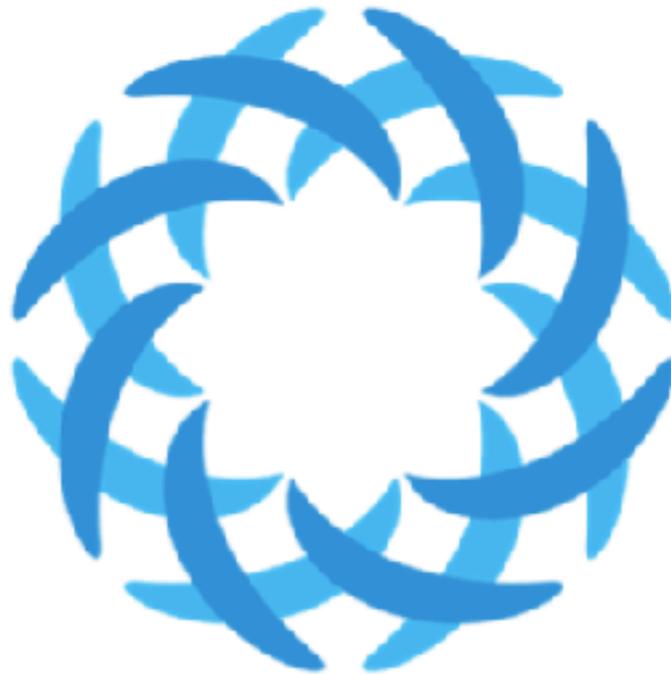

The CollegeBoard

Creating a Better Test

St. John's Preparatory School • Danvers, Massachusetts • 9 December 2017



SJPMUN XII

building a better tomorrow

Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegates,

My name is Simon Peterson, and this year I am a Senior at St. John's Prep. I will be your chair for "The College Board - Creating A Better Test" committee. I have been a part of my school's Model UN club for three years, and I have attended multiple college and high school conferences. I am truly excited to see how you will choose to solve the daunting issues regarding creating a fair standardized test for the college application process. Before the conference, I encourage you to research this topic from not only your delegate's position, but as a citizen of the world. To be a successful delegate, I recommend that you arrive at the conference fully understanding the topic and with a possible solution already formed in your mind. Good luck, and if you have any questions at all, please feel free to email me!

Sincerely,

Simon Peterson '18

speterson18@stjohnsprep.org

Committee Description:

The College Board is a not-for-profit organization with the mission of preparing, inspiring, and connecting students to college and opportunity. Through the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, and AP tests, The College Board assesses student's readiness for college and proficiency in specific areas of study. With over a century of testing experience, The College Board has a trusted platform for creating standardized tests. The goal of this committee will be to prepare The College Board for the future by modernizing various aspects of testing and policy.

This committee will be composed of 15 leaders of The College Board. Each delegate will represent a different facet of The College Board but shares in a common goal. Delegates will include: one representative from each of the six regional offices, two representatives from the Puerto Rico and Latin America Office, two representatives from The College Board International, and the committee will also have eight representatives from various colleges and universities around the world.

In this committee, delegates should focus on finding a reasonable solution through directives in papers that other delegates will vote on. Delegates should work to solve issues collaboratively, while also making sure that the needs of the individual that they are representing are met. These directives must be appropriate and align with The College Board's goals. Solutions made through restructuring tests and The College Board's practices should be the primary means for reaching a solution. Every

delegate will have the same voting powers and committee will be run under standard parliamentary procedure.

History of the Problem:

The College Board was created in 1900 with the mission of creating and administering tests to find the brightest individuals for selective universities. Around the same time, Alfred Binet and Lewis Terman created the Intelligence Quota (IQ) exam. The increased use of such exams led to The College Board creating the SAT. The first SAT, which was administered in 1926, contained 10 sections and totaled one hour and twenty seven minutes. The sections were: definitions, arithmetic, classification, artificial language, antonyms, number series completion, analogies, logical inference, paragraph reading, and an experimental questions section. Soon after it was created, the SAT is required by all candidates for Harvard University. Due to a rise in attendance of higher education from 1.7 million people in 1940 to nearly 2.7 million people in 1950, partly due to the GI bill after WWII, the SAT's popularity grew quickly. Throughout the 1950's, 60's, 70's, and 80's the SAT grew in popularity.¹ This growth is partly due to the "baby boom" and the fact that more people were attempting to attend college, and schools needed a universal standard for all applicants.

¹ A (Mostly) Brief History Of The SAT And ACT Tests. Accessed June 23, 2017.

In 1972, The College Board released a report that revealed the effects of private tutoring for the SAT. “The researchers found that a 21-hour course of coaching in 7 weeks 'produces both statistically and practically significant score gains on each of the three mathematics aptitude item formats.’”²

Throughout the 1980’s and 90’s significant changes to testing policy were implemented. These included but are not limited to, removing the antonym section, and adding a calculator portion to the math section. Many individuals and colleges and universities have viewed the SAT as an unfair representation of students for decades considering that many prominent schools, such as Bates (which went test optional in 1984) have decided not to require standardized tests. The test optional movement has become especially concerning for The College Board in recent years considering that 46% of “top tier liberal arts colleges” no longer require the SAT.³ The College Board has attempted to fight this trend by publishing articles that say, “Research consistently finds the SAT to be a valid and reliable predictor of college outcomes, including grade point average, retention, and completion.”⁴ Despite The College Board’s efforts, more than 950 colleges do not require the SAT for admission. Reforming the SAT so that it is an integral part of the college application process is imperative to the success of The College Board.

² A (Mostly) Brief History Of The SAT And ACT Tests. Accessed June 23, 2017.

³ Simon, Cecilia Capuzzi. "The Test-Optional Surge." The New York Times. October 28, 2015.

⁴ "The Facts About Test-Optional Policies." The College Board. February 07, 2017.

Statement of the Problem:

The College Board needs to adapt to modern times and change its tests so that they will remain relevant. Students applying for college are feeling misrepresented in their application, for example, statistics state that as few as 22 percent of students are satisfied with their SAT scores.⁵ From having feelings that the SAT is unfair to it not being a true representation of a person's knowledge, more and more students are not viewing the SAT and College Board as a whole as a critical component toward achieving higher learning. This idea can be extended to what colleges are looking for in their applicants. For example, the [National Center for Fair and Open Testing](#) now has over 950 "Accredited Colleges and Universities" that do not require the SAT as a part of undergraduate admissions.⁶ The College Board needs to create a more comprehensive test that will reestablish its place in the college application process. Publicity of the nearly 300 point score gap (new SAT) between high and low income students when taking the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and PSAT have highlighted how a student's background can influence that student's test score.⁷

⁵ *Niche*, articles.niche.com/not-happy-with-your-satact-scores-superscore-them/.

⁶ "950+ Accredited Colleges and Universities That Do Not Use ACT/SAT Scores to Admit Substantial Numbers of Students Into Bachelor-Degree Programs." *FairTest | The National Center for Fair and Open Testing*.

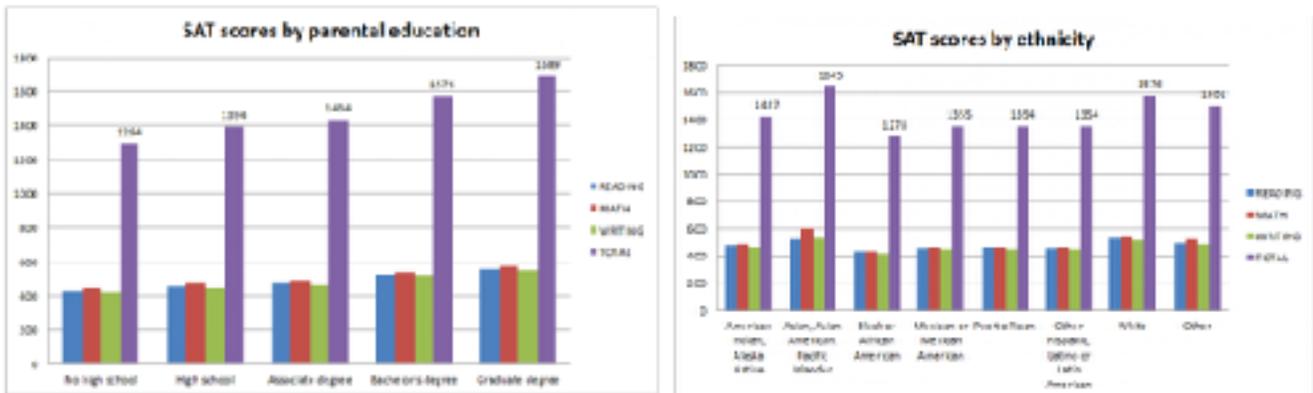
⁷Goldfarb, Zachary A. "These four charts show how the SAT favors rich, educated families." *The Washington Post*. March 05, 2014.

While the SAT does provide a universal measure of a student's cognitive ability in the subjects of English and Math, it does not create an accurate representation of a student's whole self. Many of these sentiments stem from the fact that the SAT only tests some subjects. This can create a disadvantage for students with reading disabilities. Many students feel that since many colleges and universities place so much emphasis on standardized test scores, students should be able to show off their creative ability on these tests. This idea creates problems for The College Board as it opens the door to subjectivity and detracts from unbiased grading policies, however, students need a way to show off their specific skills through the SAT.

The College Board's standardized tests favor wealthy students.⁸ The simple and clear trend is that the more money a student's family has, the better the student does on the SAT. Through having access to better schools and extra help, wealthier students do better on the SAT than poorer students. Often times, students who can afford it, hire a private tutor or enroll in a class to help prepare them for the SAT. This can cost hundreds of dollars an hour, a price that most families simply cannot afford. While this problem can be partially attributed to a larger issue of problems in the public school system, The College Board needs to find a way to make the SAT a fair baseline test for judging intelligence. This score gap can also be seen as a relationship between how highly educated the students parents are

⁸ Goldfarb, Zachary A. "These four charts show how the SAT favors rich, educated families." The Washington Post. March 05, 2014.

and the students score. The higher the degree that a student’s parents received, the more likely that student was to score highly on the SAT. This sets students back hundreds of points before they even take the SAT. Finding a better way to understand a person’s intelligence in comparison to their background is imperative.



The College Board also faces the issue of differing scores among various races.⁹ Possible reasons are the effects of internalized racism, wealth and economic status in relation to race (as explained above), or language barriers that are not addressed on today’s standardized tests. The core question behind this issue is similar to that of economic differences and parental education differences in relation to a student’s SAT score. How should The College Board go about creating a more “standard” test, and how should (if at all) the trends of economic status, parental education, and race in relation to scores play a role in a student’s final grade on the SAT?

Questions to Consider:

⁹ Goldfarb, Zachary A. "These four charts show how the SAT favors rich, educated families." The Washington Post. March 05, 2014.

What are the drawbacks and benefits of the SAT currently?

Which factors are causing more and more colleges to be “test optional”?

What aspects of a person’s intelligence does the SAT fail to test?

How can the SAT incorporate other aspects of students’ intelligence?

Should students be graded only relative to their specific economic and racial background?

How can The College Board create a more fair test for students of different racial backgrounds?

How can The College Board make the SAT a better test than all other standardized tests?

Bloc Positions:

Leaders of The College Board:

You must understand The College Board’s role as a company whose purpose is to serve students and make the test as easily available to all students, while also understanding that The College Board is a business. Understand your specific role in committee acting as an individual while still working as part of a larger team.

Representatives of Regional Offices:

Your role is similar to that of the Leaders of The College Board, however, you must also understand the specific needs and wants of your region. You should consider the prevalence of the ACT in your

area and think about ways of making the SAT more popular. Come to committee with an understanding of not only the bigger issue at hand, but also how The College Board can improve its presence in your region.

Puerto Rico and Latin America Office along with The College Board International:

Like the other members of The College Board, your job is to solve the issues as stated above, while also improving and expanding The College Board in your specific area (Latin America or Internationally).

Representatives from colleges and universities:

Your job is similar to that of the other members of committee in the sense that you want to create a solution in which everyone is happy. However, it is also your job to vouch for the wants and needs of the college or university that you are representing.

Research Suggestions:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/05/opinion/the-big-problem-with-the-new-sat.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dan-edmonds/college-board-sats_b_1595131.html

<https://www.collegeboard.org/about/region-offices>

<https://international.collegeboard.org/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/04/12/the-list-of-test-optional-colleges-and-universities-keeps-growing-despite-college-boards-latest-jab/?utm_term=.a8ead22ec785

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/how-the-sat-test-is-not-fair>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/03/05/these-four-charts-show-how-the-sat-favors-the-rich-educated-families/?utm_term=.67ba0a609432

<https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2009/09/04/sats-do-not-take-the-full-measure-of-a-high-school-student>

<https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/sat/data/archived/cb-seniors-2000>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/education/edlife/the-test-optional-surge.html>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/09/20/record-number-of-colleges-now-have-actsat-optional-or-flexible-admissions-policies/?utm_term=.e78b3ca4cf2a

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/03/will-the-new-sat-better-serve-poor-students/472311/>

<https://www.collegeboard.org/membership/all-access/admissions/facts-about-test-optional-policies>

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Strauss, Valerie. "The list of test-optional colleges and universities keeps growing - despite College Board's latest jab." The Washington Post. April 12, 2017. Accessed June 23, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/04/12/the-list-of-test-optional-colleges-and-universities-keeps-growing-despite-college-boards-latest-jab/?utm_term=.a8ead22ec785.

Goldfarb, Zachary A. "These four charts show how the SAT favors rich, educated families." The Washington Post. March 05, 2014. Accessed June 23, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/03/05/these-four-charts-show-how-the-sat-favors-the-rich-educated-families/?utm_term=.67ba0a609432.

Niche, articles.niche.com/not-happy-with-your-satact-scores-superscore-them/.