

To: Parents of Seventh and Eighth Grade Students:

I am writing to inform you of a standardized testing option in which you may be interested as your child approaches high school.

The Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) has a different orientation than the annual California State achievement testing program (STAR). Included are: vocabulary knowledge, verbal reasoning, reading comprehension and numerical reasoning (rather than computation). It is an excellent preparation for major tests that students who are college-bound will be taking in high school, such as the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Of special interest is the fact that the SSAT norming population is comparable to that of our district, so that our students who take this test can be compared with other college-bound students, rather than with the general population.

Some families are seriously considering private high school options. Many private schools require the SSAT as part of the admission procedure, so you may want to have your child take the SSAT sometime during seventh grade to see how s/he performs. The test taken in December or January of eighth grade is the one that will be considered for high school admissions. If you are considering private school options, I would suggest you read my document "Private School Suggestions," also included in this mailing.

Some students might benefit from test preparation courses, though these are not necessary or appropriate for all students. I do not recommend study courses for seventh graders taking the SSAT for the first time. Some 8th grade parents may want to engage a private tutor. Others may simply buy a study book with sample tests and test strategies. Others may want to enroll their child in a test preparation course. I recently received notice of an SSAT class offered by Tamalpais Union High School District. For information go to www.marinlearn.com, community courses – academic. I cannot endorse this course, but since it is offered by the Tam District, I feel comfortable informing you of its availability.

In order for your child to take this test, you must contact the Secondary School Admission Test directly by getting information and registering on-line. Their web site is: <http://www.ssat.org>

If your child decides to take the SSAT, I would also greatly appreciate your sharing the results with me. My interest is in gathering data on this test to show that our students can compete favorably with a similar nationwide population, and that our program is adequately supporting and challenging their intellectual growth. I would keep all results confidential, and in addition, would be happy to discuss the results with you.

If you have any questions about whether your child should take the SSAT, about test preparation strategies or high school options, in general, please call me at 388-7100, ext. 3105.

Sincerely,

Allan P. Gold, Ph.D.
Reed District Psychologist

