

## **Huron PTSO ABOUT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING**

It was clear from our parent meeting on standardized college admissions testing that there is no one size fits all standard for Huron students when it comes to determining what college admissions test to take and when to take it. The following information was compiled to provide additional information when it comes to making these decisions, based on the questions asked during the Junior Parent Meeting. Please consult with your student's counselor for individual student geared information. Please consult the Huron High School website at [www.huron.aaps.k12.mi.us](http://www.huron.aaps.k12.mi.us) – Guidance and Counseling and College and Career Sections for specific information regarding test dates and registration deadlines and practice tests and the Huron High: A Guide for Parents and Students for 2005-2006 guide.

### **What tests to take?**

Deciding which college admissions tests to take is a confusing decision. A student has to take into account the admissions requirements of specific colleges. Students at Huron attend all kinds of colleges, both in state and out of state.

For example the following colleges require these tests (taken from current websites 9/05, subject to change):

Grand Valley State University	ACT or SAT (ACT used for scholarship consideration)
University of Michigan	ACT with writing or SAT
Michigan State University	ACT with writing or SAT
Western Michigan University	ACT or SAT
Central Michigan University	ACT
Northwestern University	ACT with writing or SAT, SAT II (three tests recommended)
Washington University	ACT with writing or SAT, SAT II recommended
Yale University	SAT I and three SAT II or ACT plus writing (may use ACT with writing alone but some Yale departments use SAT I and II for course placement)

Many engineering schools have specific requirements. As you can see requirements differ so look at college websites to help make this determination.

### **When to take the test?**

Students at Huron take college admissions tests at many different times and you should gauge your readiness based on the individual student. For example, some students will take the SAT in the fall of junior year and again in the spring of junior year.

The collegeboard.com website reports that most juniors take the

PSAT – fall of junior year as preparation for the SAT

SAT I – spring of junior year and again in the fall of senior year if desired

SAT II – spring of junior year, again in fall if more tests are to be taken.

Collegeboard.com, administrators of the SAT state that at least ½ of all students taking the SAT take the test twice, once in the spring of junior year and once again in the fall of senior year.

Keep in mind that some colleges admit students through rolling admissions (the earlier in the fall an application is received, the higher the chance is for admission) and early action/early decision deadlines in the fall of senior year. Some colleges do not accept rushed scores from SAT/ACT.

If a student is taking the SAT II subject tests, plan test dates carefully in the spring and fall of junior year.

### **How many times?**

Although students may take a particular college admissions test more than once, it is generally recommended that one not take the same test more than two-three times.

### **How do colleges handle test scores when a test is taken more than once?**

Colleges handle scores differently, depending on the college. Some colleges take the highest composite score (ACT or SAT) and others might take the highest scores from one section of the SAT and add it to the highest score from another section to calculate a new composite. Colleges may look at either the highest SAT or ACT composite score. Check with each college for its specific handling of test scores.

### **PSAT**

The PSAT is a practice SAT I administered on one date only in the fall of junior year. It is the qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship program. It also allows a student to identify strengths and weaknesses before taking the SAT I.

- **When:** It is administered on one Saturday only in October (with an alternate date available if there are religious or other conflicts). Students may take this test as 10<sup>th</sup> graders for practice.
- **Where:** It is administered in a student's home high school.
- **Registration/Cost:** Through the general office at school and is \$20.
- **It consists of three parts:** verbal, math and writing. Each is scored on a 20-80 point scale. The composite score is obtained by adding all three scores (perfect score is 240).
- Simulations are held at the high school before the actual test.
- The test is scored like the SAT I – 1 point for each correct answer, 0 points for no answer, and minus ¼ points for incorrect answers.
- The National Merit Scholarship Corporation recognizes the top scores each year (some 50,000 of the 1.3 million entrants). In late September of senior year, 34,000 of the 50,000 students receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their performance. In early September the 16,000 highest scorers are notified they have qualified as semi-finalists and are invited to apply to be finalists. Notification of this status comes in February of senior year. 8200 scholarships to students are awarded in the spring of junior year – including \$2500 National Merit scholarships, corporate-sponsored scholarships and college-sponsored scholarships.
- Semi-finalists are designated on a state representational level (the highest scorers in each state) thus the selection index in New York might be higher than the index in Michigan. This index may vary slightly from year to year.
- The National Achievement Scholarship Program, also administered through the National Merit Scholarship Program, recognizes the top black students' PSAT scores.

- For more information: visit the website [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org)

## **ACT**

The ACT consists of curriculum-based achievement tests in English, math, reading and science. An optional writing section is available.

- **When:** The test is administered many times throughout the year: Oct, Dec, Feb, April and June at Huron or at Pioneer. It is also given at WCC and Concordia locally.
- **Registration:** Registration can be done online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) or request a packet at 319/337-1270. The Career Center also has registration packets.
- When registering, students may choose to send the reports to 4 colleges (by indicating on registration form). They may also send scores to two additional colleges on the registration form for a cost of \$7 for each college.
- **Cost:** \$29 for the basic test and \$43 for the basic test plus writing. (You should decide to take the writing section based on the institutions to which you are applying. Some colleges require or recommend the writing section i.e. University of Michigan requires the writing. The ACT website has a section where you can check this per college.)
- Students check in for the test at 8am and finish at 12:15 (1pm if they are taking the writing portion) with a break between the first two sections.
- Students are not penalized for wrong answers on the ACT. Each correct answer is awarded one point and nothing is subtracted for an incorrect answer. The raw scores are then converted to scale scores. The composite score and scores for each section range from 1-36. For students who taking the writing portion, a combined English/Writing score is reported by using a formula that weights the English test 2/3 and the Writing test 1/3 for a combined score. This combined score is then reported on a 1-36 scale.
- Students can view scores online 2 and ½ weeks after the test for \$8. A written report will be sent out 4-7 weeks after the test.
- Students may designate a particular test date's scores to send to colleges (all scores from one given test date). The fee after registration is \$7 per test date per report.
- The ACT company reports that 55% improve composite score with repeat test, 22% show no change and 23% show lower score.

## **SAT I**

This college admissions test was recently modified (March of 2005) with the following changes:

- The test sections include Math, Critical Reading, and Writing
- Essay, grammar, short reading passages and Algebra II were added
- Analogies, and quantitative comparisons were deleted
- The test is administered seven times a year: Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, April, May, June. It is not given in Oct in the Ann Arbor Schools.
- The cost is \$41.50 for the test.

- It is scored on the basis of 200-800 points per section with 2400 as a perfect score.
- The essay comprises 1/3 of the writing score (The writing section consists of a 25 minute essay graded by two independent readers on a scale of 1-6 for a combined essay score of 2-12, and) and a multiple choice section
- Students receive 1 point for each correct answer on this test, 0 for no answer and minus ¼ point for each incorrect answer.
- Test taking time is 3 hours and 35 minutes.
- Students are allowed to send scores to four colleges with no charge if specified on registration or test form by test day.
- Additional score reports can be requested online (easiest way) or by mail to the SAT Program, PO Box 8057, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864. It costs \$9 for each additional score report.
- A cumulative report of *all* scores is sent. Separate scores for specific test dates or test sections of subject tests cannot be sent.
- Scores can also be reported early by phone for an additional fee of \$10. Written reports are sent about three weeks after the test date.
- Scores can be cancelled in two ways. At the test center ask the test supervisor for a Request to Cancel Scores Form. Turn it in before leaving the room. Once the request has been process scores cannot be reinstated. You must cancel all sections of the SAT, not individual sections.
- After leaving the test center, The College Board must receive your request to cancel scores by the Wednesday after the test date. See [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for the needed information.

## **SAT II**

Sat II are subject tests that are sometimes required of selective colleges or particular schools/departments at colleges for admission. The tests are designed to measure your knowledge of a particular subject area and are curriculum based.

- Subject tests are one hour in length, multiple choice tests.
- Cost of the test is \$18 for basic registration fee plus \$8 per subject test. (Language and listening tests are \$19).
- A student can sign up for three subject tests on one test date
- You can change your mind on test day about which Subject Test you want to take. You may substitute a Subject Test (other than a listening test), or add Subject Tests (other than a listening test) on test day.
- SAT Subject Tests - You must cancel ALL scores for that test date.
- Subject tests are in the following areas Literature, U.S. History, World History, Math I, Math II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Language Reading and Listening (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish), Language Reading only (French, German, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Spanish)
- All Subject II tests are offered in Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, May and June except for Languages (see collegeboard.com) for schedule. April is SAT I only.

- Try to take an SAT II Subject Test in either May or June of the year in which you took the course that the test covers. Usually this is late in junior year or early senior year.
- Very few colleges specify that you have to take any one particular SAT II test but many specify that you have to take at least one from certain categories, such as Science, Math or the Humanities.
- Try to take the SAT II tests that will show you in the best light that you'll score the best on. Average Scores for the most popular SAT II Subject tests:
 

Literature	590
US History	590
World History	580
Math I	580
Math II	660
Biology	590
Chemistry	610
Physics	640

*Individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights to equal access to programs and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In order to access these rights, a student must present documentation indicating that the disability substantially limits some major life activity, including learning. Students who present the academy with appropriate documentation will be granted those requested academic accommodations that are supported by the documentation and considered reasonable in this educational setting. For more information about the academy's documentation standards and the granting of accommodations, please contact the Dean of Students' Office.*

#### *Non-standard Administration of College Board Exams*

*The Educational Testing Service (ETS) of the College Board offers non-standard administration of the SAT I and II and the Advanced Placement exams to qualified students. In order to qualify, students must apply to ETS for accommodations by the registration deadline of the test for which they wish to use them. (Students who have applied for accommodations when at a previous school must re-apply to be allowed to take the exams under non-standard conditions here.) To help a student avoid a special review of his or her application by ETS, the academy must be able to certify that it regularly provides the student with the special arrangements for instruction and/or assessment that are being requested for College Board examinations. Students considering taking any of the College Board examinations with accommodations should consult with their counselors.*