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# Preparing for the SAT<sup>®</sup> I: Reasoning Test— An Update

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**DONALD E. POWERS**

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**The College Board**  
Educational Excellence for All Students

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## Abstract

To document the extent of special test preparation for the SAT<sup>®</sup> I: Reasoning Test, we surveyed a stratified random sample of some 6,700 students who registered to take the SAT I in 1995-96. A smaller companion survey sought information about special preparation programs from a stratified random sample of secondary schools whose students take the SAT I. The objectives were to:

- determine the availability, and incidence of use, of a variety of programs and resources designed to prepare students to take the SAT I;
- describe some of the salient features of these resources; and
- estimate the amount of time (and money) that students spend on preparing for the test.

Though the surveys differed slightly from similar surveys conducted in 1986-87, they were designed generally to enable comparison with the results of the earlier surveys.

The student survey found that prospective SAT I takers participate, to varying degrees, in a variety of preparation activities. Taking the PSAT/NMSQT for practice and using the test familiarization materials provided by the College Board are the most frequently used strategies. Other commercially available books and texts used in regular courses are also consulted relatively frequently. Engagement is much less frequent with such resources as test-preparation software, special programs given either at school or outside school, or private tutoring. When particular programs or resources were available, cost was cited less often than some other factor as a reason for not using the resource. This was true for each of several resources, including coaching courses. About 12 percent of all students in the survey said they had attended preparation or coaching sessions outside school, where this minority of students paid, on average, about \$400.

On average, students currently spend a total of approximately 11 hours preparing for the SAT I, about the same amount (10 hours) that students reported in the 1986-87 survey. Currently, about 10 percent of all students report spending 54 hours or more preparing for the test (about the same as the 58 hours reported in 1986-87). Now, approximately 3 percent of test takers say they do not devote any time at all to SAT preparation (compared with 9 percent in 1986-87).

The results of the school survey revealed that a slight majority (52 percent) of all secondary schools now offer programs to prepare students for the SAT I, about the same proportion (49 percent) as in 1986-87.

## A Survey of Test Preparation for the SAT<sup>®</sup> I: Reasoning Test

During the 1986-87 academic year, the College Board sponsored a survey of a random sample of SAT I: Reasoning Test (hereafter referred to as the SAT I) takers (and another of secondary schools whose students take the SAT I) to determine (a) the availability and (b) the incidence of use of a variety of programs and resources designed to help students prepare for the SAT I. The rationale for undertaking these information-gathering activities was as follows:

- First, if effective preparation for the SAT I is differentially available, some test takers may have an unfair advantage over others. More important, if some test takers do not undertake *any* preparation to become familiar with the basic procedures required for taking the SAT I, they may disadvantage themselves unnecessarily.
- Second, test preparation can be time-consuming, and beyond a certain point, its benefits appear to diminish. As a result, test preparation that is excessive may detract needlessly from students' abilities to pursue other worthwhile activities (and from secondary schools' capacity to offer other beneficial academic programs). There is a need, therefore, to (a) strike an apparently delicate balance between too much and too little test preparation and (b) ensure that all test takers, regardless of financial resources, can and do avail themselves of appropriate ways to prepare for the SAT I (Powers, 1988).

This same rationale still seemed applicable when we undertook to update the estimates obtained in 1986-87. Moreover, the time also seemed right to redo the earlier survey, as the SAT I formally replaced its predecessor in the spring of 1994. When we mounted the study reported here, the revised SAT I had been in place for more than a full year. By then, we thought, students, schools, and parents would have become accustomed to the new measure, and any initial anxiety about the new test would have subsided considerably. Therefore, any short-term fluctuation in preparation activity resulting from the initial introduction of the new test also should therefore have declined, thereby allowing a more accurate estimation of any long-term trends in preparation for the new test.

In addition, more up-to-date information was needed, we felt, because an even greater number of test-

preparation options are available today than in 1986-87. For instance, 10 years ago a relatively substantial number of test-preparation software packages were being introduced. We suspected that even more such packages are available today, and their use more prevalent than in the past. In addition, entirely new kinds of resources have appeared since the earlier survey was conducted. Now, for example, commercial coaching enterprises distribute their advice over the Internet and on MTV. A better fix on the nature and availability of some of the most recently introduced resources was thought to be desirable.

Besides being potentially useful to the SAT I program, new information could also serve other purposes—for instance, to either confirm or refute the accuracy of media reports about the revised SAT I and about how students prepare for it. It is sometimes assumed, for example, that only certain privileged students have access to preparation for the SAT I, and that this access accounts for their higher test performance (Garcia, 1997). Also, some writers have reported that, because of “anxiety over the first substantial revisions of the SAT I in 20 years,” students have registered in “record numbers” for coaching programs (Honan, 1994a, p.12). Moreover, recent advertisements by commercial coaching companies have suggested that the new SAT I is more coachable than its predecessor (“New SAT I proves,” 1995). Whether true or not, these claims may influence students’ decisions to seek special preparation for the test.

## Previous Research

Some relevant data are available from previous studies of test preparation for the SAT I. The studies of which we are aware—by the Response Analysis Corporation (1978), by Alderman and Powers (1980), by Powers and Alderman (1979, 1983), by Powers (1988), and by Ingels, et al. (1994)—were conducted in either 1977, 1978, 1986-87, or 1992. Each of these surveys contained some questions that were similar, if not identical. The responses to these common questions have been summarized in Table 1. It should be noted, however, that any differences among the results of these surveys may be a function of the wording of questions, the method of sample selection, or the time of year at which the surveys were conducted. Nonetheless, in combination these surveys provide some baseline data (and a historical perspective) on the incidence of test preparation for the SAT I. For example, it is clear that traditionally only a small minority of students have attended coaching programs given outside of their schools, and a majority of students have relied on resources provided by the College Board.

Some earlier information is also available on school-sponsored preparation for the SAT I. In the 1977-78 academic year, as a prelude to evaluating the effectiveness of school-based preparation for the SAT I, Alderman and Powers (1980) surveyed secondary schools in seven northeastern states. The purpose of the survey was to identify for further evaluation those programs that were thought to be effective in increasing SAT I verbal scores. No attempt was made to define a representative sample of all secondary schools, but only to identify those schools that would be most likely to have programs of special test preparation. The survey

TABLE 1

Summary of Results Common Across Several Surveys of Test Preparation for the SAT I

Method of Preparation	Year/Study			
	1977 Response Analysis Corp. (1978)	1978 Powers & Alderman (1979)	1986-87 Powers (1988)	1992 Ingels et al. (1994)
Used the test-familiarization booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	n/a	92%	72%	n/a
Tried sample test in <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	n/a	77%	60%	n/a
Completed sample questions in <i>About the SAT</i>	63%	77%	n/a	n/a
Reviewed test-preparation books	27%	52%	41%	51%
Reviewed English or vocabulary on own	24%	45%	38%	n/a
Reviewed math books on own	27%	30%	39%	n/a
Used test-preparation software	n/a	n/a	16%	12%
Attended prep course at school	11%	16%	15%	18%
Attended coaching course outside school	3%	5%	11%	10%
Tutored privately	n/a	n/a	5%	7%

n/a = not available

Note: Because the wording of questions differed from survey to survey, the results are not entirely comparable.

revealed that nearly a third of the responding schools offered preparation for the verbal sections of the SAT I. In our more systematic survey of schools in 1987, we found that 49 percent of the schools surveyed offered some kind of program to prepare students for the SAT I.

## Objectives

The major objectives of the study reported here were the same as for our 1986-87 survey:

- to identify the variety of test-preparation resources that are available for the SAT I,
- to determine the overall incidence of use of various test preparation programs and materials,
- to describe specifically the use of College Board-provided test-preparation materials, and
- to estimate the time and money that students devote to preparing for the SAT I.

## Method

### *Instrument Development*

In order to facilitate comparisons across time, we drew heavily on the questionnaires in the 1986-87 survey to design the survey instruments used for the current effort. The student questionnaire was modified to reflect the greater variety of preparation resources that are available now compared with 10 years ago. To update this questionnaire, we first contacted about 100 students who had taken the SAT I in the spring of 1995, asking them to help us with our questionnaire redesign—to tell us, in response to two open-ended questions, how they prepared for the recent SAT I (what methods, materials, etc., they had used). We also asked if they had attended any SAT I preparation or coaching programs (if so, why, and if not, why not). The responses, from about 40 students, helped us to identify new resources, and more importantly, provided a sense of how students describe these resources. Perusal of advertisements for test preparation, news articles, and a variety of other reading also helped in our redesign effort.

Most of the information gathered in the earlier survey of test takers was still pertinent:

- students' perceptions of the availability of various preparation resources

- students' use of these resources
- the offerer and characteristics of any commercially provided coaching
- the amount of time spent using various resources
- the cost of resources

In addition, in anticipation of a follow-up study of the effects of coaching on SAT I scores, a few questions were added to obtain additional information about student decisions to seek (or not to seek) coaching. We thought this information would be useful in conjunction with other information about students' backgrounds in estimating the effects of coaching.

Questions of this kind included:

- How would you regard your most recent previous Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) or SAT I scores as estimates of your abilities? (pretty good, somewhat too low, much too low) (Rationale: Students may enroll in coaching programs because their early scores are not commensurate with other estimates of their abilities.)
- How important was getting good scores on the SAT I to you? (Rationale: Motivation is one factor often thought to differ for coached and uncoached students.)
- If you have thought about applying to college, which college is currently your "first choice"? (Rationale: Students applying to more selective colleges may seek coaching.)

We believed that most of information sought on the 1986-87 school survey also was still of interest.

Once developed, both the student and the school questionnaires were reviewed by several Educational Testing Service (ETS) and College Board staff, pretested on small samples of respondents, and revised according to the suggestions that were obtained. Respondents were local college preparatory students and secondary school principals or guidance counselors. The appendixes contain copies of the questionnaires.

### *Sample Selection*

*Test Takers.* Five random samples of students were drawn separately for each of five of the eight national administrations of the SAT I during the 1995-96 testing year. The numbers of students sampled are shown in

Table 2. Samples were selected from all seniors who registered to take the SAT I in either October,<sup>1</sup> November, or December 1995. Juniors were selected from the May and June 1996 administrations. Test takers who were neither juniors nor seniors (less than 10 percent of all 1995-96 test takers) were excluded from the sampling frame. A sampling fraction of 1 in 200 was used for each administration. This fraction was larger than that used in the 1986-87 survey (1 in 500) in order to obtain information on sufficient numbers of commercially coached test takers to enable a follow-up study of the effects of commercial coaching.

Seniors were selected only from the October, November, and December administrations because, nationally, a majority of seniors (traditionally, about two-thirds) take the test at one of these administrations. These three administrations, therefore, best represent the "typical" senior. Similarly, juniors were sampled only from the May and June administrations because these dates best represent the "typical" junior (also about two-thirds of them). These administrations were selected also because of the particular patterns of test repetition that are observed most frequently. The largest proportion of test repeaters tend to be students who take the test in the spring of their junior year and again in the fall of their senior year. Our sampling was thought to minimize any distortion resulting from the double counting of some test takers. In all, our samples

TABLE 2

**Sample Selection: Students**

Group	Test administration				
	Oct. 95	Nov. 95	Dec. 95	May 96	June 96
Seniors	1,578	1,244	826	—	—
Juniors	—	—	—	1,709	1,407

were selected from a frame that included more than 60 percent of all the students who registered for the test in 1995-96.

*Secondary Schools.* A stratified random sample of secondary schools was drawn from the secondary school file maintained by the Admissions Testing Program (ATP). This file contains the names, addresses, and other data for some 22,000 secondary schools whose students take the SAT I. Stratification was based on geographic region (middle states, midwest, New England, south, southwest, and west).

<sup>1</sup>For the 1986-87 survey, the October administration was not included, as this administration was limited during this earlier period. It has, however, become much more prominent, as many students now choose to take the SAT somewhat earlier than in previous years. We therefore included this administration in our 1995-96 survey.

## Data Collection

With two exceptions, the same data collection procedures used in 1986-87 were used again. Questionnaires were mailed to test takers just before each test administration so that students would receive them as soon as possible after they had taken the test. This timing was thought to maximize response, since previous experience has suggested that test takers' interest (and cooperation) is highest at this time. Care was taken, however, to ensure that questionnaires would not arrive before the test administration, so that students would not be distracted by our request. Postcard reminders were sent to all nonrespondents about two to three weeks after the initial questionnaire was sent. If needed, a second questionnaire was mailed two to three weeks after the postcard reminder. Finally, when returns began to diminish significantly (about two months after the initial questionnaire was mailed) a final, abbreviated questionnaire was mailed to all remaining nonrespondents. (This final follow-up was not attempted in the 1986-87 survey.) This single-page questionnaire asked students to indicate only which of the various test preparation resources they had used (and for coaching programs, the name of the offerer and the time of their enrollment). Questions about the time and money spent preparing and about other aspects of students' preparation were omitted.

Because the data were based on student reports (whose accuracy could not be readily verified), it was desirable to assess at least their consistency. To this end, a "reliability" questionnaire, containing most of the questions from the initial questionnaire, was sent to a total of 350 early respondents from the fall 1995 test administrations. This information was not collected in the 1986-87 survey.

School questionnaires were mailed in March 1996 to school principals, who were asked to complete the questionnaire or to direct it to a more appropriate respondent, for example, a school counselor. A postcard reminder was sent to nonrespondents about two weeks after the initial mailing, and about two weeks later a second questionnaire was sent to each remaining nonrespondent.

## Data Processing

All returned questionnaires were first edited manually for obvious errors and omissions and for an indication of whether each was usable in data analyses. A few questionnaires that were returned unanswered, or with obvious patterns of random responses, were deleted from the analyses.

Next, for test takers, questionnaire data were merged with background data from the Student Descriptive



Questionnaire (SDQ). Matching was accomplished through test registration numbers, which appeared both in the test-taker file and on the address labels attached to the questionnaires. In addition, duplicate records, mainly a result of some examinees returning both initial and follow-up questionnaires, were deleted from the files.

## Results

### Data Quality

Generally, the data appeared to be of relatively good quality. No major problems were readily apparent with the responses to either the student or school questionnaires. For the student questionnaire, we were able to assess the consistency of student responses by comparing, for 139 students who completed two questionnaires, their responses from the initial questionnaire with those from the subsequent reliability questionnaire. With respect to reported use of various test-preparation resources, these students exhibited very consistent responses, ranging from 80 to 100 percent agreement (median agreement over all resources was 93 percent). Student reports of (a) their degree of nervousness while taking the test and (b) the degree to which getting good scores was important were also relatively consistent, correlating .73 and .77 with earlier reports. Students were less consistent in reporting their perceptions of whether their previous test scores accurately reflected their abilities ( $r=0.53$ ).

Agreement rates were more difficult to obtain for reports of time devoted to (and money spent on) various preparation resources, as students tended not to report this information on both questionnaires. However, if our sparse data are any indication, the agreement rates were very high. The median over all resources was 88 percent for time spent and 96 percent for cost. We believe, however, that these estimates may be unstable and probably inflated.

At various points throughout the report, comparisons will be made between the estimates obtained in the current surveys and those obtained in 1986-87. With the relatively large samples that we have been fortunate enough to obtain, quite small differences are significantly different statistically. For the school surveys, differences of 5-10 percent are significant at the 0.05 level (6-14 percent at the 0.01 level). For the student surveys, differences of 1-3 percent are significant at the 0.05 level (2-4 percent at the 0.01 level). Throughout the report, any differences that are discussed can be as-

sumed to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level or beyond. We will not, however, discuss all statistically significant differences, rather only those that also seem to us to be practically significant.

### Results of the School Survey

Questionnaires were returned from 343 (60 percent) of the 576 schools that were contacted. One-half (51 percent) of the respondents were guidance counselors; about a third (36 percent) were principals or assistant principals; and the remainder (14 percent) were teachers, learning specialists, or other school staff.

*Availability of Programs.* For the purpose of this study, special programs were defined in the questionnaire as:

any of a wide variety of classes, small-group sessions, or individual tutoring given either during or after regular school hours for the specific purpose of (1) helping students to become more familiar with the SAT I or (2) providing a review of concepts that students might encounter on the SAT I.

Overall, a slight majority (52 percent) of responding schools said that during the 1995-96 academic year they had sponsored, or otherwise made available, some such program designed specifically to help students prepare for the SAT I.

*Description of Programs.* A majority of the programs were relatively established offerings, having been in existence for either two to five years (47 percent) or more than five years (39 percent). About one in every seven programs (14 percent) was offered for the first time during the 1995-96 academic year. Table 3 shows the degree to which each of several factors influenced (i.e.,

TABLE 3

#### Factors in Schools' Decisions to Offer Special Preparation (N = 182)

Factor	Major (%)	Minor (%)
Student interest	71	25
Faculty or administration interest	67	23
Parent interest	56	34
Introduction of new SAT	20	37
Declining SAT scores	20	19

were either a major or a minor factor) the schools' decisions to offer special preparation for the SAT I. Student and faculty interest were the most often cited factors; the introduction of the new SAT I was not.

SAT I preparation was offered on a variety of bases:

- as an extracurricular activity (44 percent of the time),

TABLE 4

**Emphases of Special Preparation Programs (N = 178)**

<i>Emphasis</i>	<i>Primary (%)</i>	<i>Secondary (%)</i>
Increasing familiarity with the SAT I	77	21
Improving SAT I verbal scores	77	18
Improving SAT I mathematical scores	75	18
Developing confidence	62	35
Developing general test-taking skills	58	31
Developing test-taking skills specifically for the SAT I	56	34
Decreasing test anxiety	55	35
Improving general verbal skills (e.g., reading skills or vocabulary)	52	35
Improving mathematical skills (not solely for improving SAT I scores)	43	37
Improving other skills	16	29

- as an elective course (24 percent),
- as a requirement for at least some students (17 percent), or
- on some other, unspecified basis or combination of bases (20 percent).

Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of the courses carried credit toward graduation requirements. About one-quarter (27 percent) of the programs bore a nonrefundable fee. The number of students who engaged in these preparation programs varied considerably over schools. Nearly 30 percent of the schools reported preparing more than 50 students during the 1995-96 academic year.

*Characterization of Programs.* Programs employed different instructional strategies:

- 57 percent entailed group instruction that was distinct from regular courses,
- 28 percent provided group instruction in conjunction with regular courses,
- 16 percent offered individualized instruction, and
- 12 percent used some other instructional method or combination of methods.

Most frequently (about 88 percent of the time), preparation courses included both verbal and mathematical components. Some (10 percent) of the courses focused only on verbal preparation and some (7 percent) only on mathematical. In a majority (66 percent) of the programs, teachers bore a primary responsibility for conducting the program. School counselors played a major role in about 14 percent of the programs. Commercial test preparation companies were involved in a major capacity less often (12 percent of the time). About 8 percent of the programs were conducted by some other staff or by some combination of teachers, counselors, and commercial coaches.

Table 4 shows the extent to which each of several program objectives was emphasized. Increasing familiarity with the SAT I and improving test scores were listed as primary emphases more often than was any other objective. Developing confidence, decreasing anxiety, developing test-taking skills (both general ones and those specific to the SAT I), and improving general verbal skills were also mentioned as emphases by a majority of the programs.

A slight majority of schools developed their own instructional materials (Table 5). Materials available from the College Board—in particular, the test familiarization booklet *Taking the SAT I* and the practice test book *Real SATs*—were used more often than any other resources. The most frequently used commercially available materials were test-preparation books and computer software programs.

A plurality of schools conducted either one (35 percent) or two (39 percent) preparation sessions per week. Few (2 percent) held more than five sessions a week. The modal time per session (45 percent of programs)

TABLE 5

**Program Use of Various Preparation Materials (N = 180)**

	<i>Use by programs (%)</i>
School-developed materials	57
Materials from the College Board:	
Test familiarization booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	85
Practice tests (i.e., <i>Real SATs</i> )	76
<i>One-on-One with the SAT</i> (software for the SAT I)	36
Audiovisual presentations (e.g., <i>Think Before You Punch</i> , <i>Look Inside the SAT</i> , and <i>Focus on the SAT</i> )	21
Materials from commercial publishers:	
Test-preparation books	71
Computer software	51
Videos, audiocassettes, or films	26
Online information services	11
Other	4

was 30–60 minutes. A majority (51 percent) of programs were from four to ten weeks in duration; the median was about six weeks. In addition to the time devoted to special programs, a fifth of all schools said they had also devoted a significant portion of some other regular courses to preparing students for the SAT I.

*Perceptions of Effectiveness.* Table 6 displays respondents' opinions regarding the extent to which their programs' objectives were met. The emphasis most often stated in Table 4 as primary—increasing familiarity with the SAT I—was also the objective that was judged most often (by 64 percent of programs) to have been met “very effectively.” Decreasing test anxiety, developing confidence, and developing test-taking skills were each judged to have been met “very effectively” by about one-third of the programs. Generally, however, programs were not judged to be as effective with regard to (a) improving either SAT I verbal or SAT I mathematical scores or (b) improving verbal, math, or other skills more generally.

As shown in Table 7, respondents most often based their judgments of program effectiveness on feedback from students and, to a somewhat lesser extent, on feedback from program staff. Only about 15 percent of schools said they had conducted a formal research or evaluation study.

*Comparison with Previous Results.* In comparing these findings with those obtained in 1986-87, we note the following:

- the proportion of schools that now offer SAT I preparation programs is about the same as in 1986-87;
- schools give the same reasons for offering these programs now as they did earlier, except that declining SAT I scores is less a factor now than in 1986-87;
- today, school programs place more emphasis on improving verbal and math skills (not solely those measured by the SAT I) than they did in 1986-87; and
- schools are more likely now than earlier to feel that they have been successful in improving students' verbal and math skills more generally.

## Results of the Student Survey

*Description of Sample.* Questionnaires were returned by 64 percent of the 6,764 students who were contacted. Table 8 shows that the responding sample was very similar in composition to the population of 1995-

TABLE 6

### Schools' Judgments of Their Effectiveness in Meeting Objectives of Special Preparation

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Program very effective (%)</i>	<i>Program somewhat effective (%)</i>
Increasing familiarity with the SAT I	64	35
Developing test-taking skills specifically for the SAT I	37	62
Developing confidence	37	57
Decreasing test anxiety	35	60
Developing general test-taking skills	31	61
Improving mathematical skills (not solely for improving SAT I scores)	21	63
Improving SAT I mathematical scores	20	74
Improving SAT I verbal scores	20	73
Improving general verbal skills (e.g., reading skills or vocabulary)	18	66
Improving other skills	8	59

Note: N varies from 51 to 163, depending on whether each was considered an objective.

TABLE 7

### Bases for Schools' Judgments of Program Effectiveness

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Major (%)</i>	<i>Minor (%)</i>
Feedback from students	87	10
Feedback from program staff	48	31
Feedback from parents	30	48
Formal research or evaluation study	15	18

Note: N varies from 142 to 173.

TABLE 8

**Descriptions of Responding Sample and All College-Bound Students Who Took the SAT I in 1995-96**

	All 1995-96 college-bound SAT I test takers (%)* (N = 1,090,000)	Responding sample (%) (N = 4,117)
Sex (% female)	53	59
Ethnicity		
American Indian	1	1
Asian American	9	10
African American	11	9
Mexican	4	4
Puerto Rican	1	1
Other Hispanic	3	3
White	69	70
Other	3	3
Degree objective		
Bachelor's degree or less	26	23
Master's degree	29	30
Doctoral-related degree	24	27
Other or undecided	21	20
Family income		
Less than \$20,000	15	13
\$20,000-\$40,000	26	24
\$40,000-\$60,000	23	24
\$60,000-\$80,000	16	17
\$80,000 or more	19	21
High school rank		
Top tenth	22	25
Second tenth	22	24
Second fifth	28	26
Third fifth	24	22
Fourth fifth	4	3
Fifth fifth	1	<1
High school GPA		
A+	6	7
A	14	18
A-	15	16
B	49	48
C	15	10
D, E, or F	<1	<1

\*Source: 1996 College-Bound Seniors: A Profile of SAT Program Test Takers. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1996.

96 college-bound senior test takers with respect to ethnicity and family income. Females, students who ranked in the top fifth of their class, students with grade averages higher than B, and students aspiring to doctoral degrees were slightly overrepresented in the sample of respondents.

*Availability of Various Resources.* We asked students not only about their use of various test preparation resources but also about the availability of these resources. Table 9 reveals that about two of every ten test

takers were either not aware of *Taking the SAT I* or else perceived that it was not available to them. A majority of students felt that they did not have either knowledge of, or access to, other College Board resources such as *Real SATs*, *Introducing the New SAT*, or *Look Inside the SAT*. Other resources were regarded to be unknown or inaccessible to varying degrees.

About one-half of the students did not think they had access to coaching programs outside school, private tutoring, or test preparation software, and a large proportion were unaware of any SAT I preparation programs at their high schools. When these programs or resources were available, cost was less likely than some other reason for students' failure to use them. Cost was a somewhat more important consideration in decisions to forgo coaching (17 percent) and private tutoring (18 percent) than it was for other methods.

*Use of Various Methods.* The overall incidence of use of each of a variety of methods to prepare for the SAT I is shown in Table 10. A majority of students (81 percent) had taken the PSAT/NMSQT, and 83 percent of these students said they had mainly taken it just for practice. The remaining students had probably taken the test either to be considered for scholarships or because their schools had required it. A slight majority of students had also taken the SAT I previously, with 38 percent of these students saying they had taken it mainly for practice.

Aside from previous test taking, reading the test familiarization booklet *Taking the SAT I* and taking the sample test that it includes were the only activities undertaken by a majority of students. About a third of all students had (1) obtained other test preparation books, (2) received preparation in conjunction with their regular classroom instruction, or (3) reviewed English or

TABLE 9

**Availability and Use by Students of Test-Preparation Resources**

Resource	Unavailable or student unaware of (%)	Not used because of cost (%)	Not used because of other reason (%)
Video <i>Look Inside the SAT I</i>	74	7	17
Online test preparation	71	7	20
Videos or related resources	66	8	23
Book <i>Introducing the New SAT</i>	64	7	22
Book <i>Real SATs</i>	58	6	24
Private tutoring	52	18	23
Coaching outside school	48	17	22
Test-preparation software	48	11	23
SAT-preparation at high school	41	5	23
Study aids	39	6	31
Other test-preparation books	31	8	28
Booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	20	—	25

TABLE 10

**Students' Use of SAT I Preparation Methods**

<i>Method</i>	<i>Student using (%) (N = 4,267)</i>
Took PSAT/NMSQT previously	81
Read booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	58
Took SAT I previously	56
Tried sample test in <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	51
Reviewed mathematics books on own	38
Received preparation for SAT I as part of regular classroom instruction	33
Reviewed English books on own	33
Got other books on preparing for the SAT I	32
Used study aids	25
Used test-preparation software	19
Attended SAT I preparation program given by high school	18
Other methods	13
Attended SAT I preparation program outside school	12
Got the book <i>Real SATs</i>	10
Tutored privately	6
Got the book <i>Introducing the New SAT</i>	6
Attended other special programs that included SAT I preparation	3
Got the video <i>Inside the SAT I</i>	2
Used videos or related resources	2
Accessed online test preparation	1

mathematics books on their own. Significantly smaller proportions of students had used any of the variety of other resources about which we asked. About 12 percent of all students reported attending SAT I preparation (coaching) programs given outside their schools.

Because, we thought, juniors and seniors might differ in the degree to which they had considered preparing for the SAT I, percentages were computed separately for each of these groups. These figures showed that juniors and seniors differed mainly with respect to whether they had previously taken the SAT I (39 percent of juniors versus 71 percent of seniors). Juniors and seniors also differed slightly with respect to their use of several other resources, but the differences were not significant practically. For example, 54 percent of seniors but 48 percent of juniors had attempted the sample test in *Taking the SAT I*. Juniors and seniors were equally likely to have attended a coaching program outside of their school (11 percent of juniors and 12 percent of seniors). *Details on Selected Methods.* Because considerable diversity was possible within each category of preparation, we requested additional details about several methods. Generally, the answers to these queries did suggest substantial variation. For example, the median number of practice tests tried by students who obtained

*Real SATs* was three, but about 23 percent attempted all five tests.

Students were asked to indicate the names of any test preparation books that they had used. By far the most frequently mentioned commercial book—by about 38 percent of all book users—was Barron's *How to Prepare for the SAT I*. Princeton Review's *Cracking the SAT I* was mentioned by nearly 20 percent of all students who reported using books. No other book was mentioned by more than 10 percent of book users.

About 19 percent of all survey respondents had used test-preparation software. More than two dozen distinct packages were mentioned. Davidson's *Your Personal SAT Trainer* was by far the most frequently mentioned, and Cliff's *SAT Studyware* was the next most often mentioned package. A variety of other programs were mentioned far less frequently.

Nearly all of the 12 percent of students who said they had attended coaching programs outside of their schools also indicated who offered the program:

- 43 percent, the Princeton Review or the Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Centers;
- 58 percent, programs of other companies, organizations, or individuals.

Students were also asked to state who had conducted school-based special preparation programs. Most (75 percent) said that school staff were responsible for the program, and 26 percent reported that an outside company had conducted the program.

*Effort and Expense.* Most students who attended test-preparation programs at their schools (49 percent) did not pay any fee for participating. For those who did pay a fee, the median cost was \$50; about 10 percent of these students said they paid \$200 or more.

With regard to preparation programs given outside school, about 10 percent of participating students reported they did not incur any costs. The median cost for those who did pay a fee was approximately \$400. About 10 percent of coached students spent nearly \$800 or more. For those who purchased test-preparation software, the median cost was about \$35; about 10 percent of these students spent approximately \$60 or more.

About 40 percent of the students who said they were tutored privately did not pay any fee for this service. The median cost of tutoring for those who did pay was about \$150; approximately 10 percent paid more than \$700. Other resources were far less expensive than the ones mentioned here. When all costs were totaled for all students, the figures revealed that:

- a near majority (48 percent) of students spent no money preparing for the test,

- the median amount spent by all students was \$8,
- about one-fourth of all students reported spending \$40 or more,
- about 10 percent said their costs had exceeded \$135.

Besides money, students also spent time. Table 11 summarizes student reports of the amount of time they devoted to each of the activities listed. Shown are the median hours spent and the amount of time that was exceeded by 10 percent of all students engaged in each particular activity. As is clear, by far the most time-consuming activity involved attendance at test-preparation or coaching programs conducted outside school (median = 20 hours in class, 8 hours outside class). School-based programs were briefer, requiring on average (median) about 8 hours in class and 3 hours outside class.

Time estimates for each activity were also totaled for all students. These computations showed that nearly 3 percent of SAT I takers did not, according to their reports, spend any time preparing for the test. At the other extreme, about 10 percent of all students reported that they devoted 54 hours or more to SAT I preparation activities. The median time spent on all activities by all students was 11 hours.

*Comparison with Previous Results.* When comparing the current results with those obtained in the 1986-87 student survey, we found that:

- the use of a number of resources, including *Taking the SAT I*, the primary resource available from the College Board, has decreased somewhat;
- attendance at formal programs conducted in or outside of school has held steady or increased slightly;
- fewer students now than in 1986-87 spend no time at all preparing for the SAT I;
- the percentage of test takers who engage in extensive preparation has not increased, nor has the proportion spending a significant amount of money to prepare; and
- on average, students do not spend appreciably more time today than they did in 1986-87 on preparing for the SAT I.

TABLE 11

**Amount of Time Spent on Test-Preparation Activities**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Median number of hours spent</i>	<i>Hours exceeded by most involved 10% of students</i>
Getting coaching outside school:		
in class	20	51
outside class	8	30
Attending special preparation at school:		
in class	8	39
outside class	3	14
Being tutored	6	20
Reading other test-preparation books	5	24
Using test-preparation software	4	18
Using <i>Real SATs</i>	4	15
Preparing for the SAT I in regular classes	3	20
Attending other programs	3	15
Other activities	3	15
Using study aids	3	10
Using <i>Introducing the New SAT</i>	2	10
Using video-related resources	2	10
Reviewing material from English courses	2	10
Reviewing material from math courses	2	10
Using online services	2	6
Taking the sample test in <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	2	4
Reading the booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	1	3
Using the video <i>Inside the SAT I</i>	1	3

*Note:* Each figure is based only on the group of students who undertook the particular activity. The medians should therefore not be interpreted as reflecting the average time devoted by all students, since for some activities most students spent no time.

## Summary and Discussion

A survey of SAT I registrants was undertaken (1) to estimate the proportions of test takers who engage in various test preparation activities; (2) to determine how much time, effort, and money students spend on these activities; and (3) to learn more about particular characteristics of these activities and the resources they involve. The survey solicited information from a stratified random sample of 1995-96 SAT I takers. A companion survey of a stratified random sample of secondary schools in the United States was conducted to obtain information on school-based, test-preparation programs.

### *The Student Survey*

The survey of test takers revealed that, relatively frequently, students feel that many test-preparation resources are not available (or at least they are not aware

of their availability). A slight majority of students said they did not have access to (or were unaware of) various College Board-sponsored resources such as the books *Real SATs* and *Introducing the New SAT* or the video *Look Inside the SAT I*. Online test-preparation resources, video-related resources, and private tutoring were also regarded as being unavailable by a majority of test takers. In comparison, only about 20 percent of all students said they were not aware of the availability of *Taking the SAT I*, the most universally available SAT I preparation resource. Materials provided by the College Board continue to play a major role in preparing students for the test.

Concerns for cost were cited less often than other noncost reasons in decisions to forgo the use of available resources. Cost was a somewhat more important factor in decisions about tutoring and coaching than in decisions about other methods. However, even for these relatively costly methods, reasons other than cost were more prominent.

Students use a wide variety of test-preparation materials, and the frequency with which these resources are used in preparing for the SAT I varies substantially. The College Board's test-familiarization booklet *Taking the SAT I* is the only resource used by a majority of students, though the frequency of its use is less today than in 1986-87, as is the use of several other resources. We speculate that decreases in the use of some resources may be the result of competition from additional resources that were not available earlier. The use of other commercially available test-preparation books, independent review of material from regular courses, and test preparation as part of regular classroom instruction are also still quite frequent. Most other methods are still used relatively infrequently.

A minority (about 18 percent) of all students attend special preparation programs given at their high schools, and about 33 percent receive some preparation as part of their regular classroom instruction. Relatively few (about 12 percent) of the students in our sample had attended a commercial preparation or coaching program given outside their schools, about the same proportion (11 percent) as in 1986-87.

Nearly half of the students who participated in preparation programs given at their schools did not pay a fee for attending them. The other half paid, on average, about \$50. On the other hand, the small proportion of students who were coached outside school incurred an average cost of approximately \$400, more than twice the \$150 that students reported in 1986-87.

Overall, almost one-half (48 percent) of all students did not incur any costs associated with preparing for the SAT, but about 10 percent paid at least \$135 in con-

junction with preparing themselves to take the test. On average, students spent about \$8. Apparently, some students (nearly 3 percent) still do not devote any time at all to preparing for the SAT I (compared with about 9 percent in 1986-87). About 10 percent spend considerable time (about 54 hours or more) according to student reports. In 1986-87, 10 percent of preparers spent an average of 58 hours or more. On average, students currently spend a total of approximately 11 hours on all preparation for the SAT I, about the same (10 hours) as in 1986-87.

## *The School Survey*

Overall, slightly more than one-half (52 percent) of all secondary schools reported that they sponsored or otherwise made available special preparation for the SAT I during the 1995-96 academic year, about the same (49 percent) as in 1986-87. Most of these programs had been in existence for at least two years; about one in every seven was a new offering. Student interest was cited most often as a major factor in the decision to offer a program (71 percent of programs). The introduction of the revised SAT was a major factor relatively infrequently (20 percent).

Nearly two-thirds of schools judged their programs to be effective in meeting their primary objective, which was usually to increase familiarity with the SAT I. Programs were thought to be considerably less effective in meeting another, nearly as important objective of improving test performance. Effectiveness was judged mainly from student feedback, not from formal research or evaluation studies.

Although a majority of schools reportedly develop their own preparation materials, a large majority rely on materials from the College Board, mainly the booklet *Taking the SAT I* and the practice test book *Real SATs*. A much smaller proportion (but more than a third) also use *One-on-One with the SAT*<sup>®</sup>, the software package that is available for the SAT I. A significant majority of programs also use test-preparation software and test-preparation books offered by commercial publishers.

## *Involvement by Students*

When we conducted our earlier survey, there were widely divergent estimates of the numbers of students involved in test preparation activities of various sorts, particularly commercial coaching courses. For example, the *New York Times* reported that enrollment in the Stanley H. Kaplan Educational Centers and in programs offered by the Princeton Review had substantially increased in 1987 to a total of 40,000 students ("Cram Courses," 1987). In the same month, *Better Homes and Gardens* reported that "more than 110,000 students" take coaching courses each year (Conroy, 1987), *Changing Times* suggested that about one-third of all test takers participate in coaching courses (McCormick, 1987), and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* contended that coaching courses had doubled, tripled, or quadrupled their enrollments during a five-year period (Pothier, 1986).

More recently, the popular press has reported that:

- the Kaplan Educational Centers and the Princeton Review each enrolled more than 30,000 students in 1994, "almost double the number of five years earlier" (Brooks & Sumberg, 1995, p.1; Ponessa, 1996); and
- because high school students were "packing coaching sessions in record numbers," about 180,000 students were expected to enroll in commercial coaching programs in 1994 (Honan, 1994a, p.12).

Much of this purported increase in test preparation has been attributed to anxiety over changes in the SAT I (Honan, 1994a, 1994b).

Our survey suggests that currently about 12 percent of SAT I takers attend coaching programs given outside their schools, and that about 40-50 percent of these coached students are enrolled in courses offered by Kaplan or the Princeton Review. These figures suggest that, in general, media-reported estimates of enrollments in coaching programs are at least of the right order of magnitude. However, our current estimates, when compared with those obtained in our previous survey conducted nearly 10 years earlier, do not suggest that interest in coaching programs has increased to the extent implied in media reports.

## *Student Effort*

The time and effort devoted to SAT I preparation has been as much a concern as the money that students and their parents spend. For instance, in the past some colleges have expressed concern about the emotional energy being committed to SAT preparation by secondary school students and their parents, and they have cited this concern as a factor in decisions to drop the SAT as a requirement for admission ("Middlebury alters rule," 1987; Ordozensky, 1987; Woodruff, 1987).

Our data suggest that, on average, students devote about 11 hours in total to all activities associated with preparing for the SAT I—not significantly more than in 1986-87. As we opined earlier (Powers, 1988), in some respects there is little cause to regard 11 hours as excessive preparation for a major half-day event like taking the SAT I. On the other hand, spending more than 54 hours (as did 10 percent of the students we surveyed) could be construed as inordinate, given what is known about the relationship of SAT I performance to the amount of time devoted to preparing for it. For example, in terms of improvements in test scores, the benefits from a 60-hour program are not much greater than those from a substantially shorter one (Messick and Jungeblut, 1981).

In our earlier survey, we characterized as disturbing the fact that in 1986-87 nearly 10 percent of all students reportedly did not allocate any time to preparing for the SAT, apparently making no attempt to gain even minimal familiarity with the test. We suggested, therefore, that more effort be directed to encouraging these students to gain familiarity with the basics of the test. From this perspective, it is encouraging to note that the proportion of students who said they did not undertake any preparation has decreased. At the same time, the proportion of students devoting extensive effort has not increased.

## *Conclusion*

This study has, we hope, provided some current basic descriptive information about the extent of preparation for the SAT I. These data also constitute a basis for gauging changes in SAT I preparation activity over a nine-year period. The continued availability of instruments and the documentation of procedures will also facilitate any future monitoring efforts, should they be undertaken.



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# Appendix A

## Student Questionnaire

# Survey of Preparation for the SAT I: Reasoning Test

For each activity listed below, please circle "Yes" or "No" to indicate the things you did to prepare for the recent SAT I: Reasoning Test. Also, please *estimate* (to the nearest whole hour and dollar) how much time and money you spent on each activity during the current year.

Activity	(1) Yes, I did this	(2) No, I did not do this	Total hours spent (Enter 0 for none)	Total cost to you/parents (Enter 0 if free or borrowed)
1. I read the free College Board booklet <i>Taking the SAT I: Reasoning Test</i> .	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ <u>0</u> (free)
2. I tried the sample test in <i>Taking the SAT I: Reasoning Test</i> .	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ <u>0</u> (free)
3. I got the College Board book <i>Real SATs</i> that contains five tests. I tried ____ (number) tests.	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
4. I got the book <i>Introducing the New SAT: The College Board's Official Guide</i> .	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
5. I got the College Board's video <i>Look Inside the SAT I</i> .	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
6. I got some other books on preparing for the SAT I. Name(s): _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
7. I received special preparation for the SAT I as part of (during) regular classroom instruction. For verbal ____ For math ____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
8. I attended a special SAT I preparation program given by my high school. Program offered by: School staff ____ An outside company ____ Name of company: _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs. <u>in</u> class	\$ ____  ____ hrs. <u>outside</u> class (e.g., homework)
9. I attended a SAT I preparation or coaching program outside of school. Program offered by: Kaplan ____ Princeton Review ____ Other ____ Name: _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs. <u>in</u> class	\$ ____  ____ hrs. <u>outside</u> class (e.g., homework)
When enrolled? ____ to ____, 199 ____ month month, year				
10. I was tutored privately. For verbal ____ For math ____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
11. I used computer test-preparation software. Name(s): _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____
On my own ____ As part of a course ____				
12. I used study aids (flash cards, cassettes, etc.). On my own ____ As part of a course ____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ ____

<i>Activity (continued)</i>	<i>(1) Yes, I did this</i>	<i>(2) No, I did not do this</i>	<i>Total hours spent (Enter 0 for none)</i>	<i>Total cost to you/parents (Enter 0 if free or borrowed)</i>
13. I accessed SAT I test preparation through an online computer information service (e.g., Internet) Name: _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ _____
14. I used videos, "pay-per-view," or other video-related resources or services. Name: _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ _____
15. On my own, I reviewed books or materials from mathematics courses I've taken.	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ <u>0</u> (free)
16. On my own, I reviewed books or materials from English courses I've taken.	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ <u>0</u> (free)
17. I attended some special program(s) (other than those listed above) that included test preparation for the SAT I. Name: _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ _____
18. I previously took the PSAT/NMSQT. Mainly just for practice? Yes ____ No ____	Yes	No	<u>2</u> hrs.	\$ _____
19. I previously took the SAT I. Mainly just for practice? Yes ____ No ____	Yes	No	<u>3</u> hrs.	\$ _____
20. I did other things to prepare for the SAT I. (Please describe.) _____ _____	Yes	No	____ hrs.	\$ _____

21. Please circle one number for each resource listed to indicate whether or not it was available to you.

	<i>Available?</i>			
	<i>No, or at least I was not aware of it</i>	<i>Yes, and I used it</i>	<i>Yes, but I did not use it mainly because of cost</i>	<i>Yes, but I did not use it for some reason other than cost</i>
A. The booklet <i>Taking the SAT I</i>	0	1	—	3
B. The College Board's <i>Real SATs</i>	0	1	2	3
C. The book <i>Introducing the New SAT: The College Board's Official Guide</i>	0	1	2	3
D. The College Board's video <i>Look Inside the SAT I</i>	0	1	2	3
E. Other books on preparing for the SAT I	0	1	2	3
F. SAT I preparation given by my high school	0	1	2	3
G. SAT I coaching program <i>outside</i> school	0	1	2	3
H. Private tutoring	0	1	2	3
I. Test-preparation software	0	1	2	3
J. Study aids (flash cards, cassettes, etc.)	0	1	2	3
K. Videos or other video-related resources	0	1	2	3
L. Test prep from online computer information services	0	1	2	3

**See other side.**

22. Who recommended that you take a course to prepare for the SAT I? (Check all that apply.)  
 A. Parents/family \_\_\_\_\_ B. Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ C. Guidance counselor \_\_\_\_\_ D. Friends \_\_\_\_\_ E. No one \_\_\_\_\_
23. If you took the SAT I or PSAT/NMSQT before, how would you regard your *most recent* previous scores as estimates of your abilities?  
 My earlier scores were:
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Pretty good estimates of my abilities       | 1 |
| Somewhat too low compared with my abilities | 2 |
| Much too low compared with my abilities     | 3 |
| I have not taken these tests before         | 0 |
24. How nervous were you about taking the SAT I most recently?
- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Extremely nervous  | 1 |
| Very nervous       | 2 |
| Somewhat nervous   | 3 |
| Slightly nervous   | 4 |
| Not at all nervous | 5 |
25. How important to you was getting good scores on the SAT I?
- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Extremely important  | 1 |
| Very important       | 2 |
| Somewhat important   | 3 |
| Slightly important   | 4 |
| Not at all important | 5 |
26. If you have thought about applying to college, which college is currently your "first choice"?
- Name of school \_\_\_\_\_
27. Do you have any other comments about preparing for the SAT I? Is there anything else in particular that ETS or the College Board could do to help you with your preparation for the SAT I?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please return the survey in the enclosed POSTAGE-PAID envelope.**

D. Powers  
 Mailstop 17-R  
 Educational Testing Service  
 Princeton, NJ 08541

**THANK YOU for participating in this survey!**

**Appendix B**  
**School Questionnaire**

# SAT I TEST-PREPARATION QUESTIONNAIRE

## I. SPECIAL PREPARATION OFFERINGS

1. During this academic year has your school sponsored, or otherwise made available, any special programs designed specifically to help students prepare to take the SAT I: Reasoning Test?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(By special programs we mean any of the wide variety of classes, small-group sessions, online information, or individual tutoring given either during or after regular school hours for the specific purpose of (a) helping students to become more familiar/ comfortable with the SAT I or (b) providing a review of concepts that students might encounter on the SAT I. These include any programs given under the auspices of your school or school district, regardless of the particular provider or the length/duration of the program. If more than one distinct kind of program is offered, please complete the questionnaire in terms of only the program that you consider to be the primary one, as suggested for example by the duration of the program. Do not count multiple sections of the same program as distinct.)

2. Which best describes the program?

Group instruction distinct from regular courses.....1  
Group instruction as part of a regular course.....2  
Individualized instruction.....3  
Other (please describe briefly).....4

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3. In addition to the special program(s) considered above, has your school devoted any significant portion of any other regular courses to preparing students to take the SAT I?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

(If you responded "no" to both questions 1 and 3, please skip to the final question.)

4. About how many years has special preparation for the SAT or the SAT I been offered at your school?

This is the first year.....1  
Two to five years.....2  
More than five years.....3

5. On what basis is the preparation offered

Extracurricular activity.....1  
Elective course.....2  
Required (for at least some students).....3  
Other.....4  
(please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does the SAT I preparation carry credit toward graduation?

Yes.....1  
No.....2

7. Is any fee charged for the preparation?

Yes (nonrefundable) Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_1  
Yes (fully or partially refundable upon completion).....2  
No.....3



8. By the end of the academic year, about how many students will have engaged in school-sponsored SAT I preparation this year? \_\_\_\_\_

**II. CHARACTERISTICS OF SAT I PREPARATION**

1. Who is primarily responsible for conducting SAT preparation for your school's students?

- School counselors.....1
- School teachers.....2
- A commercial test-preparation company.....3  
(please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify).....4

2. On which sections of the SAT I does the preparation focus?

- Verbal only..... 1
- Math only.....2
- Both verbal and math.....3

3. To what extent is each of the following an objective or emphasis of the special preparation offered at your school?

(Circle one number for each.)

	<i>A primary emphasis</i>	<i>A secondary emphasis</i>	<i>Not an emphasis</i>
Improving SAT I verbal scores .....	1	2	3
Improving SAT I math scores .....	1	2	3
Decreasing test anxiety .....	1	2	3
Increasing familiarity with the SAT I .....	1	2	3
Developing confidence .....	1	2	3
Developing general test-taking skills .....	1	2	3
Developing test-taking skills specifically for the SAT I .....	1	2	3
Improving general verbal skills (e.g., reading skills or vocabulary) .....	1	2	3
Improving mathematics skills (not solely for improving SAT scores) .....	1	2	3
Improving other skills .....	1	2	3
(please specify) _____			
Other .....	1	2	3
(please specify) _____			

4. Which, if any, of the following materials are used at your school to prepare students for the SAT I?

(Please circle one number for each.)

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
A. School-developed materials.....	1	2
<b>B. Materials from the College Board or ETS</b>		
The test-familiarization booklet, <i>Taking the SAT I</i> .....	1	2
Practice tests (e.g., <i>Real SATs</i> ).....	1	2
<i>One-on-One With the SAT</i> (software).....	1	2
Audiovisual presentation (e.g., <i>Think Before You Punch</i> , <i>Look Inside the SAT</i> , <i>Focus on the SAT I</i> ) .....	1	2
TestSkills™ (a test-prep program for the PSAT/NMSQT).....	1	2
<b>C. Materials from commercial publishers</b>		
Test-preparation books.....	1	2
Video- or audiocassettes, films.....	1	2
Computer software.....	1	2
Online information services.....	1	2
Other.....	1	2
(please specify) _____		

5. For the typical student how much time is devoted to special preparation for the SAT I?

Number of sessions per week: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time per session: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes  
 Program duration: \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
 Approximate percentage of total program time devoted to:  
 Verbal preparation \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Math preparation \_\_\_\_\_%  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_%

**III. YOUR OPINIONS**

1. How instrumental was each of the following in your school's decision to make available special preparation for the SAT I?  
 (Circle one number for each factor.)

<i>Factor</i>	<i>A major factor</i>	<i>A minor factor</i>	<i>Not a factor</i>
Faculty or administration interest .....	1	2	3
Student interest .....	1	2	3
Parent interest .....	1	2	3
Declining SAT scores .....	1	2	3
Introduction of the new SAT .....	1	2	3
Other .....	1	2	3
(please specify) _____			

2. In your judgment, how effective has your school's SAT I preparation program been in meeting its objectives?  
 (Circle one number for each objective.)

	<i>Very effective</i>	<i>Somewhat effective</i>	<i>Not very effective</i>	<i>Not an objective</i>
Improving SAT I verbal scores .....	1	2	3	4
Improving SAT I math scores .....	1	2	3	4
Decreasing test anxiety .....	1	2	3	4
Increasing familiarity with the SAT .....	1	2	3	4
Developing confidence .....	1	2	3	4
Developing general test-taking skills .....	1	2	3	4
Developing test-taking skills specifically for the SAT I .....	1	2	3	4
Improving general verbal skills (e.g., reading skills, or vocabulary) .....	1	2	3	4
Improving math skills (not solely for improving SAT I scores) .....	1	2	3	4
Improving other skills .....	1	2	3	4
(please specify) _____				
Other .....	1	2	3	4
(please specify) _____				

3. On which, if any, of the following factors do you base your judgments of program effectiveness? (Circle one number for each.)

	<i>A major factor</i>	<i>A minor factor</i>	<i>Not a factor</i>
Feedback from students .....	1	2	3
Feedback from parents .....	1	2	3
Feedback from program staff .....	1	2	3
A formal research or evaluation study .....	1	2	3
Other .....	1	2	3
(please describe) _____			

4. Your position:

- Principal or assistant principal.....1
- Guidance counselor.....2
- Learning resource specialist.....3
- Teacher.....4
- Other.....5
- (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your help.

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