

## **Standardized Testing and Test Prep**

My name is Cindy Batik, and I am thrilled to be working with your sons as their junior counselor this year. I have received a number of questions about standardized testing and test prep.

**PSAT:** The juniors will take the PSAT again in October, with scores arriving in December. Students often find these scores to be a much better predictor of SAT performance than their sophomore PSAT scores, since the SAT is in fact a junior-level test. Thus, these scores may be effectively utilized to determine the areas in which students need the most focus in preparing for the SAT.

**SAT:** The vast majority of students do not take the SAT for the first time until March of junior year. Students who score exceptionally well on the PSAT might choose to take a January SAT, since they may not need as much time for SAT preparation. Keep in mind that this test is designed for juniors and is based on content learned throughout the junior year, so I do not recommend that students take the test prior to January 2009. I have found that students who take the test prematurely may not score as well as they would like and become anxious about their scores, allowing a lower test score to become a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of sorts. Most juniors find that the ideal time for taking the SAT is sometime during the spring, be it March, May, or June. Try to time test prep so that it occurs soon before the actual examination date.

Jesuit will offer our test prep course again in spring 2009, leading up to the March 14th SAT, so it is not necessary for juniors to take the course offered this fall. While it does not hurt students to prepare early, it makes more sense for students to focus on their challenging junior year coursework and maintaining/improving their GPAs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I am aware that this is a hectic and confusing year, and I will try to help make it less so!

Cindy Batik  
Jesuit High School Junior Guidance Counselor  
(813) 877-5344, ext. 246