

# the NEW TRIER NEWS



## College Board announces SAT adversity score plans

The score includes variables such as crime rates and poverty levels

by Hannah Sussman

Recently, the College Board announced its plans to assign an Adversity Score to every student who takes the SAT in the hopes of contextualizing scores with socioeconomic standings as well as community environments. Alongside the announcement comes the debate over race and wealth influencing college admissions.

The Adversity Score, part of the College Board's Environmental Context Dashboard, is measured on a scale from 1-100 using 15 variables, such as crime rates and poverty levels in a community, to assign a score.

While this score would not alter a student's SAT score, it would allow colleges to see how students compared with peers who have a similar Adversity Score.

For some students such as Gabe Kramer, a junior at Batavia High School, this score threatens to dismantle a system that is potentially already beneficial.

"I think that all students should have their applications measured by merit, not race or socioeconomic standings, as that is the definition of equality," explained Kramer.

New Trier sophomore Juliana Gurevich echoed aspects of this

Figure 1. Framework for Environmental Context

### Neighborhood Environment

- Crime Intensity
- Housing Values
- % Below Poverty
- % Vacant

The social and economic milieu outside the home and school, peer culture, influences, and norms.

### Family Environment

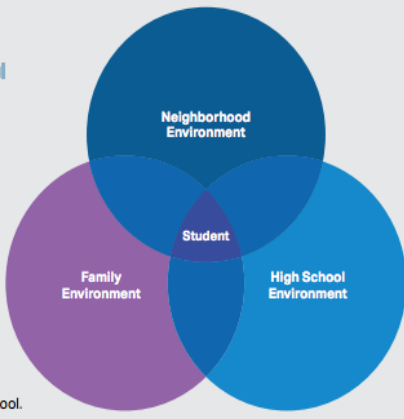
- Median Income
- Single Parent
- Education Level
- ESL

The family culture around educational aspirations, knowledge of the admission process, support for educational attainment, familial models of educational success, financial stresses, and limitations.

### High School Environment

- Undermatch Rates
- Curricular Rigor/AP/IB
- % Free Lunch
- AP Opportunity

The educational support environment, resources, counseling, and college-going culture of the high school.



The College Board provided specific criteria for the scores | College Board

sentiment.

"Test scores should be objective and this ruins that," added Gurevich.

In contrast to Gurevich and Kramer, New Trier sophomore Grace Koehler felt that scores would never be objective nor equal with such large underlying disparities.

"It is unfair to measure people with a standardized test without taking into account factors out of their control that could influence their testing or education," stressed Koehler.

In creating and spreading the application of the Adversity Score to the SAT, College Board's overarching goal was to more explicitly and statistically factor in the impact that students with less privileged or impoverished educational and socioeconomic lives must endure, according to The New York Times.

Although the SATs may appear unbiased, many studies have actually found them to be directly influenced by socioeconomic standings. The Washington Post reported an almost 400 point difference in average scoring between students from families with an annual income of greater than \$200,000 and students from families with an annual income of less than \$20,000.

Junior Katherine Figura, notes that taking these factors into account is not a new practice, but is rather simply being standardized.

"Many colleges have a points system where they allot points to a student based on a certain standardized testing score, GPA, extracurriculars, etc. If you're a minority student or come from a lower financial status, then some schools give you 'points' automatically, so

this type of recognition was already in place at a later point," explained Figura.

Lucas Weisman, a senior at Oak Park and River Forest High School, believes that the Adversity Score could offer valuable insight into how these adversities may impact a student's testing.

"The College Board should use this to measure the fact that certain communities and schools have unequal access to resources than other communities," said Weisman.

Likewise, Gabriella Perez, a junior at Kennedy High School, views these scores to be a fair measure of adversity accompanying the widening inequalities between schools, including her own.

"Post Secondary Education is not only elitist within itself due to the long history of excluding minority groups, but it's still heavily inaccessible due to how expensive it is," explained Perez.

"I think it's great to prove that it's not only about race, but also about socioeconomic factors and how colleges can become more accessible to those areas."

Despite the perspective that the Adversity Score is a step in the right direction, many remain apprehensive of its inclusion of only a specific type of adversity, as well as its quantification of adversity.

As mentioned in a New York Times article, the Adversity Score does not account for the individual hardships of students in the college admissions process.

Similarly, New Trier sophomore

Jake Mastrofski cautions that someone's life can not be filtered down to a number between 1 and 100.

"I believe that while the score could theoretically begin to bridge the gap of inequality, a numerically assigned value does not fully encompass one's background," explained Mastrofski.

Other students simply view the Adversity Score to be both an oversimplification of adversity as well as an overstep by the College Board.

NT sophomore Max Leibov feels that, above all else, the College Board should not be involved in determining what constitutes adversity.

"I don't think that the College Board should have taken it upon themselves to attempt to quantify how hard someone's life is. There is no way to possibly express that on a 1-100 point scale," Leibov said.

Sam Shafiro, a sophomore at Oak Park and River Forest High School, explained that although the Adversity Score cannot encompass all adversity, that does not make these scores less valuable.

"People see adversity and think it's supposed to represent all adversity, when it is actually only a measure of socioeconomic adversity, which I think is very important to factor in. If someone works harder than me to get to my score they should get into a better college than me, that is the definition of merit-based," emphasized Shafiro.

## Student Alliance and Pep Club to merge in 2020 school year

Leaders of Student Council, Rosen and Culbertson, work to integrate their clubs

by Emma Mansour

In the coming school year, Student Alliance and Pep Club will be merging to create one club called Student Council.

The new club has been in the works for months, was finalized on Monday, May 20.

When the merge was first announced, members of both clubs reacted with surprise and some confusion, but have since changed their views on the idea.

Junior Max Rosen, the current President Elect, described his initial reaction, saying, "I was excited. All of us in both clubs were surprised, but as we got over that we realized that this is an opportunity to work more together, and I think it's a great opportunity to expand our function as a group and expand our ideas and the projects we want to work on."

Junior Anna Culbertson, Vice-president and acting president of Pep Club had a similar reaction.

"It's hard to picture not having what we had this year, but as we've had to accept this, I think it's cool that we get to create a new club together."

While this may seem like an unlikely combination of clubs,



Next year's school leaders and members of the newly-joint club take the Oath of Office with their club sponsors | Kolack

Culbertson described how they often overlap.

"They are having a merger between Student Alliance and Pep Club because we have a lot of similarities in what we do," said Culbertson

Junior Cat Cohen, a committee chair, added, "I often hear people saying 'what does Pep Club do?' and I think having more people and getting more feedback will have more people interested in the club and involved."

The merge was a complicated process, and the two clubs worked collaboratively to work out the plan for how it will be set up next year.

Rosen, who was one of the students heavily involved in the process, said, "The merge was not an easy task. There's been a lot of stuff that we've had to layout. For example, how will the room be handled, and the name, which was an ongoing debate for a while. How does the leadership structure work out?"

Those issues were eventually resolved, with the new club agreeing on the name Student Council, as well as the creation of a new officer position called School Culture Commissioner, which will be filled by Culbertson.

With the resolution of some of

their initial worries, club members are looking forward to the opportunities that Student Council will present.

Culbertson noted the increased accessibility that the club will provide.

"I think it opens up a lot of opportunities for students with broad interests, and it opens up an opportunity for students to find something in the club that they truly want to do, and will in turn make the club bigger and positively benefit the school."

Pep club sponsor Stacy Kolack agreed.

"As sponsors, we believe that this new, expanded platform will offer

the students greater opportunities to expand their work and increase their positive impact on the school community."

Members of the clubs are optimistic about how this will affect students. Rosen said, "What I have to say to the students is that this is going to be a positive for them, and they will see the benefits next year. Our capability to work on projects is going to increase dramatically."

He said that because there will be more members, the club can work more towards being transparent with the student body.

"Now that we have more people, it will only help us hear the students more. There's really only positives for students in the merger."

Culbertson added, saying that next year, this club has the opportunity to do a lot more than our clubs can do separately. "Together, we have a really good impact. We need to focus on every aspect of all things each club did is represented. We can't leave anything out, we can't leave anything that was less noteworthy around the school, because that hinders the capabilities of the club"

Despite the challenges faced during the merger of the clubs and the unexpected change, members and sponsors are looking forward to the new opportunities in the coming year.

"This is an incredibly dedicated and passionate group of students and we are excited to see what the new year will bring," said Kolack.