



Economic Disparity in SAT Scores

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INTRODUCTION

More than 4 million students took either the SAT or ACT last year. Now imagine if these tests that are meant to test college readiness were heavily skewed to benefit people that are affluent and can afford extra preparation. You don't have to imagine. There is a problem with how the SAT and ACT scores relate to income or financial well being. Despite the SAT and ACT intending to test readiness for college, they end up being heavily affected by how much money a student's parents are able and willing to pay for tutoring and test preparations in general. This problem has negatively impacted less affluent students because they can't afford this tutoring that essentially guarantees a raise in score.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Identify the issue at hand and the potential gaps in research.

Filled out the PAUSD innovation grant in order to hopefully fund an SAT prep course for low-income and historically underrepresented students.

Surveyed local high schools on what methods they are utilizing to combat and publicize the issue, if any at all.

CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS

My findings indicate a couple of different things. One of these things is that not only is there a clear divide in SAT scores based on financial status, but it's getting worse, not better. Despite efforts from the College Board to implement an adversity score, which was quickly shot down, the issue is moving in the wrong direction.

There are quite clearly many factors that contribute to the achievement gap within standardized testing and more specifically the SAT, but one of the main contributors is the effects of shadow education. Shadow education is shown in full effect through some of the local companies that offer various types of test prep. As shown in figure #2, the prices of test prep highly outweigh the prices of the SAT themselves. It has been shown throughout research that private tutoring is much more effective in SAT preparation than it's free counterparts.

DATA AND FINDINGS

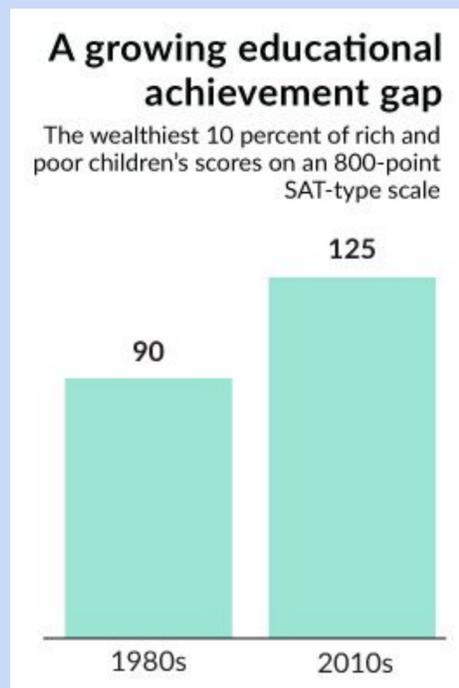


Figure #1: Growing educational achievement gap

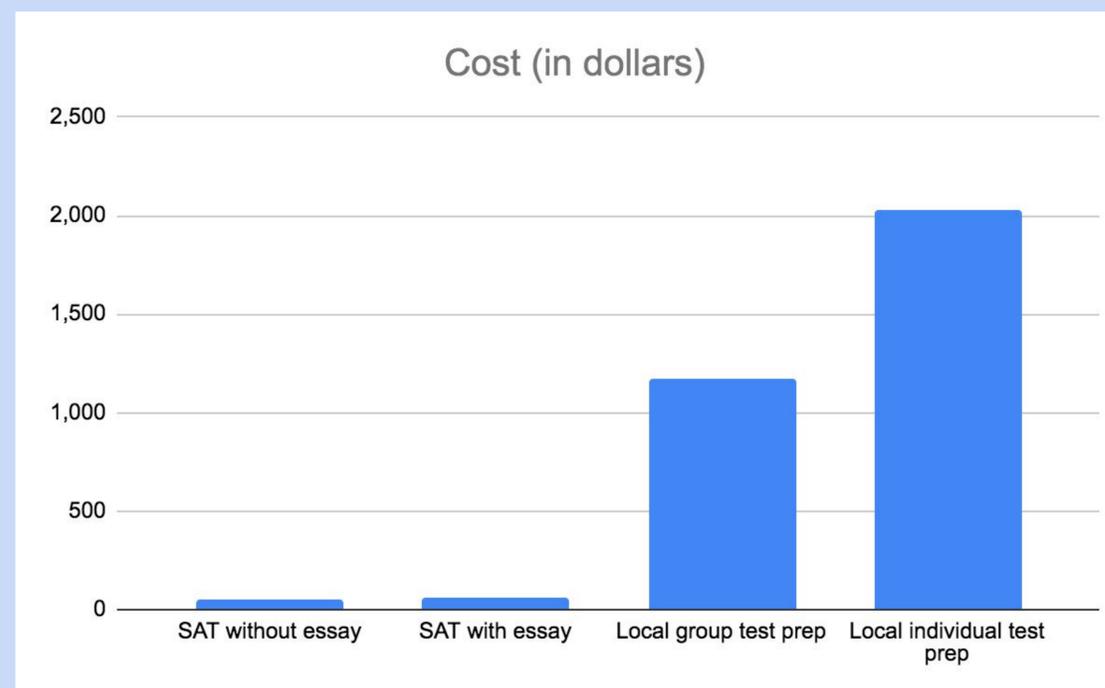
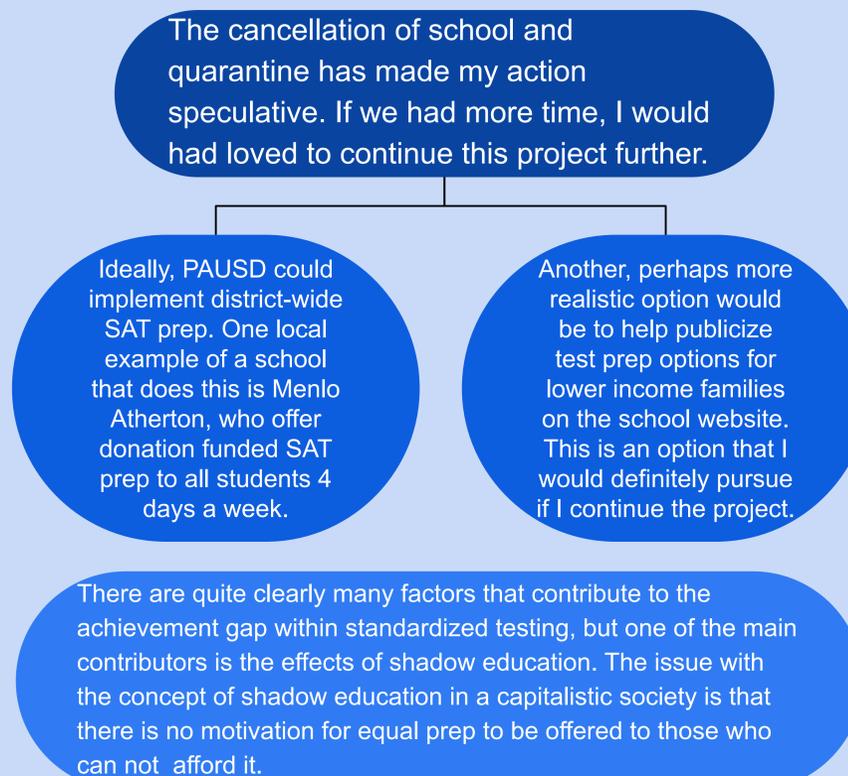


Figure #2: Costs of SAT related classes and the SAT itself

IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS



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