

James G. Clynes
Chairman

Latha Thompson
District Manager



505 Park Avenue
Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
info@cb8m.com- E-Mail
www.cb8m.com – Website

**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Youth & Education Committee Meeting
New York Public Library
328 East 67th Street
Monday, January 11, 2016 at 6:30 PM**

Community Board Members (Present): Debbie Teitelbaum, Lori Bores, Zoe Markowitz
Community Board Public Members (Present): Jay Rosenberg
Attendees: 26

**Agenda: Demystifying the New SAT and the Updated ACT:
Find out which standardized test your college-bound student should take to
show off his or her strengths
Guest Speaker: Kristina Semos**

I. Introductions

II. Kristina began by providing an overview of researching colleges. Once you have your list, you can see the median score range that each college accepts, along with whether or not SAT specialized tests would be required as part of an application.

Below is the handout that each attendee received, along with a few notes.

Standardized Tests

1. SAT or ACT? While there are test-optional schools, generally speaking, every college-bound student will take one of these tests.
2. SAT II Subject Tests? SAT II's are tests that are generally taken at the end of the school year, after a student has completed a subject. Many colleges do not require the SAT II's as part of an application, but many of the more selective schools do, depending on a specific program or major. Often, if the student chooses to take the ACT, the school waives the SAT II requirement.

Let's Compare the Two Tests

A. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Grammar

1. ACT – “English Section” – 1st Section
 - a. 1 section with 75 Q's in 45 min
 - b. 5 passages with 15 Q's per passage
 - c. 9 min per passage
2. SAT – “Writing & Language Test” – 2nd Section
 - a. 1 section with 44 Q's in 35 min
 - b. 4 passages with 11 Q's per passage
 - c. 8:45 min per passage
 - d. Graphs or charts on 1+ passage(s)

3. Basically same layout and same grammar and rhetorical skills tested!

B. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Reading Comprehension

1. ACT – “Reading Section” – 3rd Section

- a. 40 Q’s in 35 min
- b. 4 passages with 10 Q’s each (Fiction, Soc Sci, Humanities, Natural Sci)
- c. 8:45 min per passage
- d. UPDATED ACT: one passage is a PAIRED DOUBLE

2. SAT – “Evidence-Based Reading Test” – 1st Section

- a. 52 Q’s in 65 min
- b. 5 passages with 10-11 Q’s each (Fiction, 2 History/Social Studies, 2 Science)
- c. 13 min per passage!!
- d. 1 Paired Double Passage
- e. 2 passages will have charts or graphs in them
- f. “Evidence” questions

C. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Math

1. ACT – “Math Section” – 3rd Section

- a. 1 Section, all multiple choice
 - b. 60 Q’s in 60 min
 - c. Geometry: 24% of test
2. SAT – “Math Test” – 3rd & 4th Sections

a. Section #3 – NO CALCULATOR

- i. 25 min
 - ii. 15 multiple choice
 - iii. 5 grid-in (self-produced)
- b. Section #4 – Calculator OK
- i. 55 min
 - ii. 30 multiple choice
 - iii. 8 grid-in (self-produced)
- c. Total 58 Q’s in 80 min
- d. Geometry < 10 % (considered “Additional Topic”)
- e. Focus: “Heart of Algebra,” “Problem Solving and Data Analysis” and “Passport to Advanced Math”

D. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Science

1. ACT – Science Section – 4th Section

- a. 40 Q’s in 35 min
- b. UPDATED ACT: typically 6 passages now, not 7.
- c. STILL a time crunch at 5:50 min per passage.

2. SAT – NO Science Section

- a. Instead, charts, graphs and tables are included in:
- i. 1 Writing and Language passage
 - ii. 2 Reading passages
 - iii. in several math questions
- b. Students given a “Science subscore” of up to 40 pts based on how well they answered questions with Science content, across the sections of the test.

c. There's also a "History subscore" of up to 40 pts.

E. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Vocab

1. BOTH – vocab is tested indirectly with specific "Vocab In Context" questions in the Reading sections.
2. Still helpful to review vocab for increased reading comprehension and essay writing ability.

F. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Writing Skills: The Essay

1. UPDATED ACT

- a. 40 min
 - b. Issue and 3 perspectives.
 - c. Analyze 3 perspectives, come up with your own, and relate them back to the given 3 perspectives.
 - d. Scored on a 36-pt scale (scored separately)
2. New SAT
- a. 50 min
 - b. Read a passage and analyze the features the author uses to make his or her argument.
 - c. Scored on a 2-12 pt scale (scored separately)

G. Scoring on the tests

1. Updated ACT:

- a. Each Section 1-36
- b. Composite Score averaged to create 1-36
- c. Essay scored separately; not required for every college.
- d. No Guessing Penalty!

2. New SAT:

- a. Combined Grammar + Reading = 200-800 ("Evidence-Based Reading and Writing"); Combined Math Sections = 200-800
- b. Sections added for a Total Score of 400-1600
- c. Essay scored separately; not required for every college.
- d. No Guessing Penalty!

Major Pros and Cons of each test

A. Updated ACT

1. PROs:

- a. We have history! Tons of practice tests
- b. We know what ACT scores each college wants.
- c. You might be exempt from taking SAT II Subject Tests.
- d. Score Choice
- e. Questions are generally straightforward.

2. CONs:

- a. TIMING – this is a SPEED TEST. Many students REALLY struggle, especially with the Reading and Science sections.
- b. Your score is averaged. It's harder to move up a point—you actually need to get 4 more points test-wide.
- c. Considerably fewer schools Super Score for the ACT.

B. New SAT

1. PROs:

- a. TIMING is incredibly more forgiving!!!
 - i. Grammar: 8:45 min for 11 Q's instead of 9 min for 15 Q's!
 - ii. Reading: 13 min per passage vs. 8:45 min per passage!!!
 - iii. No Science section!
- b. Fewer Geometry questions (if Geometry is your weak point)
- c. Your score is added. If you improve 100 points on the Math, you get to keep it And MANY more schools Super Score.

2. CONs:

- a. We don't have history with this test
 - i. Only 4 College-Board-approved practice tests right now.
 - ii. We don't know what the "Median 50%" range is for each college, so it's hard to know what target score to work toward.
- b. We don't know the Test's Scaled Score yet.
- c. It's hard to find help.

Putting it all together: How do you actually CHOOSE?

A. Top Priorities and Deal Breakers:

- 1. Extended Time: You may receive extended time from the SAT but not the ACT or vice versa. That could be a determining factor in determining which test to take.
- 2. Required Subject Tests for your college list
- 3. National Merit Scholarship Program

B. Take a Practice Test of Each.

- 1. Test Allergy?
- 2. Timing struggles?
- 3. Awful at Geometry? Would prefer No-Calc arithmetic?
- 4. Compare % correct for each section.

C. If tests are pretty much equal, go with the ACT.

- 1. More practice tests available for prepping.
- 2. More stats on what range colleges want.
- 3. You may luck out and be exempt from Subject Tests once you figure out your college list.

I Found my Test! Now what? (Creating Your Testing Timeline)

A. ACT test dates:

- 1. Sep, Oct, Dec, Feb 6**, Apr 9, June 11

B. SAT test dates:

- 1. Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan 23, Mar 5, May 7, June 4

C. Timing your first attempt

- 1. Spring of Junior Year (Feb** or Apr for ACT; Mar or May for SAT)

D. How many attempts?

1. 2-3 is normal these days. (1 or 2 in Spring, last attempt in the Fall)

E. When should you take Subject Tests (if you need to)?

1. In May or June, when you're already studying for your finals, AP exams, and Regents. Sophomore and/or Junior years.

Resources

A. FREE Cheat Sheet and helpful advice - www.KristinaSemosTutoring.com

B. Official ACT website - www.ACTstudent.org

C. Official SAT website - www.CollegeBoard.org

D. Researching Colleges:

1. College stats and requirements: www.CollegeBoard.org

2. Book: "Fiske Guide to Colleges"

E. DIY ACT Prep:

1. "The Real ACT Prep Guide" – official practice tests from the company

2. Princeton Review's "Guide to Cracking the ACT 2016"

F. DIY SAT Prep:

1. Princeton Review's books are better than Kaplan's.

2. www.KhanAcademy.org - Free practice questions

G. National Merit Scholar info – <http://www.nationalmerit.org/nmsp.php>

H. List of test-optional schools – <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.