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I. PLACEMENT EXAMS

Students planning on attending suburban public high schools will need to take a Placement Test during the first semester of the 8th grade year. The high schools use these results to help them make their decisions regarding course placements for grade 9. You will receive information directly from your public school as to the specifics of when and where the exam takes place. Typically, New Trier and Niles North give their exams in mid-October while ETHS gives their exam in early December.

Local suburban public high schools:

(1) **EXPLORE Test** **ETHS, Niles North Township High School, Highland Park High School**

EXPLORE is the eighth grade component of the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). Benefits of the EXPLORE assessments include the following:

- appropriate use of the assessment results helps to prepare students for high school coursework and post-high school transition;
- educators are given the means to strengthen high school academic planning and career exploration;
- schools have a baseline to monitor academic progress; and
- students are given the opportunity to investigate a full range of educational and career options.

EXPLORE includes four multiple-choice tests:

Subject	Number of Questions	How Long It Takes
English	40	30 minutes
Math	30	30 minutes
Reading	30	30 minutes
Science	28	30 minutes

(2) **CTP 4**, Subtests: Verbal Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Reasoning, Mathematics 1, and Mathematics 2 **New Trier High School**

What is CTP 4?

CTP 4 is the latest revision of the Comprehensive Testing Program, a reasoning/achievement test that ERB makes available to the more than 1,600 ERB member public and independent schools.

What kind of a test is CTP 4?

CTP 4 is not one test, but a battery consisting of a series of multiple-choice and open-ended question tests administered to groups of students over the course of several days, either in the spring or the fall. CTP 4 has 10 levels; a different level is used with each grade from 1 through 11.

Students in the early grades take the test under untimed conditions and mark their answers in the test booklet.

Students in the middle and upper grades take CTP 4 under timed conditions and mark their answers on a separate answer sheet. The time limits are generous, and all but a few students are able to complete the test in the time allowed. There is also an option for schools to include open-ended reading comprehension and mathematics questions in the test that provides for full, partial, or no credit.

What does the test measure?

All 10 levels of CTP 4 include achievement tests that measure what the student has learned in the areas of reading and mathematics. In addition, levels 1 and 2 test word analysis and listening skills. Beginning with level 3 (introduced in the spring of grade 3) there are also tests that measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, certain kinds of writing skills, and vocabulary.

How should my student prepare for the CTP 4?

This test is designed as a “low-stakes” exam, the purpose of which is to test what a student knows at a given point in time, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. It is intended to help teachers and administrators make decisions about classroom instruction. As such, there are no preparatory materials available for it. This makes the test a more accurate reflection of the student’s knowledge, and makes it a better diagnostic tool

CTP 4 link:

<http://www.erbtest.org/parents/achievement/ctp4#whatis>

II. ENTRANCE EXAMS FOR PRIVATE, PAROCHIAL, AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Most private, parochial and independent schools require an entrance exam as part of their admissions process. In order to sit for these exams, the student must contact the Admissions Office at the school and complete the necessary paperwork and meet the other requirements.

Below is information regarding the entrance exams used by the private, parochial and independent schools where our Baker 8th grade students topically like to apply:

(3) High School Placement Test (HSPT®) - Most Catholic Schools
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HSPT[®] Test

Many private high schools in this country, especially Catholic ones, use the High School Placement Test (HSPT) as a means of screening and classifying incoming students. Since many of these schools accept students from a wide variety of backgrounds, and from many different schools with widely differing academic standards, it's necessary to use some sort of standardized test to find out how far along their prospective students are in various subjects. The HSPT test has a good track record of being very reliable when it comes to measuring these things. It's a multiple choice test, and will usually be taken at the private high school that requires it, and normally is given only once a year. You'll want to inquire of the school for the exact date and time. The HSPT lasts about two and a half hours.

There are five sections on the HSPT: Verbal Skills consists of 60 questions, and lasts 16 minutes. Quantitative Skills consists of 52 questions and lasts 30 minutes. There are 62 questions in the Reading portion, and it lasts 25 minutes. Mathematics lasts for 45 minutes and is comprised of 64 questions. Language consists of 60 questions and lasts 25 minutes.

It's important to know that test takers aren't penalized for wrong answers, so it's much better to guess than to leave a question blank. Scores on the HSPT range from 200 to 800. The minimum acceptable score is determined by the school itself. It's possible to have scores sent to more than one school if you're considering several. Because of the desirability of a private school education and the competitive nature of the admissions process, in many cities there are far more applicants for private high schools than there are available slots.

(4) **The ISEE** Latin, Francis Parker, Lake Forest Academy; University of Chicago Lab School*

*Some schools will accept ISEE or SSAT scores

(Independent School Entrance Examination) is a 3-hour test used to assess your math and verbal abilities prior to entering private school at grades 5 through 12. The test has two components: a multiple-choice segment and a 30-minute essay. There are three levels of testing: lower (for entrance into grades five and six), middle (for grades seven and eight), and upper (for grades nine-twelve

Test Structure

Verbal Reasoning	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Synonyms; sentence completions	40
Time Allotted: 20 minutes	
Quantitative Reasoning	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; applications; quantitative comparisons	35
Time Allotted: 35 minutes	
Reading Comprehension	

Question Type	Number of Questions
Passages from the humanities, science, and social studies	40
Time Allotted: 40 minutes	
Mathematics Achievement	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; skills; comprehension; and applications	45
Time Allotted: 40 minutes	
Essay	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Response to a topic	1
Time Allotted: 30 minutes	

ISEE link

http://www.petersons.com/testprep/test_info.asp?id=554&sponsor=1&path=hs.pft.isee

(4) **SSAT** Latin, Francis Parker, Lake Forest Academy*

*Some schools will accept SSAT or ISEE scores

For students hoping to gain admittance to private schools with high academic standards, it may be required by the school that you take the Secondary School Admission Test, or SSAT for short. This is a test that many private schools use as a more objective standard when it comes to deciding which students to admit and which students to pass on. Schools need a tool like the SSAT because the academic quality of different schools varies, by huge margins, and an A at one school may be no better than a C at another school. Plus, grade inflation in recent years has gotten out of hand, and it's now far too easy to get an A or B without earning it. The SSAT solves this problem, and if your child is hoping to attend an elite private school you should be familiar with the SSAT. It's given eight times a year, and the school your child is interested in will have the dates and locations and times.

What is the SSAT?

The Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) consists of two parts: a brief essay, and a multiple-choice aptitude test which measures your ability to solve mathematics problems, to use language, and to comprehend what you read.

The test is administered on two levels:

- Lower (for students currently in grades 5-7)
- Upper (for students currently in grades 8-11)

Many editions of the test exist to ensure that no student takes the same SSAT twice. All tests are printed in English.

Test Format

The test is timed and divided into five sections. You will be given 25 minutes for the writing sample, 40 minutes for the reading section, and 30 minutes each for the remaining multiple-choice sections.

- Writing Sample

Includes one topic statement which you will be asked to support or argue, using specific

examples from personal experience, current events, history or literature. This portion is not scored by SSAT and a copy of the writing sample is not included with the report sent to students.

- Quantitative (Math)

Consists of two sections of 25 questions each. You will be required to do math computation similar to what you do in school or what is useful in everyday life.

- Verbal

Consists of 30 synonym and 30 analogy questions.

- Reading Comprehension

Includes 40 questions based on about 7 reading passages. These questions measure your ability to read quickly and comprehend what you read.

All questions on the SSAT are equal in value, and scores are based on the number of questions you answer correctly minus one-quarter point for each question you answer incorrectly. You may only give one response to each question. Although no points are awarded or deducted for questions left unanswered, you will be penalized for questions answered incorrectly or with more than one response.

SSAT information <http://www.ssat.org/>

Register for the SSAT:

<http://www.ssat.org/publicsite.nsf/FromWelcome/Test%20Calendar%20&%20Fees>

(5) CTP 3 North Shore Country Day School

Subtests: Verbal Ability, Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Reasoning, and an essay (read a short story and respond with a 5 paragraph essay). It is an earlier version of the CTP4 test described above.

(6) *The Selective Enrollment Entrance Exam* Chicago Public Schools *Selective Enrollment*

The Exam format may change from year to year. The Exam given in December 2006/January 2007 was in fact different from the one administered the previous year. It contained four sections - three lasting 40 minutes each (Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, Language) and a shorter 15 minute section (Vocabulary). The Exam, including administrative time, lasted about three hours.

Exam topics include:

- Reading Comprehension. The reading section assesses comprehension of two types of reading material:
 - Non-fiction (e.g., science, social studies, humanities, general information, etc.)
 - Fiction (e.g., poems, dialogue, short stories, etc.)
 - The test questions cover various comprehension skills from the basic literal level up to the inferential and critical levels of reading comprehension. Students will also be tested for their ability to analyze words (e.g., idioms, metaphors, etc.) and to interpret word meanings given a particular context.

- Mathematics. The math section assesses the ability to compute as well as apply math concepts to problem-solving situations. Word problems are emphasized. No formula sheets or calculators are permitted. Topics include:
 - geometry
 - arithmetic
 - number properties
 - percents
 - ratios & proportions
 - algebra
 - Interpretation of graphs (e.g., linear and nonlinear functions, bar graphs, pie charts, etc.)
- Language. The language section assesses:
 - Punctuation
 - capitalization
 - application of grammatical concepts
 - language expression
 - word manipulation
 - recognition of effective sentence structure and writing style
- Vocabulary. The vocabulary section assesses your child's knowledge of word roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Resources: Test Taking Tips, Prep and Strategies

- EXPLORE link (includes practice test) <http://www.actstudent.org/explore/>
- Exam Flashcard Study System: <http://www.flashcardsecrets.com/explore/> (commercial product)
- ISEE Practice site: http://www.testprepreview.com/isee_practice.htm
- SSAT link (with practice questions) <http://www.studyguidezone.com/ssatest.htm>
- HSTP: [Click here to download StudyGuideZone.com's free HSPT® Study Guide](#)
- HSPT link: <http://www.studyguidezone.com/hspttest.htm>
 - practice questions: <http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=60>
 - more practice: http://www.testprepreview.com/hspt_practice.htm

- CPS Selective Enrollment Schools:
<http://www.selectiveprep.com/index.php> (commercial site but has useful information and a quiz game for test practice)
- Test Achiever: Mastering Achievement Tests: Great Source Education Group: <http://www.greatsource.com> (make sure you order correct grade level and teacher's edition for answers)
- Test Taking Tips:
http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=ddqw9zpc_15f65t4xfz
- General Test Tips:
<http://www.studygs.net/ts ttak1.htm>
- Taking Multiple Choice Tips:
<http://www.studygs.net/ts ttak3.htm>;
http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/asc/index.gw/Site_ID/46/Page_ID/1456/;.how-to-study.com/MultipleChoice.htm
- Overcoming Test Anxiety:
<http://www.studygs.net/tstprp8.htm>;
<http://www.how-to-study.com/testanxiety.htm>

Books on Amazon:

Kaplan SSAT & ISEE, 2007 Edition: Test Prep For Private and Independent School Admissions (Kaplan SSAT & ISEE) (available from Amazon.com)

McGraw-Hill's SSAT and ISEE High School Entrance Examinations (McGraw-Hill's SSAT & ISEE High School Entrance Examinations) (available from Amazon.com)

Cracking the SSAT and ISEE *by Elizabeth Silas, Reed Talada, Jennyfer Pizzo* (available from Amazon.com)

The Best Test Preparation for the Catholic High School Entrance Exams (COOP & HSPT) (REA) (Test Preps) (from Amazon.com)

