

# UBSCT Exam Practice Packet

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*Northridge High School  
Layton, Utah*

**A**lthough Northridge High School did not join NNPS until February 2006, the school's new Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) did not waste any time getting to work. The ATP and Northridge staff developed a take-home test-preparation packet for the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT).

High school sophomores in Utah are required to pass the UBSCT to qualify for their diplomas. Those who do not pass as sophomores may retake the test during their junior and, if necessary, senior year. The goals of the test-preparation program were to increase parental awareness of the upcoming UBSCT and to improve sophomore test scores.

The school examined information that the School Improvement Plan committees gathered and determined that parents and students needed to know more about the examination. They found that students coming from the junior high school did not know enough about the state test and the strategies that might help them do well. Parents needed to know why students were taking the test and how they might help. The Northridge packet, which was distributed to sophomores in their English classes, included sample test questions, test-taking strategies, and questions and answers for parents. The program cost \$300.

To gauge the effectiveness of the practice, the ATP will compare last year's scores to this year's. But the school has already noted several benefits from the program. Students knew what types of questions to expect. They

received moral support from teachers and older students with a we-can-do-this-together attitude. Because they were familiar with the test, sophomores felt more relaxed and less stressed. For next year, students recommended adding sample take-home tests to the program to help clarify the format and expectations of the UBSCT. Parents, too, made suggestions for improvement. The ATP intends to create the packets for at least two more years and track the results.

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