

# *College Entrance Exams...*

Grading policies may vary from high school to high school. Because of this, colleges often use standardized tests as a common measurement to evaluate students. Most colleges will require some type of entrance exam, which may be a factor used in the admission and/or financial aid process

## **Determine which test to take**

Most colleges accept ACT and SAT assessments, and the ACT is the most commonly used entrance exam. Community colleges and technical schools may require a different standardized test, such as the COMPASS or the ASSET test. Check with each college you are considering to determine which tests are required for admissions.

**ACT-** The ACT is composed of multiple choice tests covering four subject areas: English, math, reading and science. This is a four hour exam. There is an optional writing test which measures skill in planning and writing a short essay. Add 30 minutes for the optional writing test.

**SAT-** The SAT is made up of 3 sections: critical reading, math and writing, including 9 subsections. The critical reading questions measure ability to understand and analyze what you read and understand word meaning in context. The mathematical questions measure your ability to solve problems involving algebra functions, geometry and measurement, number and operations, data analysis, statistics and probability. Calculator use is permitted and there are some questions that do not include multiple answer choices.

## **Prepare for the test**

Check with the school counseling office or library for study materials to help you prepare. Both the ACT and the SAT have practice tests that are available on line that can serve as practice for the actual assessment. Practice tests will give you a chance to see where your academic weak spots are so you can focus on those areas. The website [www.number2.com](http://www.number2.com) is good for ACT prep.

## **Score well on the test**

In addition to your GPA, class rank and extracurricular accomplishments, colleges will use your score on standardized tests as part of their admission criteria. The score may also be used to determine the amount of merit financial aid the college will award you, so it is important to do your best.

## **Retake the test if necessary**

If you are unhappy with your score or feel you can do better, you may retake the test. Try to take the test for the first time by the spring of your junior year so you will have time to retake it if necessary. Check with your high school counselor or admissions counselor before you retake the test.