

# Chagrin Valley Times

## High-school juniors hear colleges calling

By SUSAN HENSCHEL

Ready or Not, Eleventh Grade is Here

Where did the time go? It seemed like only yesterday your child was starting school. The thought of college seemed far and distant. Well, ready or not, eleventh grade is here and the first bells for college are tolling.

No matter the year in high school, freshman through senior, they are all important for grade point averages and activities. Remember G.P.A. comes from the accumulated average of ALL the grades in high school. And yes, being active at your school is of equal importance. But, what sets eleventh grade apart is that this is the last year to boost the grades and take challenging course work. Yes, grades matter in twelfth grade, but with so many students applying early decision, usually the process is over by November or earlier of the senior year.

The next thing that sets eleventh grade apart is that this is the time to take admission tests for college. For many this strikes terror. A student may not be of the same mind set as to the importance of these exams as would a parent. I am sure you can see the conflict. After all, these tests represent admission into a college, and yes, the

score could represent money. With rising college costs, money is as important as admission. The exception is Harvard and a few other Ivy League schools, which if your student is accepted and your combined household income is under forty thousand annually, tuition is not a requirement.

For many this is not a reality. So eleventh grade is the time to get ready and take the standardized tests.

Typically high schools administer the PSAT/NMSQT in October to their eleventh grade students. The PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. It also gives you a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation [NMSC] scholarship programs. Many high schools are offering an optional practice run in tenth grade.

Here is the breakdown of the test:  
PSAT/NMSQT

Two 25-minute critical reading sections

Two 25-minute math section

One 30-minute writing skills

section

Now on to the SAT:

SAT stands for Scholastic

Aptitude Test. It is the standardized test most colleges require for admission and scholarships. The SAT takes 3 hours, 45 minutes to complete and is given 6 times a year. Registration is required with deadlines for each date. There are two ways to register, either mail-in or online. [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). SAT has a registration fee.

What is on it?

Critical Reading,

Math, Writing

And the third test is the ACT.

ACT stands for American College Testing. It is widely accepted by most colleges. The ACT takes 4 hours, 15 minutes with 30 additional minutes for writing. ACT is offer in Ohio five times a year. Registration is required with deadlines for each date. There are two ways to register, either mail-in or online [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) ACT has a registration fee.

What is on it?

English, Math,

Reading, Science, and Optional writing

In addition to these test many students will also take SATII which are subject based exams.

The SAT and ACT are offered several times a year. Most students will take both the SAT and ACT to see which score will be higher. Choosing the right time to take a test can be difficult given the activity levels and school commitments. Due to registration requirements by the test manufacturers, students need to register in advance for test dates. Not being prepared can have a negative impact as in a case that appeared on The Today Show. On the show, a student and her family were fighting with the College Board (manufacturers of the PSAT/SAT), who thought her latest SAT score was too high compared to her previous score.

She was being labeled a cheat. The student explained over and over that the first time she took the SAT she was not prepared. Unfortunately for her, she learned the hard way that it is necessary to be prepared.

Junior year begins the first step to college admission and scholarship consideration. Early planning and being prepared are keys to success.

Now you're ready for eleventh grade.

The College Review SAT/ACT Prep. 1-877-EXAM-123 or visit our website at [www.collegereview.org](http://www.collegereview.org)