

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

THE WASHINGTON POST COMPANY

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GOOD -
SAT PREP

Eric/Kendra/
Andy -
Let's do an
event. BR

Bruce
maybe we
should do something
do this
JOH

March 16, 2000

The Honorable John Podesta
Chief of Staff to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear John:

Following up on the President's call for SAT test preparation for low-income students, we've been talking with Kendra Brooks of the Domestic Policy Council staff about some ideas for giving substance to the President's initiative.

Knowing that you never have enough to read, I enclose a copy of our memorandum on this subject. We've also been working with people on Capitol Hill to see if adequate funding for such a program can be secured. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this most worthwhile issue.

Hope all is well with you. See you in church.

Sincerely,

Pat

In his 2000 State of the Union address, President Clinton challenged the nation: "Let's also offer these kids from disadvantaged backgrounds the same chance to take the same college test prep courses wealthier students use to boost their scores."

In response to this challenge, Kaplan Learning Services is pleased to offer its assistance in improving equitable access to test preparation for all students regardless of income or background. This outline describes three institution based SAT preparation programs for both teachers and students. Each addresses the academic concepts, strategies, and skills assessed by the SAT and may be used separately or as components of a comprehensive plan to immediately affect student performance and improve scores.

- I. First, Kaplan's Strategic Overview -- Professional Development Seminar builds awareness of the test process for the entire faculty.
- II. Second, Kaplan's Predictive Pre-test provides the most sophisticated diagnostic tool available for students.
- III. Third, Faculty-led PSAT and SAT courses allow teachers to deliver Kaplan's proven SAT and PSAT curriculum directly to their students. Additional information regarding this program is included because an in-depth institution based course such as the Faculty-led SAT course will more closely mirror the opportunities available to more affluent students in a commercial test preparation course.

Kaplan's Background and Experience

With principles Stanley Kaplan outlined in his first classes more than 60 years ago, Kaplan continues to serve the public as a foundation of instruction and knowledge regarding test preparation. Kaplan programs have a record of success with students nationally. An independent auditing firm has found that students in Kaplan's SAT Preparation Program showed an average gain of 120 points on the SAT, while 28% of all Kaplan SAT students achieve an increase of 170 points or better. In recent years, Kaplan has devoted more than \$5 million to research in teaching and learning, ensuring that Kaplan courses and materials continue to be the most accurate, up-to-date and effective available.

One of the most effective tools in test preparation is Computer-Assisted Feedback (CAF). We believe that it is the most complete and accurate diagnostic testing tool available. CAF is clear, concise and, most importantly, prescriptive. It focuses on potential improvement – in addition to current scoring – reinforcing Kaplan's positive motivational strategies and encouraging students on to greater success. The CAF includes a detailed breakdown of performance, customized test analysis and personalized strategies for score improvement, all in an easy-to-use format.

Another key component of SAT preparation is our Predictive Pre-test Program which can be delivered to students as a stand-alone program or as part of a comprehensive test preparation program. Individual schools may use the test to identify eligible 11th graders for participation in a test preparation course, or to identify school-wide reform opportunities. Each student receives a Computer Assisted Feedback (CAF) report that identifies his/her individual strengths and weaknesses and recommends, in student-friendly language, specific strategies to remedy those weaknesses.

Institution Based SAT Preparation Programs

Note: The following programs may be combined or run as stand-alone programs.

Strategic Overview – Professional Development Seminar for Teachers:

- 3 hrs of professional development for teachers on SAT strategies
- Comprehensive training manual provides teachers with proven test taking strategies
- Delivered at schools: morning, afternoon, or evening.

Predictive Pre-Test:

- Each student receives ten pages of individual feedback that provides prescriptive strategies for improvement (see enclosed sample)
- Tests scored and returned within 10 days of test date
- Comprehensive proctor's guide for ease of delivery

Faculty-led PSAT/SAT Courses:

- Kaplan can train high school teachers to deliver our full SAT/PSAT course (commercially available at \$750 per student), including 6 hours of curriculum training for teachers and all student and faculty materials.
- Flexible implementation models for after-school, summer, or elective courses
- 6 hrs. of professional development to ready teachers in each discipline (math & verbal) to teach test-taking strategies
- 9 hours of testing consisting of 3 diagnostic/prescriptive practice tests, scored and evaluated by Kaplan
- 27 hours of comprehensive classroom instruction materials

Faculty-led PSAT/SAT Course Overview

❖ 36 Total Hours of Instruction

- 9 hours of testing
- 27 hours of instruction
- homework assignments are provided

❖ Flexible Schedule of Classes

- During or after school
- Evenings or weekends
- Summer classes
- Deliverable as elective in 30-60 minute classes

❖ Highly Interactive Class Format

- Course format fully engages students' interest and energy
- Instruction methods build each student's sense of success

❖ Teacher Training

- Teachers delivering the course will receive 6 hours of curriculum training in their subject areas (math or verbal).
- Training increases staff capacity and raises the knowledge of the testing process.
- Provides the teacher(s) with course framework for teaching the class and detailed Teacher's Editions of Lessons.

❖ Course Delivery

- Kaplan will train teachers to staff and deliver as many concurrent or sequentially scheduled courses as are needed by the district.

❖ Practice Tests

- Three tests: pre-, mid-, and post-course
- Computerized scoring and analysis of student test results, with detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses
- Scoring history is saved and presented with each analysis, for comparison

❖ Experienced Support

- Kaplan will score every test and will monitor course delivery to insure high-quality delivery.

❖ Course Materials

- All course materials will be included in the price of the course.
- All student material, lesson plans, and testing are included in the program.

Student Materials

The Faculty-led PSAT/SAT Course includes the following student materials, which become the property of the student at the time of distribution:

- **User's Guide** – Tells the students what is coming up in the lesson. Spells out all in-course work as well as all homework assignments.
- **Lesson Book:**
Preview/Classroom/Review – Contains Preview assignments that allow a student to learn foundationally necessary concepts prior to the class/Classroom assignments led by expertly trained BHSD teachers or Kaplan staff/Review assignments that reinforce concepts taught in class.
- **Math/Verbal Workbooks:** – Verbal section provides students with word lists, root lists, and drill exercises to allow students to practice the skills they are learning. Math section provides students with key math concept review and drill exercises to build math comprehension. Also allows students to use the skills they are learning in class
- **Math Flashcards** – Spells out for students the concepts that are tested on the SAT. Allows them to use the cards to drill on concepts they need in an easy to use format.
- **Verbal Flashcards** – These flashcards encourage students to learn words both by memory and thesaurically. Allows them to use flashcards to increase their standardized test overall word retention.
- **CD-ROM** – Allows students to practice SAT questions, review lessons and drills on the computer. Extra bells and whistles in the software measure the time it takes a student to answer questions as well as measuring confidence levels.

Student Software

As detailed above, each student enrolled in a faculty-led course will receive a copy of Kaplan's CD-ROM for the program. The software is used in conjunction with the other classroom and homework materials, and serves as another opportunity for students to experience taking the SAT.

Kaptest.com – On-line SAT Preparation Course

Kaplan's on-line SAT preparation program, launched in December of 1999, provides students with the first comprehensive on-line option for preparing for the SAT. The online course offers interactive exercises as well as Kaplan lectures presented through audio and video streaming.

The on-line course includes the following components:

- Unlimited access to more than 24 hours of multimedia lessons with corresponding SAT lesson book
- Interactive exercises and dynamic animations
- Email help from course experts who respond within 24 hours or less
- Diagnostic tests to assess each student's skills and prescribe customized study plans
- Weekly coaching emails providing study tips and up-to-the-minute test information
- Comprehensive home study kit including: a home study workbook; CD-ROM (with diagnostic test, five full-length tests, answers to every question, extra lessons, study tips); vocabulary and math flashcards and book; and *A Parents' Guide to College Admissions*

It is our belief that one of the biggest benefits for students from an on-line course, as compared with the center-based program, is the convenience and flexibility it provides busy individuals who, due to time or geographic constraints, cannot attend a live course at a center. On-line courses also allow students to work at their own pace and to review the video and audio lessons as many times as necessary. Additionally, the on-line course is priced at approximately one-half the cost of the center-based course.

Since the program is newly launched, data on its effectiveness relative to that of the center-based program is not yet available. However, we anticipate that our students will see score improvements similar to results seen in our center-based SAT preparation courses. The next test date for SAT is April 8, 2000. We will forward the results from our on-line students once they become available.

A sampling of e-mail comments from students is attached to provide an overview of student response to other Kaplan test preparation courses.

Kaplan's College Admissions Course

The College Admissions Course was first launched last fall in select cities and on-line in conjunction with kaptest.com . The brick-and-mortar version of the College Admission Course will be available in all Kaplan's centers throughout the U.S. starting this spring. Kaplan's innovative college admissions course provides students with the knowledge and organization essential to successfully navigate the college admissions process in an increasingly competitive environment.

The course consists of eight multimedia sessions covering every aspect of the admissions process including: strategies and advice for creating and narrowing a target list of schools; completing college applications; ensuring successful college interviews; applying for financial assistance; and securing strong letters of recommendation.

Course features include:

- Unlimited access to more than 20 hours of multimedia lessons (i.e. split screen of video and web-linked slide show)
- Email help from Kaplan admissions experts, who respond within 24 hours or less
- Email review of the Personal Statement essay by a Kaplan Essay Expert
- Free access to Scholastic Registry, an online service that helps colleges find and recruit students
- Supplemental material including: a comprehensive lesson book; a Parent Portfolio Companion Guide to the course; organizational worksheets; a CD-ROM; a college guide; a sample college application and a financial aid book and user's guide.

The curriculum for both Kaplan's online and in-center admissions courses was developed with input from a special admissions advisory panel, made up of college admissions officers, guidance counselors and independent educational consultants. The panel collectively has over 100 years of admissions experience, working with thousands of students and schools including Harvard, Dartmouth, Princeton, Brown, Yale, Columbia, New York University and Oberlin. This panel trains Kaplan's admissions consultants and will advise Kaplan on an ongoing basis.

The Admission Course is currently separate from the SAT preparatory courses. However, it could be easily combined into one program for delivery to high school student in an institution based setting.

March 3, 2000

Ms. Kendra Brooks
Domestic Policy Council
2416 Lancaster Court
Falls Church VA 22043

Mr. J.B. Buxton
Domestic Policy Council
Old Executive Office Building
Room #218
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Kendra and J.B.:

We appreciate the opportunity to share with you various information and materials on test preparation. As requested, I have enclosed brief outlines on the various types of institution based test preparation courses. Kaplan has successfully used these courses throughout the country in capacities similar to what we discussed in our meeting. I also provided various examples of the materials and reports used in the courses. Additionally, there are summaries on Kaplan's On-line Test Preparation Services as well as its newly launched College Admissions Course.

I also included in the packet a recent article from Education Week, which contains a critical discussion of the current issues relating to test preparation within schools. We believe this will be helpful in framing the debate as we move forward.

The only thing that we have not been able to compile, as of today, is comprehensive data on Kaplan's involvement with the Hayden initiative in California schools. Statewide results are not yet available. However, two schools wherein Kaplan provided a faculty-led SAT program received the following results. San Diego High School, San Diego, California had an average score gain of 108 points. While Huntington Park High School in Los Angeles, California saw an average gain of 143 points.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide our experience and background on this issue and look forward to further discussions on institution based test preparation. If you need any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mallory Roberts

cc: Drew Littman
Enclosures