

# Standardized testing perpetuates inequality

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Year after year, high school students stock their bookshelves with SAT or ACT prep books, take countless practice exams and hire private tutoring.

After hours of meticulously reading short passages, solving math problems and filling in multiple-choice bubbles, students across the globe sit down for the standardized test that supposedly dictates their future success and life path.

The resulting score defines one's academic achievement, self-worth and identity as a whole. Standardized test scores weigh heavily on college admissions, where one score can determine if a student is worthy of attending a certain university or not. Were it not for that one "comprehensive" number, the path of a given student may be drastically different.



**Do not let standardized test scores define your self-worth and intellectual value.**

Standardized testing intends to reflect an accurate measure of student potential. Instead, it reflects nothing more than privilege and test-taking ability. Hence, the abolishment of this outdated, unjust system is imperative.

I bought my first SAT preparation book at 13 years old. Wandering through the aisles of a local bookstore, my eyes landed on a section showcasing college guides and testing booklets. I walked out of the store that day with a "Barron's SAT" testing book.

That guide still sits on my desk, and every time I glance over at the spine, I can't help but feel apprehensive about having to showcase the entirety of my academic abilities in a 4-hour test session.

Standardized testing scores simply do not render a reliable, all-encompassing portrayal of a student's potential nor ability. Students are unable to share crucial skills such as creativity, resilience and leadership on standardized tests.

While these skills may be supplemented on college applications, if a student is not up to par with a college's testing criterion, these skills provide no apparent value in the eyes of many admissions officers.

In light of challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, many colleges omitted the requirement to submit standardized test scores.

While a filter of some sort should be implemented to prevent thousands of additional, unqualified applicants from applying to top schools, universities should permanently drop the standardized testing requirement for future years. Doing so will level the playing field between all students and allow for

the showcasing of academic capabilities beyond test-taking ability and affluence.

Students spend an immeasurable amount of time preparing for standardized tests, which not only places an enormous amount of stress and pressure on their shoulders but also destroys the morale of those who consistently receive low scores because they are simply bad test takers.

Standardized tests are both mentally and physically draining. I have spent countless nights agonizing over SAT practice sets and scouring online resources claiming to reveal the key to achieving higher scores.

I have also observed the burden of standardized testing weighing on classmates, with similar complaints of endless hours of practice and countless

Students are then discouraged from learning for the sake of learning and instead taught that memorization and test-taking strategies are key to achieving high test scores. Thus, when teach-

development among students.

Perhaps the most notable flaw of standardized testing is the widening divide between those with money and access to valuable resources and those

private tutors and the possibility for test retakes. In contrast, students from lower income backgrounds lack those opportunities.

Given that prestigious universi-

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ers choose to further explore a topic in-depth or present challenge questions not included on an upcoming test, students dismiss it off-hand.

Consequently, valuable learning experiences are wasted. Student progress is ultimately hindered and replaced with the common questions of, "Will this be on the test?" and "Why are we being taught this concept if it will not be assessed?"

without. The test preparation industry monopolizes the testing field and directly gives affluent students advantages over others.

Former Stanford admissions officer John Reider emphasized that standardized tests only "advantage the already advantaged." According to the Wall Street Journal, students from affluent backgrounds received scores that were, on average, 400 points higher than economically disadvantaged students.

This perceptible testing advantage lies in privileged students having access to expensive preparation courses,

ties allegedly facilitate success and set graduates on a fast track to receiving higher-paying jobs, those without access to valuable testing resources are even more disadvantaged.

Standardized testing is ultimately a system created to ensure privileged students gain access to higher education while preventing those who do not fit the aforementioned criteria from future success.

In fact, contrary to popular belief, the argument that higher-scoring students perform better in college is fallacious. An "Education Drive" article revealed "no correlation between ACT score and college graduation rate at some schools."

Learn for the sake of learning. Ignite your curiosity. Expand your academic horizons.

Study for the SAT or ACT, utilize available resources and take practice tests, but do not let standardized test scores define your self-worth and intellectual value.



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