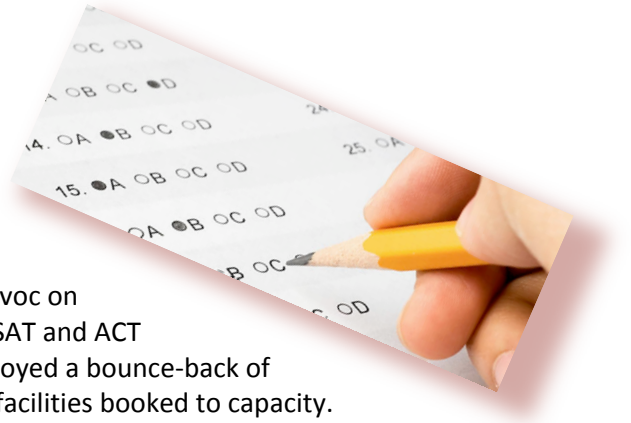


SUPPORT FOR U.S. COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PREP

PSAT, SAT, ACT INSTRUCTION NOW AVAILABLE

THE REBIRTH OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, high school students across the country seem to be slowly, but surely, reigniting their dreams of post-secondary schooling south of the border. The American education system is once again finding its legs, and efforts to restore the college admissions process have indeed been renewed. The pandemic wreaked havoc on the 2020/21 testing calendar, causing the cancellation of most SAT and ACT administrations. By contrast, the last two school years have enjoyed a bounce-back of sorts as demand surged and the competition for seats had test facilities booked to capacity. Assuming this trend continues, anyone interested in applying to American schools is well advised to begin preparing soon.



One of the many opportunities afforded students at The Bishop Strachan School is access to the network of U.S. colleges and universities. The dedicated staff in Student Services have years of experience helping candidates gather all the necessary documentation for a polished applications package. One valuable step in this process is to help students prepare for the standardized admissions tests that accompany most applications.

In this regard, BSS is pleased to announce that it will once again be partnering with **The Learning Curve Tutoring and Educational Services (TLC)** to provide instruction and support throughout the 2023/24 school year for students readying themselves to write the PSAT, SAT and ACT. TLC owner/director **Colin McMahon** has developed a preparatory program that demystifies standardized testing in relation to the U.S. college admissions process. He possesses a strong understanding of the independent school culture and has proven to be very flexible in the delivery of his company's services. Colin brings to the table 20+ years of experience working in the field of standardized testing, and has been providing regular support - including curriculum-based private tutoring - to BSS students since 2000.



This information package includes details about the following:

- A) the fall 2023 PSAT prep course at BSS (pages 2, 3)
- B) private/semi-private tutoring and small-group tutorials for the SAT and ACT (pages 3, 4)
- C) SAT vs ACT diagnostic sessions (page 4)
- D) the registration form for the fall 2023 PSAT prep course at BSS (page 5)

A) PSAT PREP COURSE

What is the PSAT?

Applying to American colleges and universities can be a daunting task for most people, especially with regards to standardized admissions tests. One obvious place to start is with the Preliminary SAT (PSAT). The PSAT is a standardized test administered every October to grade 10 and 11 students considering a college or university education in the United States. Designed by the College Board, an American private nonprofit organization, the PSAT measures an individual's ability to perform post-secondary schoolwork by evaluating their reading, writing and mathematical skills. More importantly, it serves as firsthand practice for the SAT, the admissions test that remains a standard-bearer of the U.S. college applications process. Upon writing the PSAT, students will receive a comprehensive diagnostic report outlining their performance on each section of the test. This feedback will identify their areas of relative strength and weakness, point out their test-taking patterns and offer suggestions for improvement, information which can be used to establish a study plan in preparation for the SAT. Because PSAT scores are NOT reported to *any* American colleges, writing the test is considered a smart, if not essential, risk-free first step in applying to post-secondary schools in the U.S.

The Evolving Role of the SAT

Since its inception in 1926, the SAT has regularly undergone changes to reflect the test's evolving role in the U.S. college admissions process. With the latest version in place as of March 2023, it is expected that SAT scores will now be used by students to validate their high school grades, which have been rising consistently over the last two decades: the number of students graduating with an A average has climbed from 39% in 1998 to 55% in 2021. The wide variations in curricular standards, grading systems and course offerings - not to mention the challenge of teaching and evaluating students during the COVID era - have put renewed focus on standardized tests to level the playing field. Whereas SAT scores were once used as a primary gateway to admissions, their more likely role in the current climate is to strengthen a student's application, as if to say, "That's right, my high school grades are legitimate!"

The New Digital PSAT and SAT

Throughout its nearly century-long history, the SAT - and, by extension, the PSAT - has routinely undergone changes in order to remain relevant and vital. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest the current overhaul may be the most dramatic of all. For starters, the test has switched platforms from paper-and-pencil to digital. This will have an effect on the way students not only write, but also prepare for, the test. The College Board didn't stop there, though, taking advantage of the opportunity to modify both content and structure while implementing measures designed to better safeguard students' results. From shortening the test to restoring full use of calculators to developing a device-based app for secure delivery, the College Board hopes this new version of the SAT and PSAT better reflects the way students study and demonstrate what they have learned in the current educational environment.

Test Details

The PSAT allows students to practise writing a standardized test under strict time constraints in an environment similar to that of the SAT. The Bishop Strachan School expects to host this year's test the morning of **Saturday, October 14**.

Course Details

BSS has arranged for **The Learning Curve Tutoring and Educational Services (TLC)** to provide a series of PSAT training sessions to interested grade 10 and 11 students. Both in-person and online options will be available:

Anticipated course dates and times (subject to change, pending actual test date):

IN-PERSON: *three, 3-hour Saturday sessions (Sept. 16, 23, 30 - 9am to noon)*

ONLINE: *four, 2.25-hour weekend sessions (Sun., Sept. 17, 24, Oct. 1 and Sat., Oct. 7 - 9am to 11:15am)*

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS: *private, online, 15-minute review sessions (Dec. 9, times TBD)*

Both options will involve nine hours of interactive instruction in the fall and a personal performance analysis session in December to review each student's results. The syllabus begins with a comprehensive tour of the PSAT before breaking off into a more in-depth study of the content domains that make up the English and math sections. Tips addressing specific question types, time management, and pacing are introduced in order to demystify the test format and help students build a bridge between the PSAT and the SAT. Along the way, they will have a chance to establish a set of baseline scores while test-driving these strategies on a series of practice questions, thus developing their own personalized game plans for writing these standardized tests.

Registration Options

- 1) **Online:** The simplest way to sign up for the course (or to get more information about it) is to access [The Learning Curve's online registration form](#).
- 2) **E-mail:** The registration form is included on the last page of this document. Save, scan or take a picture of it, and send the completed copy to colin@learningcurvetutoring.ca.

NOTE: *To sign up for the test itself, contact Ms. Alison Wong in Student Services (416.483.4325 x 5525 or awong@bss.on.ca).*

B) SAT AND ACT TUTORIALS

On-campus or In-home Private Tutoring

Private sessions are available in 2023/24 to grade 11 and 12 students who plan to write either the SAT (on August 26, October 7, November 4, December 2, March 9, May 4 or June 1) or the ACT (on September 8/9, October 27/28, December 1/2, February 23/24, April 12/13, June 7/8 or July 12/13). Arrangements can be made through Student Services to locate off-campus host sites for these tests, both of which are equally accepted by U.S. colleges and universities.

Semi-private and small-group classes can also be organized if there is enough interest. Either way, Colin will work with BSS families to develop personalized programs that address each student's specific needs.

For those who end up writing the PSAT as a first step, the results from that test can be used to establish a baseline for subsequent SAT prep. Otherwise, an assessment can be conducted to determine what areas of the SAT or ACT require prioritized attention.

Online Tutoring

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been responsible for forcing education out of the classroom and into the video conference space, one benefit has been the accelerated efforts to marry technological innovation with personalized teaching methods. The Learning Curve, in keeping with the rest of the industry, has reformatted its prep courses for the virtual learning environment. Private sessions followed suit to the extent that online tutoring has not only become an acceptable solution, but for some students a preferred alternative to in-person sessions.

Scheduling

Because all tutoring sessions are appointment-based, there is no set schedule. This means students are free to book at whatever frequency suits their respective needs and availability. Whenever possible, Colin makes every effort to meet with students during their daytime spares or study periods, but he is just as happy to book evening and weekend sessions at mutually convenient times. If enough registrations are received to warrant organizing a small group, interested participants will be contacted regarding scheduling options and session structure. In this case, cost will be determined by the size of the group and its collective needs – demand for specific topics, availability, targeted test dates, etc.

Registration Options

The easiest way to register for SAT or ACT support is to complete [The Learning Curve's online SAT/ACT registration form](#). It includes a list of all 2023/24 administration dates for both tests as well as a full break-down of the various costs for private, semi-private and small-group prep sessions.

C) SAT vs ACT DIAGNOSTIC

What Are the Differences Between Both Tests?

For more than half a century, the SAT stood alone in the U.S. college admissions world. However, in 2012, the ACT pulled level, in terms of participation, and is now considered equally relevant. With the College Board's recent introduction of the digital SAT, there now exist significant differences between them, and the truth remains that every student will be more predisposed towards writing one over the other. Rather than expend considerable time and energy preparing for both, it makes sense for students to figure out, in advance, which of the two is more suited to their individual test-taking skills.

For those who have been unable to make this determination on their own, The Learning Curve offers diagnostic sessions aimed at outlining the structural differences between the SAT and the ACT. This involves a series of condensed mini-evaluations under strict time restrictions that allow students to experience the contrasting question types, levels of difficulty and pacing requirements for each test. It also gives them an idea as to how scores from one test translate into scores on the other. At the end of this process, it should be clear which test is more likely to produce competitive scores for the student.



35 Wyndfield Crescent, Whitby ON L1N 8L3
416.422.5988 - colin@learningcurvetutoring.ca - www.learningcurvetutoring.ca

2023 PSAT Prep Course Registration Form (The Bishop Strachan School)

Registration Options: *(deadline is Thursday, September 14, 2023. Please DO NOT return this slip to BSS)*

- 1) **online** - sign up through The Learning Curve's website (www.learningcurvetutoring.ca)
- 2) **by e-mail** - save, scan or take a picture of this form and send to: colin@learningcurvetutoring.ca
- 3) **by Canada Post** - mail a printed copy of this form to:

The Learning Curve
35 Wyndfield Crescent
Whitby ON L1N 8L3

For more information, contact Colin McMahon (owner/director) at 416.422.5988

Student Information

Name: _____ E-mail address: _____
 Grade: _____ Boarder: Yes / No Accommodations (for example, extra time): Yes / No
 Tel #s: (home) _____ (cell) _____

Parent Information

Name: _____ E-mail address: _____
 Mailing address: _____
 Tel.#s: (work) _____ (cell) _____ (other) _____

Course Selection

- IN-PERSON: *three, 3-hour sessions* (\$500)*
 ONLINE: *four, 2¼-hour sessions* (\$450)
** if registration numbers for the in-person option are low, students will be redirected to the online course*

Payment Options *(payments are non-refundable and non-transferable)*

- CHEQUE: payable to "The Learning Curve"
 E-TRANSFER: use "thelearningcurve.colin@sympatico.ca" to initiate the transaction
 CREDIT CARD:

type of card (circle one) : Visa MasterCard
 card number : _____
 expiry date (month/year) : ____ / ____
 name of cardholder (on the card) : _____
 signature : _____

Anticipated Course Dates (in person) ^

Saturday, September 16 9am - noon
 Saturday, September 23 9am - noon
 Saturday, September 30 9am - noon

Anticipated Course Dates (online) ^

Sunday, September 17 9am - 11:15am
 Sunday, September 24 9am - 11:15am
 Sunday, October 1 9am - 11:15am
 Saturday, October 7 9am - 11:15am
 Saturday, December 9 by appointment

[^] subject to change, pending actual test date

Scheduling Conflicts

Please note any course dates the student will not be able to attend due to scheduling conflicts: _____
 Every effort will be made to reschedule or arrange make-up sessions.

Please check this box if you would like to be contacted for private tutoring in any academic subjects for the 2023/24 school year.