

# The Disadvantages the Lsat has on the African American Community

By: Janielle Walker

---

As every aspiring law school student knows, one of the biggest obstacles that every student faces is the LSAT. I spoke to students, teachers, and lawyers who have already conquered the challenge; they shared that they heavily relied on resources such as LSAT prep courses, private tutoring, and others to elevate their chances for success. However, there have been recent concerns about how this test negatively impacts people of color and low-income students who cannot afford some of the educational advantages due to lack of knowledge, mentorship, and/or finances.

According to the Law School Admissions Council, the purpose of the LSAT is to test the skills necessary for success in the first year of law school. The creators of the LSAT test students on reading comprehension, reasoning, and writing. However, it is believed that this test has lost some of the beneficial qualities that the LSAT attempts to achieve. In 2006, the American Bar Association required that the highest LSAT score be reported to law schools contrary to the average score -- a more accurate result. In response to this, the number of LSAT test takers rapidly declined almost 18.7% from June 2010 to last June, the largest drop since 2006.



This change in the LSAT put more pressure on students to improve their scores by taking advantage of any and every LSAT prep course available -- in most cases disregarding the high cost. However, for many African-American aspiring lawyers and their families, expensive prep courses are not an option. The average LSAT score for African American test takers is 142, while Caucasian and Asian test takers average 153.

Beyond financial reasons, the lack of knowledge about the legal profession and the steps to take within the field is another detrimental factor for success among minorities. "It isn't that African Americans are not smart enough to do well on the LSAT — It's that they don't have access to people who know how to play the game," explains Michael Meyerson. The simple act of increasing the student's awareness and providing minority students with the access to LSAT prep courses, mentors, and other opportunities to meet people in their desired field would drastically help motivate and improve their LSAT and law school success.

Improving the representation of African Americans in law school and the legal profession is important. No matter what financial background, racial ethnicity or age, all individuals should have equal opportunity to score well on the LSAT without any barriers. It should be a priority to develop strategies to help mend some of the factors, such as the LSAT, that are contributing to the limited diversity within the field of law.