from ACT. Teachers are encouraged to create an account on ACTprofile.org so they have access to the question of the day. Blackman High School Teachers will share the question during primetime with students who are not receiving remediation. The answers are provided along with an explanation as to why it is the best answer.
- *Drivers Education/ACT Computer Lab:* All students who are in driver's education will now take part in practice ACT sessions when they are not driving. This will take place in the computer labs after they have finished the classroom instruction piece. Formerly these students were used across the building as teachers' aides.
- *ISS:* Students in ISS have scheduled ACT prep time in class – 5 computers for use.
- *School Wide Vocabulary:* each week a focus word will be sent out to the staff to be shared with their students. We are asking the teachers to use this word in bell work, lessons and homework. The word have been researched and will enhance vocabulary as well as understanding and comprehension for our students. This set of words was developed by analyzing a range of introductory college texts that appeared in multiple academic areas across genres. For example distribute: In social studies, it might be used to refer to such concepts as distribution of power, or income redistribution. In math, students learn about distributive properties of multiplication or frequency distributions.
- *ACT graphing skills:* Environmental and Physical Science, Physics, and Bridge math focus on teaching graphing skills and interpretation of graphs as they relate to the ACT.

- *Prime time:* Blackman High School is putting an emphasis on making sure non-tested areas are using prime time to make sure students are getting more access to ACT related materials and emphasizing reading for comprehension skills. Primetime has specific requirements for use of time: *M.E.S.S.Y.*
 - *Monday – EOC pullout – Math priority*
 - *Tuesday – EOC pullout – English priority*
 - *Wednesday – EOC pullout – Science priority*
 - *Thursday – EOC pullout - Social Studies– Character Ed*
 - *Friday – Your choice -all subjects can pull students*
 - *Non-tested teachers may use primetime for enrichment in their subject, ACT practice, and/or close reading practice*
- *Training of teachers in ACT breakdown:* Teachers were provided with the breakdown of the ACT test as it related to their subject area. This training was provided during back to school in-service. For example: English ACT is a 75 question, 45 minute test. It consists of five essays or passages, each of which is accompanied by a sequence of multiple-choice test questions. Students have approximately 4 minutes to answer the question of each passage. English ACT is comprised of Usage/Mechanics with punctuation making up 10-15%, grammar and usage 15-20% and sentence structure 20-25 %. It also is comprised of Rhetorical Skills with strategy making up 15-20 %, organization 10-15 and style 15-20.
- *ACT Prep Math:* Break down instruction to include: 1 Week Calculator skills. Load programs related to ACT and practice Usage. This would be followed by Pre-algebra 1 Skills, pretest, determination of needed skills and teaching of skills. Followed by the same procedure and broken down by Alg. 1, graphing, intermediate Alg. 1, Geometry and all math skills.
- *Emphasis on Goal Setting:* Teachers have been asked to have their students focus on setting goals in their classes and on the ACT.
- *ACT posters* for each room to help students identify how many questions to get correct to reach a higher score.
- *Practice reading:* Start timing on passages on test and on close readings. Start by giving students 10 minutes to read and answer questions. Gradually decrease time. This is to be done in individual classrooms.
- *Literacy focus in school – PLCs* share articles and questioning to determine rigor. All teachers must contribute one article with questions and answer key to a database kept by the librarians for all teachers to use.
- *“Did you know”* ACT facts program: Information on ACT that is important to students (signs visible in cafeteria; Friday news with “did you know” facts about ACT from principal.
- *Tutoring flyers* developed and placed in all offices, including APs and counselors.
- ***SCHOOL WIDE MENTALITY-*** Teachers, students and administrators need to be focused on improving ACT scores.

BLACKMAN ACT DATA FOR 2015-16

- Junior Cohort:
 - Blackman showed a composite gain of 0.2. Moving from 20.8 to 21.0.
 - Blackman showed its largest gain in Math 0.6
 - Blackmans greatest loss was in English 0.7
 - Blackman has a three year upward trend in Junior Composite, Science, Reading, and Math scores.
- Senior Cohort:
 - Blackman showed a composite gain of 0.1. Moving from 21.0 to 21.1.
 - Blackman showed its largest gain in English 0.6
 - Blackmans greatest loss was in Math 0.2
 - Blackman has a four year upward trend in Senior Composite scores.