

SAT Update: August 4, 2016

The State of Illinois has made a decision to transition from administering the ACT exam to the SAT Exam beginning with the 2016-2017 school year. While this transition may cause some initial concern, there are multiple factors that will enable District 300 to ease concerns and prepare our students to succeed on the SAT Exam.

The SAT exam shares many similarities with the ACT:

- Universities and colleges that require an entrance exam will accept both ACT and SAT results
- There are opportunities for re-takes
- There is considerable overlap in the academic skills students are asked to demonstrate and the format of the exam as indicated by the table below:

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships
Test Structure	Math	Math
	Reading	Reading
	Writing and Language	English
		Science
	Essay (Optional)	Essay (Optional)
Length	3 hours (without essay)	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)
	3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)	3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
		1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific

Science	None	science knowledge)
Math	Covers:	Covers:
	Arithmetic	Arithmetic
	Algebra I & II	Algebra I & II
	Geometry, Trigonometry, and Data Analysis	Geometry and Trigonometry
Tools	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
Essays	Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36

One of the SAT Exam's added benefits is that the District can administer the PSAT and PSAT/NMSQT on an annual basis leading up to the formal SAT administration during a student's junior year.

To prepare students for the SAT exam, District 300 has teamed up with College Board in providing the SAT suite of assessments, which includes annual practice tests for eighth graders, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. The practice tests include PSAT 8/9 (8th graders and freshmen), PSAT 10 (sophomores), and PSAT/NMSQT (juniors). Each test is sequentially aligned with the SAT to provide all stakeholders with the most information for making well-informed decisions.

The PSAT 8/9 (8th graders and freshmen) and PSAT 10 (sophomores) will provide staff with an opportunity to:

- Establish a baseline for student readiness

- Assess and monitor student performance from the baseline to each subsequent annual administration
- Pinpoint areas for improvement
- Prepare students for the redesigned PSAT/NMSQT (juniors) and SAT (juniors)

The PSAT/NMSQT (juniors) is a preliminary version of the SAT. However, it provides far more information than a mere practice test and helps students enter scholarship and recognition programs, plan for college and/or workforce development, understand their potential for success in AP examinations, and receive information from colleges.

The testing dates listed below are for the 2016-17 school year, but successive years will follow a similar timeframe:

- Eighth grade students will be given PSAT 8/9 on Wednesday, October 5, 2016, which will provide them with practice and a baseline score as they prepare for the state-funded SAT when they are juniors.
- Freshmen will be given the PSAT 8/9 on Wednesday, October 19, 2016, which will provide them with practice and a baseline score as they prepare for the state-funded SAT when they are juniors.
- Sophomores will be given the PSAT 10 on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, which will provide them with practice and a baseline score as they prepare for the state-funded SAT when they are juniors.
- Juniors will be given the PSAT/NMSQT on Wednesday, October 19, 2016. In addition to being a practice SAT exam in the fall to prepare students, this is the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which offers high-scoring students the possibility of receiving scholarships and/or recognition for qualifying scores.

In addition to preparing students by providing a baseline score and additional growth scores on each successive test, the SAT suite of assessments are aligned with AP tests. Students and schools will receive AP potential scores, which will be paired with the other traditional indicators, enabling stakeholders to better identify potential AP courses for students to enroll.

The AP Potential Report is a tool that is used to help identify and encourage more students to take AP courses and exams. The report is based on research that establishes significant correlations between PSAT test scores and AP Exam scores. The College Board research

supports that a student's score on the PSAT are better "predictors" of a student's AP Exam outcome than traditional indicators of grades, proficiency in previous coursework, and the number of courses a student has taken in the same content area/discipline. However, the District will continue to use multiple indicators to ensure that no isolated data set is used to limit a student's access to advanced coursework.

Finally, students will have access to their scores online and will be able to evaluate their strengths and areas of concern through each successive test. Students are also provided free access to Khan Academy that will provide modules to prepare students for the SAT.

Additional resources:

- Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>
- About Education
 - *"Are Your SAT Scores Good Enough?"*
<http://collegeapps.about.com/od/sat/f/goodsatscore.htm>
 - *"Low SAT or ACT Scores? Check Out These Test Optional Colleges"*
<http://collegeapps.about.com/od/standardizedtests/a/optionalscores.htm>
- College Board
 - *"Understanding Scores 2016"*
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/understanding-sat-scores-2016.pdf>
 - *"Practice Online Through Kahn Academy"*
<https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>