Beyond HCA – Standardized Testing

TYPES OF TESTS

ACT
The ACT (American College Testing) is a three-hour assessment exam consisting of four multiple-choice examinations in English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Natural Science. There is an optional half-hour writing section, which is scored separately. The ACT Assessment is designed to assess high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The total score range is from 1 (low) to 36 (high). Originally popular primarily in the Midwest, the use has spread and many colleges will allow you to submit ACT scores rather than SAT scores.

AP Exams
The AP exam takes approximately 4-hour, and is given at the school in early to mid-May, in conjunction with AP classes. Scores of 3, 4, or 5 may result in either college credit and/or placement in advanced courses. Many colleges post their credit policy on the College Board website: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/apcreditpolicy/index.jsp.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
Five general examinations and forty-seven subject examinations used to evaluate non-traditional education approximating formal college study. Where CLEP examinations are accepted, students can use them to gain advanced standing or to waive basic courses. CLEP is administered periodically throughout the year at various universities.

COMPASS TEST
COMPASS is an untimed, computer-based test that helps colleges evaluate skills and place students in appropriate courses. This test does not have a fee for the student. COMPASS offers tests in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Writing, and English as a Second Language (ESL). COMPASS is not scored in the traditional sense, but rather provides a report of a student’s academic strengths and weaknesses, allowing for the most appropriate placement in college classes and additional support, if needed. Most colleges administer COMPASS during freshman orientation, before students register for classes. In Georgia, technical colleges (including Gwinnett Technical College), most two-year colleges, and many four-year colleges and universities use COMPASS in the admissions process.

PSAT
The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a co-sponsored program by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). The PSAT/NMSQT measures the critical reading, math problem-solving and writing skills that you have been developing throughout your life. It does not measure things like creativity and motivation, and it does not recognize special talents that may be important to colleges. The PSAT/NMSQT gives you firsthand practice for the SAT I and SAT II, Subject test in Writing. It also gives you a chance to qualify for scholarship and recognition programs.
SAT Reasoning Test
A three-hour and 45-minute aptitude test consisting of multiple-choice exams in Critical Reading (verbal) and Mathematics, plus a writing section that was added in 2005. The SAT assesses student reasoning based on knowledge and skills developed by the student in school coursework. Your SAT score can help you and colleges better understand how you compare with other college-bound students. The score range is from 200 (low) to 800 (high) for each of the three sections, making 2400 a perfect score. Most colleges are still looking primarily at the critical reading and math sections, and are quoting statistics based on the old 1600 scale. They are tracking the writing results while deciding how to use them – e.g., admission, placement, etc.

SAT Subject Tests
One-hour multiple-choice examinations in 20 specific subject areas designed to measure the student’s knowledge of particular subjects and the ability to apply that knowledge. They are usually taken at the end of the school year in which you took the subject. Approximately 200 colleges require subject tests as part of the admissions process. They often require a math, a writing, and one of your choice. Other colleges may not require them, but would look at them to get an indication of your academic ability if they were submitted. These tests are given on many of the same dates and in the same locations as the SAT I. You can take one, two, or three-subject tests on a given test date, but you cannot take the SAT I and SAT II on the same day.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
The TOEFL is a three-hour test consisting of three sections (includes listening, comprehension, structure, written expression, vocabulary, and reading comprehension) to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English.

HCA School Code: 111808
SAT, PSAT, and AP Information: 609-921-9000
www.collegeboard.com
ACT Information: 319-337-1270
www.act.org