

Counselor's Corner – Test Dates – September 6, 2016

Greetings!

Your friendly neighborhood college counselor here. I hope everyone is off to a great start to the year. Continue to push yourself in the classroom and pursue extracurriculars and service opportunities that fit you! Also, keep exploring and focusing in on colleges that interest you!

This month's big announcement is upcoming college admissions tests!

Practice Exams:

- [Pre-ACT \(Wednesday, October 12\)](#) - This is simply a practice test for the ACT. All 10th graders will take this exam. This will be administered here at MCA.
- [PSAT/NMSQT \(Wednesday, October 19th\)](#) - This is a practice test for the SAT that all 10th and 11th graders will take. BUT, 11th graders should note that good scores can qualify you for national merit scholarships and various other college merit scholarships. Glad to announce that I secured a Level II College Board code which will allow us to administer this exam right here at MCA this year!

College Admissions Exams:

- [ACT \(Tuesday, February 28th\)](#) - This is one of the two major college admissions exams. All 11th graders will take this exam. This will be administered here at MCA. If you take this exam again at a later date, you will have to register/pay individually. [Fee waivers](#) may be available.
- [SAT \(Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 21, Mar 11, May 6, June 3\)](#) - This is the other major college admissions exam. All 11th graders should plan on taking this at least once during their junior year whenever they feel ready. This must be registered/paid for by each student and taken at a designated testing facility. [Fee waivers](#) may be available.

When should I take the SAT or ACT? Should I take both?

My recommendation is to take **BOTH!**

- Colleges accept either test, and you would be doing yourself a favor to "get a feel" for both tests and to see which one you perform better on.
- THEN, decide which you felt better about and scored higher on and plan to prep hard for a re-take of that one in the Fall of Senior year if you feel it's necessary based on your college ambitions.
- You can send your best scores to colleges, but nowadays, most colleges will look at the highest scores for each individual test section even if you decide to include scores from multiple tests with your application.
- Take them whenever you feel ready. You might consider waiting until you have familiarized yourself with the exam and prepped for a reasonable amount of time.

Ok, so how should I prep?

Books: Your best bet is to buy a prep book at Barnes & Noble or Amazon and work through it!

- There are many that you can choose from, BUT make sure it is as current as possible!

- The exams change from time to time, and old books may not contain the same types of questions.
- Set aside time during the week or maybe Saturday morning to work through problems and take practice exams. Consider choosing an accountability partner to keep each other on pace!

BONUS, prepping for the SAT will help you score well on the PSAT for those of you hoping to qualify for National Merit or some other college scholarships that are offered based on PSAT scores.

Additionally, various college merit scholarships may also be qualified for based on SAT or ACT scores. Be sure to check with your specific college choices to verify which tests, if any, are required/preferred for various merit scholarships.

Online: SAT and ACT prep courses are available online.

- **SAT:** [KHAN ACADEMY](#) partnered with CollegeBoard on FREE prep program
- To download the Daily Practice App for Apple/Android go to [SAT Practice](#)
- **ACT:** Makers of the ACT have an [ACT Online Prep](#) program available for purchase
- To sign up for the ACT question of the day and more go to: [ACT Test Prep](#)

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask! Also, check out the bulletin board outside my office for more SAT and ACT test dates and info.