

EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES

**PSAT/SAT I/SAT II/ACT Prep
College Consulting Services
Professional Math Tutoring**

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How will preparing for the HSPT help my son or daughter?

The HSPT is a challenging nationally administered entrance exam that is used to screen students attempting to enter Catholic high schools across the country. The test is not your run of the mill exam like the Iowa Basic Skills Test and others on which a high percentage of students score well. Although not necessarily a true assessment of students' abilities and future success in high school, successful performance on the HSPT is nonetheless critical for admission to most Catholic high schools. Keep in mind that if all students scored in the 90th percentile or higher, the test would be an inflated useless tool.

The prepared student fares better time and time again. Over 90% of students who have been prepped through my program since 1998 have been admitted to the high school of their choice, many with honors or distinction (90th-95th+ percentile). Prepping for the HSPT will enable your son or daughter to not only be admitted, but also hopefully be admitted with Honors or Distinction by scoring in the 90th-95th percentile. Honors or Distinction admission status is determined primarily by test performance success, not merely grades, GPA, or recommendations.

Such admission status will allow your son or daughter to participate in Honors and AP classes at most Catholic high schools. Once admitted, the honors and AP class track is rather difficult to move up into because of the relatively few number of classes offered at most schools and because of demand. Certainly all students and parents should know that the best colleges in the country prefer to see honors and AP classes on students' transcripts.

What kind of questions are in the HPST?

The very first section called Verbal Skills has 60 questions which have to be completed in 16 minutes. This can make a test taker very nervous if not prepared. The math sections cover word problems, quantitative skills, basic computation problems, algebra, and geometry. Many students do not, or will not, have many of these skills learned well by the time they take the test without extended test prep. There is also a reading comprehension and vocabulary section which includes 4 reading passages and a page of vocabulary questions that need to be finished in 25 minutes. The language skills section proves

to be very challenging for many students and covers grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage questions. Needless to say, having an exposure to what the test is like, knowing about timing, guessing strategies, etc. reduces test anxiety greatly.

What kind of preparation do you offer in addition to the HPST test questions?

Practice for the interview and essay writing skills are also discussed. Although covered later in the course, students have found my tips about the interview and essay that is written on test day (not the application essays) very helpful. The interview can be the deciding factor in the admission process sometimes. I used to be a teacher, coach, and guidance counselor at Brophy College Prep and have experience in interviewing students while I worked there.

What if my son or daughter doesn't need the whole HPST prep course?

If after a few weeks it appears that your son or daughter does not need to prep any further for the test, he or she can stop and come back later for the essay and interview sessions. This has, however, only happened a few times since I began prepping kids in 1998.

Can students request extended time for the HSPT if they have a diagnosed learning disability?

Here is the response from a high school admissions advisor:

“High schools do not provide for any accommodation for students for the entrance exam in January. As the results are for our purposes only, and because our admissions process allows an applicant's parents to submit additional information and documentation to us along with the application of any previous academic accommodations that have been made for a student, we think it is better for the student to take the test in the same format as all the other applicants and to not feel singled out that day — they are nervous enough! The test results are just one part of the whole profile of the student — and we examine all pieces. A test prep course will definitely benefit your son or daughter. The practice will help build confidence with skills and provide a sense of familiarity with the test. The practice in itself not only reviews and reinforces critical skills that are necessary for success in a high school curriculum, but just knowing what the test will look like, the type of questions, and the timing issue greatly lowers the anxiety factor, which usually translates into higher scores.

“Bear in mind, though, that most high schools are not required to follow 504 plans for students for their individual classroom work; there are not any resources teachers. Students with appropriate documentation may be granted extended time for any standardized testing that students take while attending high school, though, such as the PLAN, EXPLORE, PSAT and then of course the SAT and the ACT. Having previous and current medical documentation and evidence of accommodation for the PLAN and EXPLORE will be necessary if you will be requesting accommodation for the SAT test or ACT test.”

How much does the course cost, and how long are the classes?

The cost is \$175/month. This means that 4 classes that last 1.5 hours each will cost \$175. This equates to about \$29/hour. Most parents pay by the month rather than for the whole course upfront. I hope to get in 10 sessions. We will have some downtime during the Thanksgiving and Christmas vacations.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 602-331-4873.

Thank you,

Ken Krueger, M.Ed.
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