

## **Preparing for College Entrance Exams/Standardized Tests**

The best way to prepare is to take the practice tests. The PLAN, which is practice for the ACT, was offered in the fall of your sophomore year. The PSAT, which is practice for the SAT, was offered in the fall of your junior year. Not only are these great practice because the tests are timed the same way the SAT and ACT are, but research shows the more familiar you are with the type of test questions, the better you will do on the real thing. Another important reason to take these practice tests is because the results give you an idea of what areas you need to work on to improve your scores. Refer to the printed material given to you with your score sheet for ways to access personalized suggestions for improvement. When you begin to research schools during your junior year, you can use your PSAT and PLAN scores in place of the real tests since most of you don't take the SAT and ACT until toward the end of the year, usually in May and/or June of your junior year.

There are also additional practice tests available in the C&CC as well as on the websites. Some students also purchase College Board, Princeton Review or Barron's SAT/ACT Review Books with CDs for more in-depth test taking tips, vocabulary and practice tests.

## **Types of College Entrance Exams/Standardized Tests**

**SAT Reasoning Test:** Includes a Critical Reading, Math and Writing component; the score range for each area is 200-800. Not all colleges and universities use the Writing component in admissions decisions. Many schools will use the highest Critical Reading and Math scores over multiple test dates. Example: If you received a 550 in Critical Reading and 600 in Math in June, then received a 600 in Critical Reading and a 590 in Math in October, the college could view your score as a 1200 overall. When students are researching SAT admission scores from various publications it is important to take note of whether or not the Writing score is being included in the total score.

**ACT (with Writing):** Includes tests in English, Math, Science and Reading as well as an optional test in Writing. *We recommend that all students take the optional writing portion of the ACT, as colleges and universities will often require it.* The ACT measures knowledge and skills that you have acquired throughout high school. Your test results reflect individual scores in each of these areas as well as a composite score, which is the average of your scores on the four subject area tests. ACT test scores and the Composite score range from 1 to 36. Writing scores range from 2 to 12 and are not part of the Composite score.