

EDUCATION NEWS AND NOTES

The Right Tools Help Teens Succeed On College Entrance Exams

(NAPSA)—College enrollment is growing more competitive, having increased by around 3 million students over the past decade and continuing to rise, according to the United States Department of Education. For many students, having a strong showing on high-stakes college entrance tests is critical for attending the school of their dreams.

Strong college entrance test scores not only improve a student's chances of getting in, but are also tied to scholarships—a key factor during today's economic times when finances can become daunting, even prohibitive.

Pressures like finances and increased competition add more stress and can prevent teens from doing their best on exams, says Dr. Ruth Peters, a nationally renowned adolescent psychologist and parenting contributor to NBC's "Today" show.

Peters advises parents that "being prepared with the right tools and adequate study time makes a big difference in easing teens' anxiety and increasing their confidence that they'll succeed."

Many teens and parents are surprised to learn that a graphing calculator like the TI-Nspire calculator from Texas Instruments is allowed on the SAT, ACT, AP, IB (International Baccalaureate) and many statewide math exams. College Board policy recommends graphing calculators over scientific calculators for SAT level 1 and 2 mathematics subject tests and recommends students bring calculators with which they are familiar to exams. ACT and IB exam policies also allow approved graphing calculators on math tests.



College Board policy states students should bring calculators they are familiar with on testing day.

"Almost every student in my classes takes the SAT at least once, and I've found that having a graphing calculator at school and at home helps them learn advanced math concepts on a deeper level and equips them to succeed—not only on high-stakes exams but also in college and their future careers," said Eric Butterbaugh, an algebra and geometry teacher at Bread and Roses Integrated Arts High School in New York City.

Parents can not only ensure their teen has access to the right tools in class and at home, but also follow several tips from Dr. Peters to make sure their child is ready for the big day.

- **Know before you go.** Not all calculators are allowed on exams, such as those built into cell phones and laptops. Become familiar with the calculator policies at www.CollegeBoard.com and www.actstudent.org.

- **Prepare early.** Take advantage of free SAT and ACT test prep resources from a reputable source like The Princeton Review. Free test prep questions are available on www.TImathrocks.com and can be downloaded to the TI-Nspire graphing calculator.

- **Don't cram.** Some students tend to procrastinate and wait until a few days or a week before the test to review the material, but cramming can lead to exhaustion and actually hurt performance. Many psychological studies have shown that working a little each day or two over an extended period of time leads to significantly higher test scores, rather than cramming the night or two before the exam.

- **Sleep well and eat up.** Studies have shown that students perform better in school if they start off the day with a full night's sleep and a complete, balanced breakfast. The same goes for test day, too.

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