

Florida Expands Access To Higher Education: Provides Free Pre-College Tests For All 10th-Graders

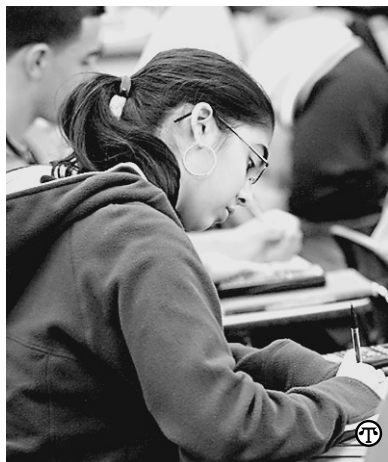
(NAPSA)—On May 14, 2004, Governor Jeb Bush signed SB 2184 into law, creating the Florida Partnership for Minority and Under-represented Student Achievement. The law will expand access to higher education by allowing all of Florida's 10th-grade students to take a free test that will show if they are on course for college success.

Given each October, the PSAT/NMSQT® helps students identify their academic strengths and weaknesses. By checking with the counselor in your high school, you can find out if your child is registered for the test. When the results come back, students will know which of their skills need improvement and can work on them in 11th and 12th grades to be better prepared before taking the SAT®, the most widely used college admissions test. The PSAT/NMSQT can also identify students who can do well in AP courses, college-level classes taken in high school.

The SAT helps colleges know whether a student will succeed on their campuses. Since schools, classes (even in the same subject), and grading vary a lot, it helps colleges to have one standard for all applicants. The SAT is given seven times during the year so students planning to go to college will find a date convenient for them.

The SAT measures verbal and mathematical reasoning skills that a student has developed through course work in school, as well as through outside reading. In March 2005, a third section will be added to the SAT to measure writing skills. Students in the class of 2006 will be asked to write an essay that takes a position on an issue and to use examples and details to support the position they take.

In reviewing a student's application, many colleges use the SAT as one gauge of a student's readiness to do college-level work. Other signs of possible college success are high school grades, class rank, extracurricular activities, the personal essay, and teacher recommendations. Studies show, that students taking two or more AP courses in high school are twice as likely to graduate from college on time as students who have not been exposed to AP.



Students can prepare for the SAT by making sure they're familiar with the test format.

BEING PREPARED CAN HELP

Here are some tips:

- Learn about the format of the SAT ahead of time. Read the directions on a practice test and try some of the questions in each section.

- Take a complete sample SAT, available free in the registration booklet or online at www.collegeboard.com. Taking the sample test will give students a better sense of how to pace themselves.

- Review the answers to the practice test to see how well your answering strategy works. Wild guesses, taken without any idea at all which answer is correct, do not usually pay off and can cost points.

- Do the little things that really count—get a good night's sleep before the test, eat a good breakfast on test day, and remember to bring your ID, pencils, eraser, and calculator to the test center.

The College Board Florida Partnership is working with the Florida Education Fund and the Urban League of Miami Dade and Broward counties to offer students test awareness sessions that can help. Teachers also offer these test awareness classes in high schools across Florida. Check to see if review classes are available in your student's high school. Additional test information, test dates, and free sample tests can be found online at www.collegeboard.com/sat.