

Is Standardized Testing Back?

Today's Presenters



Dr. Nathan Kuncel

The Marvin D. Dunnette
Distinguished Professor of
Industrial-Organized Psychology
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Dr. Keith Wright

Vice President of Psychometrics
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Enrollment Management
Association



Jim Daughdrill

National Director of
Membership and Business
Development at the
Enrollment Management
Association

Agenda

1

Testing in Admissions

With Dr. Nathan Kuncel

2

Fairness in K-12 Admissions

With Dr. Keith D. Wright

3

Questions?

Please enter questions into the Q&A field as we go.

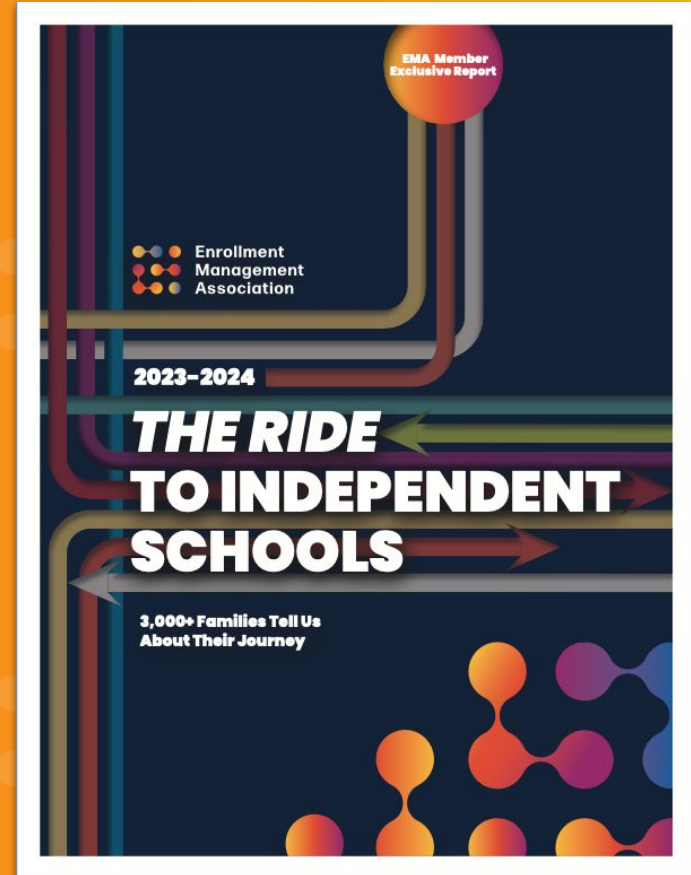
The 2024 Ride to Independent Schools

“

Instead of one stressful (but predictable) standardized test, there were now MANY stressful (and unpredictable) tests.”

—A Parent Interviewed for *The Ride*

enrollment.org/ride



Testing in Admissions

Nathan R. Kuncel

Department of Psychology



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to Discover®

What's going on in Higher Ed?

How is testing helping with diversity?

Setting the Scene

- Rampant Grade Inflation
- Uneven Transcripts
- Different School Level Outcomes



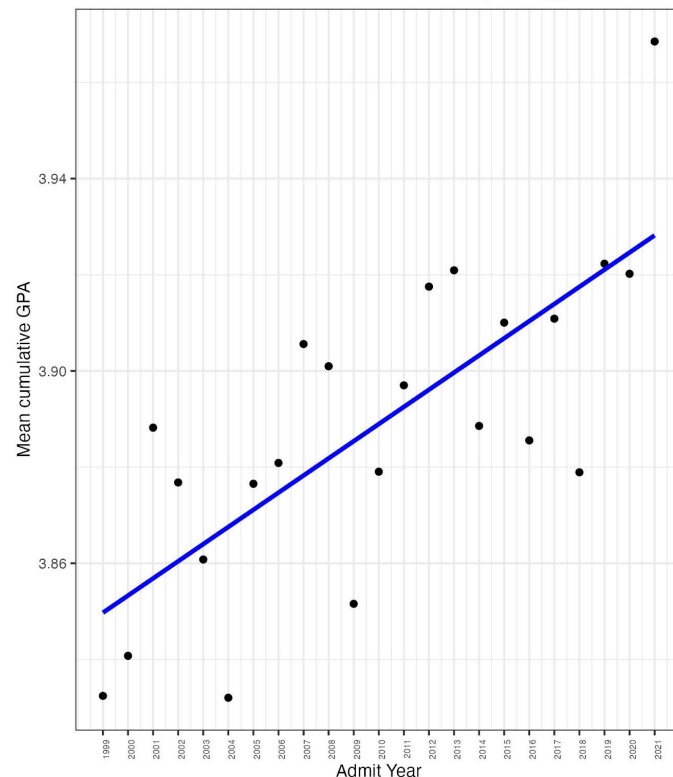
Rampant Grade Inflation

Historically, grades were slightly better predictors than tests.

That has reversed recently.

Likely due to gradual, persistent inflation of grades over time at all levels of education.

Mean for cumulative GPA across time in Psychology



Transcript and School Effects

- Is this Precalculus class the same as that Precalculus class? Are both students equally prepared?
- An A average from this school is consistently associated with better outcomes than an A average from that school.



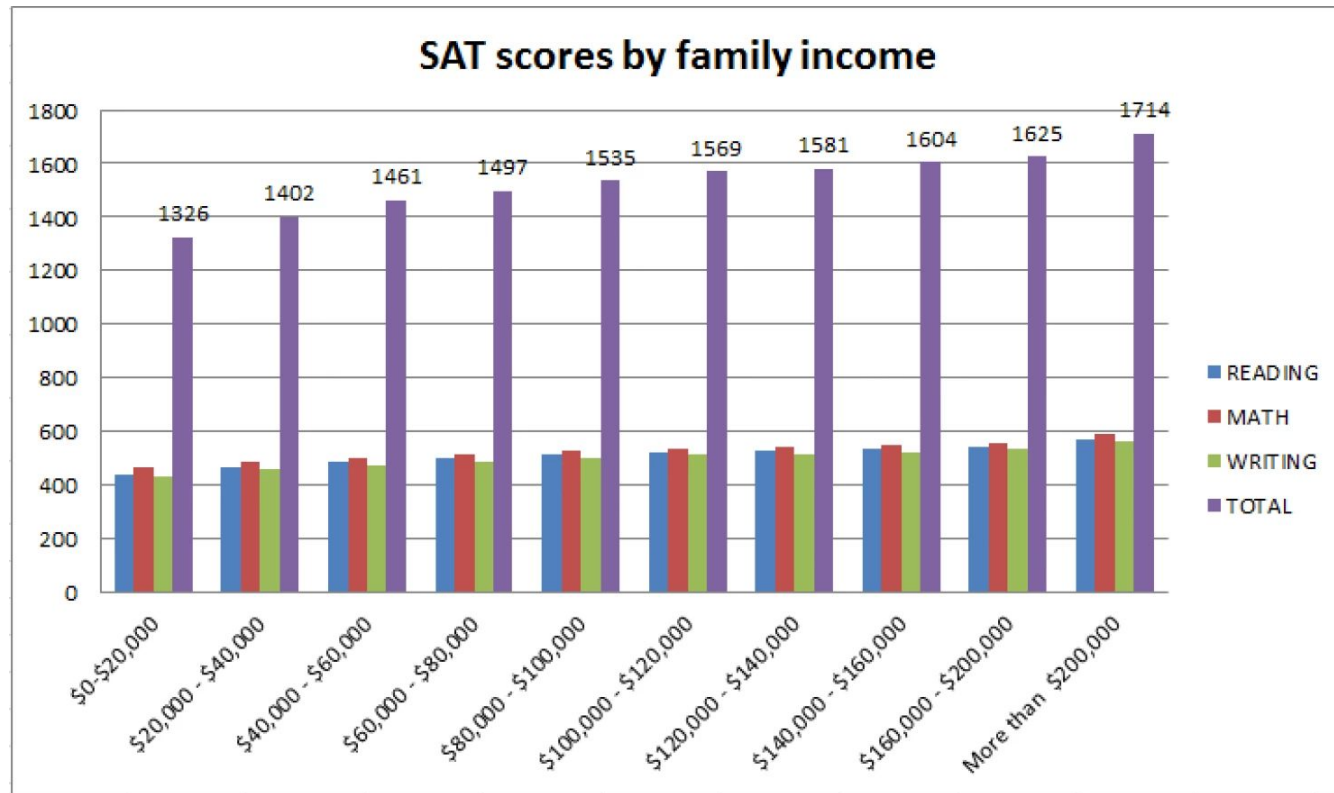
The consequence is that many schools could admit multiple classes full of “A” students BUT there would be considerable variability in how well everyone would do.



Intersection with Diversity

- What has been found at several colleges is that they can do a better job identifying diverse candidates by including test scores.
 - MIT
 - Harvard
 - Dartmouth
 - Yale
 - Cornell
 - Brown
- How can this be?

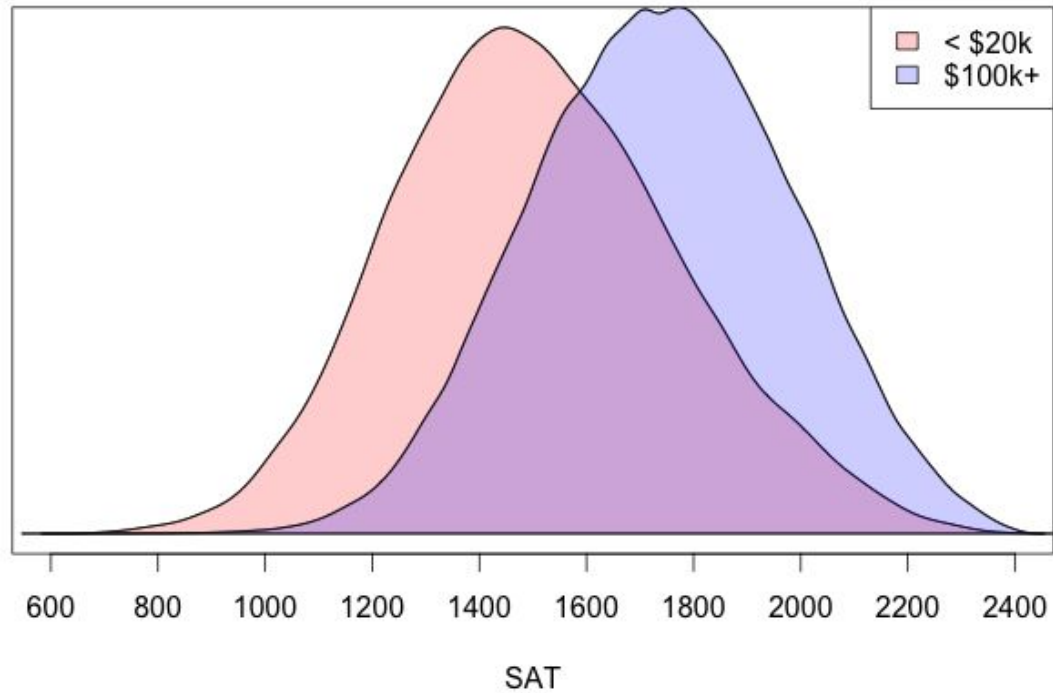




Goldfarb, 2014, *Washington Post*



Distribution of SAT Scores by Income



MIT as an Example

- They really want Calculus
 - Note, this isn't arbitrary.
- I have two students with a 4.0 GPA and one of them has taken Calculus. Who do I take?
- BUT only half of all high schools offer Calculus (only 38% of predominantly Black and Latinx HS).
- Hard to argue that I should take the student without Calc unless I have other evidence.
 - Oh look, a 700 SAT score in Math...interesting.



Testing Use Cases

- Highly Selective
- Placement
- Managing Limited Resources



Applied Research Work

- Hotchkiss School
- Phillips Exeter Academy
- Thacher School



Some Overall Findings From the Data

- SSAT was the single best predictor of student grades at all three schools.
- Students in the top 25% of scores were 3x as likely to get an A average than those in the bottom 25%.
- Academic potential ratings worked but students in the top 25% were only 2x as likely to get an A average.
- Academic potential ratings added zero to a little to SSAT scores in predicting grades and taking honors courses.
- Prediction was the same across URM and majority groups.



Some Suggestions

- Scores can give us a better picture of what is going on with a student, but:
 - We should always consider multiple pieces of information
 - They don't have to be rigidly followed
- To consider the whole student we really need to try to do as good of a job measuring the other characteristics.

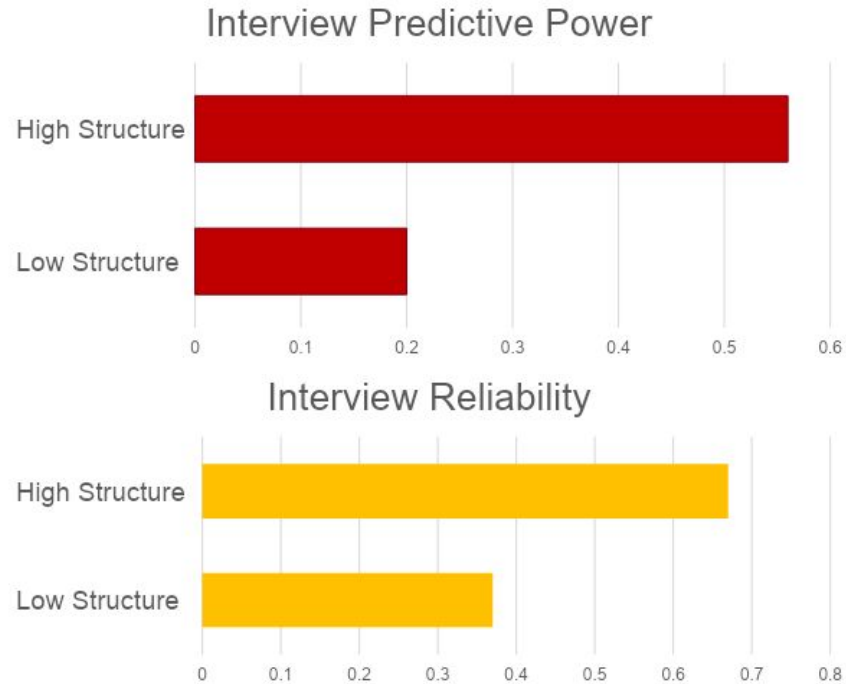


Three Principles for Admissions

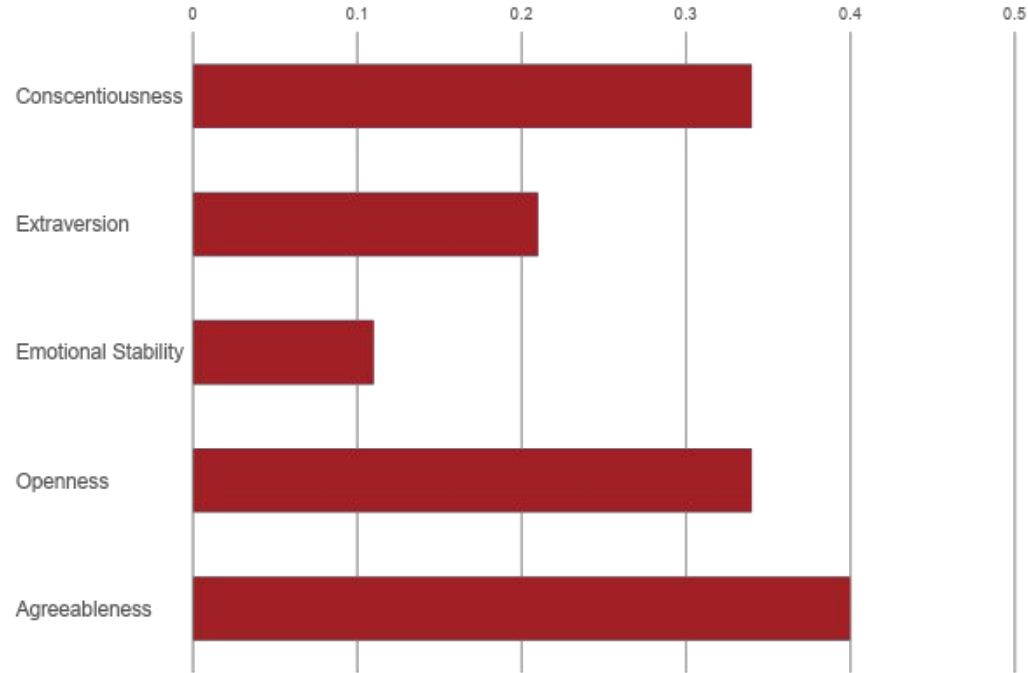
- **Targeting** – Intentional alignment of assessments with the most critical characteristics.
- **Triangulating** – Using more than one assessment to capture information about a characteristic.
- **Transforming** – Building and using better quality assessments.



Structured Interviews vs. Traditional



Classroom Engagement



N = 4,200-5,400

Hessen & Kuncel (2022) *Personality and Individual Differences*





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Fairness in K-12 Admissions

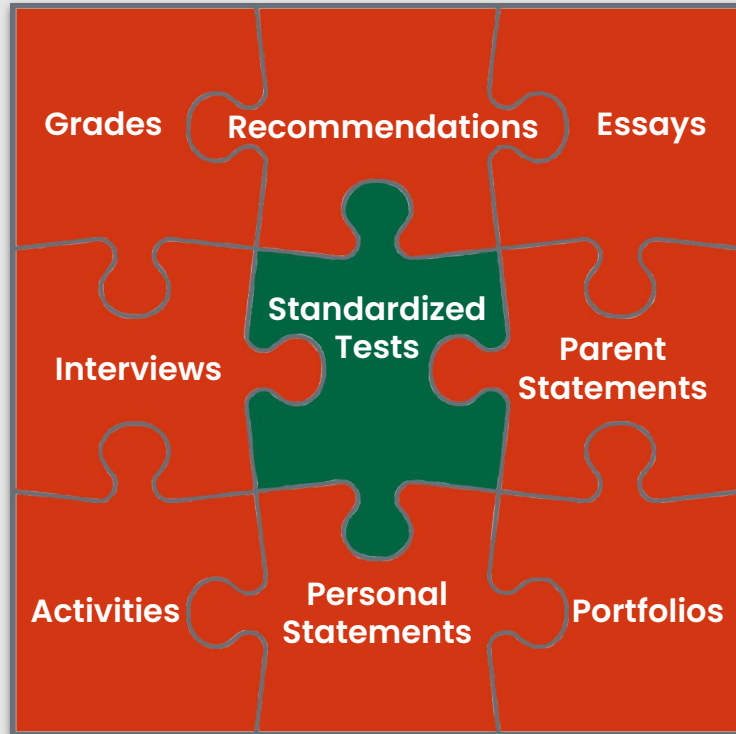
Dr. Keith D. Wright

To mitigate bias in the candidate review process,
we must first recognize its presence.

Holistic Admissions

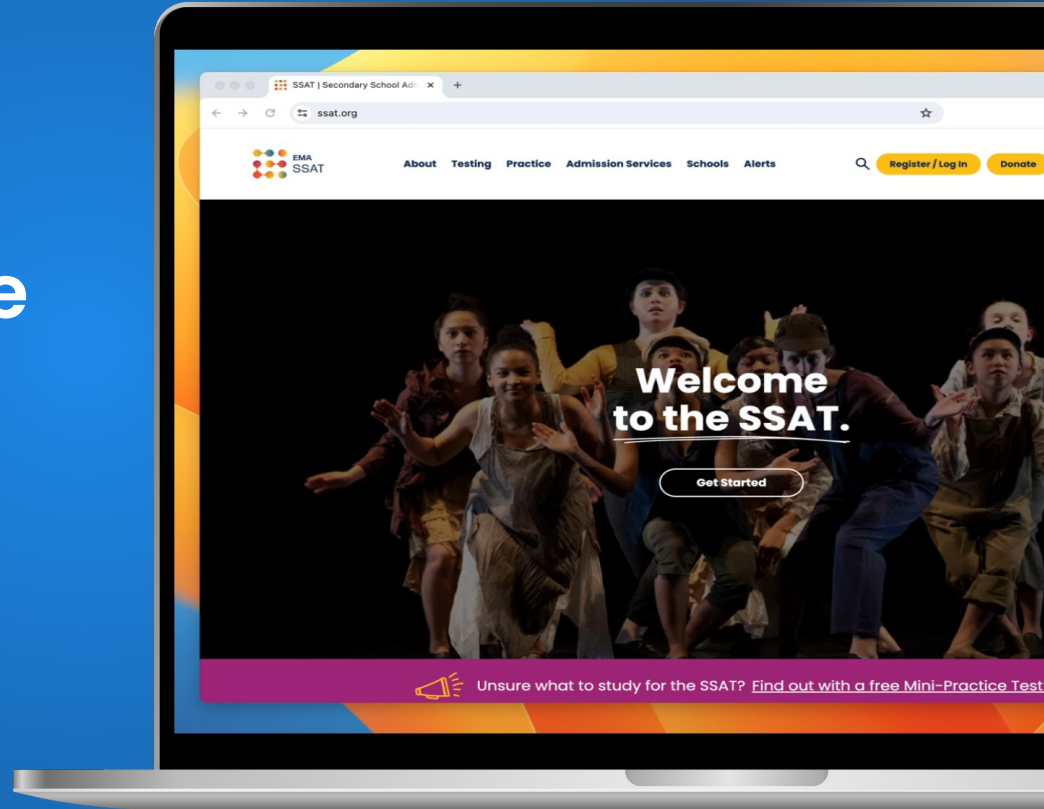
Subjective Criteria

Objective Criteria



Removing standardized testing takes away the only objective measurement against which to compare the other application components.

It's also critical to recognize that not all assessments are created to be equal.



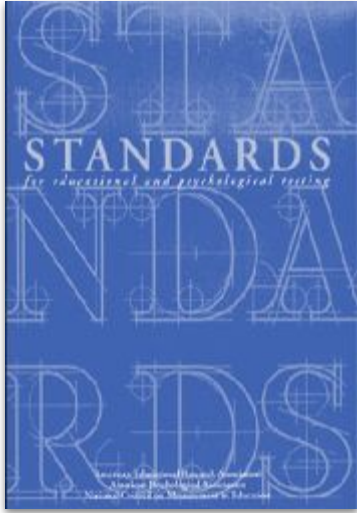
Mitigating Bias in the SSAT & Snapshot

Multiple Approaches

- 1 Adhering to Standards
- 2 Assessment Construction Process
- 3 Fairness Reviews
- 4 Score Equity

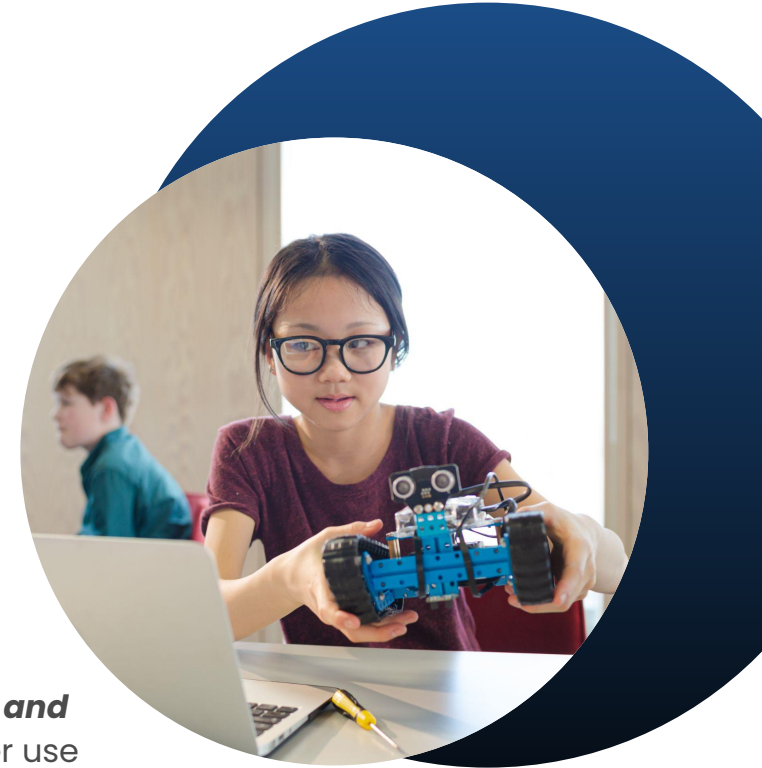


1 Adhering to Standards

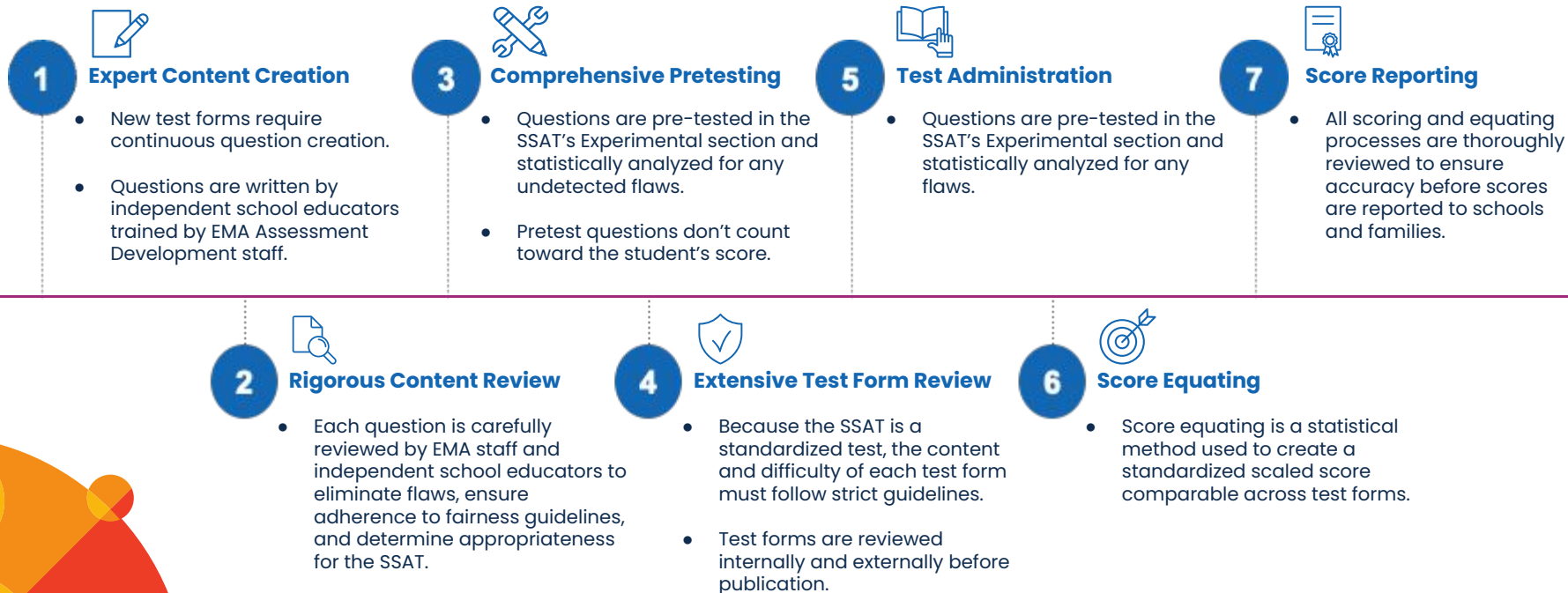


- Test Design & Development
- Test Administration
- Scoring & Score Reporting

The AERA, APA, and NCME produce the ***Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing***, which outlines best practices..... and proper use of assessments in admission.



2 Assessment Construction Process



3 Fairness Reviews

Treat all groups of people with appropriate respect in test materials.

- A wide variety of life situations, living conditions, housing, families (including single-parent families), regions, etc., should be depicted
- People who are members of what are traditionally considered minority groups should be represented
- People of different ages, physical abilities, and social classes should be represented
- Males and females should be approximately equally represented



4 Score Equity

Score Equating

Equating is a statistical procedure that adjusts form difficulty differences so that scores from different test forms have the same meaning and can be used interchangeably.

Differential Item Functioning

A statistical measure of whether test items are potentially “biased” towards one group versus another.



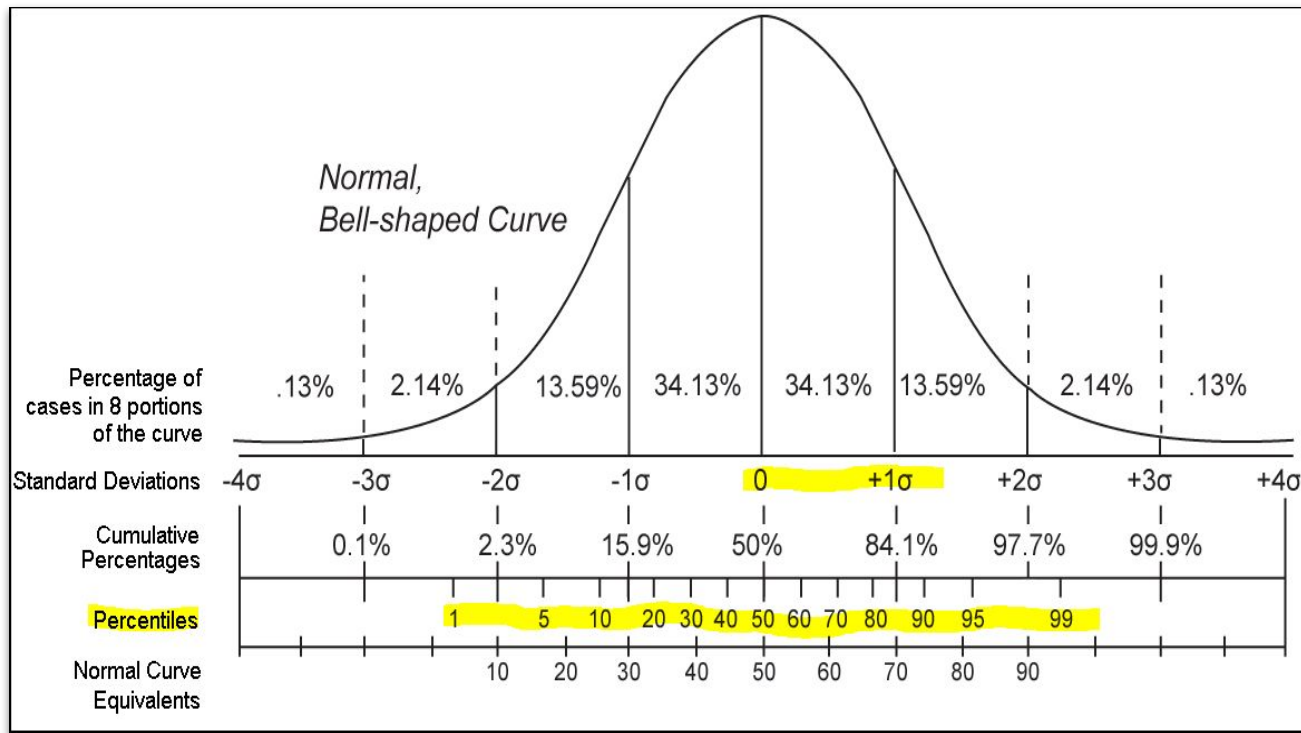
Okay, so the SSAT itself is not biased, but advantaged students still have an unfair testing advantage?

Removing test scores from consideration further emphasizes criteria rich with economic bias.



Use Caution When Comparing Percentiles!

- Avoid the trap of trying to interpret the distance and meaning between percentiles.
- Any result above average is an indicator, that a student could be ready to succeed in a rigorous independent school academic program.





Audra Lopez
Roosevelt, Nevada 11240,
Mexico

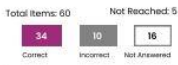
DOB: Jan 21, 2011
Current Grade: 5

Registration ID: 7654321
Level: Middle Grades 5-7
Test Date: May 21, 2021

Total SSAT Score Summary



If taken multiple times, your score would fall between: 650 and 720



If taken multiple times, your score would fall between: 650 and 720



If taken multiple times, your score would fall between: 650 and 720



How to Interpret Your Scores

Upper and Middle level SSAT scores

Scores are calculated by awarding one point for each correct answer and subtracting one-quarter of one point for each incorrect answer. Points are neither awarded nor subtracted for questions left unanswered.

How are my scores calculated?

We provide score ranges to emphasize the possibility of small score differences if you had taken a different edition of the test instead of the one you took, accounting for changes in difficulty and different editions of the test. A statistical approach called "equating" is used to adjust for these differences. Even after these adjustments, no single test score provides a perfectly accurate estimate of your proficiency.

For more information about the SSAT and to take a free practice test, please visit our website: www.ssat.org/practice.

What does "Not Answered" mean?

Questions not answered include both skipped questions and questions not reached. The number of correct, incorrect, not answered or not reached questions should not be compared between different test takers. These not only depend on the test takers ability but also on the difficulty of questions.

What do percentiles mean?

SSAT percentiles have range from 1 to 99, indicating that your scaled score was equal to or higher than the percentage of other test takers shown. If you are concerned that your percentile is lower than other scores, that may be because the SSAT test takers are on a small & highly competitive group of students who plan to go to the world's best independent schools.



Reports will now show the percentage of correct, incorrect, and unanswered questions **for each topic**, providing more detailed data for members and families.



Audra Lopez

Roseville, Nevada 11240,
Mexico

DOB: Jan 21, 2011
Current Grade: 5

Registration ID: 7854321
Level: Middle Grades 5-7
Test Date: May 21, 2021

Your score suggests that you are already likely able to:

Improve your skills by focusing on the following areas:

Synonyms

Excel in recall of many vocabulary words, including high-level;
Determine word meaning using roots, prefixes, and suffixes

70%

Analogies

Competently determine a relationship between words and ideas.

43%

Continue practicing analogies to strengthen your ability to
determine relationships between words and ideas.

Numbers and Operations

Aptly solve problems involving number concepts and arithmetic
computations such as order of operations, single and multi-step
word problems, estimation, and fraction concepts.

80%

Algebra

Demonstrate a superior grasp of solving problems involving
algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities with one and
two variables; Simplify and evaluate algebraic expressions; Able
solve problems involving ratios and proportions as well as
percent increase and decrease problems.

79%

Geometry & Measurement

Demonstrate a general understanding of geometric concepts such
as some unit conversions, angle and shape relationships, and
properties of triangles, quadrilaterals, and circles

33%

Deepen understanding of geometric concepts by practicing
problems involving angles in polygons, angles created by parallel
and intersecting lines, problems involving unit conversions with
customary and metric measures, and foundational problems
involving properties of quadrilaterals, circles, and triangles.

Data & Analysis

25%

Practice problems involving data displays including circle, bar,
and line graphs as well as other data displays such as histograms,
scatterplots, and tables.

Determining Main Idea

Demonstrate a strong grasp of the main idea of a text

75%

Identifying Text Details & Structure

Comprehend text and recall and identify key details; Understand
text structure

75%

Comprehending Language Use

Able to determine the meaning of language as it is used in context;
Identify and understand figurative language.

78%

Interpreting & Inferring Meaning

Use context and evidence to make most inferences and interpret a
text

44%

While reading, continue to form questions, make predictions,
and develop thinking.

Understanding Authorial Intent

Demonstrate a proficient understanding of an author's purpose,
tone, and strategies in writing

50%

While reading, consider the author's purpose, tone, and writing
strategies.



Additionally, we are developing
a second page to provide
diagnostic data for families to
understand their scores and
improve their skills.

What's next?

Member schools: Contact your EMA account representative if you have questions about accepting SSAT or Character Skills Snapshot results.

New schools: Let's find a time to talk! Simply fill out our quick inquiry form: enrollment.org/inquire or use the QR code.

