

Jacksonville University

English Department

**ENGLISH 103 EXIT ESSAY**

The English department at JU requires students enrolled in ENGL 103 to take an exit exam focused on research, writing, and citation/documentation. These skills are emphasized throughout ENGL 103. Students must demonstrate proficiency in the above skills in order to pass the exam and exempt ENGL 214.

YOU MAY USE THIS SHEET FOR NOTES. WRITE YOUR ESSAY ON THE LINED PAPER.

- Select one of the following options and read the article carefully. You may wish to spend a few moments organizing your thoughts and writing down some ideas or an outline.
- Using appropriate conventions of organization, structure, and language, write a formal essay in response to the prompt, referring to the attached source article you selected. Your essay should demonstrate:
  - k. an effective introduction that establishes a focus for the essay
  - l. an essay body that is organized, unified, and developed
  - m. that you can properly integrate into the essay a summary, a paraphrase, and a quote (at least one of each should be evident in the essay), and cite each appropriately
  - n. appropriate documentation at the end of the essay
  - o. standard grammar and general mechanics

**Option I --“Rethinking Public School ‘Fat Letters’ for Students”**

**PROMPT:** Using information from the article and your own experiences, construct an essay in which you answer the question: What role should the schools play in combating childhood obesity?

**Option II--“The Case against the SAT”**

**PROMPT:** Thomas Rochon argues that the SAT is not an accurate indicator of college-level performance, and should be reconsidered as an admissions tool. Write an essay responding to Rochon’s case against the SAT, and whether other colleges should follow Ithaca College’s model of a test-optional policy for admissions.

**Time Magazine**

**Sept. 11, 2013**

## **Rethinking Public School 'Fat Letters' for Students**

*Against some doctors' recommendations, the state may soon cease notifying the parents of extremely overweight children*

By Maya Rhodan

Parents of elementary school students receive a steady flow of letters throughout the year as teachers notify them of class projects, parties and special events. But parents in 19 states, including Arkansas, California, Massachusetts and Illinois, should be on the lookout for letters on another, less friendly topic: their child's weight.

In these states, students' Body Mass Index (BMI) data is collected at school. Parents of the children whose BMI is above a healthy percentile receive notification in what students have dubbed "fat letters."

Childhood obesity is a serious concern throughout the U.S., where over 30% of children and teens are overweight or obese and 5% are severely obese according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. But members of the state legislature in Massachusetts have started a crusade against the "fat letters," introducing legislation to ban the collection of students' BMI data, which the state's department of health has been gathering since 2009.

Scientists have argued BMI is a faulty measure of obesity because it doesn't take into account where fat is stored or muscle, which is heavier than fat. But many doctors agree it is an effective tool for determining whether or not a patient has a weight problem.

Parents and pediatricians have been going back-and-forth on the "fat letter" issue recently after an August report by the American Academy of Pediatrics urged parents to put their pride aside and welcome the screenings and letters, which they say will help parents and their children adopt healthier lifestyles.

"BMI screening letters are an additional awareness tool to promote conversations about healthy eating habits, exercise, and weight in the safety and confidential environment of the child's home," read the report.

Though opponents of the letters argue they can be damaging to children's self-esteem and lead to eating disorders, which are common among obese children and teens, the report says in the four years since the program has been implemented in Arkansas, there is no indication of negative consequences.

Those who are not in favor of the letters still insist this is just another instance of the government sticking its nose where it doesn't belong.

"It goes to a larger problem, the Department of Public Health is losing sight of what its focus is and expanding too many areas," Massachusetts Rep. Jim Lyons, whose anti-"fat letters" legislation was scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday, told Patch. "I don't think it [a child's BMI] is something that parents need to be told through a school department."

# The Case Against the SAT

**Test scores don't predict the potential success of future students**

By THOMAS ROCHON

September 6, 2013

***U.S. News & World Report***

The debate over the use of standardized test scores in college admissions is not new. Opponents condemn the practice as biased; proponents tout it as a critical indicator of future academic success. But few live the experience from both sides.

As a former executive director of the GRE testing program, the graduate school cousin of the SAT, and now president of Ithaca College, I have. And despite my respect for standardized testing and my belief that much of the criticism it receives is misplaced, I recently made the decision to institute a test-optional policy for undergraduate admission at Ithaca.

Last year, Ithaca joined the growing number of colleges that have incorporated an option to omit standardized test scores for some or all of their applicants last year. At the heart of our decision was the conviction that requiring a test score might limit our applicant pool and potentially distort our admissions and financial aid decisions.

Our first realization was that test scores add relatively little to our ability to predict the success of our students. Studies undertaken by the SAT's sponsor, the College Board, generally indicate that the SAT adds only modestly to the prediction of student success after high school GPA is taken into account. Our internal study showed similar results, validating that the loss of test score information at the time of admission makes very little

difference in our ability to identify how successful applicants will later become as college students.

In addition, we know that some potential students are deterred from applying to colleges that require a test score because they are not comfortable taking standardized tests. In fact, groundbreaking research by psychologist Claude Steele, now dean for the School of Education at Stanford University, has shown that underrepresented groups are more likely than others to be put off by test score requirements.

As a result, we strongly suspected that we were not seeing applications from some potential students who would shine in our academic environment and who could use the Ithaca College experience as a springboard to a happy and successful life. We expected that eliminating standardized tests as a required element of the application would enable us to increase the number of highly qualified applicants to the college, increase the quality of the enrolled freshman class, and increase the diversity of that class. And we fared well against those goals.

With respect to the increase in application numbers, we greatly exceeded our expectations. We projected a 7 percent increase in applications compared to one year ago and instead experienced a 13 percent increase. One-quarter of our applicants chose not to submit a test score, meaning that we may have had nearly 4,000 applications that we would not otherwise have received.

We also enrolled a freshman class of over 1,800 students – 100 more than our target enrollment. The fall 2013 freshman class will be the most diverse in our history,

with 22 percent of the class identifying themselves as members of underrepresented groups. The quality of the freshman class, as measured by grade point average and test scores for the 75 percent that submitted them, is essentially identical to one year ago. And the accept rate and the average high school grade point average of applicants who did not submit test scores were only slightly lower than the comparable numbers of those who did send us their scores.

Standardized tests are tools rather than ends in themselves. They are often helpful as one piece of information in an application to determine whether an applicant is likely to do well in one's college environment.

There is substantial evidence, though, that test scores for some applicants conceal more than they reveal. And when the requirement of submitting test scores deters some potentially strong students from even applying, then it is time to take a fresh look at the tool.

*Thomas Rochon is president of Ithaca College.*