

# **DEMYSTIFYING TEST ACCOMMODATIONS**

**September 12, 2017**

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# IDEA v. ADA Standards

Testing agencies provide accommodations to individuals based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These standards are more stringent than the standards used by schools in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) v. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

IDEA (Educational Benefit)	ADA (Testing Benefit)
It is the school district's responsibility to identify a student's disability.	Students must self-identify.
A student with a disability that adversely affects educational performance is entitled to an education and necessary accommodations and/or modifications that are designed to meet the student's unique needs and from which the student receives educational benefits.	ADA does not guarantee that students receive an education from which they receive educational benefit. Students have access to the same free appropriate public education that is available to children who are not disabled.
School district develops IEP to define educational supports and services that will be provided under special education (educational benefit).	Accommodations must be consistent with ADA requirements and appropriate and reasonable for the documented disability. To fall within the protection of ADA, a person's physical or mental impairment must have a substantial limitation (permanent or temporary) on one or more major life activities: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning or working. The critical question is whether a student's impairment substantially limits the ability to learn.

**Summary:**

**IDEA** – Test Accommodations are identified by IEP and 504 teams and apply to all testing situations within the New Trier High School curriculum.

**ADA** – Test accommodations are identified by stricter ADA requirements that may not mirror IEP or 504 determinations. To fall within the protection of ADA, a person's physical or mental impairment must have a substantial limitation on one or more major life activities.

# How Do Students Qualify for Testing Accommodations?

## Disability Documentation for Standardized Testing

ACT and the College Board, in deciding a student's testing accommodation, typically consider the date the student was originally diagnosed, the date of the most recent reconfirmation of diagnosis, and the person making that diagnosis. They also consider the cognitive and achievement test data, the IEP or 504 Plan listing the accommodations regularly used in the classroom, and the length of time the accommodation plan has been in place.

New Trier has no direct influence over the testing agencies' decision to provide accommodations; however, we will assist you and your New Trier student in filing the application with supporting documentation to ACT and the College Board.

Occasionally, testing organizations request an updated evaluation that includes IQ and achievement tests. The most recent school evaluation may not meet the testing agencies' requirements. High schools are not obligated to provide testing for private agencies; it is the family's responsibility.

Further information regarding ACT and SAT requirements can be found online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) respectively.

## Disability Evaluation at New Trier

All public schools are mandated by law to conduct re-evaluations of students receiving special education services every three years. The purpose of the re-evaluation is to determine continuing eligibility for services and to provide information for IEP planning.

Evaluations use a variety of methods, which may include:

- ✓ Evaluation of current performance through review of grades, teacher reports, and observations;
- ✓ Review of previous evaluations and information;
- ✓ Standardized tests and rating scales; and
- ✓ Progress on IEP goals.

One-to-one testing using standardized measures (e.g. Wechsler scales, Woodcock-Johnson) are only indicated if the testing results provide information to guide current instruction or lead to a change in placement during high school.

# **Application Process for Testing Accommodations 2017-2018**

To request accommodations for an administration of the National ACT (those test dates that are on Saturdays), students must:

1. Create an ACT web account – see website address below. Students cannot register for a test unless the student account has been created.
2. Register for a test date. When registering for a test, the examinees must indicate that they receive accommodations. Decide whether the registration will include writing or no writing.
3. After successful registration, an email will automatically be generated by ACT prompting the parent/student to forward this email to the Test Coordinator. The Test Coordinator will then submit all applications through the ACT Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA).
4. After ACT reviews a request for ACT-approved accommodations, an Accommodations Decision Notification is created in TAA. When the notification is available, the Test Coordinator will be notified of the decision, and this decision will be forwarded to the student's parent or guardian.

To request accommodations for an administration of the National SAT (those test dates that are on Saturdays) students must:

1. Create an SAT web account – see website address below. Students cannot register for a test unless the student account has been created.
2. Register for a test date. Decide whether to sign up to SAT with essay.
3. The parent or student must notify the Test Coordinator that a registration for a test date has taken place, and a request for accommodations must be submitted. The Test Coordinator will then apply for accommodations through the College Board Disabilities Accommodation Management System.
4. After College Board reviews a request for SAT-approved accommodations, an Eligibility Letter will be created and will be mailed directly to the student's home. A copy will be forwarded to the Test Coordinator's Accommodations Management system.

Please remember that accommodation decisions for standardized tests (PSAT, PSAT 10, SAT, ACT, and AP) are made by the testing companies, which use the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) criteria for accommodations. These standards are much more stringent than Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) standards, which is used in educational institutions. Some students who receive accommodations at New Trier do not qualify for accommodations under ADA.

All information recorded on the application is part of the student's special education file. The Testing Coordinator will also complete a section of the application verifying accommodations received at New Trier, and are a part of the student's IEP or 504 Plan. New Trier provides as much information and

support as possible to our students and parents as they go through the application process for testing accommodations.

**Helpful Information**

New Trier School Code: 144-430

ACT Test Center Code: 174480

SAT Test Center Code: 14585

ACT website: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

ACT Customer Service: 319-337-1313

ACT Test Accommodations Department: (319) 337-1851

[www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html](http://www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html)

College Board website: [www.collegeboard.com/testing](http://www.collegeboard.com/testing)

SAT Customer Service: (866) 756-7346

SAT Services for Students with Disabilities: (609) 771-7137

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ssd>

**New Trier High School Academic Services Staff**

Linda Knier                      Director of Academic Services: (847) 784-2207

Peg Stevens                     Testing and Accommodations Coordinator: (847) 784-2259



# Standardized Tests Overview

## PreACT

- Mandatory test for sophomores in October
- No registration required and no fee
- Similar to ACT with an additional career component
- Students receive personalized feedback on test performance as well as career planning options
- Score reports and actual test books sent home after winter break
- Scores CANNOT be used for college admission
- **Accommodations:** same as noted on New Trier IEP or 504 Plan

## PSAT

- Mandatory test for juniors in October
- Similar to SAT
- For juniors only - Qualifying test for National Merit Scholarship Program
- No registration required; cost included in student fee bill
- Students receive personalized feedback on test performance
- Score reports and actual test books sent home after winter break
- Scores CANNOT be used for college admission
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from College Board to test with accommodations. After application is made for accommodations, the College Board Decision will be mailed directly to the student's home.

## SAT

- Available on Saturday dates throughout the school year; can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).
- For all SAT tests, other than State SAT, students register with SAT online.
- Students can register for SAT Plus Writing or No writing.
- The SAT test measures critical reading, math problem-solving, and writing skills.
- SAT Subject Tests are one-hour tests in specific subjects required by some colleges and California state universities.
- Students register with College Board online.
- Scores CAN be used for college admission.
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from College Board to test with accommodations. **Please contact the Testing Coordinator, Peg Stevens, for instructions before registering for a test.**

## ACT

- Available on Saturday dates throughout the school year; dates can be found at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).
- For all ACT tests, other than District ACT, students register with ACT online.
- Students can register for ACT No Writing or ACT Plus Writing.
- Consists of four multiple-choice tests in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science that measure skills emphasized in junior English, math, and science courses
- Scores CAN be used for college admission.
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from ACT to test with accommodations. Students may **not** register online for accommodations. **Please contact the Testing Coordinator, Peg Stevens, for instructions before registering for a test.**

## State SAT

- Administered in April to juniors; state graduation requirement
- Measures critical reading, math problem-solving, and writing skills
- No registration or fee required
- SAT score CAN be used for college admission.
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from College Board to test with accommodations.

## District ACT

- ACT Plus Writing administered to juniors in April
- Official score reports are sent to students' homes by ACT.
- Students who take the test with accommodations receive their score reports one week to ten days after standard scores are released.
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from ACT to test with accommodations. An application for testing accommodations is submitted to ACT by testing coordinator in December. Students are notified by ACT of their approved accommodations in late February.

## Advanced Placement

- Online registration at New Trier begins in January; fee paid at time of registration on RevTrak
- Cost of each AP test in 2017 is **\$93.00.**
- AP scores CAN be used for placement or credit at some colleges.
- **Accommodations:** Students with an IEP or 504 Plan need approval from College Board to test with accommodations. Applications for accommodations must be submitted by testing coordinator by **February 24.**