



The Truth About Standardized Test Scores



Jaymi Gile
—Section Editor—

High school students are under constant pressure to succeed. Whether this success be academically, athletically, or socially, being a teenager is a stressful time for many. This stress is only amplified by the reign of standardized test scores.

Many view being a teenager as a time to be carefree and a child, but that is not quite the truth.

High school teenagers are constantly being told to have good grades, but still be social, to be good at athletic activities, but also be involved in activities beyond sports, and get good standardized test scores, but also recognize that they are worthy no matter their score.

Students in the American education system are taking standardized tests at the majority of levels of their schooling.

As students get older, their standardized test scores become increasingly more important.

At Alamosa High School, Freshman and Sophomores are required to take the PSAT (Practice Scholastic Assessment Test) and Juniors are required to take

the SAT. However, anyone could take the SAT (and ACT if they wish) on their own time outside of the AHS' mandated tests.

Alamosa High School students even qualify for three fee waivers to take the SAT.

This is important for Alamosa High School students to know because it costs \$55 dollars to take the SAT, not including the occasional other fees placed on test takers.

Over the course of multiple years, colleges and universities have started to pronounce that test scores do not matter as much as they used to for the college admittance process. Many higher educational i

Institutions have even gone as far as to become test optional, which means students applying to many universities do not need to submit their standardized test scores.

This causes the infamous question to rise: Do test scores really matter? Unfortunately, there is no definitive answer to this question.

For the sake of the argument why test scores matter, there are some viable points to note. Most high schoolers, including AHS students, are required to meet a minimum score in order to graduate. If stu-

dents wish to graduate, they need to get a minimum of a 900 on the SAT.

Beyond high school, test scores matter for students in need of academic scholarships and those that wish to attend competitive universities.

On the contrary, test scores are starting to matter less because some institutions are starting to focus more on the entire profile of a student (relevant coursework, accomplishments, awards, extracurricular activities, community service involvement, etcetera) rather than the score given to them for a test that took approximately three hours of the student's life.

Around ten years ago, it would be unheard of higher educational institutions not requiring or considering standardized test scores in admissions.

Instead of solely focusing improving standardized test scores, students must focus on the entirety of their academic profile to be considered for college admissions.

Being under the persistent stress as a teenager, in teenager words, sucks. If you are currently a high schooler reading this article, remember test scores do not define you or determine your future success in the real world.

Are Fall Drinks Overrated?



Jenelle Hernandez
—Co-Head Editor—

From the months of September through November all you see on social media are the raves about fall drinks. Pumpkin spice is turned into any drink you can think of, and apple is added into whatever has caramel in it.

Honestly, there are not really any options given when it comes to fall drinks, it is always either pumpkin spice, or something with apple and caramel. For three whole months these flavors are praised and hyped up to be some of the best things in the world.

There are so many other drinks that are way better than these fall drinks, not to mention that they are also cheaper. While many students here at Alamosa High School love fall drinks and their pumpkin spice, many also agree that they are overrated and way too hyped up. Ethan Arnoldi, a Senior here at Alamosa High School states, "I feel like fall drinks are extremely overrated because they get way too over hyped and they are honestly just not that good. Fall drinks are only for a certain bunch of people that can't get away from them. The people that love these

drinks are the ones that go to places like Starbucks all the time. These are also the people that over hype all the fall drinks and make them out to be something that they are not".

While this is somewhat true, there are also many people that do go to Starbucks all the time, and just don't have a taste for the fall drinks. Personally, I love going to Starbucks all the time, but I do not like the fall drinks.

While I can see why many people are in love with these cups filled with the vibes of fall, I do not see how it can be all over the media as if it is the most life changing beverage anyone has ever tried.

These drinks are only on the menus for limited time, this means that some are gonna get as much as they can until they have to wait till next year, and some are going to feel instant relief that these overrated drinks are finally not going to be something everyone is talking about.

The raves about these drinks are something that blows my mind. I truly do not understand how so many people can be so obsessed with a trend that comes in only a few flavors, that do not even taste that good. Fall drinks are a cute concept and a fun idea, but there are many drinks that are so much better. This trend is too hyped up.

Reduced- School, Not So Reduced



A'maree Lopez
—Section Editor—

As I was catching up with my friend from another school, we talked about the clubs we are involved with. I mentioned that we have to pay dues to be official members of NHS. She laughed, saying, "Your school is always so official." I looked at her and said, "What do you mean?" She informed me her classmates have never paid dues to be in a club.

Only showing me how we always think that these aspects at school seem normal until we see other perspectives. Making me realize that we are finding ways to reduce dues in school, but we need to consider different ways of making this school fully exclusive.

As a school, we are always trying to convince students why this school fits their interests. Something I think the community of Alamosa forgets is that we are rated pretty high for poverty rates in Colorado.

According to Data USA, about 25% of our population is under the poverty line. Which

is really high considering that the national average is 12.8%.

In a previous article I published in this newspaper, I discussed the importance of the Colorado's Free School Meals Program and how it benefits kids here. By providing access to a free breakfast and lunch. This bill began in 2019, when kids were struggling to have food during COVID-19 as schools were shut down. This bill is vital for kids here in Alamosa, as we see through poverty rates, most kids would not afford a warm meal each day. The bill has to be re-approved each year, benefiting kids for the better. On the Alamosa School Website they show in the Food Services tab how, "better nourished students," have, "better attendance...are attentive...and hold more energy for daily school activities." Even though a student has access to food everyday, we need to look at a different perspective of how we can benefit kids to have more opportunities to participate in these school activities.

There are some hidden fees in school for kids, going beyond the free meals and access to computers, that should be brought up. The problem is

not finding a way to have food, it is kids feeling excluded at this school because we expect kids to pay for clubs, dances, and games. Making this hard for students under the poverty line to be included.

I wanted another view on this article as I went to Mr. Lavier, our principal, for his thoughts, "I am not very well versed on the bill being passed for the ideas of free school lunches, though I know it is something I stand for. It is how we make this school accessible in the few ways we can." But I learned through my conversation with Mr. Lavier that we have learned how to get kids the vital needs of survival, but we forget many other ways that kids can continue to be excluded. There is already a problem I see that rises with things this school offers, such as meals. They are good for kids, but what about outside of school? We don't know if every kid has shelter or even much of anything like wifi to generate ones computer they need for their school work. That's how the perspective shifts, so what ways can we make kids feel more included? With school events, I talked with Mr. Lavier, as there

was much controversy on the price of Homecoming tickets this year, "Honestly, I think it all factors into how much the dance costs as a whole. You have to consider the DJ we pay for, the activities, the food, drinks, basically all the supplies to put on a dance." Thinking of the ethics of how prices of things rise through each year. He also concluded with, "I know that this is for Student Council and they get the money they raise, so they might have just been preparing the money they have to use for the future events." So there you go everyone, prices for the tickets are probably so high, making it a harder to include every kid.

Clubs are a big topic encouraged at school to help students build applications through their lives, whether it is for college or a job. But the dues can tend to exclude many students. In my experience with Key Club and NHS they have expected us to pay at least \$20 in dues. I personally have had friends not join Key Club because their parents think that paying dues for a club is unreasonable. Leaving these kids to not have anything for extracurriculars from school. We should think of

ways to help fundraise instead of paying dues, though I know that some of these dues keep the session of a club open here in Alamosa, we need to consider different ways to help include more kids, instead of having a select few kids in clubs. Even for sports, kids experience hidden fees that leave more kids excluded, as they have to pay for gear, food, and events.

The City of Alamosa shows the highest percentage made is 20% of people making \$15,000-\$20,000 a year. Not enough to pay for a house, or anything a family needs. Barley even able to pay rent as they receive \$1,250- \$1,700 a month, before taxes. So how do we expect kids to have money for additional fees? Families hold a poverty rate of 35% with children. These numbers are eye-opening, showing the reality of thinking that kids can afford hidden dues.

It may be time for our school to rethink small costs and how they add up. Kids need to be given fair chances, no matter the circumstance. The point is, if families can't even consistently pay for necessities, why are we still excluding kids with hidden fees?