

Don't be Pressured into taking a Spring SAT

By Mick Rosenblum

I bet you've heard people tell you that you have to take your SATs and ACTs in the spring of the junior year. Remarkably, people who know little about these tests are the first to press students into taking them whether or not those students are prepared. Some folks even advise students to take their first SAT or ACT prior to any prep in order to get a "baseline score."

This is bad advice, however, because that low baseline score becomes a permanent part of a student's record! Naturally, if you have been prepping for several months, and are scoring adequately on your actual (not phony) practice exams, then feel free to take the tests in the spring of your eleventh grade year. But if you're not, then you should wait until the fall semester of your senior year to take them. In that way, you will have had an entire summer to prepare . . . more than two months during which you can focus solely upon the admissions tests and be rested and ready for the real thing.

Another reason why the spring semester of the junior year may not be the best time to take your college admissions tests is that it is, arguably, the busiest semester of your high school career. With finals and AP tests looming on the horizon, you will have little free time to prepare adequately for SATs and ACTs. Please resist the temptation merely to follow the crowd.