

## Why is the SAT falling out of favor

The University of California's decision this past week to stop requiring the SAT and ACT tests for admissions renewed a debate: Are the tests that were first deployed to diversify the Ivy League beyond rich prep schoolers a worthwhile yardstick, or are they, as one U.S. *regent* put it, "a proxy for privilege"?

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Those who argue for keeping the tests say colleges need some sort of broad yardstick to compare students across disparate school districts and states. The tests provide important information beyond assessing achievement.

Critics of the tests cite decades of data indicating that they are inherently biased in favor of affluent, white and Asian American students. They also say the tests are too easily gamed by students who can pay thousands of dollars for private coaching and test prep.

Proponents of a change say it is fairer to judge students by other measures, such as teacher recommendations. Some studies have suggested that high school grades better measure a student's likelihood of graduation and cumulative performance in college.

John A. Pérez, chairman of the California system's board of regents, said that college officials in other states had told him privately that they would likely follow suit if California moved to eliminate the test from its admissions requirements.

The end of the SAT and ACT in California's most prestigious public universities will not necessarily mean the end of admissions testing there. University officials said they were studying the feasibility of developing their own replacement test — with less baggage.