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## Values quiz helps students plan for future

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Money. Lifestyle. Achievement. For at least 23 Pleasant Grove High School juniors getting ready for life after graduation, those three things seem to rate pretty high.

The students signed onto computers Feb. 19 to complete an assessment of their values and how those might relate to working life. The quiz, being taken by all 485 juniors at Pleasant Grove, is designed to encourage students to think about the sort of careers they might like to pursue.

As they scrolled through the online assessment, the students, mostly 16 and 17 years old, were asked to rate how important income, prestige, work environment or job security are to them, on a scale of one to five].

"Income – it's my No. 1," said Brandi Hill, who sat before a computer in the last row. "Right now money is a big issue (for me), and I know it will be a big issue in the future."

Hill scrolled through the questions and rated values:

Is it important to me to like the place where I work? She gave that a rating of four out of five.

That I have to be mentally sharp? Five out of five.

To know that my occupation will never become obsolete? Five out of five. "I want to have enough income to have a good life," she said.

The assessment was designed by Kuder Inc. Founded in 1997, the Iowa-based company draws on the research of Frederic Kuder, who in 1939 began helping people navigate their interests and ideal vocations the old-fashioned way – on paper. The firm rolled out online assessments in 1999.

Pleasant Grove High career counselor Sebastian Lampe and counseling technician Gina Williams have custom-tailored the Kuder curriculum to their students. They've also extended the program to include seventh- and eighth-graders at nearby Kay Albiani Middle School, to make career prep a six-year continuum.

Middle-school students complete a more pared-down exploration of their personal interests, while high-school students more intensively research their natural skills, interests and values.

The program provides students with a sense of how their skills and interests fall into 16 different career clusters, such as finance; architecture and construction; law, public safety, corrections and security; and arts, audio-video technology and communications, to name a few.

Kuder has a database of colleges, universities and other academic programs to match student interests, as well as links to professionals in the fields and pertinent scholarships.

"This sort of information used to be so much harder to access," said Lampe, who's been teaching since 1972 and counseling since 1978. "There used to be walls of college catalogs, paper assessments. ... There was less definitive information for us 30 years ago. Our students can make more intelligent decisions now."

At the end of the assessment, Kuder presents students with their preferred work values graphed out in ranking order.

For Jeremy Ang, who plans to join the Air Force, enjoying his co-workers scored at 91 percent, measurable achievement at work came in at 89 percent and prestige at 82.

For Andrew Perez, who wants to be a civil engineer, lifestyle and income tied at 99 percent and achievement ranked at 95 percent.

Pleasant Grove Principal Frank Lucia said he stumbled across the Kuder assessment at a conference in 2004. It seemed like a natural fit for the tech-savvy high school he imagined – one that harnesses technology for the benefit of its students.

Pleasant Grove opened in 2005. And the image has been borne out. Not only is it the lone school in the Elk Grove district using Kuder, but it was the first to use School Loop, which creates a sort of MySpace for a school's community, with e-mail, chat and e-report cards, homework assignments, test results and daily updates from teachers and administrators.

The district pays for the Kuder program at Pleasant Grove, which costs \$1,475 per year. But it isn't just for students. Its online curricula are designed for adults and others researching career changes and possibilities, too.

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