

Preparation Paramount For Tomorrow's College Students

(MS) – As the admissions process at the nation's best schools grows increasingly competitive, how and when students prepare for college entrance exams could determine where they spend the next four years and beyond.

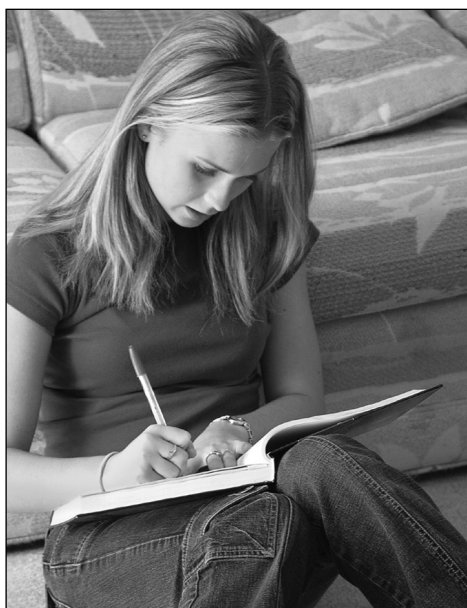
Recognizing the important role planning and preparation plays during the college decision-making process, Revolution Prep, the largest on-campus test prep provider, offers the following tips to students and parents alike.

- Prepare for the admissions process early. Every parent and student knows students don't simply show up on campus the first day of school and gain admittance to college. However, many parents struggle to understand just what needs to be done and when to help their student stand out among the rest. It's critical to research in advance the requirements of the colleges on your wish list and map out a timeline. Will your student take the PSAT? AP Exams? SAT Subject Tests? When do students have to start taking the SAT or ACT test so they can retake it if they want to? Creating a plan will give you peace of mind and alleviate the stress of not knowing if you've missed a crucial deadline.

- Take the SAT or ACT exams as seriously as you take your GPA. While a student's resume is more than just test scores, even the most impressive application can take a hit without a solid performance on exams like the SAT or ACT test.

For example, at the most competitive colleges, a student's chance of admission could as much as double with each 200 point score increase on the SAT. In addition, it has been shown that 25 percent of the college admissions decision is based on a student's SAT/ACT test score. In spite of that, the average student typically spends just 10 hours preparing for such tests vs. 1000+ hours on activities such as sports or community service, that have the same weight. This is a good reason to investigate an SAT or ACT test course for your child which can provide 50+ hours of prep time – 5 times the average.

- Preparing for the tests is not one size fits all. Your student should take a practice test



to find out if the SAT or ACT test is best for him or her (and the selected colleges) and then research what type of test prep works for your student's learning style. Some students are disciplined enough to work on their own and others prefer an on-campus class that they can attend with their friends. Some students may need a more flexible schedule and live online classes with the option to view missed classes work best for them. And higher-scoring students may prefer private tutoring to focus on a few key areas.

Whatever option you choose, make sure it allows personalization for your child and the company has a solid curriculum and teaching philosophy. Revolution Prep uses innovative technology to create an individual plan for every student. Instructors give customized homework assignments to help students use their time effectively and spotlight specific problem areas for the best score improvement. Plus, instructors see the scores of the weekly practice tests so they can gear their weekly session specifically to their students.

"Our approach engages students and pushes them to build the skill set needed to see real results on their admissions tests,"

says Ben Neely, Director of Curriculum for Revolution Prep. "Part of our philosophy is to ensure that each student is treated as an individual and that the techniques we teach have effects long after he or she has conquered the SAT or ACT test."

- Learn the mental tricks of the trade. Success on the SAT or ACT test is not only about knowing the material. In fact, students who train their minds to handle the stress of the test often score better than those who take a purely academic approach to test preparation.

Some tricks of the trade include:

- Do your homework in a noisy area to practice focusing for long stretches of time and try to simulate the test experience as closely as possible every time you practice.

- Take as many full-length practice tests as possible in a realistic environment. Not only does each practice test traditionally show a score improvement from learning the techniques, but it helps students gain needed confidence and conquer the distractions of test day in advance. Then on test day students can focus on solving the problems instead of the annoying person next to them tapping the pencil.

- Make post-test plans after the test and not ahead of time. Students who have a date or other social engagement lined up after the test are more likely to be distracted during the test than those who keep their post-test schedules free.

Planning For Student Success

Much of a student's success with respect to the college admissions process rests with how much that student and his or her family has prepared. Leading test preparation provider Revolution Prep offers the following timeline for parents and students to easily navigate the process from start to finish.

Sophomore Year

October - November: PSAT
March - June: SAT Subject Tests
April - June: AP Exams

Junior Year

October - November: PSAT
July - December: Ideal time for test prep and to take SAT/ACT
January - June: Standard time for test prep and to take SAT/ACT test
March - June: SAT Subject Tests
April - June: AP Exams

Senior Year

July - December: Last chance for test prep and to take SAT/ACT test and/or SAT Subject Tests
July - December: College applications and essays
April - June: AP Exams

What To Look For In A Graduate Program

Today's college graduates are facing a difficult job market, one that is flooded with unemployed professionals but few job openings. As a result, many college juniors, seniors and even recent graduates are considering the pursuit of an advanced degree. When researching different graduate programs, prospective applicants should take the following under consideration.

- **Admission standards.** Applicants should be looking for schools with tough admissions standards. Schools with low admissions standards won't necessarily provide a degree that's valued by prospective employers. Since many students will be pursuing an advanced degree in the hopes it will help them stand out in a crowded pool of applicants, that advanced degree should be one that has substantial value and not one that was easy to pursue and obtain.

- **Assistance.** A good graduate program will boast a career development program that helps place graduates in desirable careers. Ask about past graduates of the program, and where they are currently working and what they're earning.

- **Faculty.** When researching graduate programs, look for one whose faculty are well known in your desired field. Most school Web sites list faculty biographies. A strong faculty is one that has a history of scholarly publications, acclaim among colleagues and professional experience not just in academia, but in the desired field as well. A proven and respected faculty can be a great way for students to make connections in the field.

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