



College Board pulls plug on summer SAT for gifted students

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY

Updated 6/5/2012 1:16 PM

The [College Board](#), citing concerns about access and equity in education, has pulled the plug on a plan to administer a specially arranged SAT college entrance exam this summer to a group of gifted students.



By Todd Plitt, USA TODAY

Krystyna Karmol, with some of her SAT study aids, took advantage of study workbooks, online assistance and study classes to help improve her score in 2004.

The Aug. 3 test date, which would have been the first time in decades that an SAT was administered during the summer, was to have been available to participants at the end of a three-week summer college-prep program sponsored by the National Society for the Gifted and Talented, an organization based in Stamford, Conn.

Part of the program, which was marketed in the [USA](#) and abroad, was to include instruction by the [Princeton Review](#), a for-profit test-prep company. The College Board has long discouraged the use of expensive test-prep courses and cites research showing that such instruction has little impact on scores.

Tuesday, the College Board sent a letter to Barbara Swicord, president of the group's Summer Institute for the Gifted, saying it cannot proceed with the program because it "does not serve our organization's mission of expanding access and equity in education," and "certain aspects of the

(summer program) run counter to our mission as well as our beliefs about SAT preparation and performance."

The College Board also said it supports the society's mission to support gifted and talented youths, and would reach out to students who had hoped to take the August test to answer questions and provide information about October test dates and testing sites. About 30 students had been enrolled in the program, which cost \$4,495 for those living on campus.

Monday, the National Society for the Gifted and Talented referred questions to the College Board. The group did not respond to inquires Tuesday.

The August test date, announced in April as part of a collaboration between the two non-profit organizations, raised eyebrows among some college counselors, who argued that the special summer administration would give participating students a leg up in the competitive college admissions process.

The College Board says the August administration was to have been a pilot study as it considered whether and how it might offer the test nationwide during the summers. The College Board, which offers the SAT in October, November, December, January, March, May and June, has received "many requests from students, parents and educators" to offer the test during the summer, but the timing presents logistical challenges because schools, which often serve as sites, are not in operation and faculty schedules are less predictable, vice president Kathryn Juric said.

Monday, the non-profit National Center for Fair and Open Testing, or FairTest, issued a statement urging the College Board to cancel the test date. "Granting the opportunity to take the exam outside the regular academic year and after intense SAT coaching only to an economically elite segment of the college-going population is blatantly unfair," says a letter delivered Monday to the College Board by FairTest and signed by Elizabeth Stone, an educational consultant in [San Mateo](#), Calif. She said it was unfair that students she advises who take summer test-prep courses have to wait until October to take the test.

The prospect of taking the SAT outside of the regular academic school year was welcomed by Stone and other counselors. "My students would be thrilled to have the option of taking it in the summer," says Janet Rosier, an independent consultant in Woodbridge, Conn. There's no question the summer is less hectic."