

《越来越多北京学生参加SAT和CAT考试》

An increasing number of senior middle school students in Beijing are traveling abroad to take SAT and ACT tests in order to apply for US colleges, spawning a booming business activity, Beijing Youth Daily reports.

Many US colleges look at applicants' SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Test) scores as an important reference for enrollment, but the tests are largely unavailable on the Chinese mainland.

Chinese students have to travel to Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan, or neighboring countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore to take the tests. Hong Kong's AsiaWorld-Expo is the most popular thus far due to its proximity to the Chinese mainland and lower costs.

The paper said most attendees take the tests at least three times to get ideal scores, each trip costing a minimum of 5,000 to 8,000 yuan (\$735 to \$1,176).

Eager to seize a share of the market -- which is huge, lucrative and still expanding -- travel agencies, educational institutions, including some public schools, are all organizing group tours for the tests.

"The tests resemble the Chinese college entrance exam in that only high scores can secure a good school," said a student surnamed Zhao from the prestigious Beijing No. 8 Middle School. Students at the school's international department estimated that about 10 percent of graduates went abroad to further their studies each year.

So far, the number of international schools in Beijing has topped 85, and at least 15 public schools have international departments or classes especially designed for students who plan to study abroad.

Beijing National Day School, a renowned school, runs study-abroad classes at its main campus alongside an international department, and more than 30 percent of the students go abroad after graduation. A teacher surnamed Yan at the international department said students applying for US colleges took up more than 85 percent of the total number of applicants each season.

The schools organize SAT test tours for their own students through cooperation with travel agencies, and parents prefer them to others due to security considerations. The price usually ranges from 5,200 to 5,700 yuan.

Tours offered by various other educational institutions cover hotel, air ticket, pre-test tutoring and signing up for the tests. A four-day trip to Hong Kong costs 5,000 to 6,000 yuan, while trips to Singapore, Japan and South Korea cost around 8,000 yuan.