

Viewpoints

The Return of Standardized Testing for College Admissions



I always think of inequity in education as the difference between “hard resources” and “soft resources.” Hard resources being those that are easily quantifiable—funding, rates of teacher retention, availability of technology, student to teacher ratios etc. However, the equally compelling and outcome determinative soft resources tell a story of their own. Factors such as parent involvement, students living in homes with food insecurity, quality of medical care to which students have access, the quality of schools’ academic counselors and many other such factors all work together to tell a story. When it comes time to support students with minimal access to hard and soft resources in planning their post-graduation lives, those for whom personal and school life is an uphill battle tend not to reach for the stars and are often not pushed to do so. As colleges and universities begin to reintroduce standardized testing (i.e., SAT, ACT) for college admissions, students whose K-12 education is supported with varying quantities of hard and soft resources will face another layer of challenge.

“...Ivy League schools like Cornell, Harvard, Yale, Brown, Dartmouth, MIT, other highly selective universities like CalTech and UT-Austin, and now Stanford, reversed test-optional policies to begin



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requiring the SAT and ACT again. The flood of announcements made it easy to dismiss or tire of them, since most of these colleges are already viewed as out of reach for the majority of students, calculated on one basic fact: grades.

All students know — or at least used to — that at minimum, you need stellar grades and a good test score to get in. Today, however, it seems that will only be true of some exceptional schools. With test optional-schools, it's less clear-cut whether test scores matter and/or how good your grades and scores need to be."

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