



PSAT and SAT Update College and Career Counseling

What?

Due to short staffing at Making Waves Academy, administering a fair and incident-free SAT meant cancelling the PSAT this year.

As an alternative to administering the PSAT and SAT to 634 students in grades 8-12, we offered the SAT on an opt-in basis for a maximum of 94 rising graduates and interested juniors. Pursuing “Alternative 2” (see Original Proposal, Table 1) helped us optimize for a fair and incident-free test administration for college-bound graduates that wanted to submit SAT scores this year.

Students applying to colleges and universities that accept SAT or ACT scores are being encouraged to take the exams. 24 students took the official SAT at Making Waves Academy on October 13, 2021.

So what?

While cancelling the PSAT meant that our school could optimize for a fair and incident-free SAT, there are some important trade-offs that occurred as a result of this decision:

- Without PSAT scores, our school loses out on two important pieces of “AP Potential” information:
 1. Identifying new Advanced Placement (AP) courses that our students could do well in, and
 2. Identifying students who have “AP Potential” to do well in AP courses currently offered at MWA or new AP courses that are not yet offered
- Without a PSAT score, juniors lose out on taking the test that serves as the official route of entry to the National Merit Scholarship Program (although students may pursue alternate entry by submitting an SAT score)

Now what?

- Making Waves Academy plans to administer the PSAT to grades 8-11 and SAT to grade 12 annually, resuming next year (provided that conditions improve)
- We are seeking alternate ways to identify students with “AP potential” and to identify new AP courses, if we are in a position to expand our course offering
- We will seek “alternate entry” to the National Merit Scholarship program for juniors who took, or will take, the official SAT instead of the PSAT
- Students applying to colleges and universities that accept SAT or ACT scores are being encouraged to take the exams

Original Proposal
(Submitted to MWA Executive Team on September 20, 2021)

Background

With so many first-time proctors, increased sporadic absences, and an unfamiliar digital testing platform for grades 8-9, having under-trained or untrained proctors for our upcoming PSAT and SAT administration puts us at risk of having scores voided or having our school banned from administering future exams.

Proposal

As an alternative to administering the PSAT and SAT to 634 students in grades 8-12, I propose offering the SAT on an opt-in basis for a maximum of 94 rising graduates. This will help us optimize for a fair and incident-free test administration for college-bound graduates that want to submit SAT scores this year. I recommend moving forward with "Alternative 1."

See Table 1.

Table 1. “Alternative 1” is the most desirable option. Offering the SAT to rising graduates on an opt-in basis will optimize for a fair and incident-free test administration for students that want to submit SAT scores this year.

	Current Plans “Least desirable”	Alternative 1 “Most desirable”	Alternative 2 “Not as desirable, but doable”
Brief description	Mandatory SAT for Rising Graduates and Mandatory PSAT for Grades 8-11	Optional SAT for Rising Graduates	Optional SAT for Rising Graduates and Optional Official SAT for Grade 11, if seats are available
Test-takers	634 Max	94 Max	94 Max
Optimized for	Optimized for full access to the entire suite of assessments by the College Board	Optimized for a fair and incident-free test administration for seniors that want to submit SAT scores	Optimized for a fair and incident-free test administration for seniors that want to submit SAT scores and juniors that want an early first attempt
Trade-offs	With so many first-time proctors (see below), increased sporadic absences, and a new digital testing platform for grades 8-9: having undertrained proctors puts us at risk of having scores voided and our school banned from administering future exams	PSAT data not available for AP Potential analysis Reduces early access to a college preparation practice exam Junior PSAT scores not submitted to NMSQT for scholarship consideration	Perceptions of inequity if the number of interested juniors exceeds the number of available SAT seats PSAT data not available for AP Potential analysis Reduces early access to a college preparation practice exam
Staff needed	37	4	4
Backups available	4 (more needed, given average daily staff absences, however same-day subs may result in under-trained or untrained proctors)	2 (sufficient)	2 (sufficient)
Percent of staff that have proctored at MWA before	43% (16 of 37)	100% (4 of 4)	100% (4 of 4)