

# THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE

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# Topics to be Covered



- Courses, Grades and AP's
- College Entrance Exams
- Being Interesting to a College
  - ▣ Extracurricular activities and involvement
  - ▣ Other “tip” factors
- What Comes Next – Grades 11 and 12
- Gossip, Rumors, and “I heard that...”
- This PowerPoint and a podcast will be on the Counseling website.

# ACADEMICS

*Grades: the most important admission factor*

# 2009-2010 Courses



- *Course Guide*, transcript, and course registration information distributed today
- 4-year plan
- By March 18 they should:
  - ▣ Ask their teachers for their recommendations.
  - ▣ Choose an appropriate challenging set of courses.
  - ▣ Select courses online via PowerSchool.

# Transcripts and Grades



- The academic record is the single most important factor in college admission.
  - ▣ How a student performs in HS accurately predicts college success.
  - ▣ Each year is seen as more important than the previous.
  - ▣ In general, students should take a set of courses where they can earn B's or better.
- Transcripts are kept forever

# Grade Point Average (GPA)



- GPA calculation
  - SAS uses a weighted 4-point scale
  - Student Handbook lists the GPA for each letter grade
  - GPA calculations vary by high school
  - US colleges usually recalculate GPA
- The typical SAS student has mostly B's and a some A's or a GPA of about 3.2.

# Advanced Placement (AP)



- An overview
- In the Class of 2008, 85% of the class completed at least one AP exam in high school.
  - ▣ 75% completed 2 or more AP exams
  - ▣ 46% completed 4 or more AP exams
  - ▣ 28% completed 6 or more AP exams
- AP exam results are very important for UK university admission

# ADMISSION TESTS

*PLAN, PSAT, SAT, ACT, TOEFL*

# The PLAN and PSAT



- PLAN test
  - At SAS, given to freshmen
  - Similar to the ACT
- PSAT
  - Given to sophomores and again to juniors
  - Similar to the SAT
  - National Merit Scholar – US citizens only
- Both are “practice” tests with scores never reported to colleges

# The SAT



- Don't take it yet!
- A 3.5 hour exam given worldwide six times per year
  - ▣ Critical Reading
  - ▣ Math
  - ▣ Writing (subtest added three years ago)
- Scores on each subtest range from 200 to 800
  - ▣ Typical college bound student has 500 on each section or a 1,500 on the “new” scale
  - ▣ “Great” scores are over 2,100 (95<sup>th</sup> percentile)

# More on the SAT



- Do not take the SAT Reasoning Test until the second half of grade 11 (January, May or June)
- SAT Subject Tests
  - ▣ Required by about 50 selective colleges
  - ▣ These one-hour tests are like final exams
  - ▣ Offered in math, sciences, history, language, etc.
- Students report scores to colleges
- Counselors will review ALL of this with juniors

# Overview on Other Tests



## □ ACT

- The PLAN is a practice ACT
- The scale of 1 to 36 is different than the SAT
- ACT scores are highly correlated to the SAT

## □ TOEFL

- Test of English as a Foreign Language
- Designed for non-native English speakers

# BEING INTERESTING

*Activities vs. Resumes*

# Involvement in High School



- All students should find and pursue some activities they enjoy. Involved students are happy students.
- Colleges want:
  - ▣ A vibrant community. They look for students who were active in high school.
  - ▣ A well rounded class more than well rounded students.
- Being an interesting and involved student breaks a tie in admission – but it doesn't raise the dead

# Other “tip” Factors



- Attendance at a college-prep international school like SAS
- Gender
- Family history of “significant” giving
- Legacy (parents graduated from the school)

# Summers

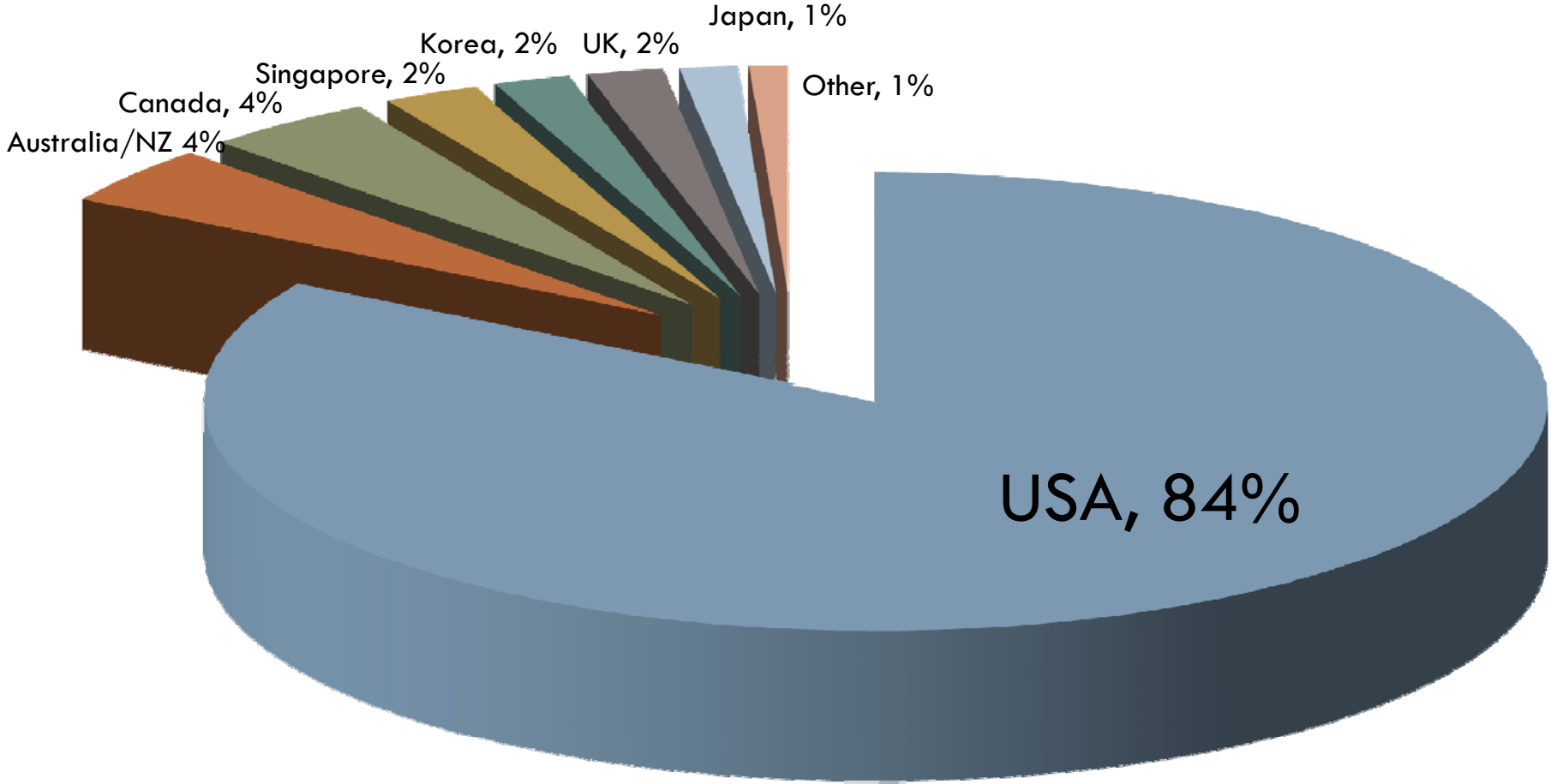


- Summer programs
  - ▣ Don't sign up for a course because "it looks good"
  - ▣ SAS students receive many gold embossed summer leadership and honor invitations
  - ▣ Quote from an Ivy League school: "There is no 'dotted line' connecting a summer program to a college admission office"
- If you are traveling near a college, visit the campus and take a tour

# THE FUTURE

What to Expect in Grades 11 and 12

# Where SAS Graduates Go



# Family Connection Website

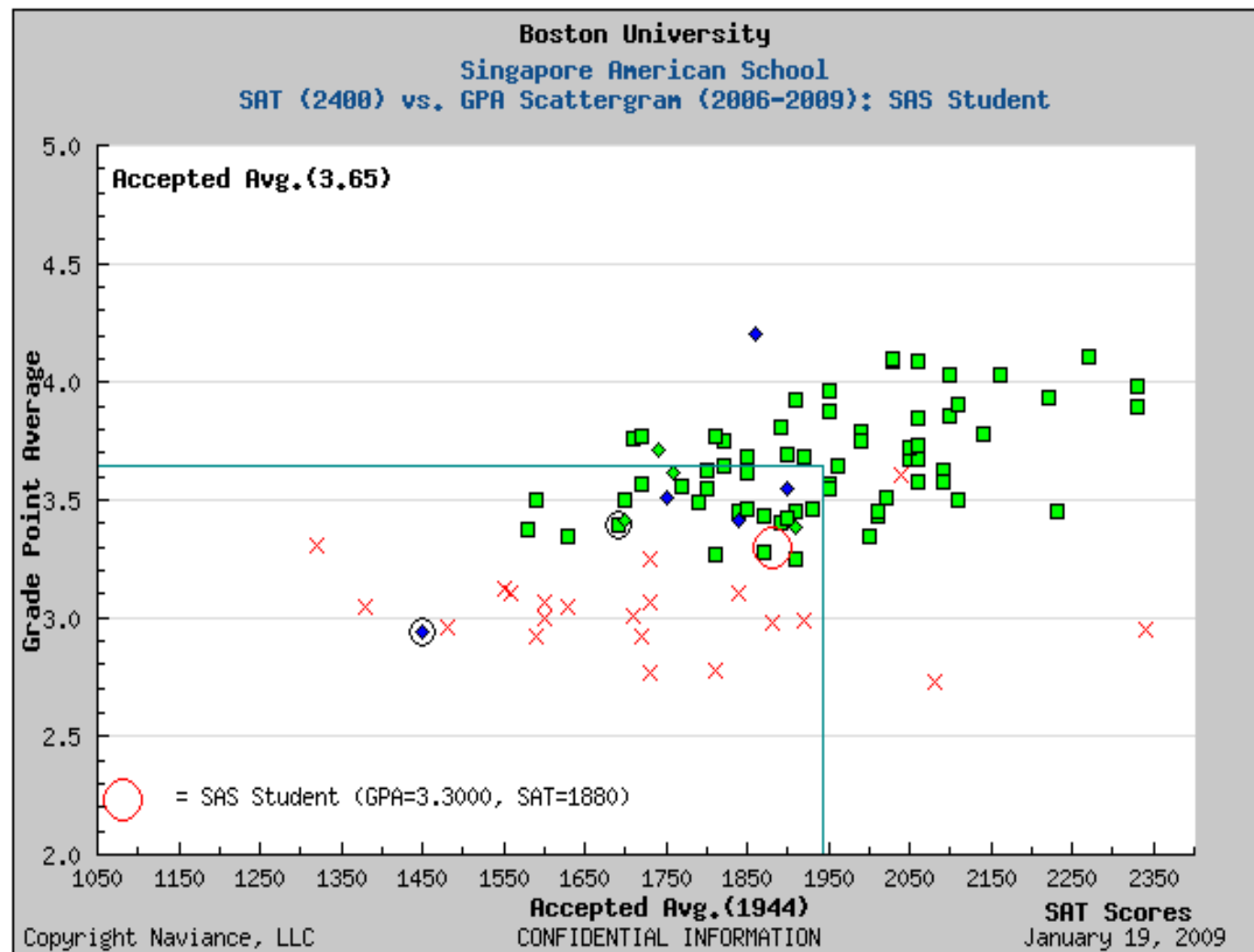


- Each SAS student has a personal account/password
- The site includes:
  - ▣ Career, interest, and personality inventories
  - ▣ Resume feature - allowing students to track activities
  - ▣ Each student's record of college related tests and GPA
  - ▣ College search features
  - ▣ SAS college acceptance data for the past 10 years
- Scattergrams

# Boston University :: Boston, MA :: U.S.

[\[back to college profile\]](#)

Test type: SAT (2400 scale with writing) ▼



# The Junior Year



- PSAT given in October
- Group meetings with Juniors in December
- Annual parent program in December
- Followed by Semester II individual meetings
  - ▣ Review transcripts
  - ▣ Discuss testing plans
  - ▣ Decide on and request teacher recommendations
  - ▣ Develop a preliminary list of colleges

# The Senior Year



- September/October meeting with each family:
  - Review junior year grades and scores
  - Review application essays
  - Discuss application strategies
  - Finalize college list and determine chances of admission to each one
- Talk with some of the over 200 reps coming to SAS
- Apply and wait

“I HEARD THAT...”

# Myths Counselors Hear



- ❑ “Every student takes AP’s as a sophomore”
- ❑ “My child has some C’s and won’t be able to go to college”
- ❑ “SAT Subject Tests should be taken by sophomores”
- ❑ “SAS should ‘rank’ students”

# You are in Good Hands



- Surveys of admission officers suggest SAS is perceived as a premier international school
- SAS counselors speak at international conferences, visit campuses, win awards, and have inside information from admission officers
- SAS counselors are on a first name basis with hundreds of admission officers

# Enhancements for 2009-2010



- Our goal is to be the benchmark for international school counseling programs
- Two additional HS counselors added next year
  - ▣ Three will focus the early high school experience and be responsible for student in grades 9 and 10
  - ▣ Five will specialize in college advisement and focus on grades 11 and 12
- All students and parents will see enhancements in the services offered by the SAS counseling office.

# Final Thoughts



- All SAS students will receive assistance in selecting and applying to college
- SAS has more college representatives visit each year than probably any other international school in the world
- Students who are successful, happy and involved in high school have hundreds of college options
- As parents, you don't need to worry

THANKS FOR COMING

