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Four area students perfect on new SAT

■ They are among 107 in nation who scored 2400 on expanded exam

By THOM MARSHALL
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Before she clicked the mouse to bring up her SAT scores on the screen, Gen-

evieve Lipp told two friends with her in St. John's School computer lab not to look.

"I wanted the option of not telling people if they were bad," she said. "I really didn't feel confident."

Then the numbers came up — 800 on all three parts. A perfect 2400.

Lipp, a junior, is one of 300,000 students across the nation who learned this week

how they did on the revised and expanded SAT. In all, 107 students earned a perfect score on the test.

Seven of those perfect grades belong to Texas students, said Caren Scoropanos, spokeswoman for the College Board, which administers the test. She would not identify the students because of confidentiality rules.

The Chronicle, however,

has learned that at least four of them attend Houston-area high schools.

Eric Sung, a junior at Stratford High School in the Spring Branch School District, said his 2400 score came as a surprise.

"The test is so long," he said. "I was confident I did well but I didn't think I'd achieved a perfect score. Just

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DYNEGY ENDS ENRON-ERA LEGAL FIGHT

■ Firm will pay \$468 million in

That is the same transaction behind the conviction of Jamie Olis, the former Dynegy execu-

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one problem could mean the difference."

Sung and Stephanie Ng, who is a junior at HISD's Bellaire High School and also a perfect scorer, both took preparation classes at Test Masters, a company that sells help in studying and practicing for a variety of exams.

"The funny thing about the new SAT, in part, it was changed to be less coachable, but in reality it's actually quite a bit more coachable than the previous test," said Roger Israni, a Test Masters director. "I mean the writing area, specifically, is the easiest area to improve your score."

Israni, a 1987 graduate of Bellaire High School who joined Test Masters in 1991 after earning a degree from MIT, said

many students have been asking him what would be considered a good score on the new test.

"I had a student call me last week and he had a 2150 and he said, 'Will this score get me into Rice?'"

"The scary thing is, no one's really going to know that until about a year from now, when the first college decisions come out based on the new test."

And for that reason, Israni calls the class of 2006 "guinea pigs."

However, he said the changes in the test are for the best. "The old SAT was too dependent on vocabulary. The math was too easy. The new test is a much more solid test."

As she left the test room, Ng said, "I had like a good feeling about it — maybe in the 2200s to 2300s. That was about what I

was expecting, even though. I was hoping for a lot higher."

She didn't think she made a perfect score "because I tend to make careless mistakes," Ng said. "But just everything seemed to work out."

She said a friend who made 2200 on the new test doesn't know whether to retake it.

"With the old 1600," she said, "above 1500 you were probably in pretty good shape. But now, it's like, 'I don't know.'"

She said she hasn't picked a college but wants to leave the state.

"I've lived in Houston my whole life and I just want to see how the other parts of the country are, you know?" she said.

Melisa Pferdehirt, a junior at The John Cooper School in The Woodlands, said her prepara-

tions for the newly added writing test consisted of "a couple of practice writing sections out of the Princeton Review Book."

She said she was "very excited" when she saw her perfect score. She hopes it helps her get into Rice University.

Lipp said to get herself ready for the test she "bought a book and did about a test and a half. I didn't write any practice essays, so that was probably the hardest part for me, having to plan and write an essay in 25 minutes."

"I think of myself more as a math and science person. But I go to St. John's, and they really emphasize writing in every course."

The new SAT is 45 minutes longer than the old three-hour SAT.

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