



Colorado's Switch from ACT to SAT January 2016

Background

Since 2001, Colorado has required every high school junior to take the ACT as their 11th grade college entrance exam, for which the state covered the cost. House Bill 15-1323 established a competitive bid process for Colorado's college entrance exam (including both 10th and 11th grade assessments). In December of 2015, a selection committee composed of educators, counselors and administrators from diverse geographic regions across the state voted to adopt SAT as the required test. Several other states have recently made the same decision to use SAT instead of ACT, including Connecticut, Michigan, Hawaii, Oregon, South Carolina, and Illinois. Parents/students will not be charged any additional fees for the switch to SAT.

Timeline

CDE is working with Pearson and College Board on a plan that would keep the ACT in place for the spring of 2016 (meaning the transition to SAT would not happen until the spring of 2017). CDE, the Department of Law, the State Purchasing Office and ACT will need to agree on the one-year delay. This would not change the requirement for this year's 10th graders to take the PSAT in preparation for Colorado's full transition to the SAT in spring 2017. The PSAT will replace the PARCC test as the required 10th grade assessment.

Why is the transition from ACT to SAT taking place?

- The SAT is aligned to the Common Core standards in English and math, which are a part of the Colorado Academic Standards. The redesigned SAT measures the skills and knowledge that evidence shows is critical for college and career readiness, including critical thinking and analytical reasoning. The alignment to Colorado's standards has also been validated by a third party.
- The selection committee found the College Board's reporting system to be more useful, as it connects students to resources and activities designed to help identify next steps for extra support or possible acceleration.
- In March 2015, College Board partnered with Khan Academy to provide *free*, personalized test prep for any student with computer access, saving students and families at least \$300 and leveling the playing field for families that might not be able to afford test prep or tutors for their children.
- The SAT provides four fee waivers for college applications for students who qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, for an average total savings of about \$200.
- In the spring of 2014, high school sophomores sat for 11 hours of PARCC testing. The PSAT that will be taken by sophomores is a substantially shorter test – only three hours.
- Regarding longitudinal data, a concordance table will be constructed to compare scoring on the ACT and SAT. This will allow schools and districts to retain the ACT data collected since 2001 while also using new data that will result from the future use of the SAT.
- The SAT is a globally-recognized test accepted by nearly every college in the nation, including every Colorado college and university.
- College Board has signed the Student Data Privacy Pledge – a list of 12 commitments school service providers have made to affirm K-12 student data is maintained in a secure, private and responsible framework. For more information: <https://studentprivacypledge.org/>