

How fair are the sats?

Business



For months, students are filled with stress, anxiety, fear, worry, and frustration. When the big day comes, they wake up at the crack of dawn, eat a healthy breakfast (if their nerves can tolerate it), go to a small classroom with other teenagers, pick up their yellow, wooden pencils, and work as efficiently as they can.

This big event, of course, is the SAT. As teenagers, we're all going through this experience right now. Every year, millions of high school students are set goals, take prep classes, and study for this test, but how accurate is the SAT in measuring a student's intelligence? The test claims to measure a student's math, writing, and reading skills. In reality, it does a better job at measuring a student's time management skills as well as how many test taking strategies a student knows. Just because a student can't write an amazing essay in 60 minutes doesn't mean that they are a poor writer. Just because a student can't do 20 math problems in 25 minutes doesn't mean they don't understand math.

Yet, even if a student wants to pursue a field that has nothing to do with any of these subjects, he or she still needs to get a high enough score to get into college. The SAT doesn't represent a student as a whole, in terms of intellect or talent. Statistics prove that there are large race gaps in SAT scores. Blacks and Latinos tend to score lower than average. In addition to race gaps, children whose parents don't have a college degree tend to score lower.

Studies show that there is a correlation between SAT scores the the income of students' families. Having more money means that you can afford better schools and expensive SAT prep classes, study materials, and tutors. The

average cost of a tutor is \$40 to \$80 per hour. Access to these tools results in a higher score. By this logic, the SAT contradicts the American dream. This idea that you can start off with nothing and become a self-made person through education, ambition, and hard work is almost impossible to achieve.

The SAT makes it extremely difficult for a smart kid living in poverty to go to an Ivy League school because they can't afford test prep materials and classes. In addition, the SAT was revamped several years ago to align very closely to the Common Core. This is troubling because 18 percent of U. S. states have rejected or partially rejected adhering to the Common Core in their schools. This creates a disadvantage for students from states like Texas, Indiana, and Virginia.

Today, more and more high schools are pushing students to go to college – but how can one be expected to get a higher education if their SAT score isn't good enough? The test that's supposed to get kids into college is preventing them from going and having the career of their dreams. Students can't go on to become scientists that cure cancer or engineers that build robots. So many merit-based scholarships are based on an SAT scores. Students that couldn't reach a high enough score because they didn't have the tools can't get the scholarships that they so desperately need to attend college. The SAT is controlled by a corporation called College Board. While they claim to be a nonprofit organization, they have been criticized for paying many of their employees high salaries and having surplus profits.

Their current CEO, David Coleman, had a starting salary of \$750, 000 in 2012, and 19 College Board executives earn more than \$300, 000 per year.

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The fee to take the SAT is currently \$60, and the price seems to rise every year. There are additional fees if you register by phone or need to change your testing date. Then there are fees on top of that to have your scores reported to colleges of your choice. Students who can afford it, take the test multiple times in order to raise their scores.

Asking students to pay these fees gives as a requirement to get into college is unfair. College Board is taking advantage of innocent teenagers. It shouldn't be acceptable that a huge testing corporation controls a child's future. Even though this test is one of the most important factors that's taken into consideration when applying to college, it's an extremely inaccurate when it comes to measuring how successful one will be in college. Many students with low SAT scores have had great success in college. This test doesn't even achieve its intended purpose.

Supporters of the SAT and other methods of standardized testing may argue that standardized testing is a key method in measuring the education performance of a school, town, county, state or nation, but how can it be a valid assessment if some student are set up to fail? It can't determine how well students in a specific area are doing in school if they have not had enough tutoring to learn the shortcuts and strategies that allow them to do the best on this test. People can't make assumptions about the kids from a certain area based on one test. It's like saying that you know every single thing about a person you've known for a day. We need more college scholarships that are based on the student as a whole. More weight should be placed on extracurricular activities and community service. Dedicating

time to helping people that aren't as fortunate is equally as important as going to school.

What kids do in their free time is what builds their values and makes them the person that they will introduce to the world one day. The only way for teens to find their passion is to go out into the world and create experiences. Taking a four hour test certainly won't help their love for a subject blossom. A SAT score shouldn't define what college you get into. That number shouldn't define your future as a student. That number shouldn't define how successful you'll be in life.

In order for students to make this change, they need to write to college admissions offices and local politicians. Policies should reflect that students' dreams matter. Laws should be enforced so that nonprofit organizations like College Board can't charge high fees to low-income students. Students should also write to colleges, asking them to look at their scores less and focus more on more accurate measures of their intelligence, such as G. P. A. and their life experiences. We have the power to force colleges to stop looking at numbers and start looking at students as individuals. Students have the power to use their voices to make change possible.