

# Everything College Admissions

Centennial High School Junior Night

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**applerouth**  
tutoring services llc



# Admissions Factors

*What are colleges looking for?*



# Understand the Needs of Colleges and Universities



If you understand institutional priorities, you can craft an application that makes you more appealing.

# Key Institutional Needs When Constructing a Class

- Financial Health
  - Managing discount rate
  - Development
  - Legacy
- Rankings: Staying on Par with Peer Schools
  - Academic strength of applicants



# Key Institutional Needs Cont'd...

- Diversity
  - Ethnic
  - Geographic
  - Serving first-generation students
- Activities and Campus Life
  - Athletics
  - Fine and performing arts



# NACAC Admissions Trends Survey 2012:

## Factors Influencing Admissions decisions

Importance	Considerable	Moderate	Limited	None
Grades in college prep	86.5%	11.5%	1.6%	0.3%
Strength of curriculum	70.7	22.0	5.9	1.3
Admission test scores	57.8	32.0	9.2	1.0
Grades in all courses	45.6	43.9	9.8	0.7
Essay or writing sample	26.4	37.5	19.9	16.3
Demonstrated interest	20.7	27.0	27.6	24.7
Teacher recommendation	17.4	47.7	23.7	11.2
Counselor rec.	17.1	50.0	22.0	10.9
Class rank	16.3	42.2	31.7	9.8
Extracurricular activities	8.9	43.9	34.3	12.9
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	7.0	27.2	33.6	32.2
Extracurricular activities	8.9	43.9	34.3	12.9
Interview	6.6	26.3	31.9	35.2
SAT II scores	5.0	11.0	28.0	56.0

# Admissions Process

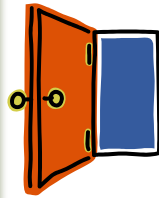
*What happens to my application after I submit it?*



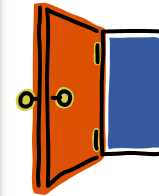


# Application “Gates”

High School  
GPA,  
considering  
strength of  
schedule and  
school



SAT  
ACT  
SAT Subject  
Tests



Admissions Essays  
Teacher/Counselor  
Recommendations  
Activities  
(Leadership, Depth)

Academic Index:  
Quantitative Components  
How will they read your  
application?

Qualitative  
Components  
Have you told a  
cohesive story?



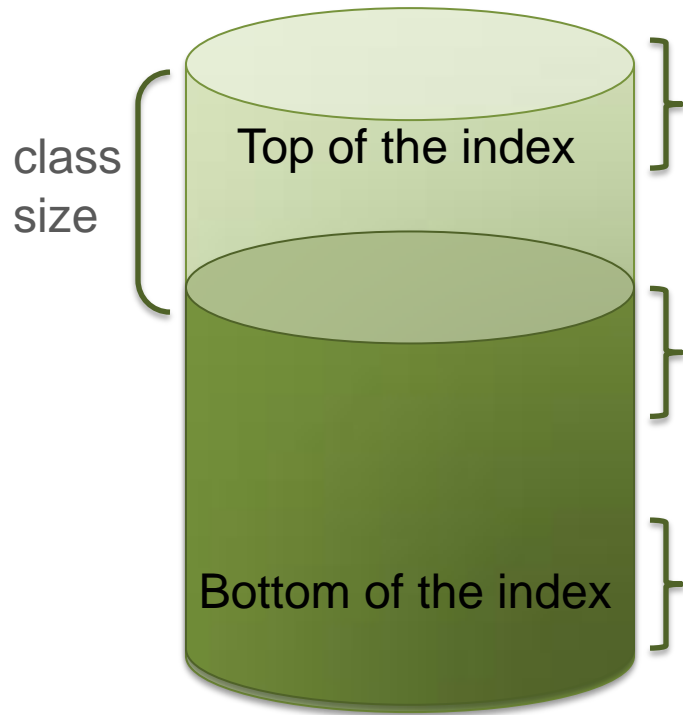
# How Most Colleges Evaluate Applicants

## Step 1: Academic Indexing

- Applications are indexed through an algorithm that typically includes:
  - *Course rigor*
  - *Grades in core classes*
  - *Test scores*
  - *School strength*
- Schools assign different weights to these factors, but core GPA and course rigor often trump testing



# The Academic Index Impacts the “Read” a Student Receives



Is there a compelling reason **not** to give an offer to these students?

The real work for the admissions committee  
– the kids in the middle

Is there a compelling reason to take a risk  
on these students?

# How Most Colleges Evaluate Applicants Continued...

## Step 2\*: Involvement/Leadership Evaluation

- Student résumé
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Leadership positions (depth) trump variety (breadth)

\*The factors in Steps 2 and 3 are considered *only if* the student's academic index justifies a holistic read



# How Most Colleges Evaluate Applicants Continued...

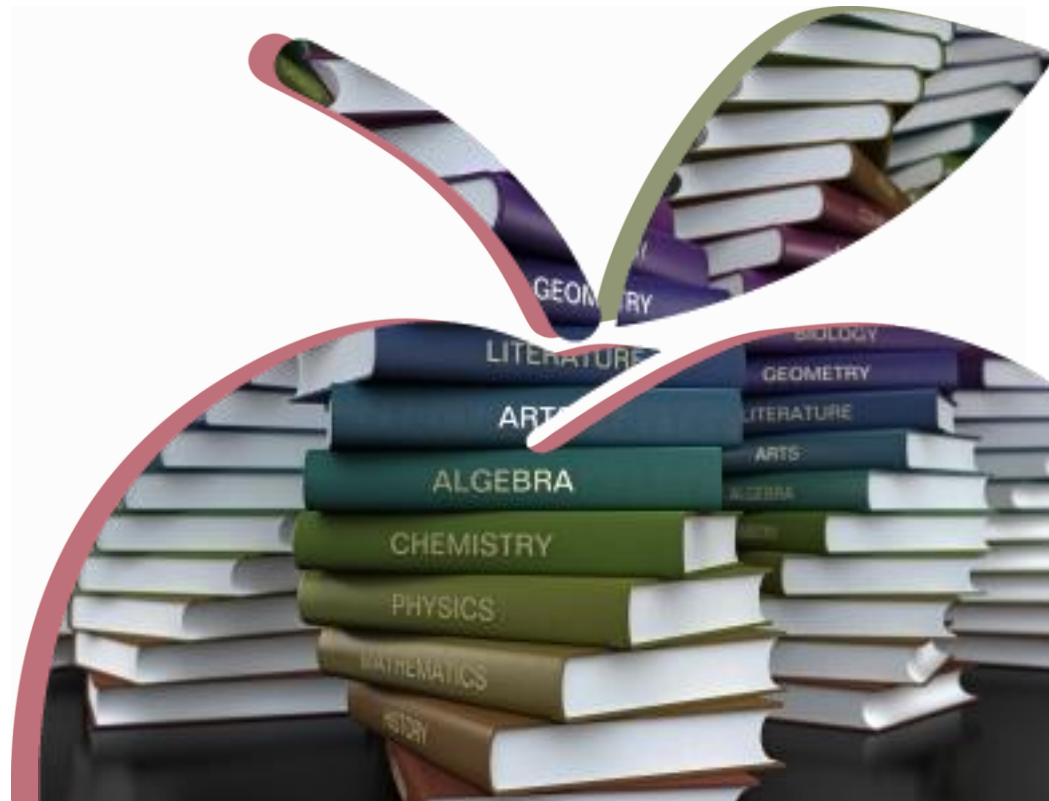
## **Step 3: Consider Other, Qualitative Factors**

- Adversity
- Contributions to the community
- Diversity
- Awards and recognitions
- Personality and voice
- Student's self-awareness or insights, as demonstrated through the essays or letters of recommendation



# Academics

*How will colleges view my transcript?*



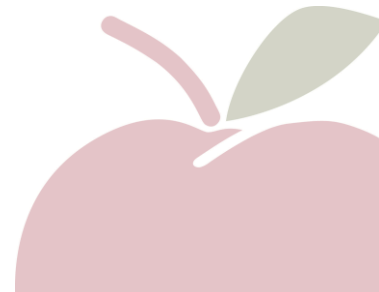
# Balance Course Rigor and GPA

Encourage students to take a challenging curriculum  
**in the context of your school**



To strike the right balance, consider:

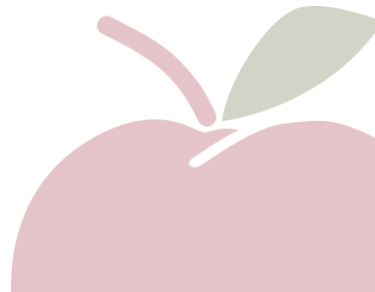
- Past performance
- In-school commitments
- Other commitments



# Grade *Trends* are Essential

It is **never** too late to improve your grades. It may be tough to change your cumulative GPA first semester senior year, but an upward

trend can help with admissions -- *especially* if you can explain the change with a compelling narrative.





# Competition within Cohorts

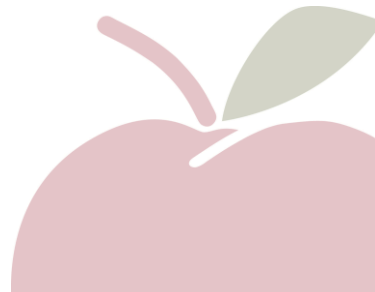


You are compared to other students at your school; you are also compared within ethnicity and gender bands



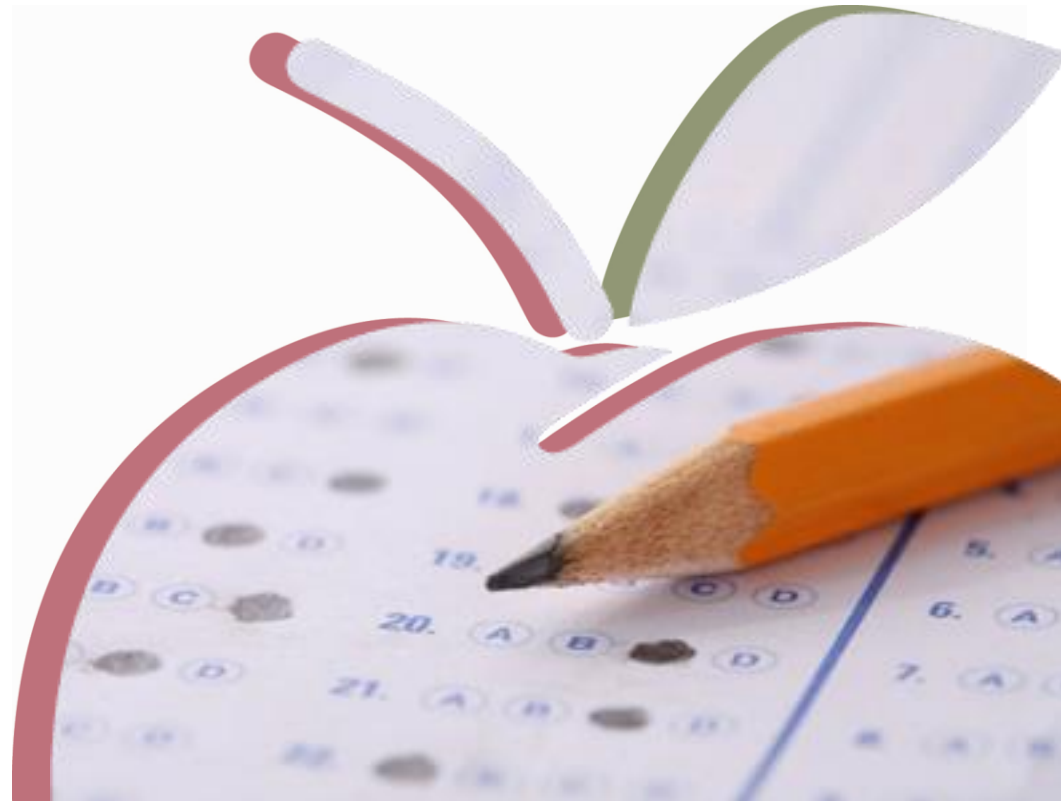
# Calibrate the Relative Importance of GPA

- Grade inflation is rampant in the US
- With so much aid money on the line, many teachers feel that giving a C is like taking money out of a student's pocket
- Some students get too caught up in GPA, an unstandardized metric, and ignore testing, which is standardized



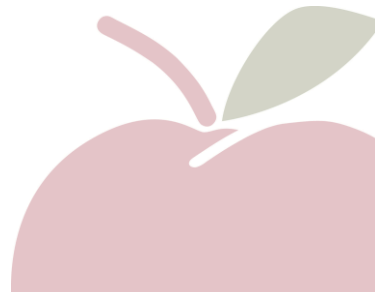
# Testing

*Should I take the SAT or the ACT?*



# How Important are the Tests?

Over the last decade, the tests have become a more significant part of the application process, affecting both admissions and merit-based scholarship decisions.

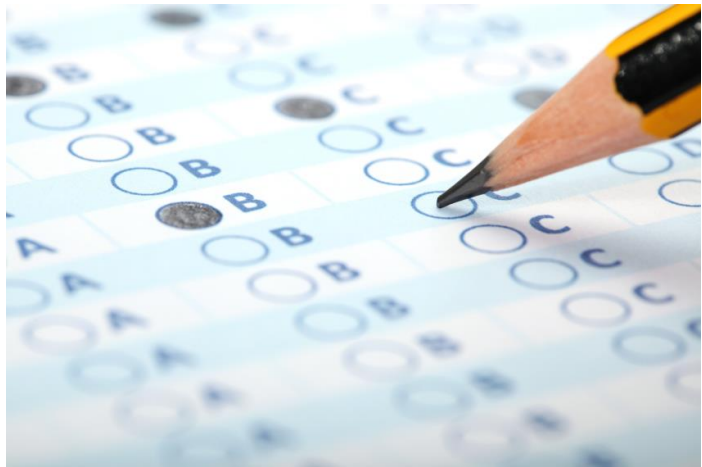


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# Why Testing Has Increased in Importance



- Standardized, which allows for easy comparison across geographic & demographic lines
- A hedge against grade inflation
- Efficient way to make big cuts
- Moderately useful predictor of success in college

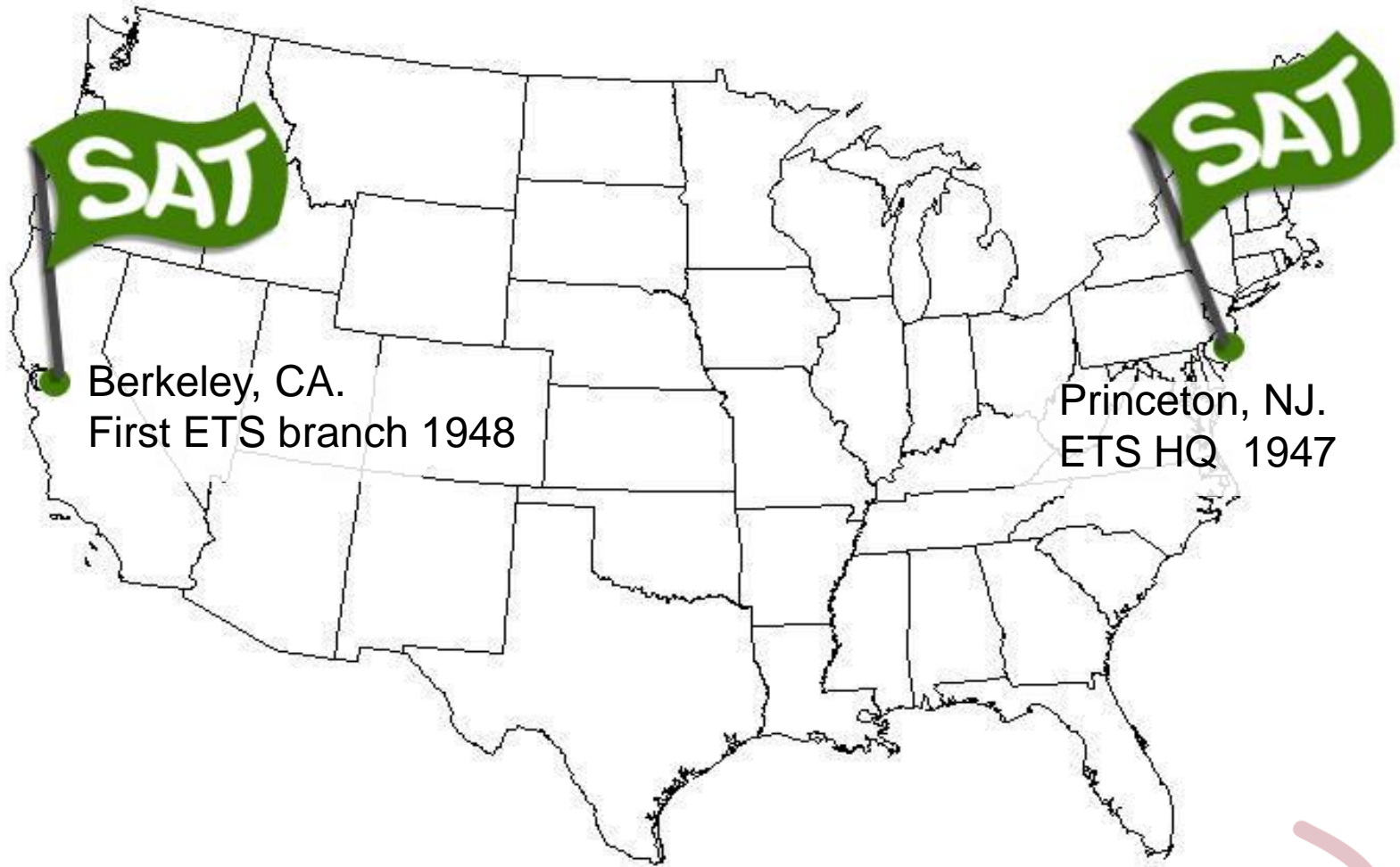


# Quick Intro to the Assessments

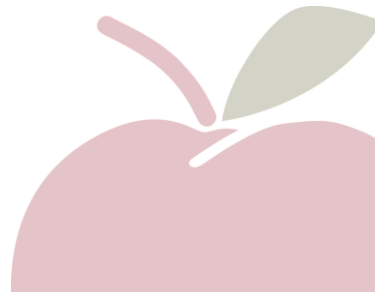




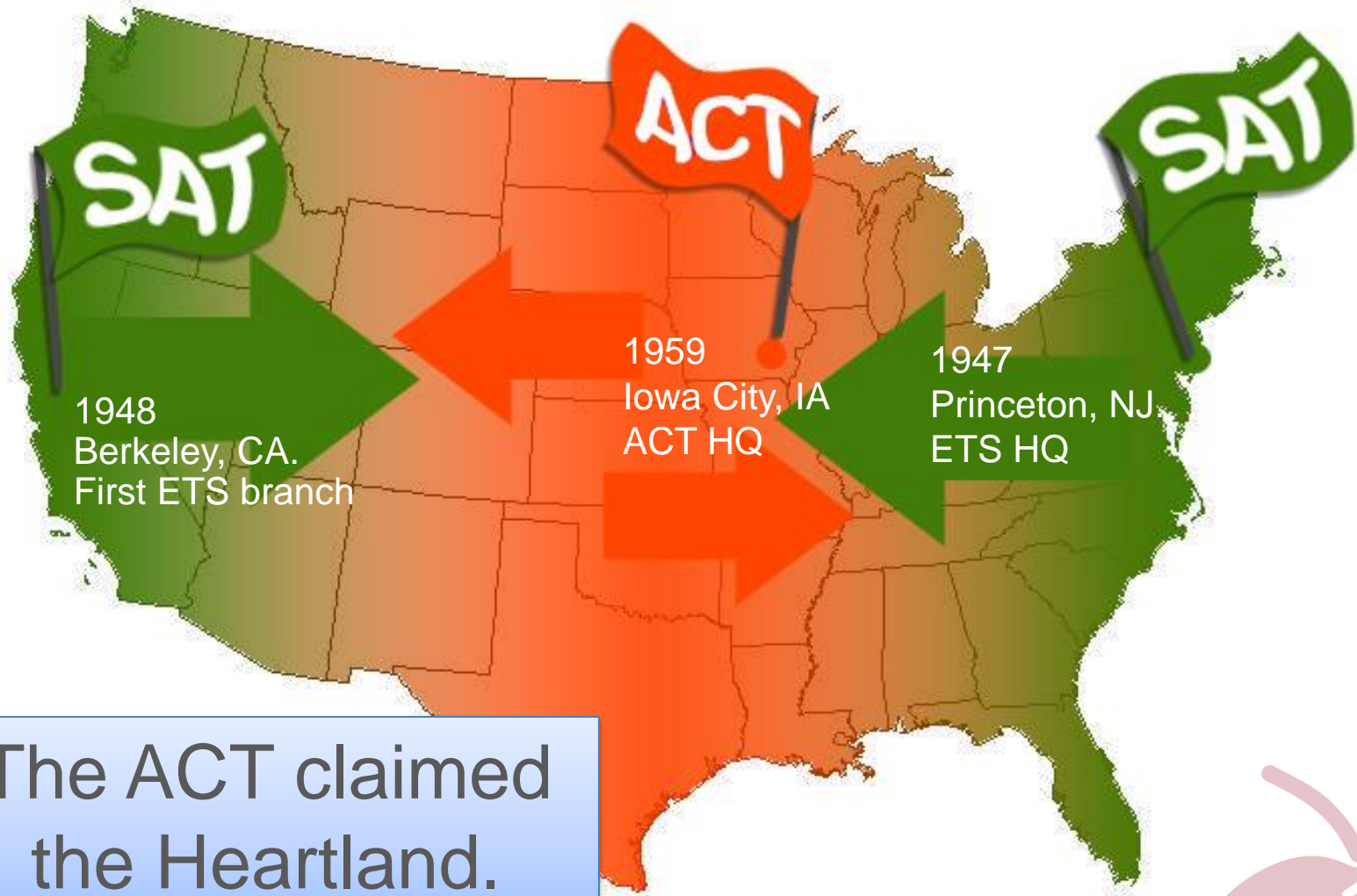
# SAT/ACT Geographic Origins



The SAT was first on the scene.



# SAT/ACT Geographic Origins



Today the SAT and ACT  
are universally accepted

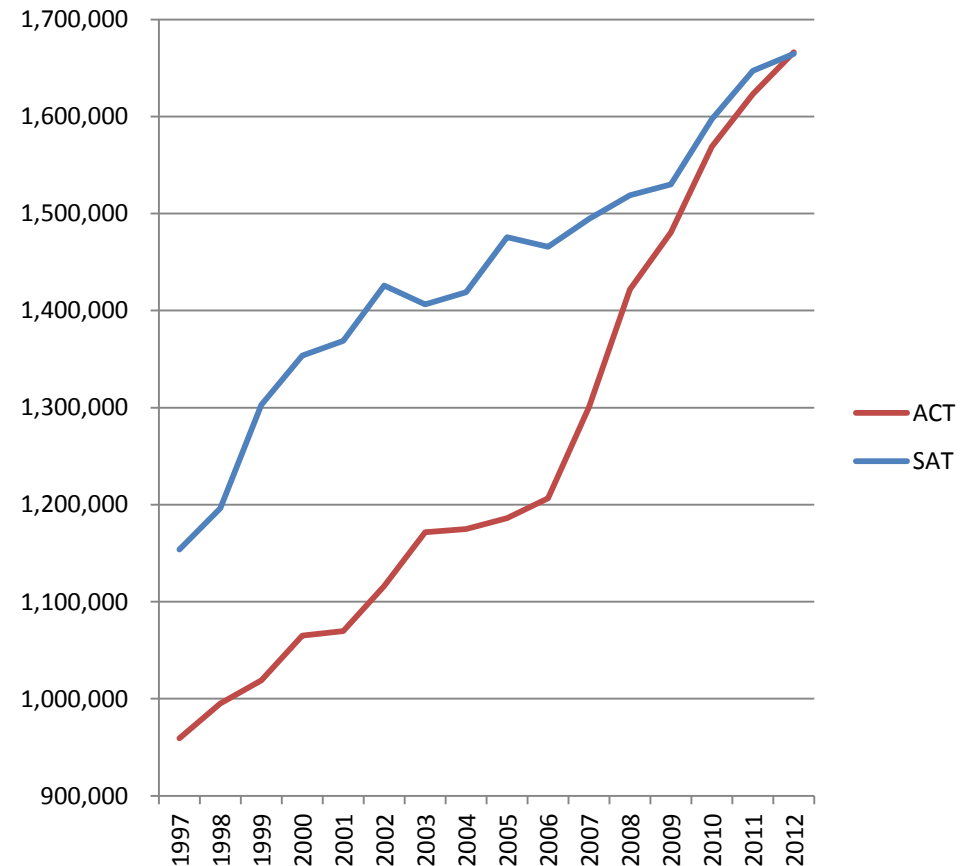


Colleges will accept either  
test **without prejudice.**



# The ACT Has Rocked the SAT's World!

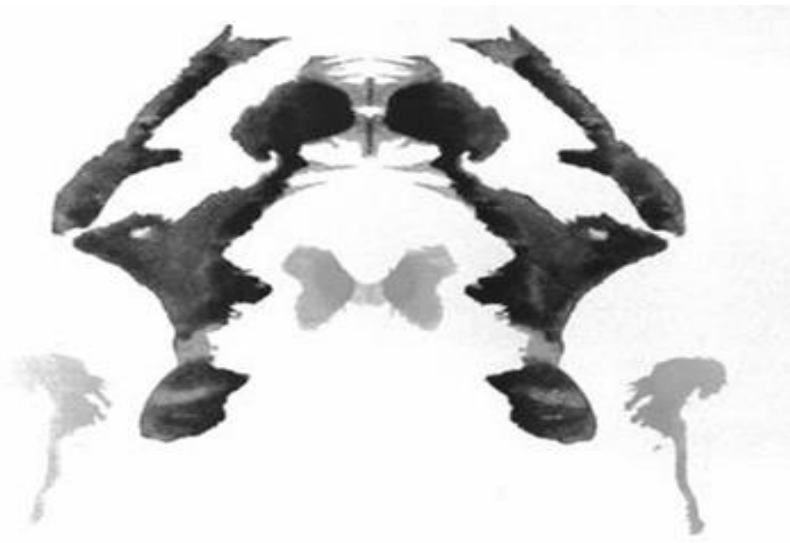
	SAT	ACT	Gap
2005	1,475,623	1,186,251	289,372
2006	1,465,744	1,206,455	259,289
2007	1,494,531	1,300,599	193,932
2008	1,518,859	1,421,941	96,918
2009	1,530,128	1,480,469	49,659
2010	1,597,329	1,568,835	28,494
2011	1,647,123	1,623,112	24,011
2012	1,664,479	*1,666,209	<b>-1,730</b>



Aligning with the Common Core has made the ACT the big winner!

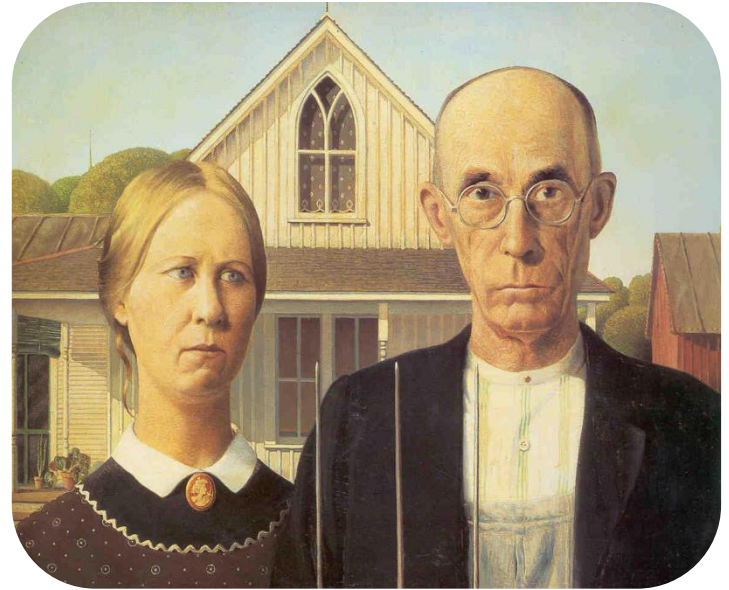
# A Quick Anatomy of the Tests

## SAT



- Abstract
- Foreign
- Easier to coach
- Learn the language of, solve the mysteries of the test

## ACT



- Concrete
- Familiar
- Comparatively less coachable
- Practice, get more familiar with the test

# Deeper Comparison: Reading

## SAT

- Abstract
- Analogous Thinking
- Interpretation
- How might the author respond?
- Vocabulary matters

## ACT

- Straightforward
- Content-based
- What did I read?
- What happened to the character?
- Vocabulary relatively less important

# Deeper Comparison: Math

## SAT

- Covers Geometry, Algebra I, and Algebra II (advanced functions and graphs)
- Unique language, trick-filled questions

## ACT

- Covers Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II, and Trigonometry
- More straight-forward and familiar question types



# Deeper Comparison: English/Writing

## SAT

- Counts for most students
- Essay is lumped together with the multiple choice to get the total writing score

## ACT

- Counts for all students
- Essay is optional (but you **should** complete it)

# Deeper Comparison: Science

## SAT

- Does not exist.

## ACT

- Primarily graph and table analysis
- Counts towards composite score

# Deeper Comparison: Timing

## SAT

- This is the marathon. Speed is relatively less important, but the test is 10 sections and 3.75 hours long!

## ACT

- This is the sprint. The test is only 4 sections and just under 3 hours long (without the optional essay); however, many students have trouble finishing.

# Deeper Comparison: Guessing

## SAT

- Students lose a quarter of a point for each question they miss, so blind guessing is penalized on the SAT

## ACT

- Students lose nothing for missed questions, so it's a good idea to "Christmas tree" questions they can't answer in time

# Deeper Comparison: Scoring

## SAT

- Section scores range from 200-800
- Overall score ranges from 600-2400
- Overall score equals sum of the section scores

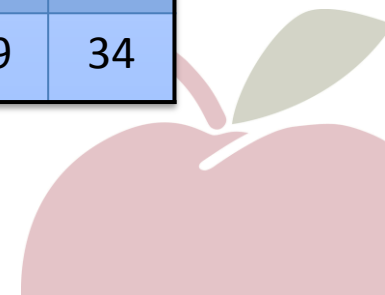
## ACT

- Section scores range from 9-36
- Overall scores range from 9-36
- Overall score equals average of the section scores

Schools are more likely to “superscore” the SAT!

# GA and Regional Schools

25-75% Ranges	Critical Reading		Math		Writing		ACT	
GA Southern	510	590	510	600			21	24
GSU	490	590	490	590			21	25
UGA	560	660	570	660	560	660	24	29
GA tech	590	690	650	730	580	670	27	31
Emory	640	740	670	760	650	740	30	33
Charleston	570	650	570	650			23	26
Furman	590	690	590	680	590	680	26	30
Clemson	550	640	590	680			25	30
Wake Forest	610	690	630	710			27	31
Duke	660	750	680	790	680	780	29	34



# Which Test Should I Try First?

- Both, ideally, to establish dual baselines
- Three-Step Analysis:
  - 1. Start with your STRENGTH. If none,
  - 2. Prep to your PREFERENCE. If still none,
  - 3. Choose the more COACHABLE test, the SAT.
- If SAT prep is not yielding results, switch to the ACT. If you have to switch, 80% of the content transfers



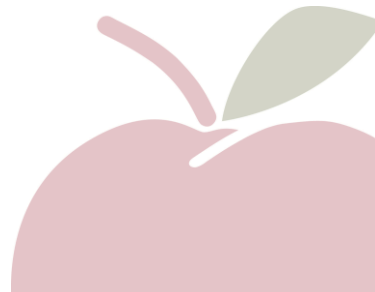


What do I need to know  
about the tests for  
colleges?



# Changes we've seen

- Super-scoring the SAT and ACT
- Taking multiple tests
- Sending all scores (elite schools only)
- Students taking (and sending!) both SAT and ACT



# Accommodations

- If you need them, APPLY. But start early. If you have to appeal, DO IT!! Persistence is key.



# Prep for the SAT Subject Tests

20% of schools Assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to SAT IIs

- 3,000 + US colleges, roughly 100 use Subject Tests for admissions
- How many to take: 2. Harvard, Georgetown, Princeton: 3
- Timing: May and June are ideal, aligned with APs
- Some schools accept the ACT as a replacement for the SAT+ SAT subject tests: Yale, Brown, Penn, and Duke
- Math 1: easier questions, harder curve.  
Math 2: harder questions, easier curve, ideal post Pre-Cal.
- UC Systems dropped Subject Tests for class of 2012 and beyond.
- Starting in 2010, NYU will accept 3 SAT Subject Test scores in non-language tests INSTEAD of the SAT or ACT

# Activities

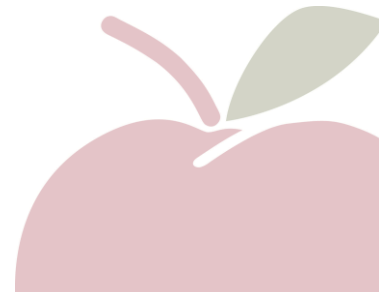
*Should I join every club in school?*



# How Do Activities Factor into Admissions?

- Admissions officers look for **continuity, depth, and contribution**
- Doing the activity consistently over multiple years is key; do not switch every year

It's good to have involvement beyond sports, if possible. Admissions officers are asking, "what will this student bring to campus?"



What are the admissions trends I need to know about?





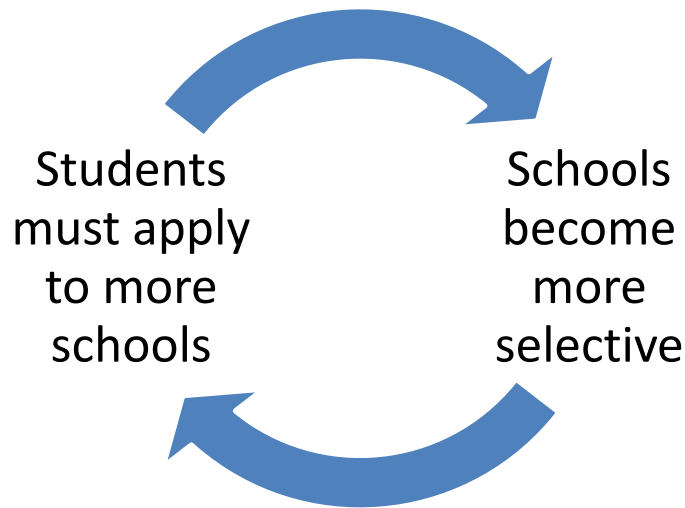
# Trend 1: Increased Selectivity at Competitive Schools





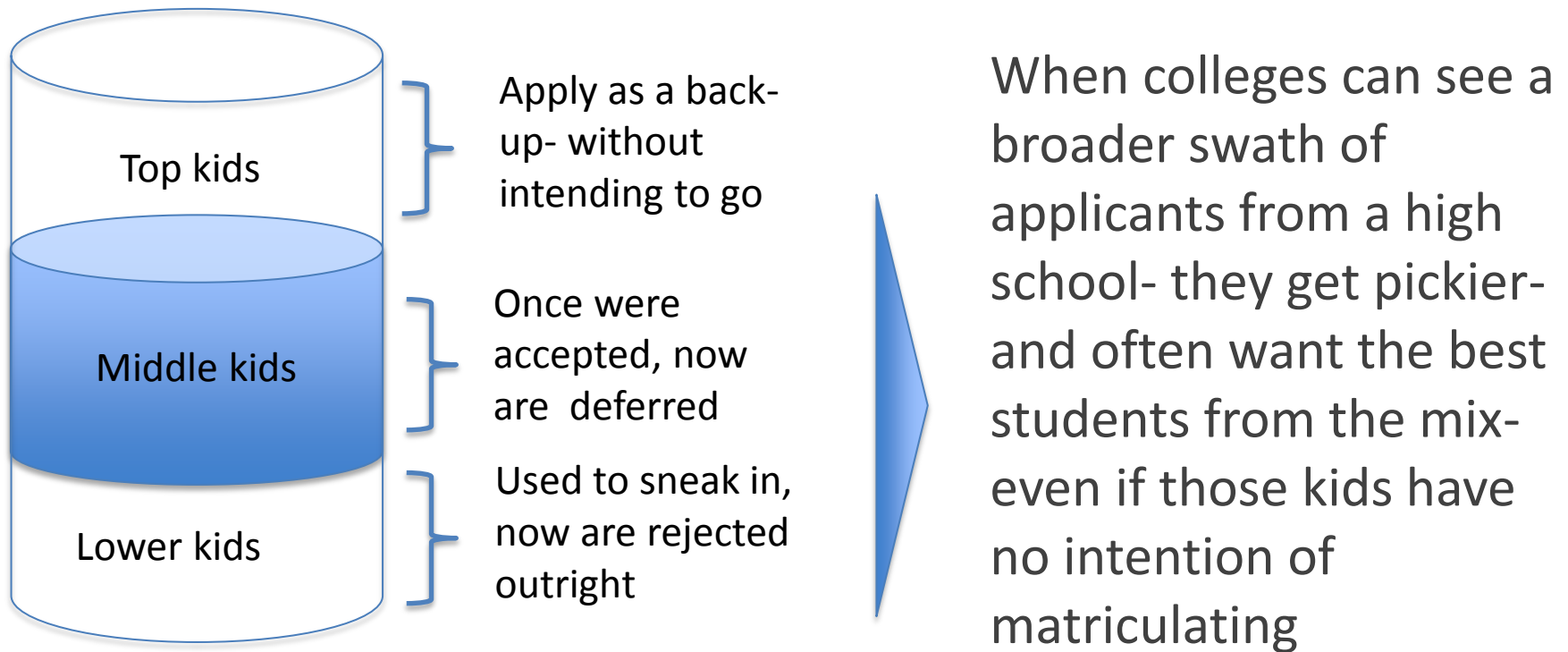
# At the top: Selectivity on the rise

Autocatalytic process: Schools become more selective: ergo students need to apply to more schools, further increasing selectivity



Common App is adding fuel to the fire

# For secondary schools, too many kids applying to the same selective colleges can hurt group outcomes



## Broader applicant pools inevitably change how applications are processed

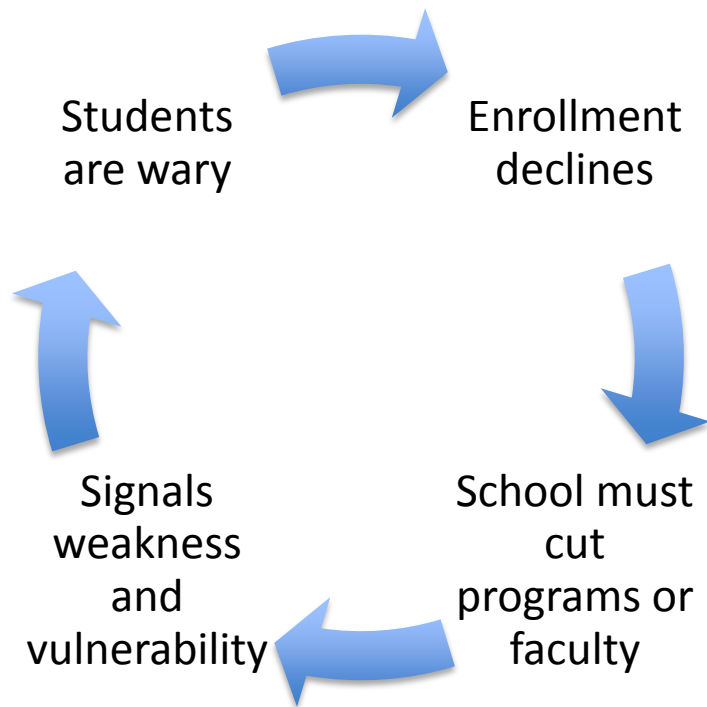
- There is always a screening process, a way to cull the herd (quantitative indexing process, or aggressive first reader)
- Unless a reading staff has grown commensurately with the rise of applications-schools must read differently.

With heightened selectivity, admissions office will continue to emphasize quantitative components

# Trend 2: Decreased Selectivity at Non-competitive Schools



At the bottom: Selectivity on the decline  
50% of colleges missing enrollment or financial targets, leading to hard choices



Some colleges are entering the death spiral

# Enrollment Management will play a larger role than ever before

- Enrollment management comes to center stage in the admissions process as institutional needs trump loftier ideals
- Greater attention to demonstrated interest, yield, discount rate, strategic pricing
- Above all else, make the budgets work



# Colleges will attend more to student's online behavior

“There are so many silent electronic footprints they're leaving nowadays....[we track] whether individual applicants

- clicked to open email communications
- logged into the system to check the status of an application
- called the school and how long the call lasted ”



- Sundar Kumarasamy, VP enrollment management and marketing, U. Dayton

Variable	Model Effect	Predictor Group
Being From Within 100 Miles of Campus	+	Best Predictors
<b>Campus Visit Flag</b>	+	
Public High School	-	
Student Athlete Flag	+	
<b>First Source Campus Visit</b>	+	
Being From Lower Income Zip Code	-	Moderate Predictors
Private High School	+	
Low Rated High School	-	
Being From Massachusetts	+	
Being From a City	+	
<b>College Fair Attendee</b>	+	Minor Predictors
Coming From a Strong High School Feeder	+	

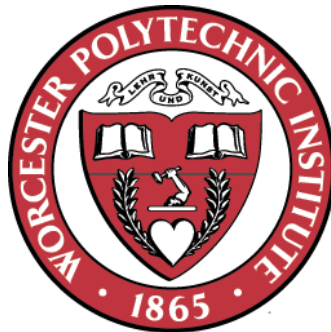


# State schools will seek more revenue through expanded geographic diversity

- Amending charters, opening up more spots to out of state students.
- Flagship state schools become more competitive, squeezing out spots for locals (e.g. GA Tech, post- Common App).
- Opening up doors to more international applicants.

May benefit some of you applying out of state

With more diversity in the population,  
we will see more Test-Optional schools



800 and  
counting!

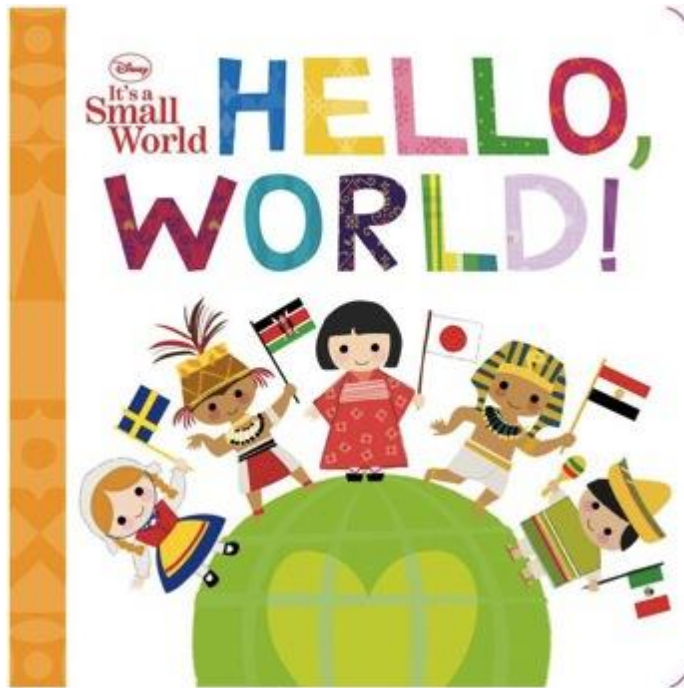


Going test optional gets an immediate diversity  
bump & also increases average reported test scores!

# Trend 3: The Increase in International Students



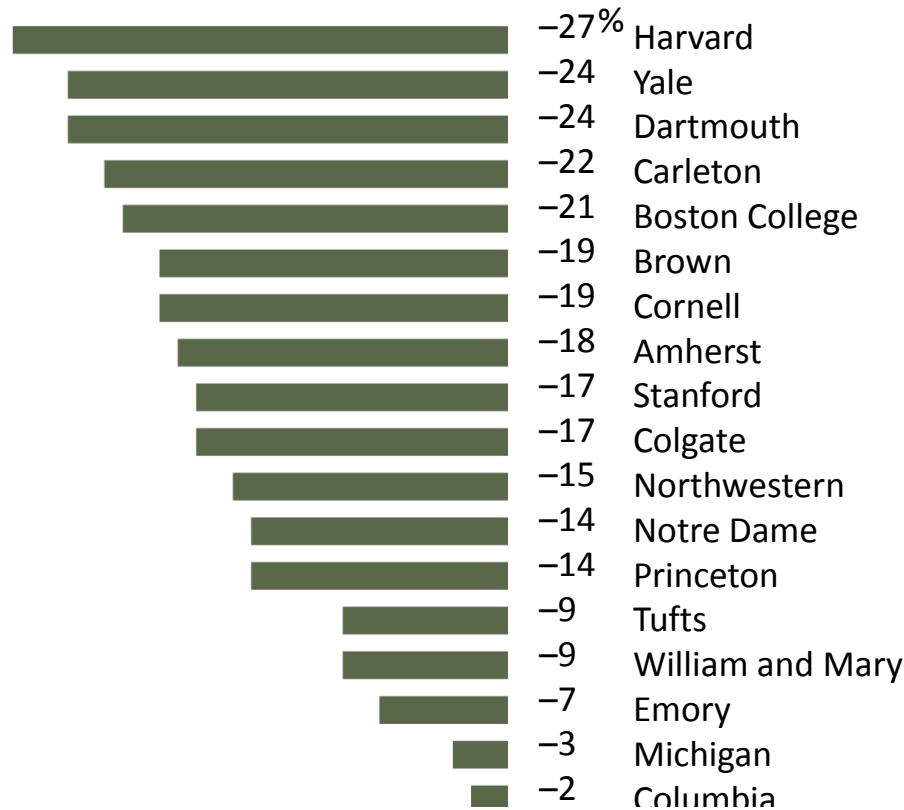
# Colleges will direct more energy and resources to attract affluent international students



2003, Columbia U. had 3 half-time officers dedicated to internationals. 2014 it has 5 Full Time.

The heightened international focus will impact your students

# Fewer spots for American students



Percentage change from  
1994 to 2012 in the  
number of spots for  
American students at each  
college,

# Trend 4: Enrollment Management and Increased Use of ED/EA



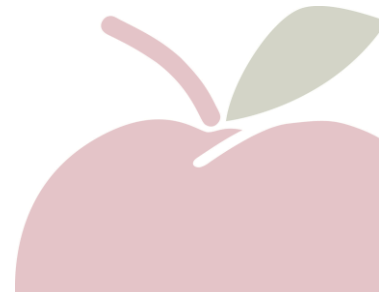
# Early admissions may play an even larger role for many colleges





# ED, EA, Rolling, Regular Decisions

- **Early Decision:** Binding. If you get in, you have to go.
- **Early Action:** Non-binding. You can apply to more than one school Early Action.
- **Rolling:** Advantageous to both schools and applicants, since both get to answer the “what will next year look like” question earlier.
- **Regular Decision:** Often more competitive for highly selective school, but gives you more time if you want to improve your GPA or get in new test scores.





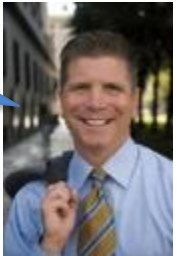
# The Early Advantage

	Accepted Early	Accepted Regular	Net Gain of Early
Brown ED	19%	8%	238%
Columbia ED	20%	6%	321%
Cornell ED	37%	14%	258%
Dartmouth ED	26%	8%	322%
Harvard SCEA	21%	6%	350%
Penn ED	*25%	9%	278%
Princeton SCEA	19%	5%	380%
Yale SCEA	16%	5%	320%

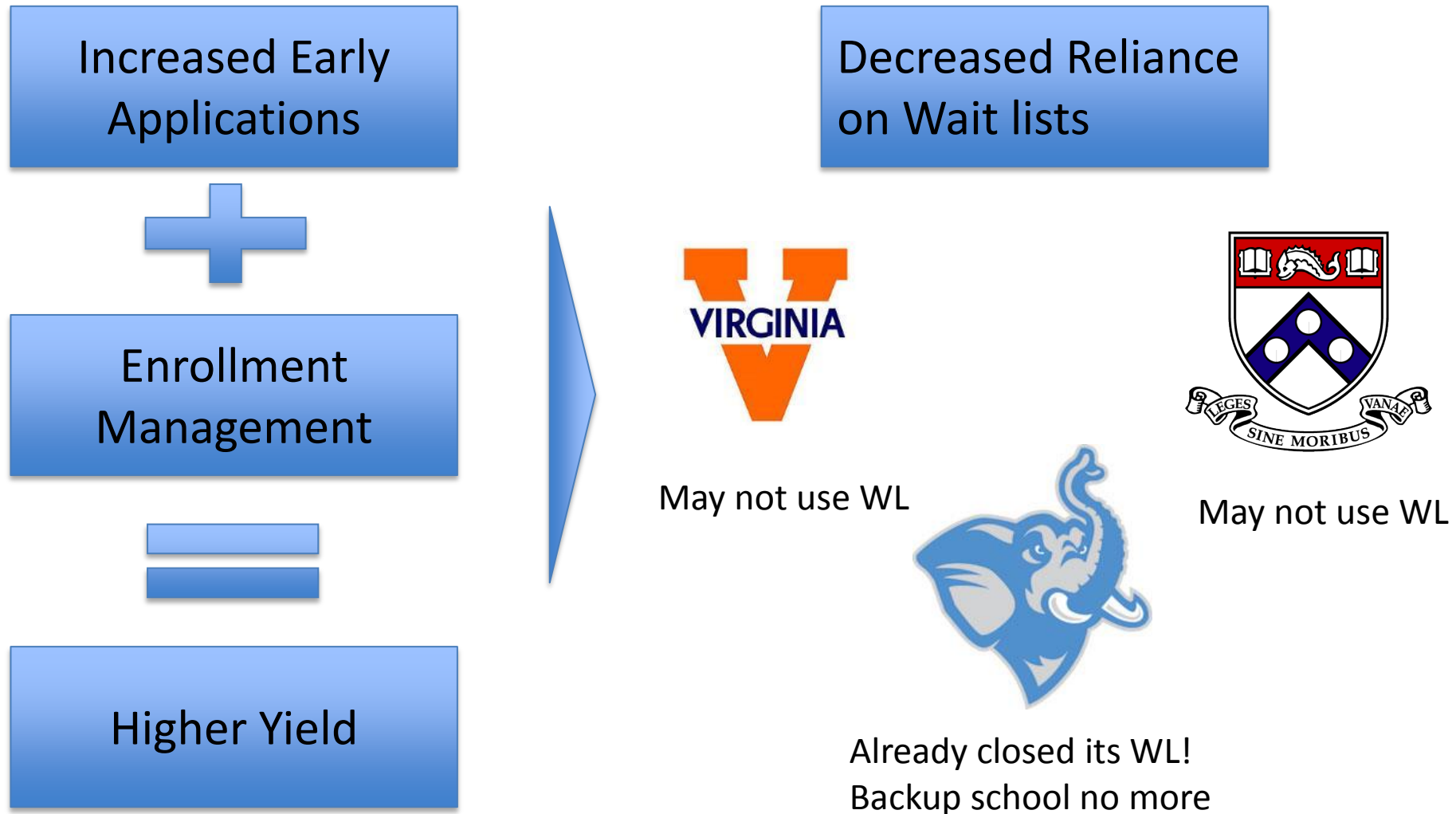
# ED: Breaking the 50% barrier!

- Penn hits 54% ED! Eric Furda, Dean of Admissions, was tired of losing kids to Chicago, Vandy, Stanford, Southern Cal.
- Gives permission to schools like Duke (47%) and Northwestern (45%) to cross over

Go big or  
go home



# Schools may move away from wait lists

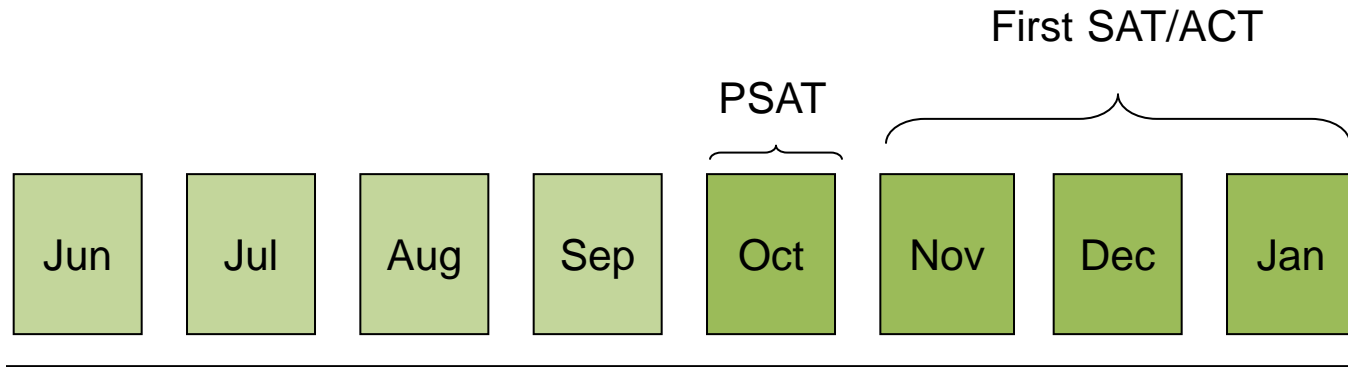


# Suggested Timelines

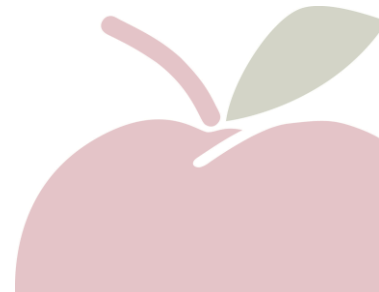
*How do I do the right things at the right time?*



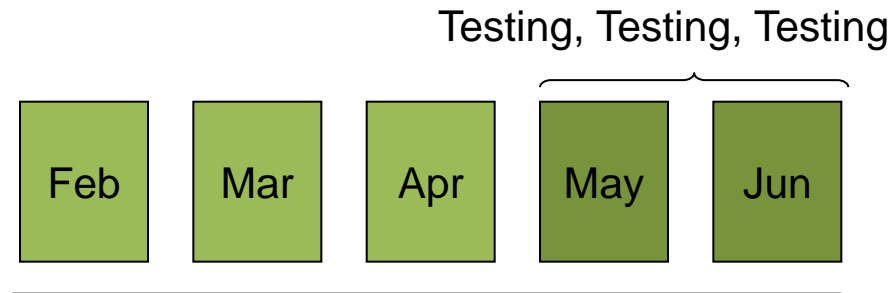
# Junior Year Timeline (first half)



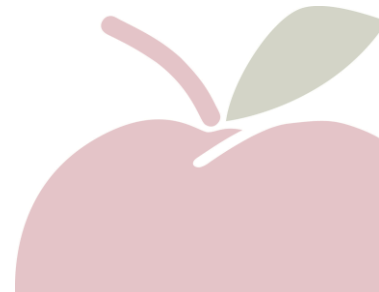
- Summer: Stay involved in extracurricular activities. Show consistency and depth.
- Aug: Take a challenging schedule. Add as many APs as you can realistically handle. Junior grades must be solid.
- Oct: PSAT. PSAT prep course if you are a potential National Merit Scholar or want to jumpstart SAT prep.
- Nov – Jan: Take first SAT or ACT. Prepare 8 to 12 weeks prior to scheduled test date.



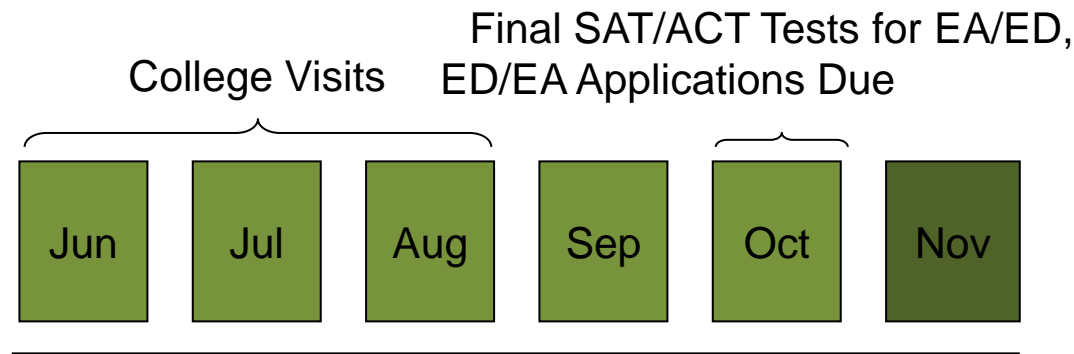
# Junior Year Timeline (second half)



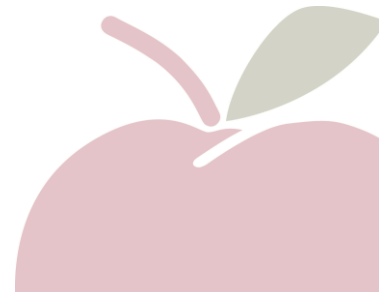
- Jan – Feb: Register for spring AP exams (if schools don't register the students).
- Dec – May: Explore financial aid/ scholarships/ grants for college.
- May – Jun: Take APs, SAT subject tests, ACT, SAT (prep courses as needed).
- Jun – Aug
  - ☐ Make a college list and collect applications
  - ☐ Begin applications/essays
  - ☐ Set up interviews and college visits



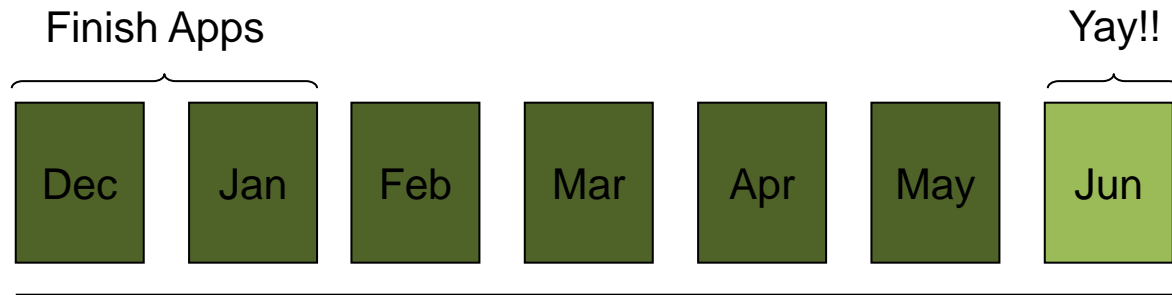
# Senior Year Timeline (first half)



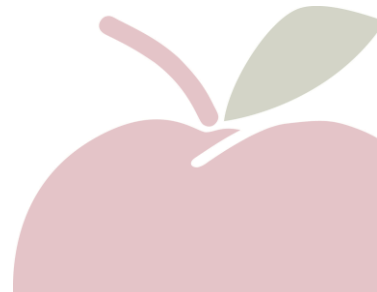
- Summer: Stay involved in extracurricular activities.
- Aug: Strong academic schedule. APs are ideal. Keep grades solid.
- Sep – Nov
  - ☐ SAT/ACT final push if needed
  - ☐ Meet with your guidance counselor for application advice
  - ☐ Finish early applications
  - ☐ October: ED deadlines



# Senior Year Timeline (second half)



- Nov – Dec: Complete remaining applications
- Dec: ED responses arrive
- Mar – Apr: Responses from colleges
- May: Deposits due
- Jun: Graduate and send final transcript to your school of choice!

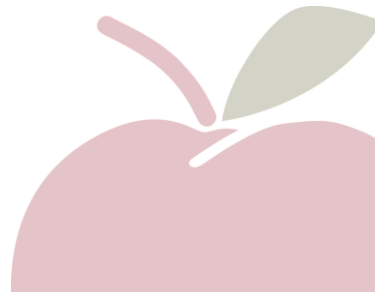




# Our Services

- Tutoring and Test Prep for:
  - PSAT, SAT, & ACT
  - SAT subject tests
  - AP exams
  - High school classes
  - Study skills
  - Essay coaching

**Visit**  
**[www.applerouth.com](http://www.applerouth.com)**  
**or fill out a contact  
card to learn more.**



# Questions?

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