

SOUTH WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL
161 Nevers Road
South Windsor, CT 06074

Date: October 17, 2016
To: Sheryl Mortensen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
From: Donna Shea, School Counseling Coordinator, SWHS
RE: **SAT Results for the South Windsor High School Class of 2016**

As many know, the SAT, as well as the PSAT, has undergone significant changes over the past year. The class of 2016 will be the last class to take the “old” SAT. Moving forward, the “new” SAT will serve as both a college admissions exam as well as the State of Connecticut high school proficiency assessment.

On an individual basis, SAT scores have been a useful predictor of first year college success, yet they are only one among many predictors. The College Board has found consistently that the best indicator of potential college success is a combination of SAT scores and cumulative high school GPA (Grade Point Average).

In the past, the “old” SAT has been primarily a reasoning/aptitude test consisting of a Critical Reading, Math and Writing score and The College Board has found that the best preparation for the SAT is a rigorous high school curriculum. Becoming familiar with the SAT by taking the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) and/or participating in an SAT prep program was also likely to increase one’s scores on the “old” SAT.

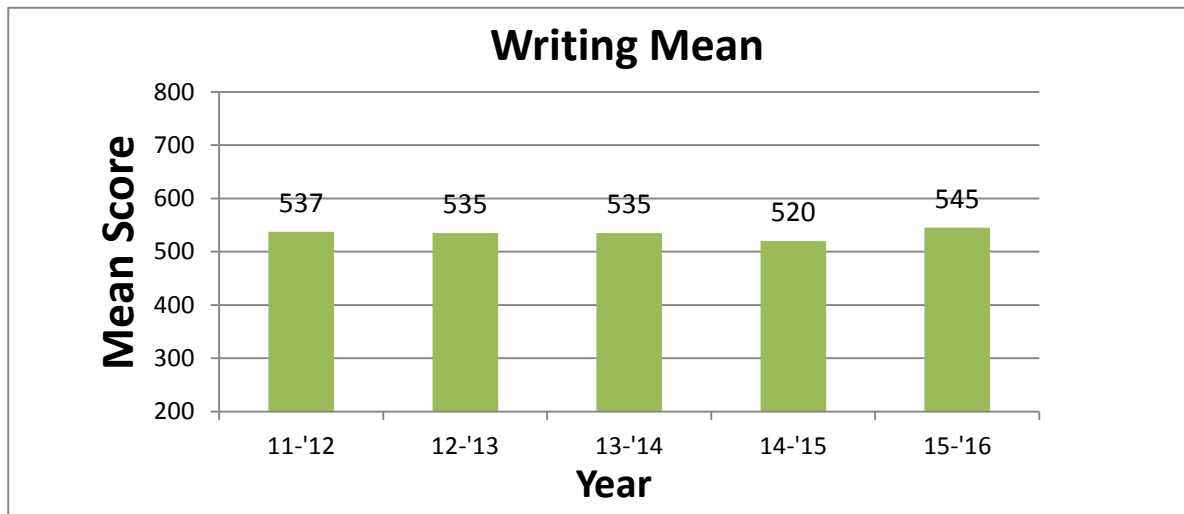
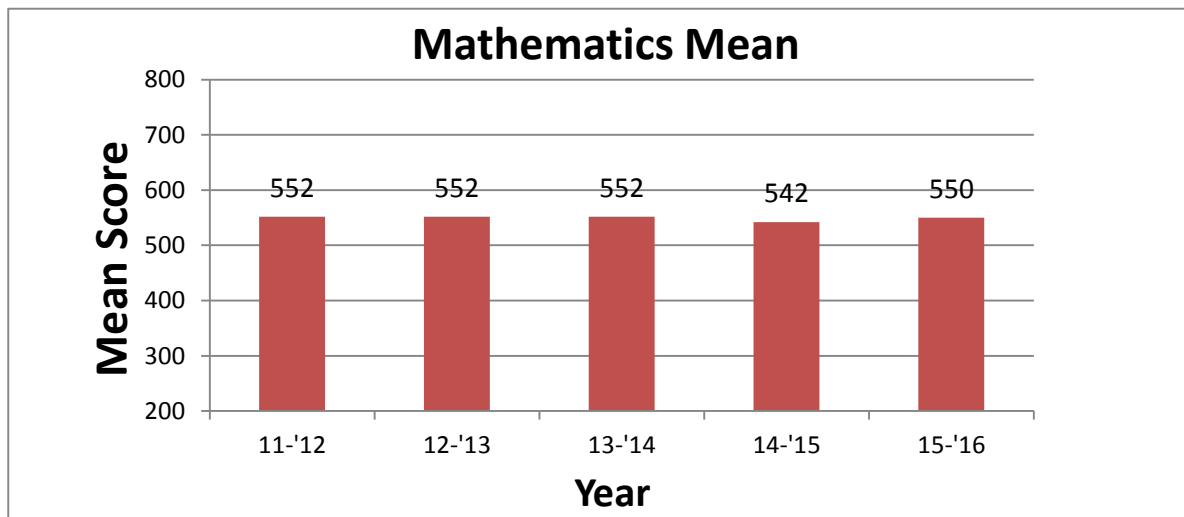
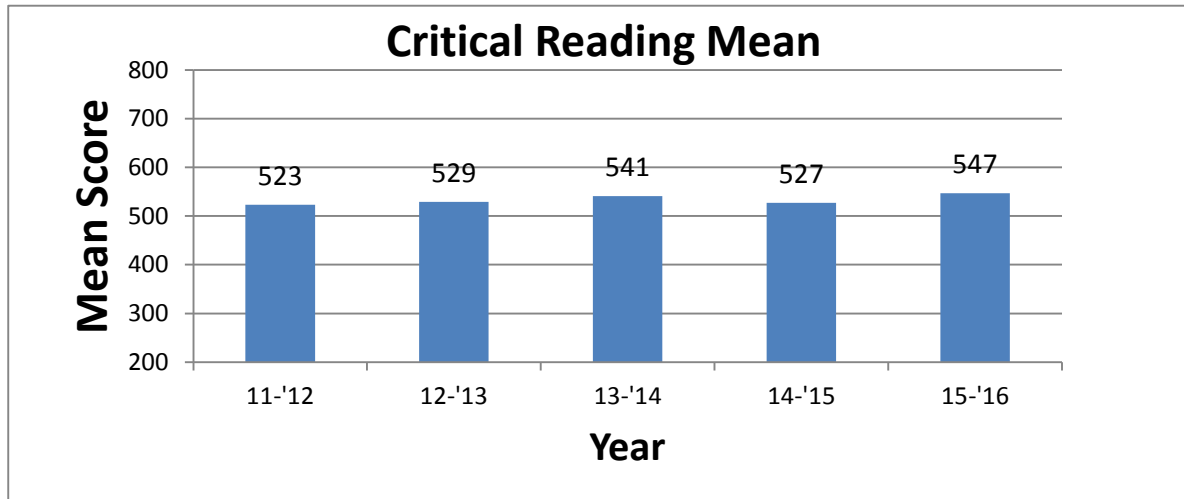
The South Windsor High School class of 2016 will be the last class to take the “old” SAT. Eighty-six percent (279 students) of the class of 2016 took the SAT. According to the College Board, one of the most significant factors to consider in interpreting SAT MEAN scores is the proportion of eligible students taking the test. Generally, the higher the level of student participation, the lower the MEAN SAT scores. **SWHS students continue to maintain a high level of participation as well as MEAN scores that exceed the state and total group averages.** The class of 2016 was a very high achieving class in many ways. They also had the highest MEAN SAT scores of any class in the past ten years. The SAT scores at SWHS have shown significant MEAN score gains over the past five years with the introduction of PSAT practice tests for grade 10 and 11 students as well as the availability of an on-site voluntary SAT test program for juniors. Below is a chart of South Windsor High School Class of 2016 MEAN SAT Scores as compared to the SAT MEAN scores of Connecticut Public Schools and the Total Group (all students taking the SAT).

Class of 2016 MEAN SAT Scores

	CRITICAL READING			MATH			WRITING		
	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean
SWHS	556	538	547	569	533	550	546	545	545
CT (Public)	491	489	490	503	477	489	479	493	487
Total Group	489	486	487	509	482	494	465	477	472

Trends in SAT Scores over the Past Five Years

The following charts and graphs depict the MEAN Critical Reading, Math, and Writing SAT scores of South Windsor High School students over the previous five years. In drawing conclusions about these scores, one should note that changes in scores may be due to differences in the group (cohort) of test takers rather than strictly test preparation and curriculum exposure/interventions. Although there has been a national trend of decreasing scores on all three sections of the “old” SAT, South Windsor students have demonstrated significant gains in the verbal (Critical Reading and Writing) sections of the exam and have remained relatively consistent with their high math scores on the SAT.



Critical Reading

Mean Scores and Point Change by Year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Five-Yr Change
South Windsor Public School District	523	529	541	527	547	+24
<i>Change:</i>		+6	+12	-14	+20	
Connecticut	506	508	507	504	500	-6
<i>Change:</i>		+2	-1	-3	-4	
Total Group	496	496	497	495	494	-2
<i>Change:</i>		0	+1	-2	-1	

Math

Mean Scores and Point Change by Year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Five-Yr Change
South Windsor Public School District	552	552	552	542	550	-2
<i>Change:</i>		0	0	-10	+8	
Connecticut	512	512	510	506	500	-12
<i>Change:</i>		0	-2	-4	-6	
Total Group	514	514	513	511	508	-6
<i>Change:</i>		0	-1	-2	-3	

Writing

Mean Scores and Point Change by Year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Five-Yr Change
South Windsor Public School District	537	535	535	520	545	+8
<i>Change:</i>		-2	0	-15	+25	
Connecticut	510	512	508	504	497	-13
<i>Change:</i>		+2	-4	-4	-7	
Total Group	488	488	487	484	482	-6
<i>Change:</i>		0	-1	-3	-2	

Comparison of Different Student Groups

In past years, we have reviewed the SAT performance of selected segments of our graduating class. These analyses are important because the high participation rate at South Windsor High School lowers the MEAN scores of the group as a whole. The following table compares the performance of different student percentile groups of SWHS class of

2016 to those in the state of Connecticut and the Total Group. As in previous years, the top, middle, and lower percentile groups at SWHS are all performing above State and Total Group MEAN scores on the SAT. This is important in that South Windsor has a very high percentage of students who attend 2 and 4 year colleges and they rely on their SAT scores for both college admission and to qualify for merit scholarship money. The class of 2016 earned close to two million dollars in merit money based on a combination of their high SAT scores and their earned GPA. Also relevant is that in South Windsor, even our lowest 25% of test takers earn scores high enough for admission into our four State Colleges (CCSU, ECSU, SCSU, WCSU).

Percentile	TOTAL SCORES CRITICAL READING			TOTAL SCORES MATH			TOTAL SCORES WRITING		
	75%	50%	25%	75%	50%	25%	75%	50%	25%
SWHS	620	540	480	610	540	480	610	540	480
CT	580	500	420	590	500	410	580	500	420
Total Group	570	490	410	590	500	420	560	480	400

Comparison of South Windsor Mean SAT Scores to other Connecticut DRG B Schools

The chart below indicates where the MEAN SAT scores of the SWHS class of 2016 fall in comparison to other DRG B schools. The College Board discourages making direct comparisons of SAT MEAN scores to other districts because of two significant limitations. **Students taking the SAT in each district are self-selected and are counted only once, regardless of the number of times that they tested, and only a student's latest scores are summarized in the data included in the MEAN score calculations.** Also, student participation rates at each school can vary greatly and can impact MEAN scores more significantly than actual student performance. The College Board does not consider aggregate SAT scores to be a valid method of comparing or evaluating teachers, schools, districts, states, or educational practices and they discourage the use of the data in this way. It is important to note however, that SWHS has moved from the bottom ¼ of the DRG comparison chart to the middle of the DRG comparison chart over the past five years. We have improved our SAT MEAN scores significantly greater than our peers in our DRG.

	Critical Reading		Math		Writing
Simsbury	567	Avon	590	Simsbury	570
Avon	563	Greenwich	576	Greenwich	564
Greenwich	562	Simsbury	573	Fairfield (Ludlowe)	560
Fairfield (Ludlowe)	556	Glastonbury	572	Avon	557
Farmington	553	Farmington	564	Madison (Daniel Hand)	554
Region 5 (Amity)	552	Region 5 (Amity)	561	Region 5 (Amity)	552
Guilford	551	Fairfield (Ludlowe)	559	Farmington	548
Madison (Daniel Hand)	551	Region 15 (Pomperaug)	557	Glastonbury	546
West Hartford (Hall)	551	Guilford	556	West Hartford (Hall)	546
Glastonbury	549	Newtown	555	South Windsor	545
South Windsor	547	West Hartford (Hall)	553	Fairfield (Warde)	543
Fairfield (Warde)	544	Madison (Daniel Hand)	551	Guilford	543
Newtown	542	South Windsor	550	Brookfield	542
Granby	539	Fairfield (Warde)	548	Newtown	541
Brookfield	538	Brookfield	547	Monroe (Masuk)	540
Region 15 (Pomperaug)	538	Trumbull	545	Region 15 (Pomperaug)	538
Cheshire	537	Granby	540	Trumbull	536
Trumbull	535	Monroe (Masuk)	540	Cheshire	534
Monroe (Masuk)	532	Cheshire	538	Granby	530
New Fairfield	531	West Hartford (Conard)	534	New Fairfield	526
West Hartford (Conard)	526	New Fairfield	527	West Hartford (Conard)	519
CT MEAN (all schools)	500	CT MEAN (all schools)	500	CT MEAN (all schools)	497

South Windsor Initiatives to Support Higher SAT Scores

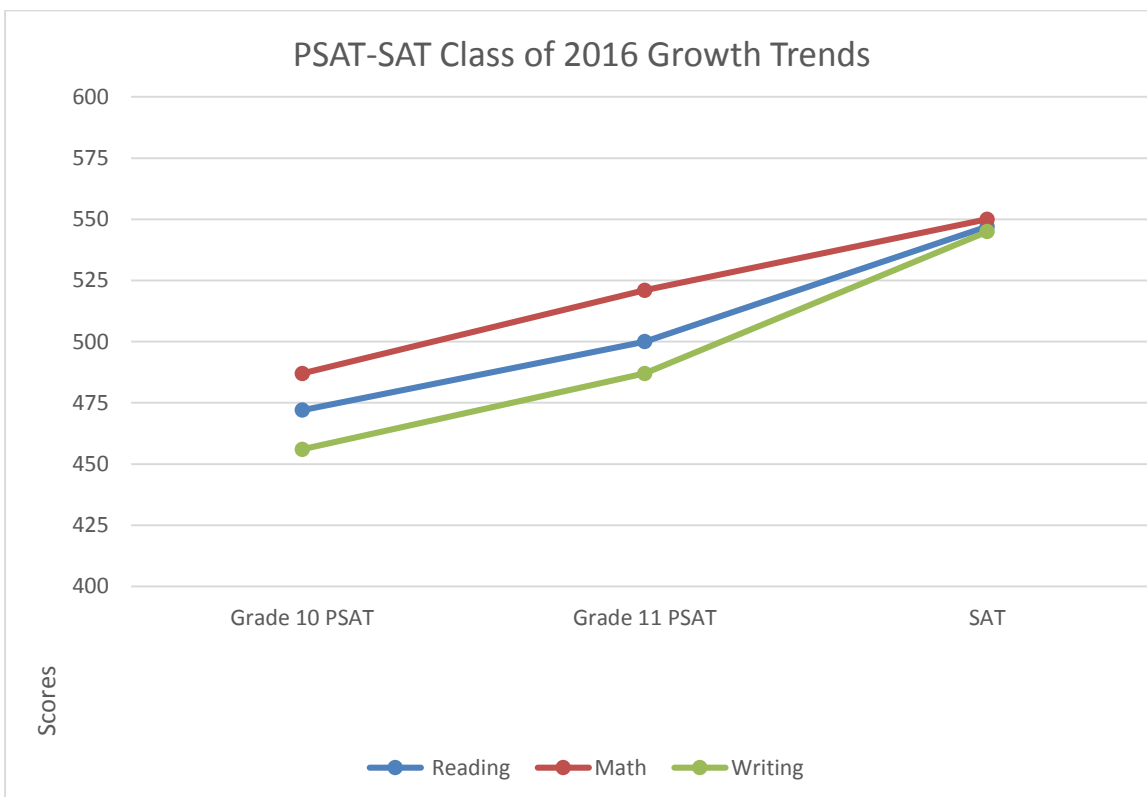
The School Counseling Department and high school administration and staff have worked diligently on a number of efforts over the past several years in order to increase opportunities for ALL students to improve their scores on the PSAT/SAT.

For the past five school years, the PSAT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) has been administered on a Wednesday test date in October, on which all 10th and 11th graders take the exam rather than on a Saturday with voluntary attendance. This effort was aimed at increasing access and equity, allowing ALL SWHS students to benefit from experiencing two practice exams and receiving early feedback on academic strengths and weaknesses. It is our belief that South Windsor High School students have benefited from these initiatives in many ways. These include higher mean SAT scores, more college choices/opportunities, and greater merit scholarship money.

South Windsor High School continues to contract with an outside company to offer a SAT prep class to our juniors at a reasonable price. During the 2015-2016 school year, 97 juniors took advantage of the opportunity to take this prep course. The SAT prep course ran from January through March and is intended to assist eleventh grade students to prepare for their first SAT. Those students who were able to take advantage of this opportunity reported significantly higher confidence and gains on their SAT when compared to those who took the March SAT without having first taken the prep course.

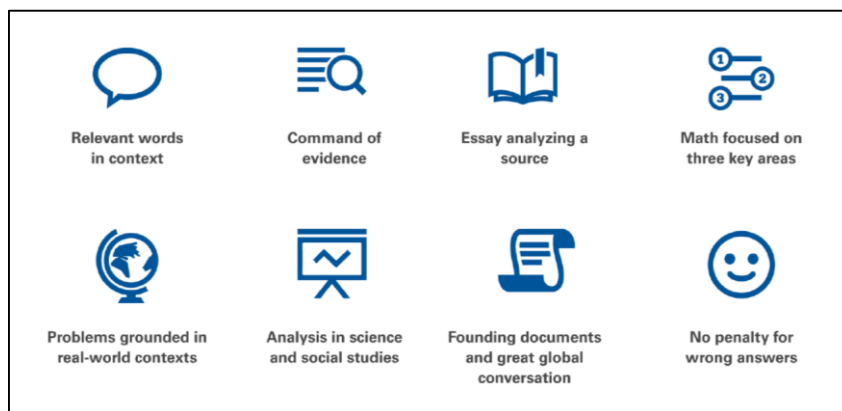
Moving forward, efforts to improve the academic skills measured on the “new” PSAT/SAT need to be addressed more on the curriculum level. Curriculum Specialists have access to a rich data base of cohort PSAT/SAT scores and they will continue to be encouraged to work with subject area teachers to use this data to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in order to inform instruction. The College Board has aligned the “new” PSAT/SAT with the skills emphasized in the Common Core of Learning. Their belief is that the new tests not only provide a more detailed measure of the academic skills attained by students, but that the “new” tests are far less influenced by test prep strategies.

The SAT scores of the class of 2016 are the highest they have been in the previous ten years. However, in reality, individual and group skill development and growth are the important targets for students, parents, and educators rather than how one cohort of students performs compared to another cohort. Tracking the performance/growth of each student (or class cohort) and using this information to inform/adjust instruction, will become the most successful strategy in maintaining our high SAT scores. True growth will be measured in the gains made by each student (or cohort) each year in grades 10-12 as illustrated below:



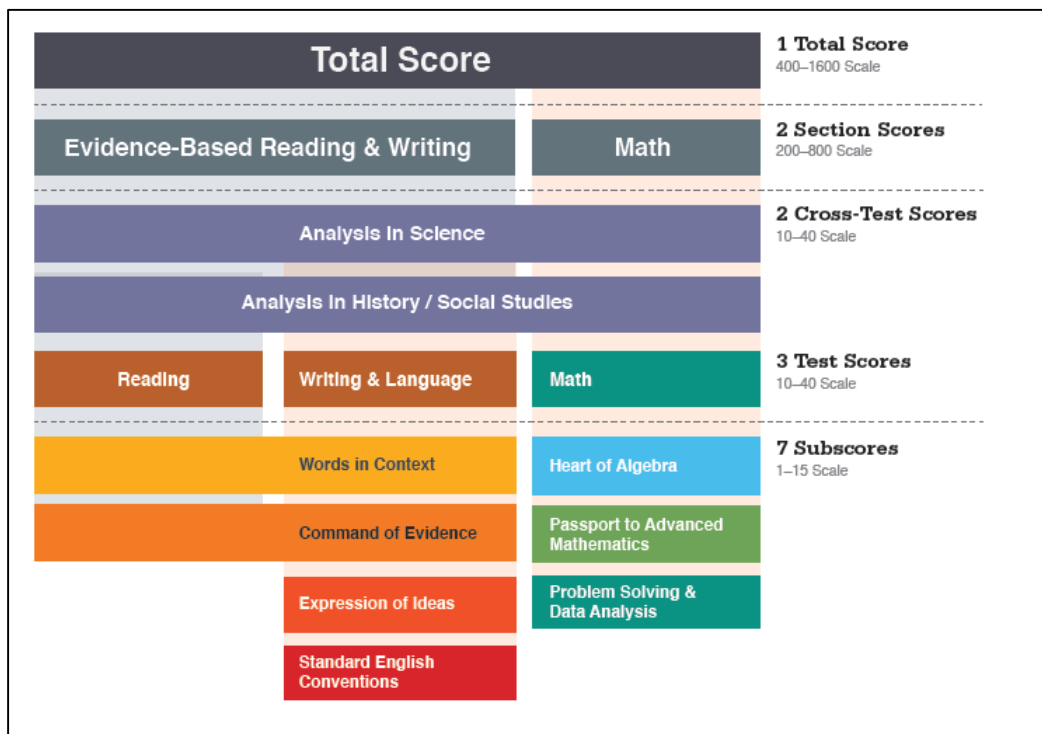
A New Direction for the PSAT and the SAT

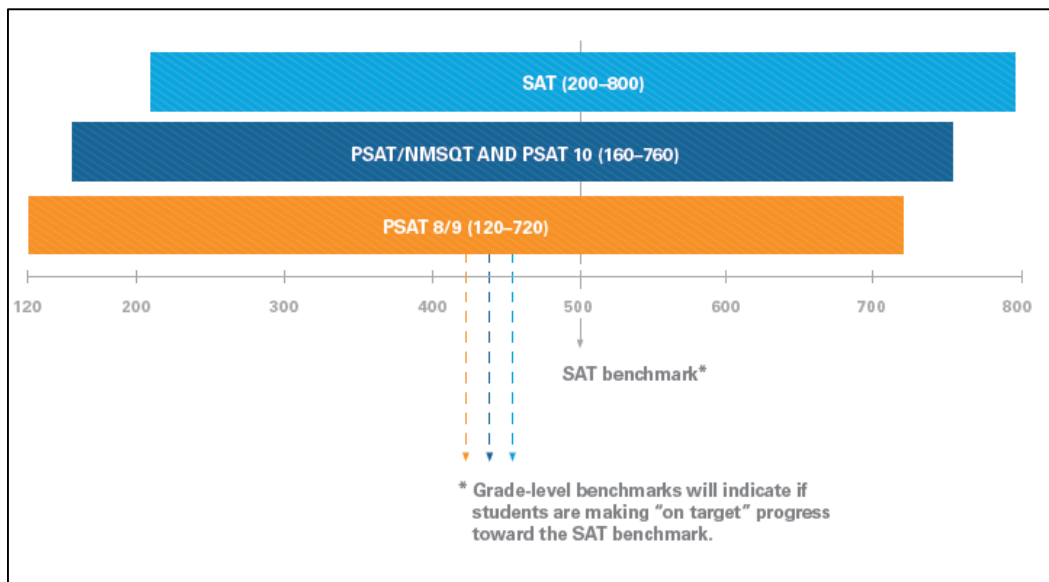
This will be the last year that SAT scores will be presented in the above format. The College Board has redesigned both the PSAT and the SAT and the content and scoring of the tests will be significantly different in future years. On October 14, 2015, all grade 10 and grade 11 students at SWHS took the “new” PSAT. The first administration of the “new” SAT occurred in March, 2016. Both tests have been significantly redesigned. The new tests contain tasks that involve reasoning, but there is a strong focus on knowledge, skills, and understandings that have been determined to be most important for college and career readiness and success. Although the SAT will still function primarily as a standardized college entrance exam, it will also aim to parallel the national curriculum initiatives identified in the Common Core. The College Board states that the aim will be to “allow students to demonstrate both what they have learned and their ability to apply rigorous cognitive skills.” The College Board has also partnered with Khan Academy, a premier online tutoring site, to offer “free SAT prep to the world.” Students who take the “new” PSAT/SAT are able to link their score reports to Khan Academy and receive individualized instruction targeted towards their weaker skills. The PSAT/SAT has changed in a number of significant ways. The following are identified by the College Board as the most significant changes:



Scoring for the “New” tests

The redesigned PSAT/SAT is scored differently. A total score, section scores, cross-test scores, and sub scores are all included in student score reports. These additional “insight” scores are intended to provide additional information about student achievement and readiness. Also, for the first time, the PSAT and the SAT will be scored on the same scale. This will allow students, parents, and educators to track growth and target areas needing improvement across grades annually.





Each time the PSAT/SAT is redesigned, it creates some shifts in instructional strategies on the part of educators and students. The SWHS counselors, teachers, and administrators have been attending workshops so they can understand the changes to these high stakes tests and guide our students and families through this change process. South Windsor Public Schools has focused a great deal of effort adopting the Common Core principles and infusing them into our curriculum work and delivery. Since these new tests are largely aligned with the Common Core, we are likely to make the transition to the new PSAT and SAT relatively easily. **However, this will require a shift in strategy in how our high school continues to improve and/or maintain our high SAT MEAN scores. The strategy will have to shift from one of test practice and prep strategies to one of using cohort PSAT/SAT scores to conduct curricular level skill analysis across all academic disciplines.** The "new" PSAT/SAT score alignment will allow districts to easily measure growth for individual students, cohorts, and academic disciplines from year to year. This will assist in monitoring and influencing the development of skills across all academic disciplines. This analysis combined with planned instructional strategies to address weak areas will allow South Windsor to maintain high MEAN scores on the SAT.