



The College Search Process

...for Junior Students and Parents

Presented by:
Pittsford Mendon High School Counseling Department
November 2024

College Selection is :

A match to be made and not a prize to be won.

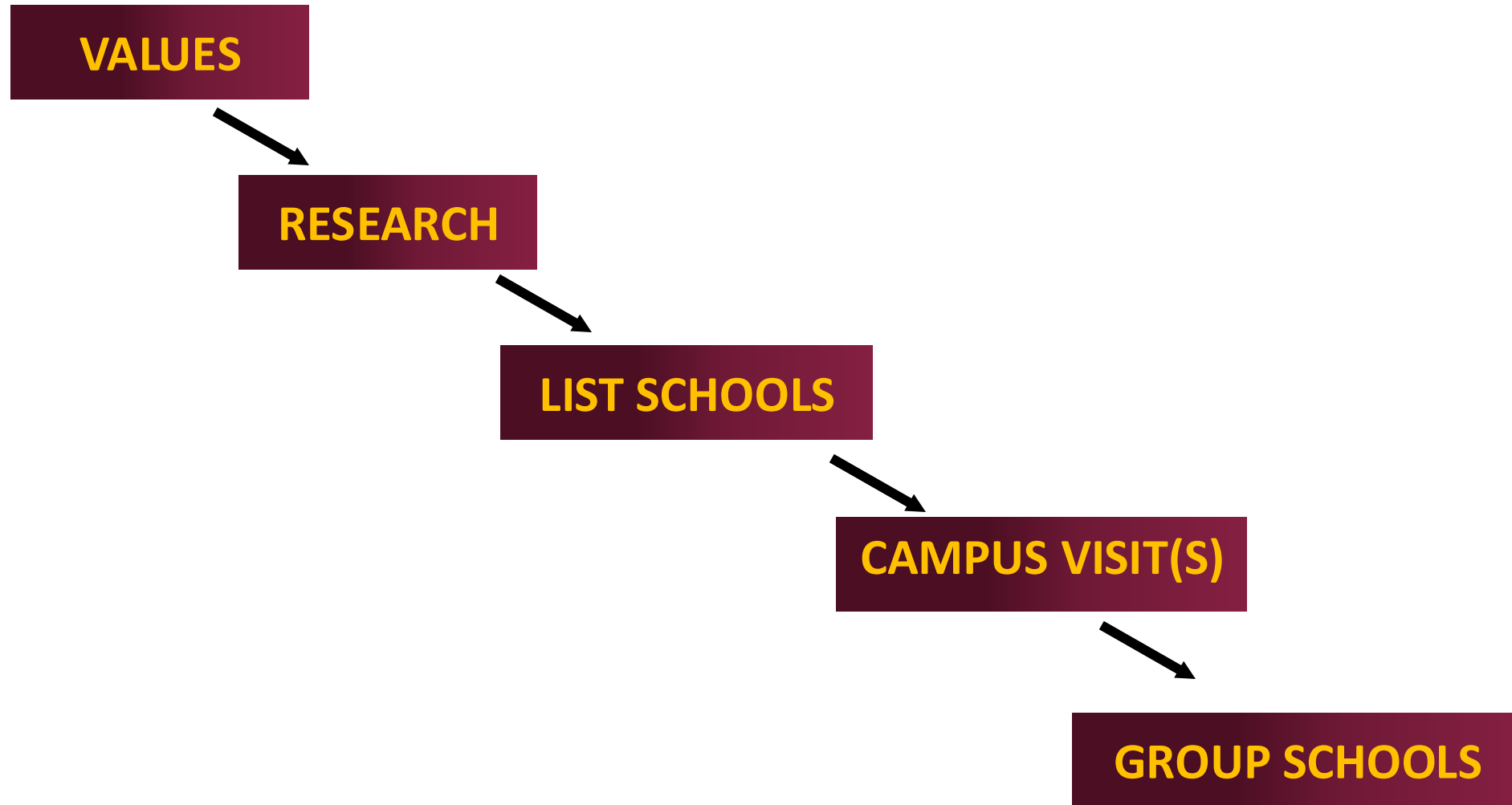


Topics Covered

1. How best to find a college match
2. Naviance/Research
3. College list “grouping”
4. Campus Visits
5. Unique Circumstances
6. Letter of Rec./Essay Writing
7. Counseling Support
8. Financial Aid
9. Testing



Finding the Match



Uncovering Values

- Visit different sized colleges early on if possible
- Distance from home
- Size: Small, Medium, Large
- Location: Suburban, Urban, Small Town, Rural
- Majors and educational programs (if ready)
- College affiliation (if important)
- Academic reputation (if important)
- *In NAVIANCE use VALUES to create an initial larger list of colleges*



December 2024 – August 2025



Research: Shortening List

- College Sites
 - Look through major programs offered
- College Representatives
- College Fairs – National College Fair (March '25)
- Parents, Students, and Alumni
- School Counselors and Teachers
- Professionals in Field of Interest
- NAVIANCE

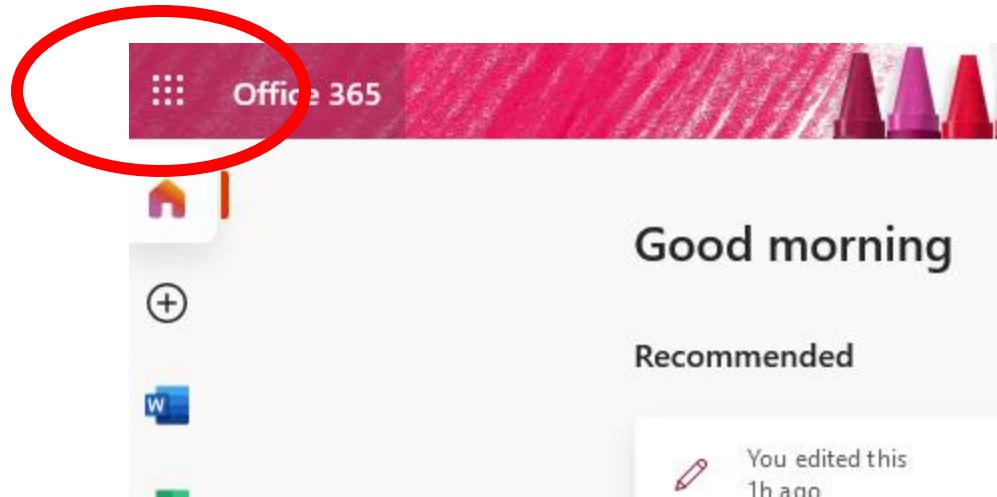


December 2024 – August 2025



* Research: Using NAVIANCE

- Web-based software to manage college decision-making process
- Access Naviance through Students Office 365 Account



December 2024 – Fall 2025



* **Research: Using NAVIANCE**

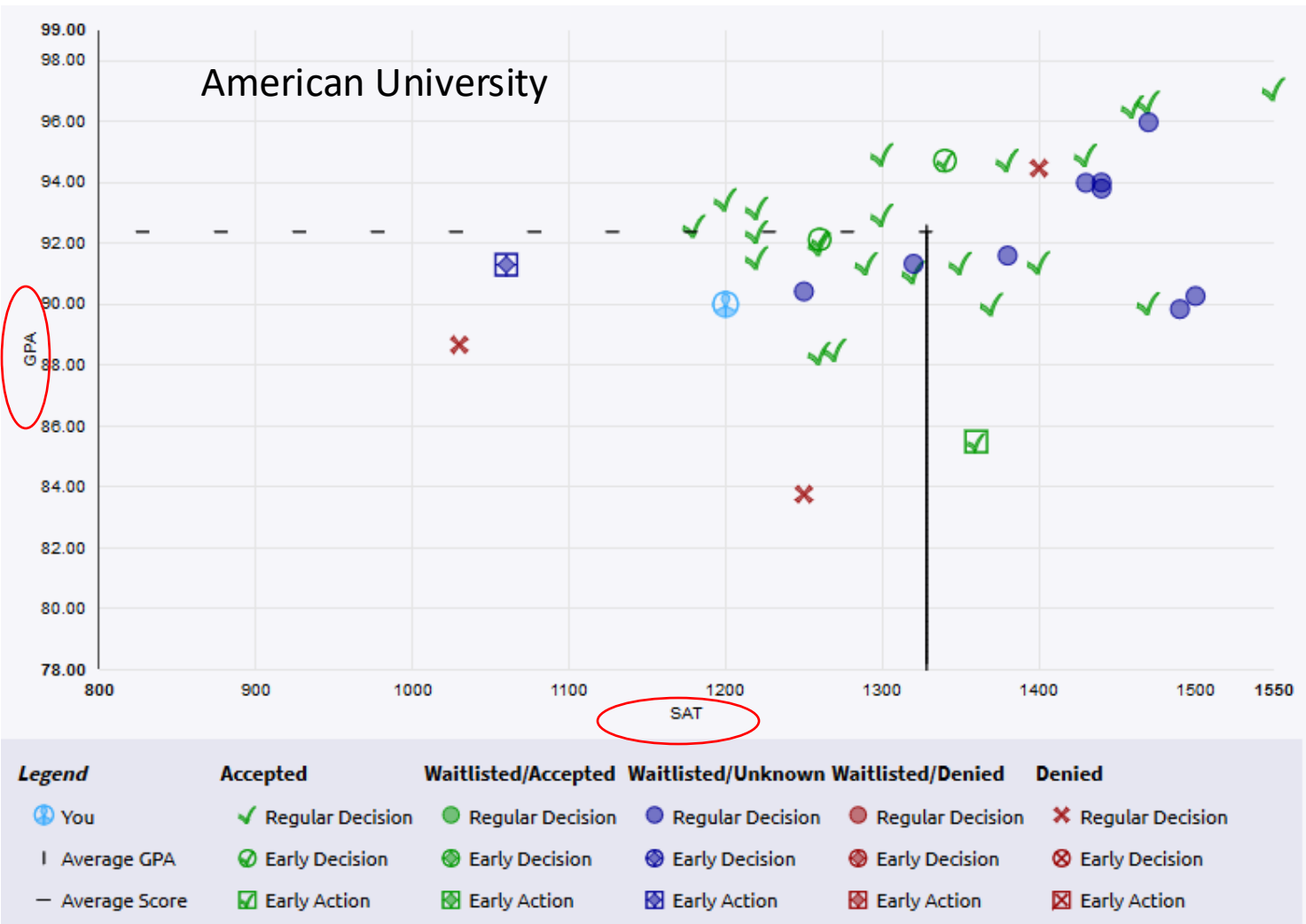
- *Use Values to create a College Search*
- *Keep a list of interested colleges for yourself and Counselor*
- *College Stats that gives MHS HISTORICAL DATA*
 - *Can look at chance of being accepted*



December 2024 – Fall 2025



* Research: Using NAVIANCE



- MHS Data over last 5 yrs.
- Can change to ACT data
 - Green: Accepted
 - Red: Not Accepted
 - Blue: No Outcome



December 2024 – Fall 2025



* Grouping Colleges

Group by Chance of Acceptance

- Safe – “I know I can get in and could see myself on campus”
- Realistic – “ I am in the ballpark based on Naviance Data”
- Reach – “I am not far away from the Naviance Data”

Group By Decision Policy

- Early Action
- Early Decision
- Rolling
- Regular Decision



December 2024 – August 2025



* Campus Visit

- Sign up for official tour online (arrive early)
- Take photo of something with campus name
- Ask questions of Tour Guide or other students:
 - What is your largest class?
 - What is your smallest class?
 - What did you do last weekend?
 - Where do students go in free time?
 - Investigate program
 - Meet with an admissions counselor
 - Inquire about a class visit
 - How are students acting in a common area?



November 2024 – Fall 2025



Unique Circumstances

- Music/Theatre
 - Start Early, Apply Early, Outside Teacher Rec., Spreadsheet
- Creative Arts
 - Start Early, Portfolio, Work with Art Teacher
- Athletes
 - NCAA Clearinghouse, Be familiar with NCAA guidelines
- Students with a disability
 - Disclose?, Specific College Support Program Research



Spring 2025 – Fall 2025



* Letter of Recommendations

Letters of Recommendation

- Ask only 2 teachers at end of Junior Year
- Managed by student through Naviance during SENIOR year
- FERPA



Spring 2025 – Fall 2025



* College Essay

How are they used

- Your ability to communicate
- An opportunity to know you
- More emphasis if you do not send ACT/SAT

How to prepare

- Take your time –start in summer and revisit
- Student’s own work and “voice”
- Pittsford Rec. course or English Teacher



Spring 2025 – Fall 2025



Transcript Request

- Applying to College:
 - ***September 2025***: a one-time consent form with signature MUST be provided for your student.
 - “Manage Transcripts” in **Naviance** to provide us where, when and what to send to each college



October 2025 – January 2026



* Counseling Support

Large Group

- Junior Seminar (May 2025)
 - Sign up and begin Common Application Process and discuss Senior Timeline
- College Application Process Presentation
 - **Senior Parent Night (September 2025)**



March 2025 – September 2025



* **Counseling Support**

Individual

- **Grade 11 Conference**
 - Senior curriculum review
 - Transcript review and how colleges look at transcript
 - ACT/SAT strategy
 - Essay Writing
 - Letters of Recommendation strategy
 - Formalize college list and look at Reach, Realistic, Safe
 - Discuss Senior Timeline



January 2025 – March 2025



* **Counseling Support**

Individual

- **Senior Conference**
 - Transcript review
 - SAT/ACT and how to report
 - Recommenders review
 - Transcript Release Form
 - Common Application review and assistance
 - College list and strategy of applying
- **For application Counselors WILL:**
 - Write a letter of recommendation for all students
 - Complete Secondary School Report
 - Provide Transcript
 - Provide School Profile



September 2025 – December 2026



Financial Aid

- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
 - December 1, 2025
- CSS Profile (mostly private schools) - Fall 2025
- Net Price Calculator
- Merit Aid and Need-Based Aid
- Under “Financial Aid” on the Counseling Office Website: See presentation from Renee Swift, Associate Director of Financial Aid at Nazareth College



October 2025– March 2026



Counselor Contact Info

Eric Domroes: eric_domroes@pittsford.monroe.edu 585-267-3631

Keith Molinich: keith_molinich@pittsford.monroe.edu 585-267-3121

Vince DiGiacomo: vincent_digiacomo@pittsford.monroe.edu 585-267-3675

James Englerth: james_englerth@pittford.monroe.edu 585-267-3678



Standardized Tests



WHO IS MIKE BERGIN?



Mike Bergin

President of Chariot Learning

- SAT/ACT tutoring and classes, academic coaching, subject tutoring, and proctored practice tests

Creator of Roots2Words

- Fun yet powerful vocabulary building resource (free WOTD)

Co-host of Tests and the Rest

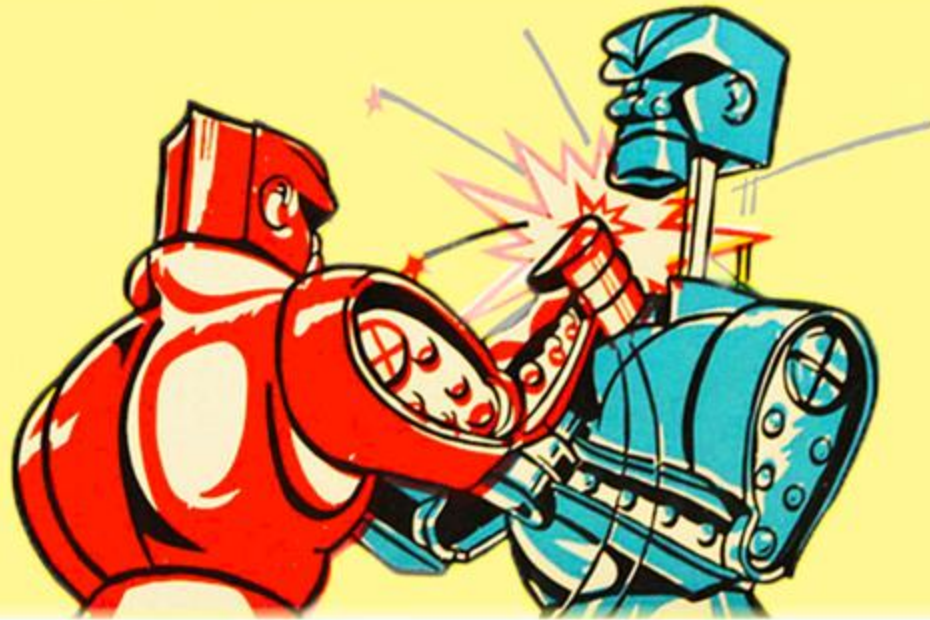
- THE podcast about testing, admissions, and learning



ACT

VS

SAT



**Which Test is Right
for YOU?**

CHARIOT  LEARNING™

✦ 585-466-4022 ✦

<http://chariotlearning.com>

WHO IS MIKE BERGIN?

President of National Test Prep Association

- Non-profit advocates for the responsible administration and use of tests for admissions and assessment

ACT Certified Educator & Trainer

- Training high school teachers across the U.S. to support College and Career Readiness Standards

Founder of TestBright

- Testing and admissions resource for parents and educators



ACT vs SAT

The SAT & ACT are both standardized college entrance exams administered throughout the school year. They both test substantially the same skills and content.

Colleges accept both equally, but students may score better on one or the other, despite their similarities.



ACT vs SAT

STRUCTURE

SAT

- Completely digital
- Limited scrap paper



ACT

- Mostly paper and pencil
- Expanding digital options

ACT vs SAT

ENHANCED ACT

Current State		
English	75 items	45 min
Reading	40 items	35 min
Math	60 items	60 min
Science	40 items	35 min
5 th Test [^] (Field Test)	12-28 items	20 min
Writing	1 item	40 mins
	National	195 min
	+ Writing	235 min
	S/D	175 min
	+ writing	215 min

[^] State/District students do not receive 5 test
 * with or without Writing test



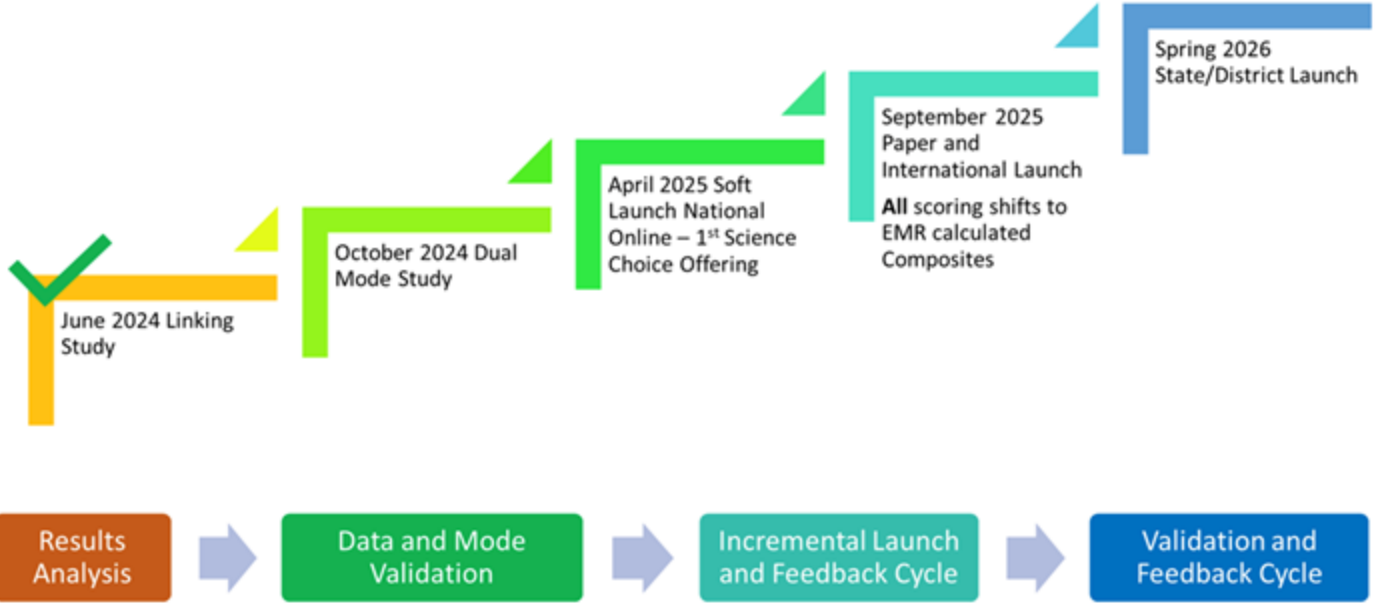
Proposed Future State		
English	50 items (10 FT)	35 min
Reading	36 items (9 FT)	40 min
Math	45 items (4 FT)	50 min
Science	40 items (6 FT)	45 mins
Writing	1 item	40 min
	National & S/D	125 min
	+Science	170 min
	+Writing	210 min

- Total count includes Field Test (FT) items
- Timing study may result in adjustment to total minutes

ACT vs SAT

ENHANCED ACT

Timeline for the transition to the Enhanced ACT





READING

SAT

- One short passage per question
- Greater emphasis on vocabulary and reasoning

ACT

- One long passage for 10 questions
- Greater emphasis on speed and comprehension



SCIENCE & GRAPHS

SAT

- No dedicated science section
- Science reasoning and graphs tested in RW

ACT

- Full section testing science reasoning
- Emphasis on graphical literacy



GRAMMAR

SAT

- One short passage per question
- Focus on a smaller pool of mechanics

ACT

- One long passage for 14-16 questions
- Broader range of writing skills

ACT vs SAT

MATH

SAT

- Greater emphasis on algebra skills
- More need for problem solving strategies
- Embedded DESMOS calculator

ACT

- Broader range of math skills tested
- More word problems and less graphing



SCORING

SAT

- Section adaptive with a smaller question pool
- Tougher questions count for more than easier ones

ACT

- Linear scoring with a larger question pool
- All questions carry the same weight



SCORE POLICIES

ALL SCORES REQUIRED FOR REVIEW

SCORE CHOICE

- Only send the SAT or ACT scores you want schools to see. Send by test date, not by section.

SUPERSCORE

ACT : Best E + M + R + S

SAT : Best RW + M

WHAT ABOUT TEST OPTIONAL?

- 1. ALWAYS CHECK THE CURRENT POLICY.
- 1. NOT ALL SCHOOLS ARE SELECTIVE.
- 1. TEST OPTIONAL ≠ TEST BLIND.
- 1. CONSIDER INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES.
- 1. ALL FACTORS ARE NOW UNDER SCRUTINY.

ACT vs SAT

PERCENTILES

ACT	SAT	Percentile
36	1600	99+
34	1540	99
28	1350	90
24	1200	75
19	1030	50
14	870	25



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

SAT

- Shorter test but greater volatility
- No need for a graphing calculator

ACT

- No need for a testing device
- Test Information Release (TIR) 3x a year



HOW DO YOU CHOOSE?

SAT

- More emphasis on critical reasoning, algebra and problem solving (plus tougher vocabulary)
- Math contributes 50% to total score.

ACT

- More emphasis on long passage speed, science reasoning, and graphical literacy
- Reading contributes 60-75% to total score.

ACT vs SAT

PSAT & PREACT

WHAT ARE THESE TESTS?

- Shorter versions of related entrance exams
- Good—but not perfect—predictors
- No impact on college admissions

WHY DO THEY MATTER?



ACT vs SAT

WHY DO THEY MATTER?



ACT vs SAT



- College admissions
- College scholarship

- College readiness
- Submitter advantage

ACT vs SAT

PLANNING



ACT vs SAT

QUESTIONS

