

Are tests for the best?

Business



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Students hold their breaths and their pencils, trapped behind old desks in a gigantic room, for four hours in absolute silence, with the feeling that their lives depend on this one test. A very stressful, expensive, time-consuming test: the SAT. While this monster test comes as a burden on the privileged student, for other students, the SAT is even worse. More often than not, colleges will look at SAT scores before perusing other prominent pieces, to make their admission choices. Because the SAT favors more privileged students and does not provide a reliable, accurate picture of a student's potential, colleges should stop requiring the SAT test.

As it stands now, all students, including those from less privileged schools and cities, must take the same SAT test, giving an unfair advantage to those from wealthier schools. Students who attend public schools in poverty stricken areas do not receive the resources that schools in wealthy communities would, which limits their level of education. David C. Berliner, a professor at Arizona State University, states that “ schools serving disadvantaged students in poor districts often lack educational quality,” affirming that students at poorer schools do not receive the quality of education of those at wealthier schools, which places them at a disadvantage when taking standardized tests (Berliner). Furthermore, students of more prosperous areas receive more funding, giving them a better education and better preparing them for the SAT.

For example, the Sto-Rox School District, in a relatively low income area, receives around 24. 4 million dollars in total revenue each year and has one of the lowest scores on a ranking of the public schools in Pennsylvania, provided by a survey from the U. S. Department of Education (Niederberger).

<https://assignbuster.com/are-tests-for-the-best/>

Sto-Rox students attain an average SAT score of 1481; by contrast, the North Allegheny School District receives about 121 million dollars in revenue, and its students earn an average score of 1700 (StartClass).

Besides the wealth discrepancy among public schools, less fortunate students face another hurdle with regard to the SAT. While affluent students possess the resources and money to seek extra test preparation, such as tutors or SAT prep classes, underprivileged students and families do not. Wealthy parents may choose to put their children through prestigious SAT preparation classes or private tutoring, but poor families do not have that luxury. As Charles Murray, a W. H. Brady Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, puts it, “[t]he richer the parents, the higher the children’s SAT scores” (Murray).

With all this in mind, students from poorer areas do not have the resources or help that those students living in luxury receive, making them less likely to do well on this test, thus providing the wealthy students an unfair advantage in the college admissions process. Despite ample proof and statistical evidence that demonstrates that students from affluent areas receive advantages, many will say that tests like the SAT are the only way colleges can narrow their pools and get an accurate picture of the applicants’ abilities. To an extent this is true, and many colleges check over the scores of students closely when making their choices; however, are these scores really a good determinant of college success? Many students spend tremendous time and money preparing and getting “coached” for the SAT, which could make their SAT scores inflated in comparison with those of less affluent students. The time factor along with the exorbitant amounts of

<https://assignbuster.com/are-tests-for-the-best/>

money students' families can spend, which others cannot afford, make the test an inaccurate means of selection. As a student from Stanford points out: " Money buys expensive SAT practice test books, test prep classes, private college counselors, etc. While there are a myriad of factors that create SES-related inequality in education, the SAT test in particular is a measure of whether a student can afford to ' learn the tricks' of the tests" (Page).

Since these tests only show the wealth of a student's family and the work they put in to prepare, they are not a valid way to judge a student's potential to succeed in college. Ultimately, when colleges require the SAT test of every applicant, students from less affluent schools face an inevitable and unfair disadvantage. Students from less wealthy schools receive less funding and therefore poorer educational quality; students from wealthier schools receive more funding and are better prepared, and students and families from poor areas cannot afford test preparation. Rather than so heavily weighing one test, colleges should equally consider factors such as extracurricular activities and grades. All students deserve an equal opportunity at acceptance into good colleges, right?