



Test Preparation & College Readiness Programs and Services



Bell Curves

Get Ahead of the Curve!





Professional Development

Bell Curves professional development seminars are the product of extensive test preparation experience and exhaustive research. These seminars are designed to help counselors, teachers, and administrators better understand test preparation programs and standardized tests by offering them support both during and after school.



Seminars for Program and School Leaders

INSTITUTING A TEST PREPARATION PROGRAM

This half-day seminar is designed for program directors, school administrators, curriculum specialists, and counselors who are interested in offering a formal test preparation program at their school. This seminar will provide a step-by-step action plan for instituting such a program. Participants will be equipped with customizable rubrics to fully evaluate school needs, assess service provider offerings, and measure program successes. Upon completion of this seminar, participants will have all the tools to effectively implement a top-quality test preparation program at their institution. Armed with rubrics and assessment standards, participants will be able to better assess what focus and form “test preparation” should take in the school and with a particular cohort. Participants will be able to more effectively assess whether they should invest in test-specific preparation (SAT versus ACT preparation) or content-specific test preparation (improving underlying skills).

ASSESSING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S TEST PREPARATION NEEDS

Through a series of hands-on activities, sample data set evaluations, and guided group discussions, this half-day seminar will provide program directors, school administrators, curriculum specialists, and counselors with the tools to more fully quantify the school's or organization's test preparation needs. Participants will be introduced to the knowledge, skills, and habits that successful test-takers display and will be provided with tools to help identify which of these three areas is most directly impacting the testing success of that participant's peer group. For instance, participants will be able to objectively determine how many students should participate in the program, what type of recruitment should be conducted, what type of “buy-in” is necessary, and how to implement program-appropriate incentives and consequences. There will be guided discussions to facilitate identifying and solving potential challenges and roadblocks.

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Seminars for Counselors

COLLEGE BOUND TESTING OVERVIEW

Designed for teachers, counselors, and advisors who regularly advise students regarding standardized test issues unrelated to specific content, this half-day seminar will bring to life the challenges students face when taking high stakes tests. Attendees will learn how to effectively advise, empower, and encourage students to prepare for and take tests, and how to support the efforts of test preparation professionals. Participants will learn the formats, scoring systems, and content areas on major college admissions exams, such as the PSAT, the Plan, the SAT, the ACT, and the SAT Subject tests, and the role test-specific preparation can play in increased scores on those tests.

DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL TESTING PLANS

This half-day seminar will present counselors and advisors with information and tools for gathering and assessing an individual student's data in order to create an individualized testing plan that maximizes the student's strengths and accounts for the student's weaknesses. Participants will learn to make recommendations for which tests to take, when to take those tests, and how to most effectively prepare for those tests. Participants will also learn how to more effectively evaluate various test preparation programs in order to properly match the program to the specific skills, objectives, and needs of the student.

Seminars for Curriculum Leaders

INTEGRATING TEST PREPARATION

This one-day seminar offers insight and actionable strategies to integrate test preparation skills and habits vertically through the Math and English curricula, as well as through classes that require similar skills. Participants will explore the causes of the typical dissonance between the curriculum-based testing conducted in school, and standardized tests. Participants will explore the challenges standardized tests present and develop local solutions to help engender more effective preparation within the current curriculum, regardless of the topic. Teams will develop instructional activities and test problems for classroom use, as well as a more complete understanding of how to help students acquire the critical thinking skills and test-taking habits of successful test-takers.

USING TESTING DATA TO INFORM INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

This one-day seminar is designed for curriculum leaders and teachers interested in collecting, organizing, analyzing, and using data for continuing school improvement and creating more effective students and test-takers. Topics addressed include: understanding test reports, defining objective and subjective measures of test-taking success, and disaggregating data in order to align tested skills to school or state standards. Participants will receive hands-on training in the use of standard and optional test reports (such as College Board's SOAS) to identify academic strengths and weaknesses.

Professional Development (Continued)

Seminars for Teachers

BUILDING ADVANCED TESTING SKILLS

This half-day seminar will explore the nature and form of the disparity between standardized tests and school-based tests. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the non-content based skills that are tested on a given standardized test and how those skills impact the performance of their students. Teachers from all subject areas will learn the key skills associated with successful test-takers and develop strategies to foster those skills in their students. Participants will form teams to analyze student test reports and explore the reasoning behind the student's performance. Teams will identify and explore both standards-based weaknesses and weaknesses in test-taking savvy. Participants will learn teaching strategies and test writing strategies to improve the three key (content blind) factors in testing success: independent thinking, active test-taking, and critical reading. Bell Curves will analyze any testing data that is provided to us before the session and integrate the results of the analysis into the seminar in order to help participants more fully understand how the data from tests can be used to inform daily instruction and testing.

CRITICAL READING TEACHER TRAINING

This one-day seminar will train teachers to be SAT Critical Reading instructors. Bell Curves will train participants in all nuances of SAT Critical Reading and in our unique strategies for teaching Critical Reading. The training will provide teachers with the information necessary to be effective SAT Critical Reading instructors.

WRITING SKILLS TEACHER TRAINING

This one-day seminar will train participants to teach SAT Writing Skills. Participants will learn the content of the SAT Writing Skills class and the best practices for teaching it. Participants will learn the fundamental skills that the SAT Writing Skills section assesses, how the Writing Skills section is scored, how to help students develop better understanding of grammar and writing mechanics, and how the writing section is evaluated by colleges. Participants will explore in-depth the "holistic scoring" approach used by the College Board to score SAT essays.

MATH TEACHER TRAINING

This two-day seminar prepares participants to teach SAT Math classes using Bell Curves materials. Participants will learn the nuances of the SAT Math section, key techniques students need for success, best practices for teaching and reinforcing those techniques, and best practices for conducting effective SAT Math preparation classes.

SAT TEACHER TRAINING

Bell Curves SAT Teacher Training provides participants with the knowledge and skills needed to be a highly effective SAT teacher. Participants will learn:

- The scoring system, the test format, question types, and effective strategies for test-taking.
- The role of the SAT and other tests in the college admissions process.
- The typical assumptions and misconceptions associated with testing in general and the SAT specifically.
- How the content of the SAT connects to and disconnects from school-based instruction and material.
- How to most effectively use available resources to support classroom instruction.
- Strategies to motivate, empower, and encourage students.

Participants will receive:

- Bell Curves SAT student manuals and SAT Teacher manuals.
- A complete lesson plan with accompanying text, activities, and syllabus.
- Access to Bell Curves diagnostic tests, diagnostic test student reports, and diagnostic test teacher reports.
- Access to discounted Bell Curves SAT student course materials.
- Access to email and phone support for one year.

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College Readiness Programs

Bell Curves SAT and ACT preparation programs are designed to provide the four key elements necessary to achieve top scores: rich content knowledge, sophisticated test-taking techniques, talented instructors, and realistic practice.

Preparation Classes for ACT or SAT

RICH CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Our programs provide a review of the underlying content that is tested and provide students the understanding of how that content is presented in unusual and tricky ways.

SOPHISTICATED TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES

Our courses deliver key test-taking techniques designed to allow students to take advantage of the scoring, question types, difficulty levels, and answers choices to answer effectively and efficiently.

TALENTED INSTRUCTORS

Before being invited to train to teach for Bell Curves, potential teachers are exhaustively screened for teaching experience, test-taking acumen, and dedication to improving the educational opportunities for historically underserved students. This screening process has allowed us to build a dedicated teaching staff committed to the success of our clients.

REALISTIC PRACTICE

All Bell Curves programs include full-length practice tests as well as periodic mini-tests designed to provide students greater comfort and familiarity. By making students more familiar with the timed standardized testing environment, we empower them to avoid anxiety and other factors that negatively impact performance.

BELL CURVES COURSE OPTIONS

Bell Curves ACT and SAT courses are designed to be flexible and enable an organization to integrate them seamlessly into current programming and schedules. Below are our recommended program structures:

Complete Course:

- 36 hours of instruction and 4 practice tests

Express Course:

- 24 hours of instruction and 3 practice tests

Introductory Course:

- 12 hours of instruction and 2 practice tests

“Our programs emphasize the review of content that students may have forgotten or not mastered to help them achieve their best scores.”



Informational Workshops

Bell Curves Informational Workshops provide dynamic interactive presentations on test preparation and college readiness. Our workshops can be aimed at educators, parents, or students, or any combination of the three. Our most requested session titles are as follows:



Preparing for the SAT (or PSAT, ACT, etc)

This workshop will provide participants a guideline for preparing for a particular standardized test. Using an interactive question and answer format, a Bell Curves test preparation expert will familiarize participants with the test and how to properly plan and prepare for it. This workshop will help students and parents understand the format of the test, techniques of successful test-takers, and the role of the test in the college admissions process.

Creating a Winning College Admissions Plan

Designed to provide students and parents an understanding of the admissions process in order to more effectively apply to schools, this session is ideal for families of 8th – 10th graders. Using case studies, interactive guided discussions, and role play, a Bell Curves professional will help explain the college and university selection process, demystify the admissions process, provide valuable resources for prospective college students and their families, and demonstrate ways to improve chances of successful admissions.



Choosing Between the SAT and ACT

This workshop will help students decide which of the two major college admissions tests is best suited to their individual abilities. By providing a detailed description of the differences between the questions and format of each test, students will be able to make more informed decisions as to which test to prepare for. This workshop is best delivered in conjunction with our ACT and SAT diagnostic exams, which will allow students to learn firsthand about each test.

Broadening High School and College Options

This workshop will provide families with a wealth of resources and tools to expand the options students have in selecting and attending high school and college. A Bell Curves educational expert will provide families with information about programs and services that will allow the family to consider educational opportunities beyond the local public high school. Using a dynamic question and answer format, families will be informed about how to access a broad range of high school services, how to gain admission to and pay for top-notch private schools, and how to prepare for college. Parents and students will leave this session with a list of proactive steps to increase the number of tools they have to support them before, during, and after high school.



Developing a College Access Toolkit

This workshop will provide parents and students with information about and resources to support college application, admission, and retention. This workshop will focus on providing parents and students with a greater understanding of the resources available to them to assist with the college process. A Bell Curves expert will guide a discussion of the types of resources that are available to support students through the process of applying to, attending, and completing college. Parents and students will leave this session with a list of proactive steps to increase the number of tools they have to support them during this crucial time.

Selecting the Right High School Courses

This workshop will explore and stress the importance of high school course selection. During the session, high school students and their families will learn how to take better advantage of high school resources and plan for college right from the start.

College Application Review

This three-part series of workshops is designed to help students manage the college application process by providing organizational guidance, research assistance, and essay review and advice. This workshop is geared to help applicants fully and effectively proofread and complete their college essays and applications. All nuances of the application will be addressed, from myths about the common application, to the development of compelling essay stories.

Preparing for College

This is an open and honest discussion on how students and parents can prepare for an effective first year of the college experience. The goal is to help students avoid the typical traps and pitfalls that freshmen encounter. The topics addressed will include everything from homesickness to credit card offers.

Choosing a College

This workshop will provide information to parents and students about how to select from among schools to which students have been accepted. It will help parents and students assess what factors are most important to them in the decision making process, why cost should not be an obstacle to attending a particular school, and how to choose the school which will help the student grow the most, both academically and socially.

The Admissions Process

Designed to further demystify the college admissions process, this presentation and panel discussion will explain the factors involved in college admissions, the schedule typically followed by applicants, and the criteria that make a good candidate. Case studies will be used to explore the decision-making process and how that should impact student course and extracurricular activity selection.

Diagnostic Testing and Scoring

Developed by Bell Curves and rigorously tested and analyzed for validity and comparability to the real tests they simulate, our diagnostic tests provide low-cost data gathering and performance assessment. A diagnostic package includes test booklets, Scantron answer sheets, and scoring services. Students receive individual reports indicating their areas of strength and weakness, and organizations receive a group report outlining both individual and collective areas of strength and weakness. An additional benefit of purchasing a diagnostic package is a quick turnaround of results and reports within 7 business days. Our diagnostic testing materials are available for the PSAT, SAT, and ACT.



Bell Curves is a test preparation company that delivers high-quality consulting services, professional development, test preparation programs, and self-study resources to organizations and individuals throughout the country. Our mission is to provide affordable, accessible, and adaptable programs and services to help individuals and organizations reach the next level.



For more information visit
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