



Middlesex School's Policy on taking Standardized Tests

Since 2009, the College Board has offered students a new score-reporting option called Score Choice. Students will have the option to decide which SATs *by test date* and which SAT Subject Tests *by subject test* to send to the colleges. This new feature will give students control over their test scores and hopefully lower their anxiety around taking the tests.

Due to Score Choice, there will be more interest in taking the SAT multiple times. On average, Middlesex students take the SAT three times, twice in junior year and once in senior year. We do not advise students to take the test more than necessary, and ask that students and parents work with the College Office if they have any questions regarding the number of tests to take.

Because we have Saturday classes, the College Office cannot excuse freshmen and sophomores for the SAT during the academic year, nor juniors for the SAT in October and November. Underclassmen can miss classes if they are taking an appropriate SAT Subject Test which aligns with their current course of study and have received permission from the College Office.

We believe students should not take the SAT before December of their junior year because:

1. Students should take the SAT when they are prepared for the test, in terms of maturity, coursework, vocabulary acquisition, and test preparation for a multiple choice test. In terms of their capacity as testers, most high school freshmen and sophomores are not ready to take a four-hour, multiple-choice test.
2. On average, Middlesex students take the SATs three times, and College Board data indicates that there is no significant change from taking the test more than three times. Research shows that students' scores improve on average about 30 to 40 points upon retaking the test (or on their second test) when they take the tests without the benefit of tutoring.

You can learn more about the data regarding taking the SATs multiple times on the College Board web site at:

http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Avg_Scores_of_Repeat_Test_Takers.pdf

3. Students taking the SATs multiple times will potentially experience testing fatigue during their high school career. With the intensity of the Middlesex curriculum along with the standardized tests the students are already expected to take, students may find their energy levels, both emotionally and physically, to be unduly taxed if they are forced to take the SATs more than necessary. Trying to "beat the test" by taking it multiple times only raises the student's level of cynicism regarding the test and the college process.
4. Missing classes is counterproductive to their preparation for the SATs, since the work in their English and math classes are crucial to building the foundation they need for the tests.
5. Middlesex math courses constantly review algebraic skills, and students benefit from using algebraic skills in different math classes as they approach the same concepts in a variety of formats. The constant review in the classroom lays the groundwork for the skills necessary in the discipline.

6. The writing, grammar, and vocabulary skills students develop and practice in the fall of AP English Literature are important and relevant to the material in the critical reading and writing sections of the SAT. In January, the AP English Literature teachers also work closely with the junior class on the essay section of the SAT, as the juniors prepare to take the SAT for the second time at the end of January.
7. Some colleges (for example, Georgetown University, Carnegie Mellon University, and Stanford University) will require that all test scores be sent to them for the admissions process. These colleges have stated that they will respond negatively to students taking the SATs too many times.

Middlesex School requires that all sophomores and juniors take the PSAT. The PSAT helps with discovering testing issues, identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses, and assists in course selections.

Middlesex students typically take the SATs and the ACTs in the following pattern:

Freshman and Sophomore Years:

January: SAT Subject Tests (optional, as appropriate Math Level I or II)
 June: SAT Subject Tests (optional, as appropriate Biology, Chemistry, or Math)

Junior Year:

October: SAT Subject Tests (optional, few juniors do this)
December: SAT
January: SAT
 March: SAT (optional, Mx is not a test center)
 April: ACT (optional, Mx is not a test center)
May: SAT Subject Tests
June: SAT Subject Tests
 June: ACT (optional, but recommended, Mx is not a test center)

Senior Year:

September: ACT (handful typically take it off campus)
October: SAT or Subject Tests
 October: ACT (handful typically take it off campus)
November: SAT or Subject Tests
 December: SAT or Subject Tests (a few seniors take it)
 December: ACT (few seniors take it, off campus)

Dates in bold are the typical dates when Middlesex students usually take the SATs.