

Challenging the SAT and ACT

Students Against Testing is partnering with Fair Test, an advocacy group in Boston, Massachusetts, to kick off a grassroots campaign against the abuses of the SAT and the ACT exams, particularly regarding their misuse in college admissions.

The SAT originates from the racist Army mental intelligence tests of the 1920's and the early talent searches by Ivy League universities during the 20's and 30's. It is primarily used throughout the East and West coasts of the country. The ACT, though often in the shadow of the SAT, is the primary college-entrance exam for students across the Midwest and the South. It is taken by over 1 million students each year. Yet both of these exams have striking similarities when it comes to their effects on students.

Both of these exams:

- **predict parental income more accurately than anything else** (According to the college board, students taking the SAT will score an extra 30 points for every \$10,000 in their parents' income)
- **have proven to be consistently biased against females, blacks, and latinos**
- **value superficial test-prep and coaching programs such as The Princeton Review and Kaplan in order to succeed, while taking away time and energy away from real learning**
- **are used by some colleges and universities as the single factor in determining whether students are admitted or not, and whether they receive scholarships or not**

"If the unhappy day ever comes when teachers point their students towards these newer examinations, then we may look for the inevitable distortion of education in terms of tests." Carl Brigham, director of the Princeton University Admissions Office in 1926, the year the SAT was administered for the first time.

A Few Action Ideas...

Take on the SAT's and ACT's at your local college campus

One of the most effective ways to challenge these exams is to challenge those who are requiring students to take them: the admissions offices of our nation's colleges and universities. There are already over 400 colleges and universities that have developed SAT-optional admissions policies of some sort.

- Spread the word and bring together a group of students, professors, parents, and citizens who are interesting in ridding their local college of strict SAT and ACT requirements
- Come up with flyers and information on how these exams specifically affect your local college's potential student body
- Get in touch with the admissions office of that college, and try to set up a meeting where that college's SAT and ACT requirements can be discussed
- Emphasize the unreliable, superficial, and biased nature of the exams, and point to the growing number of 400+ universities and colleges where they have developed alternative entrance requirements that do not primarily revolve around single test scores

Boycott the SAT and ACT

- If you're a high school student applying to college, consider boycotting the exams. It's a way to prove to colleges that you can be a highly qualified and intelligent applicant without a single test score to "get you in the door." Be careful of which colleges you are applying to and think about how gutsy you want to be with this – many colleges will not even look at your application if you don't have scores on the SAT or ACT.

Follow the Money

- Publicize the corporations and businesses that are getting rich of the SAT/ACT testing craze. Let the public know how many millions of dollars The College Board and ETS are making as a result. Publicize the annual reports of test-prep firms such as Princeton Review and Kaplan. Even if they are helping students succeed on a shallow level, they are also preying upon and profiting from the anxiety frenzy that these tests create.

To get more involved, check out: www.nomorettests.com/sat.html

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