

FALL 2020–JANUARY 2021

Flexible Policies Overview for Administering **PSAT/NMSQT** and **PSAT 8/9**

As schools continue to deal with uncertainties due to the coronavirus, the top priorities for College Board are the health and safety of you and your students.

To provide the most opportunity for the greatest number of students, we have added administrations and adapted policies and procedures. These changes allow for more flexibility and ease the process of administering PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 8/9.

Here are five key updates to help your school adhere to local health guidelines:

- [Revised and New Administration Dates](#)
- [Option to Test Across Multiple Dates](#)
- [Flexible Start Times](#)
- [No Charge for Unused Tests](#)
- [Off-Site Testing](#)

NOTE: These options currently only apply for the PSAT/NMSQT in October or January, and the PSAT 8/9 from September to January 2021. Schools can use these options independently or in combination with one another.

Revised and New Administration Dates

Based on educator feedback, we've adjusted the original administration dates to provide choices on different days of the week.

PSAT/NMSQT

Wednesday, **October 14**

Saturday, **October 17**

Thursday, **October 29** (*Revised*)

Tuesday, **January 26, 2021** (*New*)

The PSAT/NMSQT alternate test must be administered on the revised date of October 29 and not on October 28.

Schools can select multiple PSAT/NMSQT administration dates, including different days of the week in addition to Wednesday and Saturday. The January administration will be available to order in mid-October and will offer all the same benefits as the October PSAT/NMSQT, including eligibility for programs administered by National Merit Scholarship Corporation. To split your order across multiple test dates or to reorder for a new test date, visit ordering.collegeboard.org.

Option to Test Across Multiple Dates

Schools can administer the PSAT/NMSQT on multiple administration dates. This flexibility already exists for the PSAT 8/9.

For the PSAT/NMSQT, schools can administer the test on the primary test date (October 14) or the Saturday test date (October 17), plus the alternate test date (October 29). Schools also have the option to test on January 26, 2021, (ordering available in mid-October).

How can this help my school?

Schools operating under local health guidelines can take advantage of multiple administration dates to reduce the number of students reporting to school on a single test date. Schools who are functioning virtually or are unable to test all their students in the fall now have an additional opportunity to provide the PSAT/NMSQT in January.

What else do I need to know?

For the PSAT/NMSQT:

- Students may only take the PSAT/NMSQT once. Scores will be made ineligible for scholarship consideration or canceled for students who test more than once.
- Test books sent for one administration date cannot be used for a different test date. Using the wrong materials on the wrong day can result in students being ineligible for scholarship consideration or score cancellation.
- For the Saturday, October 17, and Tuesday, January 26 administrations, test books must be returned immediately after test day and score reports will not have question-level details.

Additional tips:

- Schools should define a set of criteria to determine which students will test on which test dates. For example, students with last names starting with the letters A–L test on the first day, all other students test on the second, and so on.
- For PSAT/NMSQT:
 - ♦ If you will be testing some students in October and another portion in January, keep in mind that October scores will be released in early December and January score will be released in mid-March.
 - ♦ Schools that order for Wednesday, October 14, and Saturday, October 17, should ensure that materials for those test dates are not mixed up as they may arrive at the same time.

Table 1: Example of 3 different multi-administration testing plans for the PSAT/NMSQT

	School A (250 students)	School B (250 students)	School C (250 students)
Wednesday, October 14	125 students test	None	None
Saturday, October 17	None	50 students test	None
Thursday, October 29	125 students test	150 students test	None
Tuesday, January 26, 2021	None	50 students test	250 students test

Flexible Start Times

For the PSAT/NMSQT, and the PSAT 8/9, schools can start testing earlier and/or later than usual and split their students into different testing groups.

How can this help my school?

Schools operating under local health guidelines can stagger arrivals and dismissals to be certain they have enough space to meet social distancing requirements.

What else do I need to know?

All testing must be completed within the same day (unless students are approved for a multiday testing accommodation). Keep in mind that under this option, mobile phone collection is required **for the duration of the school day** for all students testing, or at least until after the last group has started testing.

All testing must start before the first group completes testing.

All requirements for timing and breaks still apply; however, local health and safety guidelines may require that only a limited number of students may access the restroom or hallways at a time. In such cases, you may elect to double the time of scheduled breaks (including accommodated breaks) between test sections to ensure that students can access the restroom or hallway in a safe and orderly fashion.

Additional tips:

- Consider multiday test takers and students with extended time when scheduling test times.
- Work with school administrators to keep track of bus schedules and when students will arrive at school for testing. This will affect testing group assignments.
- Plan for any necessary changes to attendance-taking procedures for early and late testing groups.
- Assign rooms for separate testing groups in different areas of the school building to limit contact between students.

Table 2: Example of multiple start times when administering PSAT/NMSQT

Group A Time	Group B Time	Task
6:45 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	Staff reporting time and facility preparation.
7 a.m.	9 a.m.	Review staff assignments and room assignments. Distribute materials to staff, including Testing Room Materials Report forms.
7:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	Staff report to their rooms and prepare for student arrival.
7:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	Students report to the designated assembly area.
7:45–8 a.m.	9:45–10 a.m.	Admit students to assigned testing rooms and collect electronic devices (if applicable).
8 a.m.	10 a.m.	Close testing room doors.
8–8:30 a.m.	10–10:30 a.m.	Distribute materials and read preliminary instructions.
8:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Begin testing.
11:25 a.m.	1:25 p.m.	Testing ends for standard timing of the PSAT/NMSQT.

No Charge for Unused Tests

Schools won't be charged test fees if they're unable to administer the PSAT 8/9 or the PSAT/NMSQT for any of our administrations in September, October, or January. We understand the decision to test may not be made until closer to the administration dates. Please adjust your test book volumes the best you can by the ordering deadlines (September 16 for international schools to order or increase orders for all October tests, and December 4 for international schools to order, reduce or increase orders for PSAT/NMSQT).

Off-Site Testing

Schools will no longer need to submit an off-site plan for approval for administering the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 8/9.

How can this help my school?

Schools adhering to local health guidelines can use this option to distribute students among multiple locations, allowing for more distance between test takers.

What else do I need to know?

It's recommended that schools return materials in one consolidated shipment if possible. If schools plan to return materials directly from each site, they'll need to request additional test return kits.

Additional tips

- Consider locations such as libraries, religious institutions, and community centers as viable offsite-testing choices.
- Make a plan early and clearly communicate it to staff, students, and parents to limit test day confusion.
- Work with your SSD coordinator to plan for students with accommodations.

We're Here to Help

We're pleased to give schools these options for administering our assessments during this unprecedented time. Schools will be required to follow local public health guidelines and should be prepared to implement last-minute changes and effectively communicate them to students. College Board supports efforts to help ensure the safety and comfort of their staff and students. Precautions such as the following are recommended:

- Requiring and/or providing face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, or other PPE.
- Spacing students at least 6 feet apart to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Encouraging students and staff to practice regular handwashing and stay home if they are sick.

College Board is committed to giving you and your students a positive testing experience. We'll provide detailed updates for schools as well as professional learning opportunities, webinars, and other resources.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

PSAT Support Hotline: +1-212-237-1335
(outside of the U.S.)

Email: psat@info.collegeboard.org

For details on these updates and options, visit: sat.org/covid19