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October 25, 2011

# SAT Officials Vow More Security After Cheating Arrests on Long Island

By WINNIE HU and JENNY ANDERSON

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. — Stung by the arrest of seven Long Island teenagers accused of cheating on the SAT, the College Board said Tuesday that it was hiring a former F.B.I. director to review its security procedures, and that by the next exams, Nov. 5, it would begin analyzing more test scores for irregularities and increase training for test-center supervisors.

Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board and a former governor of West Virginia, said that in addition to bringing in the former F.B.I. chief, Louis J. Freeh, as a consultant, the College Board was also considering additional safeguards over the next year, including bolstering identification requirements for students taking the SAT and taking digital photographs to ensure they are who they say they are.

He announced the security measures during a State Senate hearing at Farmingdale State College here in which legislators and school officials repeatedly denounced the College Board and the Educational Testing Service, which administers the SAT test, over what they saw as glaring lapses in security for the high-stakes college-admissions exam.

Nassau County prosecutors filed criminal charges on Sept. 27 against Samuel Eshaghoff, 19, accusing him of being paid to take the SAT for six former and current students at Great Neck North High School. Prosecutors said they expected their inquiry to net more arrests involving at least two more public schools and a private school as early as next week.

"The procedures E.T.S. uses to give the test are grossly inadequate in terms of security," Bernard Kaplan, principal of Great Neck North, testified at the hearing. "Furthermore, E.T.S.'s response when the inevitable cheating occurs is grossly inadequate. Very simply, E.T.S. has made it very easy to cheat, very difficult to get caught."

While the new security measures represent a change of tone for College Board and Educational Testing Service officials who previously insisted their system was adequate, some superintendents and principals said they did not go far enough. These officials have

called for fingerprinting students, increasing stipends for proctors and imposing real consequences on those who cheat. Currently, if the testing service suspects cheating, the students' scores are canceled and they are permitted to retake the test — with no notification to either their high school or colleges where they apply.

“Actions speak louder than words, and E.T.S. needs to put some meat on the bones,” said Geoffrey N. Gordon, superintendent of the Port Washington schools. “They need to partner with schools to make sure there is no cheating.”

The Port Washington district, for instance, requires students to provide two forms of identification for entry to the test, instead of the one required by E.T.S.

Dr. Gordon recalled that a student from nearby Roslyn, who did not have a second form of identification, recently had to get his parents to verify his identity. The mother “chewed my head off,” Dr. Gordon said, but was somewhat mollified after he explained the reason.

Kurt M. Landgraf, president and chief executive of Educational Testing Service, said at the hearing that his company already spent \$25 million annually on security, about 10 percent of its overall budget for College Board programs. He said about 3,000 test scores — out of more than two million exams taken — were canceled each year, most after test-center supervisors reported irregularities or because of large jumps from a student's scores on previous tests.

Raymond Nicosia, the testing company's director of test security, said that impersonations were a small fraction of those cases, perhaps 150 a year — company officials previously said there were only a few — and that 750 people were generally turned away at test centers because of questionable identification.

“Once we have any inkling that there's anything improper, we go after them with every means available,” Mr. Landgraf said.

But over more than a decade, testing officials said, about 10 cases — the ones in which money changed hands — have been referred to law enforcement nationwide.

“Sadly, the losers in this are the honest, hard-working students who play by the rules: they prepare for this like the Super Bowl,” said Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, a Long Island Republican who is chairman of the Higher Education Committee in Albany. “This is something that will determine the course of their lives. And there are others, for whatever reason, who feel they can take a shortcut.”

Mr. Kaplan said that since the arrests, he had sent the College Board a proposal for a pilot program in Great Neck that would require students to take the SAT in the district to limit chances of impersonation.

At a SAT exam at his high school last spring, fewer than half the test-takers were from the school, he said; the rest showed identification cards, but “any one of those could be completely made up or forged and we would have no way of knowing.”

“It is ridiculously easy to take the test for someone else,” Mr. Kaplan said. “That’s why when E.T.S. says this kind of impersonation is a rare occurrence, you just have to laugh. How would they know? All they can say is they are unaware of a large number of impersonations. I’m sure, that’s true. They are most assuredly unaware.”

Testing officials said they would consider Mr. Kaplan’s proposal, which also calls for increasing stipends for proctors — they are currently paid \$75 for the day — and compensating the school for taking responsibility for the testing security.

Mr. Caperton pointed to the hiring of Mr. Freeh and his management company, which includes former law enforcement officials and security experts, as an indication of how seriously the College Board was taking the issue. (A College Board spokesman would not say how much it was paying him.) “We are deeply disturbed by the cases of test-taker impersonation that have recently been in the headlines and have occasioned this hearing,” Mr. Caperton testified.

Mr. Landgraf said that while test security needed constant enhancement to meet new threats, he hoped that whatever measures are considered do “not unnecessarily burden test-takers or discourage any student or group of students from taking the SAT.”

*Winnie Hu reported from Farmingdale, and Jenny Anderson from New York.*