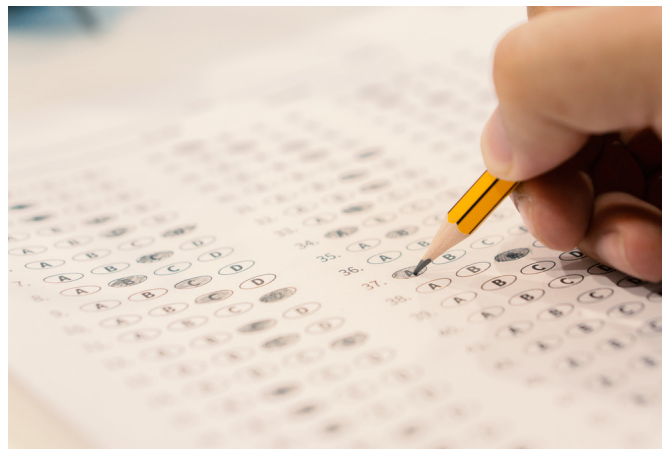




CORONAVIRUS TESTING CANCELLATIONS THREATENED TO WORSEN INEQUITIES. SO THESE STUDENTS SPOKE OUT



Coronavirus closures have upended just about every aspect of daily life. And that includes college admissions exams. The College Board **has canceled** June SAT and SAT subject tests. ACT **has delayed** its April 4th exam to June—although it’s certainly possible additional delays will occur. In the meantime, states have canceled spring exams, which in some jurisdictions would normally include free opportunities for students to take the SAT or ACT.

Led by the activist group **Student Voice** (a National Education Policy Center partner), young people are speaking out about the cancellation’s impact on equity through a campaign called **#TestOptionalNow**.

While the cancellations and closures have the potential to affect all juniors applying to college, they disproportionately impact students of color and those from low-income families, **Student Voice notes** in a statement on the group’s website.

For example, low-income Americans are **much less likely** to have high-speed home Internet access, making it more challenging to prepare for exams at home. Students from low-income families may also be more likely to rely on the free, state-provided admissions exams that have been canceled.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates pre-existing inequities in college access, it is critical that urgent action is taken to ensure low-income, minority, and other underrepresented student groups have equitable access to the admissions process,” the students say.

The students have asked colleges and universities to take the following three steps:

- Eliminate standardized testing requirements and adopt test-optional application policies for all applicants to their institution during the 2020-2021 admissions cycle.
- Announce their intention to discontinue standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 admissions cycle as soon as possible, to mitigate future applicants' concerns about meeting testing requirements.
- Reflect on the value of standardized assessments in the college admissions process and the implications testing requirements have on equitable access to the college application process.

The students are also [collecting signatures](#) on a petition at [change.org](#). They have also asked supporters to write to their alma maters' deans of enrollment and admission.

Colleges' responses to the coronavirus have been [by no means uniform](#). A [March survey](#) by Cirkled In, an adaptive portfolio platform for students, found that a quarter of the 33 colleges and universities that responded had made the SAT and/or ACT optional as a result of the pandemic.

The University of California system has announced that it will suspend ACT and SAT testing requirements for students applying to enroll in the fall of 2021. The California State University system has also said that it will offer flexibility on requirements next year.

Other colleges that have announced shifts include Pomona College in California and Vassar College in New York.

NEPC Resources on Higher Education

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