

FRESHMEN

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In order to set a passing/failing grade, the state of Ohio ordered all seniors, juniors, and sophomores, including Alice Wright, to take the proficiency tests in January.



State Tests Frosh

This year all public schools in Ohio conducted freshman proficiency tests. The intent of the test was to assess the capabilities of the class graduating in 1994. Because of a law recently passed, all freshman were required to take this test.

The test battery consisted of four parts: math, reading, citizenship, and writing. Before graduation, a student must have successfully completed all parts of the test in order to receive a standard diploma. If all parts had not been passed, then a student would only receive a certificate of attendance.

Testing took place in November and results were published in February. These results may have been misleading. Local newspapers published that 80 percent of freshman in Ohio failed all four tests, and 42 percent at Sycamore failed the overall exam. What these publications did not mention, however, was a failure of one section of the test was failure of the entire exam. Also, absentees were counted as failures. In reality, only nine students at Sycamore failed all four parts of the test.

Because of these results, Ohio legislators required that grades 10-12 also take the exam in order to

determine the fairness. With these results, the test would be altered accordingly. These tests were distributed in early March. Most students felt that the testing of grades other than the class of 1994 was a feeble-minded attempt by the Ohio state legislators to set a standard for freshmen. Junior Michelle Shifflett said, "They are using upperclassmen as a standard of comparison for where freshmen should be academically, but we have had more schooling than they."

"Schools throughout Ohio are diverse. Although curriculums are basically the same, there are just too many differences to find common ground in one test. The passing of one's school should be enough."

-Heather Hug

Freshmen also had negative feeling towards the testing. Janet Spugnardi, a new student as well as a new Ohio resident, felt that it was especially unfair. "They had questions about Ohio's history and government. For those who haven't lived here very long, these subjects were unfamiliar; therefore, it was not an accurate assessment."

The freshman proficiency tests have changed the way Ohio looks at education. A student must consider both the grading in their own school as well as the standards set by the state. Senior Heather Hug commented, "Schools throughout Ohio are diverse. Although curriculums are basically the same, there are just too many differences to find common ground in one test. The passing of one's own school should be enough."

by Erin Cline



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