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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001a. letter	Mallory Roberts to J.B. Buxton (partial) (1 page)	02/17/2000	P6/b(6)
001b. report	Kaplan report re: program results (6 pages)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Andrew Rotherham (Education)
OA/Box Number: 21294

FOLDER TITLE:

Test Prep Companies/Programs

2011-0103-S

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RESTRICTION CODES

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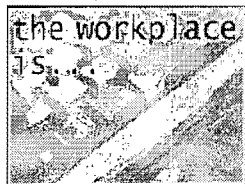
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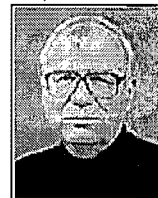


SAT preparation scores points

Payoff: An after-school program started by an adviser and the track coach at Mergenthaler Vocational- Technical High is pointing students toward test success.

By Mike Bowler
Sun Staff

IT'S AS THOUGH DeAnne Byerly were talking about pork belly futures.



Mike Bowler

"Earl and Alicia are both over 1,240," she says. "You know, Alicia started a year and a half ago at 890. Brandon's at 1,200. April's at 1,130. It's so exciting!"

Byerly, a student adviser at Mergenthaler Vocational- Technical High School in Northeast Baltimore, isn't talking about pork bellies, but she is talking about futures.

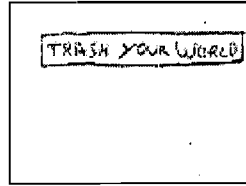
These are SAT scores, vitally important mileposts in a student's academic life. Good SAT scores are worth admission to the best schools and, equally important, worth thousands in academic and athletic scholarships.

Yet in recent years only a trickle of Baltimore public high school students have excelled on the SATs, and these have been from citywide schools like Poly, City and the School for the Arts. At the zoned and vocational high schools, 700 (on a scale topped at 1,600) is a typical score, even for students with high grades. But it's not a ticket to anything.

Two years ago, Byerly and Mervo track coach Freddie Hendricks set out to change that. With the sponsorship of CollegeBound, a nonprofit organization that helps city kids get into college, and seed money from the Abell Foundation, the two established an after-school program at Mervo designed to boost SAT scores and guide students through the Byzantine process of college application.

First-year results proved what Hendricks and his track stars knew about athletics: Success is a matter of training and technique, honing and shaping a student's raw talent. At the vaunted high schools in Montgomery County, kids know how to approach multiple-choice problems, how to succeed at SAT algebra, how to do those pesky analogies and how to write essays that catch the attention of admissions officials.

And in Montgomery, officials make sure students learn geometry, a mainstay of the SAT math test, before they take the preliminary SAT, the qualifying examination for National Merit Scholarships. In Baltimore, many kids get little geometry before their junior year.



At Mervo, kids in the CollegeBound program report after school or athletic practice for study sessions that last well into the evening with a break for a light meal. They take numerous practice tests and the real SATs as often as possible. Earl Murray III, 17, says he took it nine times.

It's paid off. He and Alicia Wilson (the class valedictorian) are off to college with SATs among the highest in the city. Murray, accepted at eight colleges, started at 810 two years ago and scored 1,240 in January, a 430-point leap.

Senior Ashlee Mayfield, whose score increased from 890 to 1,230 in 18 months, is competing for a Meyerhoff Scholarship at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and for a full scholarship at Morgan State University.

Sophomores Brandon Scott and April Barrett leapt from the 800s to 1,120 and 1,130 in a year. Both attend sessions five days a week, sometimes twice a day, says Byerly.

Some of the students are athletes trying to get grades and board scores to meet the college entrance criteria of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Frustration, says Hendricks, was a motive for his involvement. "I looked around and saw a lot of scholarship money out there," he says, "but we weren't getting much of it. Now we're starting to."

One recent afternoon, the CollegeBound students laugh as they go over analogies (crumb is to bread as cream is to butter?) and learn how to break words into their Greek and Latin roots. One of the first things she learned, says Alicia Wilson, is not to guess wildly. That tip -- that the SAT penalizes for wrong answers but not for blank answers -- boosted her score 30 points, she says.

She and some others have been in these after-school sessions for nearly two years. They've taken the SAT five times on average. Last year, at a school with a reported SAT average of 740, 82 students in the program scored an average of 880, and 17 scored higher than 1,000, according to CollegeBound statistics.

The SAT, designed as a predictor of college success, is severely criticized for having become a gatekeeper. Its content is said to discriminate against poor, inner-city students who lack the vocabulary and higher math skills of their suburban peers.

At Mervo, they're unapologetically playing the SAT game -- and in the process reaping benefits in admissions and scholarships to good colleges.

Playing the game has made going to college a "dream made real," says Alicia Wilson. Craig Spilman, CollegeBound director, agrees. What if every high school student knew not to guess on the SAT? What if more students took the test early and often instead of once, if at all? What if all the high schools got the kind of SAT prepping enjoyed by those that can afford it?

That they don't is another kind of discrimination.

Originally published on Mar 1 2000

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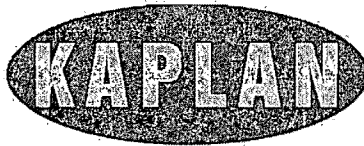
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MALLORY L. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

February 17, 2000

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

Dear J.B.:

Cool a]

I appreciate your assistance on this project [REDACTED] P6(b)(6) It was nice to meet you (via telephone) and I look forward to working with you.

As I mentioned on the phone and in the attached letter to Kendra, I will send the additional information requested by Kendra and Bethany as soon as it is available. In the meantime, if I can be of assistance to you or Bethany, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Mallory Roberts



MALLORY L. ROBERTS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

February 16, 2000

Ms. Kendra Brooks
Domestic Policy Council
Old Executive Office Building
Room #218
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Kendra:

I wanted to thank you and Bethany Little for taking time to meet with Drew Littman, Pat Butler and myself regarding the President's test preparation initiative. We are very excited about having the opportunity to share our experience in improving student achievement on standardized tests, especially the SAT.

We are currently trying to compile some of the information you requested in regards to the California test prep initiative, Kaplan's College Counseling Program, and the results of our new on-line test preparation program (Kaptest.com). In the meantime, I wanted to forward the 1999 DC Good Sports Report which includes an overview of the program as well as individual stories and anecdotal information. It is important to note that the Good Sports Program delivers test preparation through small groups of students that are individually tutored. While this is not the same type of delivery we discussed in our meeting, the Program's results clearly show that test preparation can dramatically increase students' scores on the SAT.

In an effort to develop a program that would more easily fit into the framework we discussed, I have asked our Kaplan Learning Service professionals to put together an outline regarding what type of test prep delivery in their opinion would best accomplish the goal for the students to be assisted through the President's initiative.. I will forward that outline to you along with the additional information requested shortly.

Again, we appreciate your time and effort regarding this initiative. If we can be of any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Mallory Roberts



DC Good Sports Program
Review of 1999 Program
September 1999

Overview

The DC Good Sports Program was created in 1997 to provide educational resources to motivated, economically disadvantaged high school athletes who hope to attend college and qualify for NCAA scholarships. In our third year, 35 students participated in an intensive college preparation program including private SAT tutoring and college counseling sessions. The program continues to be a joint effort with DC Public Schools, and is endorsed by Dr. Allen Chin, the Director of DC Public Schools Athletics.

Program Goals

Our main goals were to help students:

- Raise their SAT scores
- Understand the NCAA test score and academic requirements (Prop. 48 and 16)
- Develop personalized college action plans with realistic goals
- Navigate the college admissions process
- Explore financial aid and scholarship options and learn strategies for obtaining funds
- Understand the "big picture" importance of a college education in achieving short and long term goals

Program Description

Selected students participated in an intensive college preparation program. We recruited 35 students by working closely with the DC Public Schools Athletic Office and individual coaches, athletic directors, principals and guidance counselors at DC public high schools and Archbishop Carroll High School, a private high school in DC.

Students were nominated by their coaches and submitted application materials including high school transcripts, attendance records, brief essays, proof of financial need and at least one recommendation. The program included:

Private SAT tutoring (40 hours) including:

- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses through three full-length computerized diagnostic exams, enabling students to practice their skills under timed conditions.
- Personalized study plans including extensive home study materials, math and verbal workbooks, flash cards, and additional practice tests.
- Instruction in concepts, test-taking skills and strategies for avoiding traps on the SAT.
- Instruction in mastering vocabulary, sentence corrections, critical reading, analogies, math problems and quantitative comparisons.
- Extensive tracking, analysis and performance feedback.

- Strategies to overcome test-anxiety and manage allocated test time efficiently, making the test day experience more familiar and less intimidating.
- Extra help for the Fall 1999 SAT.

Private college counseling sessions with a professional independent advisor, Kpakpundu Ezeze, PhD (12 hours). Dr. Ezeze helped students:

- Create a personal action plan, timeline and list of goals.
- Navigate the college admissions process.
- Understand NCAA test score and academic requirements, and complete eligibility forms.
- Explore financial aid and scholarship options.
- Plan college visits.
- Draft college application essays.
- Prepare questions to ask college coaches and admissions officers.

Group motivational events

- Student and parent orientation with motivational talks on goal-setting and achievement with Kaplan staff and Dr. Ezeze.
- Pre-SAT motivational pep talk with Washington Redskins running back Brian Mitchell and Washington Mystic player Nikki McCray. Students, coaches and parents attended.
- Workshop on "Creative Strategies for Funding Your College Education" with Dr. Ezeze.
- Workshop on "College: Getting In and Staying In" with Dr. Ezeze.

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