

Sat: scholastic assessment test or student affluence test

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Why does every high school student's college acceptance rely so heavily on SATS? Studies have shown how the test is unfair and does not truly display a student's academic ability. Students everywhere are denied by colleges for average SAT scores, however many of them graduate with high GPAs and place high in their class.

Why is this? Why should high school students nationwide be judged on one exam and not get credited for their hard work over their four year high school career? The SATS should not be evaluated by admission officials because they reflect students' economic class and ethnic background; the test does not show a student's true ability, and test scores should not be a factor of college acceptance. Should parents' income and ethnic background affect the score students receive? It should not, but studies show otherwise. Students with the wealthiest parents score 78 points higher than average on the writing section, 75 points higher for math and 72 points higher for reading. The Students Affluence Test graph displays the positive correlation between test scores and parental income. This means the wealthier the parents, the higher the student's' test score.

Students from families earning more than \$200, 000 a year average a score of 1, 772, while students from families earning under \$20, 000 a year average a score of 1, 324. The largest gap occurs in mathematics between Asian Americans and blacks. 47% of Asian Americans who took the SATS also took an Advanced Placement class or honors class, but only 25% of blacks who took the SATS took an Advanced Placement class or honors class. Why is this statistic important? Look at the " Average SAT Scores by Race and

Ethnicity". Asian Americans scored 167 points higher than blacks in mathematics. Students who took advanced courses did better on the SATS.

Parental expectations factor into why students take challenging courses. Parents who push their children to do well in school, are often the parents who get positive results. Affluent families can also afford extra tutoring in school giving their children another advantage. Kumon, Sylvan, and Russian Math are all programs that offer help and practice to those who need it, but charge for their services. The SATS are supposed to be based on the common curriculum, but clearly offer an advantage to those who expand their education.

It is impossible to fit all four years of knowledge in one test and cover every single lesson learned. If the SAT is a "fair" test to help students show what they know, why are the grades earned on every homework assignment, quiz, test, and project not considered just as heavily? High school grades are a better predictor of grades in college than an SAT score. It has been proven that there is no correlation between the freshman year grades and SAT scores. Skills learned in high school will be carried and used throughout college, but techniques used to do well on the SATS will have no use with further schooling. Also, the timing on the SATS makes it harder for students to show what they know because they are rushed to finish the work given in a short period of time.

Rushing leads to errors and sloppy work, unlike completing an assignment in school which allows pupils more time, along with the option to check for mistakes and ask questions. The chart to the right shows Yale's acceptances.

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All of the red dots show the students who were denied acceptance to Yale. Is it a coincidence that those with perfect GPAs, but average SAT scores did not get accepted? No. Sadly, even those who busted their butts throughout high school might not receive a letter of acceptance from their top school. The most common deciding factor are SAT scores.

Studies and research from colleges across the country share one thing in common. Students who excelled on the SATS were the ones who were more frequently accepted. A little more than 25% of colleges make SAT scores optional. That is not nearly enough and more colleges should consider making the test scores optional. According to the College Board, “large, public state university systems often use a mathematical formula based on a student’s grade point average (GPA) and scores on the SAT or ACT” (Article, Admission Decisions: What Counts) The SATS are critical in college acceptances. “Charles Murray, a political scientist and a graduate of Harvard University, credits the SAT for taking him from a small town in Iowa to the most prestigious college in the world, yet he says, ‘If you’re rich, you can buy your kid a high SAT score.’” (Article, SAT is not a fair measure of skills) Once again, Murray is a primary example of how high SAT scores open many doors for secondary education acceptances and are unfair. Parents who can afford to pay for private schools are putting their children at another advantage. Private schooling may not offer better education than a public school, but looks much better on college resumes. Also, having extra money to pay for tutoring and SAT prep courses place those students above all the others. What can be done to take the stress away from students about the SATS? Ultimately, getting rid of the SATS as a whole is the goal.

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Taking baby steps such as offering free SAT courses and tutoring through the school would be beneficial. Having students who have taken the SATS share their experience and give tips to those getting ready to take them can help eliminate stress. Those who put the test together should listen to the feedback of the test takers and make revisions if possible. School Officials are using other aspects for college acceptance. Using GPA scores, college essays, and work experience as acceptance factors are all options to a fair opportunity. Colleges such as Drew University in New Jersey allow students to submit an essay graded by a teacher rather than submitting an SAT score.

There is also a website called fairtests. org that “ works to end the misuses and flaws of standardized testing and to ensure that evaluation of students, teachers and schools is fair, open, valid and educationally beneficial.”

(Website, fairtest. org) Over 800 schools no longer require SAT scores, but there is still much more work to be done. Life is not fair, but education should be.

The SATS need to be modified so that every student is given a fair chance no matter how much their parents make or the color of their skin. The test also should not be the number one thing considered by colleges because it is unfair to those students who are not good testers. The fight for fair testing needs to continue and should be based on academics, not affluence.