

College bound

There are other things that get you in besides the SAT

Another weekend of a grueling three-hour exam has come and gone. Although the SATs are required for admission to most colleges and universities, test scores alone will not get students into the colleges of their choice.

There are reasons why schools administer grades, provide opportunities for extra-curricular activities and require a certain amount of community service. These components are just as significant when applying to college.

Students sit through hours of school each day, listening to teachers, participating in class discussions and completing assigned homework. They study and prepare for assessments, create and write formal and informal writing assignments and attempt to overcome their fears of speaking in front of people. For all of this hard work, students are issued grades, which formulate into grade point averages and are documented throughout their educational careers in the form of a transcript.

This transcript is a significant publication that allows admission officers to see the progress, deterioration or maintenance of grades. It represents each student as a series of letters that indicate their ability to perform in

class over an extended period of time.

More often than not, the grades issued by teachers are more accurate reflections of a student's abilities. Many parents are concerned that their student's standardized test scores don't represent the grades they receive in school or their capability to perform well. Have no fear, because grades are extremely important, and many schools give students a chance to explain in writing why there is a discrepancy between standardized test scores and grade point averages. If they don't, offer it on your own.

What a student achieves academically in school is often more emphasized than their activities. Participating in school-sponsored activities and programs not only gives a student an attractive list for their college applications, but allows them to take part in contributing to their school. Student council, leadership, sports, arts, music and drama are just a few examples of clubs that students join.

By Vicki Isacowitz

ON THE CHALKBOARD



Being a teacher's assistant, working in the front office, library or nurse's office are other ways students enhance their school's communi-

ty. Colleges want to see that their potential freshmen do more for themselves, and schools, than earn grades and take tests.

Outside the walls of schools lies a local community filled with opportunities for volunteer services. Students gain pride and confidence through community involvement. Volunteering in the community builds character, promotes awareness of one's surroundings and enhances interaction between community members.

There are numerous organizations looking for volunteers who are willing to make a difference. The Humane Society, Project M.A.N.A., Truckee Trails Foundation, Tahoe Women's Services, Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, the Wildlife Shelter, Tahoe Forest Hospice, Truckee River Day, the Village Neighborhood Com-

pany at Squaw Valley and upcoming ski swaps are only a few of the many local organizations who value and welcome volunteers.

These last weekends before the mountains open for the winter season are ideal for students to volunteer their time and rack up hours to meet their community service quotas. Speaking to school counselors and staff will offer other choices of where community service is appreciated. Contributing to your community demonstrates characteristics of selflessness and compassion to others in need. Colleges want to know how their future students will give to their campus communities.

The significance of the college admission essay is not overlooked, but is saved for its own discussion.

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