



OPEN THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY

Middle- and low-income students face unique barriers to educational opportunity. SAT School Day is one way schools can help level the playing field.

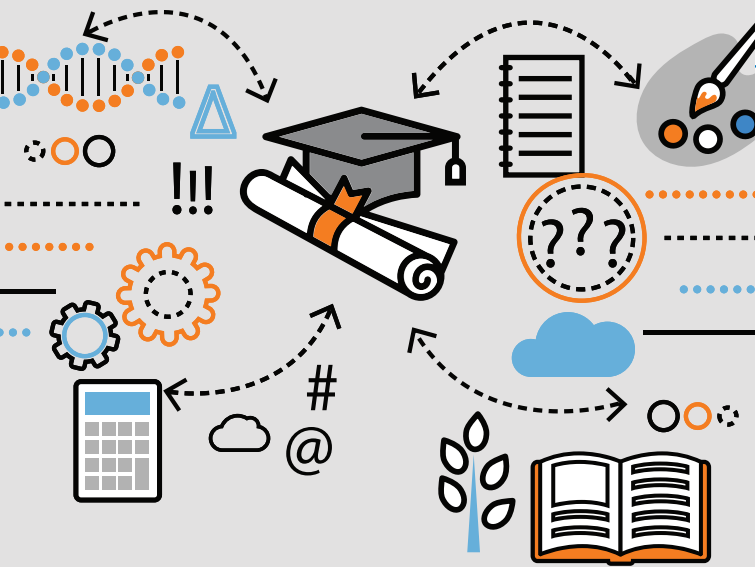
When it comes to navigating the path to college, the road is not smooth and clear for all students.

Socioeconomic factors play a large role in student outcomes. Students from high-income families are six times more likely to attend and finish college than their less affluent peers, [writes](#) University of Michigan professor Susan Dynarski, citing research that she co-authored. These students often have access to financial and family support that gives them an advantage in preparing for, applying to and graduating from college.

For students from less-affluent backgrounds, though, the story is different. Taking a college entrance exam, traditionally offered on a Saturday, can be a barrier for some students because of cost,

limited transportation options or work obligations. Similarly, the cost of many test prep services and of college applications can be a deterrent for students. And students who would be the first in their families to go to college face the challenge of navigating unfamiliar processes including preparing and signing up for college admission tests and completing financial aid and Common App forms.

The impact of poverty is significant, according to the Public Impact report [Closing Achievement Gaps in Diverse and Low-Poverty Schools: An Action Guide for District Leaders](#): “Over time, persistent poverty has resulted in many people of color, and low-income people of all races, being left out of wealth creation, home ownership, college education, and political power.”



Benefits of the SAT

The SAT®, redesigned in 2016, is a globally recognized college admission test that's accepted at all US colleges. The SAT reflects state standards, and educators can use the data from the test for instructional planning to improve college and career readiness. The SAT is the only college admission test that comes with a free, highly personalized practice plan and supporting practice tools for all students.

FREE SAT PRACTICE ON KHAN ACADEMY®

Official SAT Practice gives your students access to:

- An individualized study plan based on their scores on the PSAT/NMSQT® or other tests.
- Thousands of practice questions with instant feedback
- Video lessons that explain problems step by step
- 8 official full-length practice tests

[LEARN MORE](#)

These realities have motivated many district administrators, principals, school counselors and teachers to put equal access to high-quality instruction and college admission tests at the top of their agendas.

And NCES data on the college enrollment patterns of recent high school graduates indicate that these early efforts are paying off: The higher education enrollment gap has narrowed to 16 percentage points. To shrink this gap even further, we need a concerted effort to expand educational access and support.

CREATING A CULTURE OF EQUITY

Public Impact research found that high schools with a strong culture of equity — including access to and support for college admission testing — were most successful at closing the gap. That's why the Fort Worth Independent School District is evolving its culture.

"We learned through surveys that 80% of our children in elementary school say they're going to go to college. And yet when they get to high school, that's not what happens," said Sharon Meng, the district's assistant superintendent, [in a video produced for the College Board](#). Leaders are "trying to move the culture of many of our schools from minimums and remediation to a college-going culture, an environment where children dream."

A key element of that cultural transformation is increasing access to higher education for all students. SAT School Day, a program from the College Board that allows schools to offer the SAT on weekdays, during school hours, helps achieve this goal. The program is now available to individual schools as well as entire districts and states.

Some districts in California report that they're seeing positive results from SAT School Day. EdSource's John Fensterwald [writes](#) that during the 2016-17 school year, 22 districts participated in SAT School Day, and superintendents noted an increase in students taking the test, particularly among those from low-income backgrounds. He cites the example of West Contra Costa Unified School District, "where a third of the students are English learners and

three-quarters come from low-income families.” The district began offering the SAT for free and saw student participation double.

Nearly 3 million students in 3,000 school districts and over 8,000 schools have participated in SAT School Day.

BUILDING A PRACTICAL PATHWAY

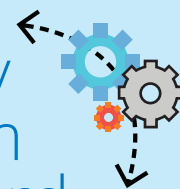
SAT School Day aims to help schools boost equity and access, cultivate a college-going culture and move students further down the path to higher education. Here’s how:

1 IT REMOVES SCHEDULING BARRIERS TO TESTING. For many students, practical barriers like transportation, scheduling conflicts and family obligations keep Saturday testing from being a viable option. School day testing helps remove these obstacles. Brenda Carter, advanced academics high school coordinator with the Fort Worth ISD, told the College Board that her district’s SAT participation increased from 35% on a Saturday to 92% on a school day.

2 IT CALMS NERVES WITH A FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT. Students who take the SAT in a place they know rather than in an unfamiliar setting feel more confident and secure. *Just being around friends and faculty eases the stress so they can concentrate more on the test.* “The day I took my SAT in school, I was in one of my classrooms and I felt very comfortable,” said Ziik, a high school student from Palm Beach, in another College Board video. “I felt like I knew where everything was. It was a familiar place. I felt at home when I was taking the test.”

3 IT EASES FINANCIAL IMPACT. Many students — even those who show potential for advancement — don’t take a college entrance exam or apply to multiple universities because they think they can’t afford it. With SAT School Day, a school may cover the costs for some or all of its test takers. The College Board offers a reduced registration fee for income-eligible students participating in SAT School Day, along with [additional benefits](#) like an additional two free Saturday SATs, six free SAT subject tests, unlimited score reports to send to colleges and waived

SAT School Day Resources from the College Board



The College Board’s portfolio of resources explains how to implement the SAT School Day program; shares educator and student insights on their experience with the program; and provides support for each step of the decision-making and implementation journey.

- **SAT SCHOOL DAY:** The hub for learning about SAT School Day, with specific pages for administrators, principals, counselors and parents that provide tools and customer experiences aimed at supporting the decision-making process and help start the SAT School Day journey.
- **SAT SCHOOL DAY- SUITE OF ASSESSMENTS CROSS-REFERENCE GUIDE:** The easiest way to compare test features like accommodations and costs across the weekend SAT, SAT School Day and the entire SAT Suite of Assessments.
- **WHAT TO EXPECT AND PREP FOR ADMINISTRATOR GUIDE:** A fact sheet, planning guide and timeline to help school and district administrators know what to expect and prepare for as they go through the purchasing decision-making process and get ready for implementation.
- **SAT SCHOOL DAY EDUCATOR DOWNLOADS:** A compendium of resources for educators, including a new implementation toolkit with resources to help reach out to parents, faculty and students. Also offered are instructional and operational materials designed to help prepare students and the school before, during and after the test.

LEARN MORE: satschoolday.org



application fees at participating universities. Another financial upside for students: According to Jennifer Ertel, college readiness senior manager for the Houston ISD, her district saw a **300% increase in scholarships and financial aid offers for students over a three-year period after taking part in SAT School Day.**

4 IT SCAFFOLDS LEARNING AND MEASURES PROGRESS. Monitoring student performance is crucial to assessing learning, measuring progress and designing appropriate interventions. Tests in [the SAT Suite of Assessments](#) are grade-level appropriate and based on a common score scale. This makes it easy for teachers to track performance across tests, measure growth and identify the areas in which students need additional instruction. The SAT Suite includes tools to help teachers set benchmarks for each student, identify students likely to succeed in AP classes and deliver actionable data via an online portal accessible by teachers and students.

SETTING A NEW DEFAULT

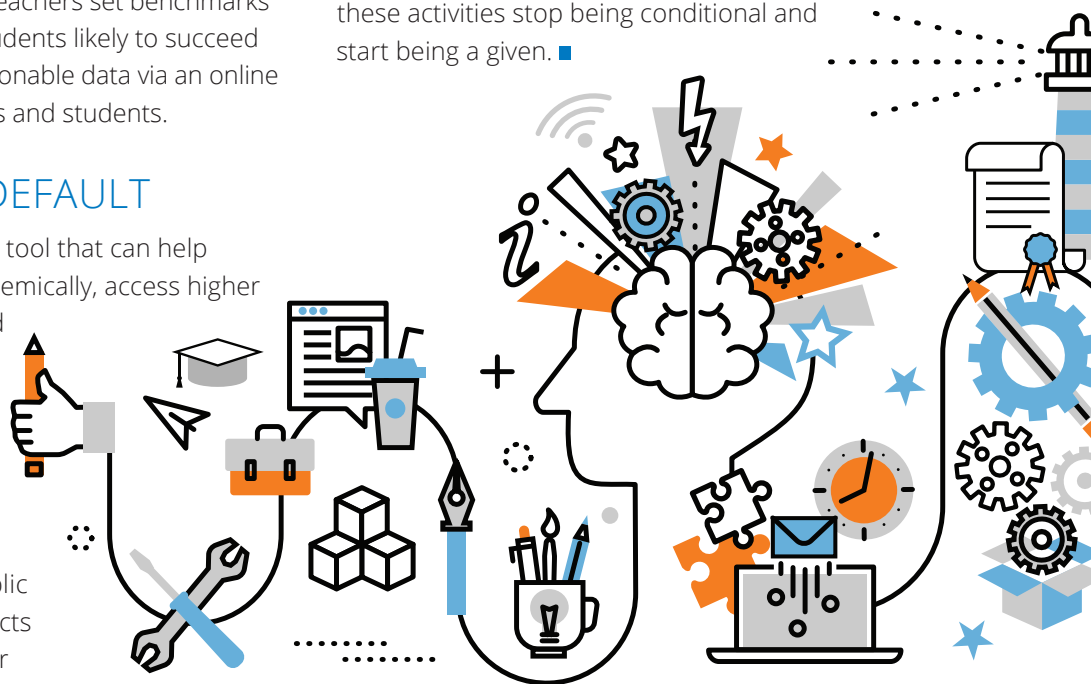
SAT School Day is a valuable tool that can help students achieve more academically, access higher education opportunities and reap the lifelong benefits of a college degree. These outcomes create a ripple effect that benefits students' lives, their communities and society at large. According to the Public Impact report, "school districts hold the power to propel our

society to a first major landing point, where achievement gaps are narrowed substantially and all students stand on strong educational footing."

Many students grow up with the expectation that they'll go to college. But far too many don't. That's because for these students "can" is a condition and not the default. They may look at a test like the SAT and think, "I'm not a good test taker; I may not score high enough."

This attitude could become a self-fulfilling prophecy — but it isn't set in stone.

Programs like SAT School Day are effective in part because the more that students participate in college admission activities, the more these activities stop being conditional and start being a given. ■



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About the College Board

Founded in 1900, the College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit created to expand access to higher education and connect students to college success and opportunity. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement® Program. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

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