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College-bound Home Schoolers Make Headlines

As we approach the time of year when high school seniors begin making the final decision about which college or university to attend in the fall, the issue of home schoolers gaining entrance to college has reached the forefront of national media. On the front page of the February 11 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, a report described home schooling success at the high school level and focused on several specific home school graduates currently in college or preparing to start classes.

Recent statistics from The College Board and the American College Testing Program (ACT) indicate that home schoolers are exceeding the national average test scores on both the SAT and the ACT college entrance exams. In 1999, the 2219 students who identified themselves as home schooled students on the SAT test, scored an average of 1083 (verbal 548, math 535), 67 points above the national average of 1016. A perfect SAT score is 1600. Also in 1999, 3616 home school students taking the ACT scored an average of 22.7, compared to the national average of 21, a perfect score being 36.

In 1996, ACT began keeping track of the number of home schooled students who took its achievement test and their test scores. Public schools generally have a specific code that identifies the school from which a student is graduating. Home school students taking the test are given a special code which identifies them as home schoolers. The ACT's special code for home schoolers is 969-999. This is different than the code assigned for students with a GED (960-000), which generally carries the stigma of a "drop out."

The College Board recognized home schoolers for the first time in 1999 by allowing them to report under a special code (970000) when taking the SAT exam. Specific home school codes were also assigned for each state where students took the PSAT exam. A list of these codes can be found on The College Board web site at:

<http://www.collegeboard.org/features/home/html/admpsatsat.html>. The College Board has also begun developing a variety of online resources for home schoolers taking the SAT and PSAT, or for those preparing for college at:

<http://www.collegeboard.org/features/home/html/intro.html>.

National Center Completes College Survey

In 1999, the National Center for Home Education conducted an informal survey of American colleges nationwide to profile home school admission requirements and success rates. We are continually updating the results of this survey with information as we correspond with institutions of higher education. A copy of the original survey is currently posted at <http://www.hsllda.org/docs/000001/00000163.ASP> and has been

reviewed in *Education Week* (March 29, 2000) and on the front page of *The Washington Times* (March 14, 2000). In addition, home schoolers across the country are beginning to use this study to search for home school friendly colleges in which to enroll.

In the committee report language of the Amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1998 Congress stated that requiring home schoolers to take additional tests including a GED or SAT II tests was “discriminatory.”¹ No college or university wants to be known as discriminatory. The National Center is working diligently to help colleges analyze their admission policies for home school graduates and recommending changes to correct discriminatory requirements.

Prepared by the legal staff of the National Center for Home Education. Permission to reprint granted.

¹ 105TH CONGRESS, 2d Session, House of Representatives, REPORT 105-481, Higher Education Amendments of 1998, April 17, 1998, p.147