

WorkKeys®



**Preparing
students for the
National Career
Readiness
Certificate**



Terms we'll use

- **Credential:** a document which shows that a person is qualified to do a particular job
- **Key Train:** the class work you'll use to prepare for WorkKeys test
- **WorkKeys:** tests on reading, math and locating information which qualify you for a credential
- **National Career Readiness Certificate:** the credential you'll use to get a job

What employers want

- Employers tell us that a high school diploma, even a college degree, is not enough anymore to insure work readiness
- Employers want workers who can read, apply math and locate information and demonstrate “soft’ skills



Rustler Inc. CMR business ed student

What we've done

- Working with the Great Falls Workforce Initiative for the past four years the Great Falls Public Schools has moved forward on a pilot project on WorkKeys
- WorkKeys is a battery of tests assessing the proficiencies of students in those three areas: applied math, reading for information and locating information

WorkKeys®



National Career Readiness Certificate

- The ultimate goal is a National Career Ready Certificate
- It is a national registry used in all 50 states to certify that a worker has proficiencies for specific jobs outlined by employers





The pre-testing

- Students pre-test in Key Train and are given a score of 1-7 in the three categories
- Teachers prompt the students on their career choices. For example, an accountant would need a score of 6 on reading, a 5 on applied math and a 5 on locating information. The students interested in accounting with a score of 3s in those areas would use the curriculum to raise their scores

<http://support.keytrain.com/profiles/search.asp?strackid=A110582860&strackey=125000%2C103823%2C157464%2C103823%2C125000%2C110592%2C117649%2C125000%2C125003>

Skills search <http://www.act.org/workkeys/skillsearch.html>

Search Jobs by Skills

Average WorkKeys Scores Needed by Job Title

Browse the [Applied Mathematics](#), [Locating Information](#), and [Reading for Information](#) scores required for different job titles.

Browse Job Titles: [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#)

Job Title	Applied Mathematics	Locating Information	Reading for Information
Accountants	6	5	5
Adjustment Clerks	4	4	4
Administrative Services Managers	4	4	4
Advertising Sales Agents	3	4	4
Agricultural Crop Farm Managers	5	5	4
Aircraft Body and Bonded Structure Repairers	5	5	5
Aircraft Structure Assemblers, Precision	4	4	5
Airframe-and-Power-Plant Mechanics	4	4	4
Architectural Drafters	4	4	5
Artillery and Missile Crew Members	3	4	4
Audio-Visual Collections Specialists	5	4	5
Auditors	4	4	4

Having high job skills means having access to higher-paying jobs. According to ACT research, occupations that require the lowest Applied Mathematics skill level usually pay beginning salaries of about \$16,000. On the other hand, occupations that require the highest Applied Mathematics skill level typically pay beginning salaries of about \$30,000.

Differences in salaries across skill levels also occur for the other WorkKeys tests included in [The National Career Readiness Certificate](#). Employers are willing to pay higher salaries for higher skill levels.

Are you interested in an occupation that requires a higher skill level?

Sample tests and training options are available to

Job Profile search

ACT

Search Jobs by Skills

[Skill Details](#) - Browse descriptions of skill requirements.

Job Profiles

Job Title:

Job Cluster:

Job Description:

Search by skill levels

Show only:

green

Bright Outlook

Search Results

O*Net Code	Title	Clusters	WK Prof	Special
Enter your search criteria and click the Search button to display results here.				

Click on a profile to learn more about it.

http://profiles.keytrain.com/profile_search/



WorkKeys®



WorkKeys test

- Teachers select a test date when they feel students have progressed sufficiently to take WorkKeys
- Each of the tests is online and is 55 minutes, with 10 minute breaks
- We have our scores within 24 hours

What it looks like at Level 3

The screenshot shows the ACT WorkKeys website interface. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with the ACT logo and links for 'The ACT Test', 'Education', 'Workforce', 'International', and 'Research'. A search bar is located on the right side of this bar. Below the navigation bar, the 'WorkKeys' logo is on the left, and a secondary navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Solutions', 'Resources', 'Test Sites', 'Contact Us', and 'Log In'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains links for 'Applied Mathematics', 'What it Measures', and 'Formula Sheet'. Below these is a 'Related Information' section with a list of links: 'Assessments', 'Job Skill Comparison Charts', and 'Applied Mathematics — Extended'. The right column features the title 'Level 3 Applied Mathematics Sample Item'. Below the title is a word problem: 'In your job as a cashier, a customer gives you a \$20 bill to pay for a can of coffee that costs \$3.84. How much change should you give back?'. This is followed by five multiple-choice options: 1. \$15.26, 2. \$16.16, 3. \$16.26, 4. \$16.84, and 5. \$17.16. A blue link 'View the Answer' is positioned below the options. At the bottom of the right column, there is a section titled 'Why this is a Level 3 item:' which contains three bullet points explaining the item's difficulty: 'Examinees must perform a single subtraction operation.', 'Numbers are presented in the logical order (\$20 - \$3.84).', and 'Number of dollars must be converted to a decimal (dollars and cents: \$20.00).'

ACT

The ACT Test Education **Workforce** International Research

search

WorkKeys®

Home Solutions Resources Test Sites Contact Us Log In

Applied Mathematics

What it Measures

Formula Sheet

Related Information

- Assessments
- Job Skill Comparison Charts
- Applied Mathematics — Extended

Level 3 Applied Mathematics Sample Item

In your job as a cashier, a customer gives you a \$20 bill to pay for a can of coffee that costs \$3.84. How much change should you give back?

- \$15.26
- \$16.16
- \$16.26
- \$16.84
- \$17.16

[View the Answer](#)

Why this is a Level 3 item:

- Examinees must perform a single subtraction operation.
- Numbers are presented in the logical order (\$20 - \$3.84).
- Number of dollars must be converted to a decimal (dollars and cents: \$20.00).

A level 7 question

ACT The ACT Test Education **Workforce** International Research

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Applied Mathematics
What it Measures
Formula Sheet

Related Information

- [Assessments](#)
- [Job Skill Comparison Charts](#)
- [Applied Mathematics — Extended](#)

Applied Mathematics Level 7 Sample Item

The farm where you just started working has a vertical cylindrical oil tank that is 2.5 feet across on the inside. The depth of the oil in the tank is 2 feet. If 1 cubic foot of space holds 7.48 gallons, about how many gallons of oil are left in the tank?

1. 37
2. 59
3. 73
4. 230
5. 294

[View the Answer](#)

Why this is a Level 7 item:

- There are multiple steps of calculation.
- Examinees must look up and use the formula for the volume of a cylinder.
- Examinees must convert from cubic feet to gallons.



Early results

Grand Total: 377 certificates earned to date: 4 Platinum, 97 Gold, 232 Silver, 44 Bronze

WorkKeys and Key Train are being embedded in selected Career and Technical Education courses



What the results mean

The certificate is awarded at four levels:

- **Platinum:** Skills for 99% of the jobs in ACT's database of occupational profiles—the largest of its kind. Minimum: "6" and above on all tests
- **Gold:** Skills for 90% of the jobs in the ACT database. Minimum: "5" and above on all tests
- **Silver:** Skills for 65% of the jobs in the ACT database. Minimum: "4" and above on all tests
- **Bronze:** Skills for 35% of the jobs in the ACT database. Minimum: "3" and above on all tests

Skills report on applied math

WorkKeys® Page 1 of 1

Skill Report
Report for: GreatFallsSchoolDistrict 1
Site: <ALL>
Test Date: Jan 4, 2012
Report Date: Jan 19, 2012

WorkKeys Individual Score Report
Name: [REDACTED]
ID #: 9803

<i>Test</i>	<i>Level Score</i>	<i>Possible Range</i>
Applied Mathematics	6	<3-7

WHAT YOUR SCORES MEAN
You scored at Level 6. People achieving this level can set up and solve problems containing extraneous information or information presented out of logical order and involving multiple-step calculations on a mixture of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, or percentages. To improve your skills:

- * apply ratios that involve a mixture of fractions and decimals, and perform multiple-step conversions that involve fractions and decimals.
- * calculate multiple areas or volumes of rectangular solids, spheres, cylinders, and other complex shapes.
- * check to see that each step of your calculations is correct, that you have solved the problem posed, and that your answer is reasonable.

HOW YOU CAN USE YOUR SCORES
For more information, visit www.workkeys.com



The certificate's value

- Obviously, it has value where it is recognized because it verifies work ready employees
- We're educating our local employers in the value of recognizing the National Career Readiness Certificate
- Students who have one possess a credential that is a resume builder

What's next?

- Intensively educating local business and industry about the certificate and encourage its use in the hiring process
- As a first step we're asking employers to be familiar with the certificate and recognize it when it is presented to you
- Some ways to recognize it would be to offer certificate holders an automatic job interview or pay differential as a recognition that the holder comes to you verifiably prepared in the three tested areas. Build the test competencies into the job description and ask for a certificate level appropriate to the job posting
- The school district is working with the Great Falls Job Service and MSU-Great Falls to consider the possibility of a local coordinating testing center.



Teaching “soft” skills

- At all three schools this year we’ve added the “Career Skills” part of the Key Train curriculum that measures “soft” skills such as work habits, communication skills, workplace effectiveness, and business etiquette http://run.keytrain.com/main/lesson_browser_CS.asp
- WorkKeys testing is being offered on a voluntary basis to students at GFHS and Paris
- There has been some discussion about WorkKeys as a critical requirement for diplomas for “At Risk” and Adult Ed students and rigorous programs of study



Signing on

Employers are asked to sign a “Letter of Commitment” that asks employers to recommend the National Career Readiness Certificate in hiring and/or promotion practices for one or more positions in its organization. This can be altered in any way appropriate to the signer. Or, some indication of support for the program will do.

So far the following employers have signed such letters or acknowledged support:

- Benefis
- Great Falls Clinic
- Great Falls Tribune
- N.E.W.
- Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
- Great Falls Public Schools
- City of Great Falls
- University of Great Falls
- Bison Motor Co.
- Comfort Inn & Suites Marketplace
- Great Falls Economic Development Authority
- Centene
- MSU-Great Falls College of Technology
- Albertson’s 10th Ave. S.
- Cascade County Commission
- Staybridge Suites
- Loenbro Inc. (Construction pipeline, plumbing, welding, insulation)
- Career Quest Temp Track
- United Materials
- Target



This represents more than 6,000 jobs in Great Falls



NATIONAL
CAREER READINESS
CERTIFICATE



National Career Readiness Certificate works!!

National Career Readiness Certificate

Letter of Commitment (LOC)

This letter communicates our commitment to use the *National Career Readiness Certificate* (NCRC) as our credential to document essential work-related skills

Employer Commitments:

- We will recommend the *National Career Readiness Certificate* in hiring and/or promotion practices for one or more positions in our organization
- We give the Great Falls public school district, and ACT permission to use our name in public awareness efforts to promote the *National Career Readiness Certificate*

Employer Information:

Employer Name: _____

Key Contact Name: _____

Key Contact Title/Role: _____

Key Contact Phone and e-mail: _____

Number of Employees: _____ Industry: _____

Employer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to: Tom Kotynski, CTE supervisor, Great Falls Public Schools, 1100 4th St. S., Great Falls, MT 59403 or FAX to: 268 7384

Some Web links

- http://www.keytrain.com/KeyTrain_Solutions.htm (The Key Train Curriculum)
- <http://www.act.org/workkeys/index.html> (WorkKeys home page)
- <http://www.act.org/workkeys/skillsearch.html> or http://profiles.keytrain.com/profile_search/ (Search for jobs by skill levels)
- <http://www.act.org/certificate/> (National Career Readiness Certificate home page)
- <http://www.act.org/workforce/case/elgin.html> (A case study on how the community of Elgin, IL is using WorkKeys/National Career Readiness Certificate for workforce development and academic attainment)

The “up” side

How is it working in Great Falls?

1. With students, it appears to be working well. A couple of measures bear that out. Students, when given the opportunity, retake the test to raise their scores. There appears to be engagement during test-taking. Time is spent in Key Train curriculum. Teachers accept it.
2. Some 20 employers representing more than 6,000 workers have signed a “Letter of Commitment” indicating support for the National Career Readiness Certificate.
3. The community’s largest employer, Benefis, has given enough funds to underwrite the program next year.

The “down” side

- It is expensive and there is no stable funding source. WorkKeys tests cost \$18, the registration and certificate another \$11. The Key Train curriculum costs the school district \$3,000 per school
- There has been a lag delivering this to the next level --- employers, worker training programs and to local and state economic development authorities and the state Superintendent of Public Instruction
- In Great Falls there appears to be enthusiasm from the business community for the program on the secondary level, but reluctance to try it out in local businesses. ACT has an offer on the table <http://tomorrowworkforcenow.com/about/> - allow 20 businesses to test 20 employees. It might be something for SWIB to consider promoting

Our neighbors

- In South Dakota the National Career Readiness Certificate is actively promoted by the state Department of Labor and Regulation at local Job Service sites
http://dol.sd.gov/workforce_training/ncrc.aspx
- In North Dakota all seniors are required to take WorkKeys or the ACT college entrance test. WorkKeys is the basis for the state's Career and Technical Ed Scholarship <http://www.state.nd.us/jsnd/docs/workforce/Workforce-Councils/Governance/Resolutions/Career-Readiness-Certificate.pdf>
- In Wyoming, WorkKeys and the NCRC are available through Job Service and community college sites and administered at some high schools
http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CF0QFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.wyomingworkforce.org%2Fcrc%2Ffiles%2FCRCI_Slideshow.pps&ei=L8q7T_bcAYKxiQLYx-j4Dg&usg=AFQjCNFUSMdE4BicOcuJQX-pjUMmmtrCAw&sig2=cQmhqwhijwR_BZbbBrW7NQ
- There is a statewide program in Washington state and Spokane uses it as the foundation for its economic development program
http://www.wdcspokane.com/Spokane_NCRC_One_Pager.pdf
- Oregon has been using the certificate aggressively <http://www.oregonncrc.org/>
- In Idaho there's nothing going on

This and that

- Ash Grove Cement in Montana City uses WorkKeys in hiring process for all positions. Its HR director is willing to speak about the benefits of the system
- I've met with the Spokane workforce development officials and it might be worthwhile visiting there to see how it is used in workforce development
- We need a business National Career Readiness Certificate "champion"