

The SAT Report on College & Career Readiness: 2012

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Each year, the annual release of SAT® data by the College Board, colloquially known as College-Bound Seniors, provides the College Board with an opportunity to share important academic, demographic and socioeconomic data about the college-bound students in each year's high school graduating class. As a former high school English teacher and Dean of Students, I know that educators share their students' aspirations, and this year's release of SAT participation and performance data reinforced a message that I always tried to convey to my students: high school course work is critical to success on the SAT and in college.

Historically, the primary focus of the information had been any year-over-year change in mean scores. While interesting, this information didn't effectively communicate the underlying reasons for student performance, nor identify the cause of year-to-year score changes...and it didn't give educators a way to take action to help put more of their students on the road to college.

On Monday, September, 24, 2012, the SAT Program released the [*SAT Report on College & Career Readiness: 2012*](#). This report offers a robust discussion of the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark, a nationally recognized measure of college readiness achieved by 43% of SAT takers in the class of 2012. It also presents a thoughtful and engaging narrative coupled with data that places the SAT in its appropriate context as a measure of college readiness and an invaluable source of data for both K12 and Higher Education.

There are several factors that contribute to whether students achieve the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark of 1550, a measure that is only to be used in the aggregate and not to evaluate the college readiness of an individual student. For example: have all students completed a core curriculum? Forty-nine percent of students in the class of 2012 who reported completing a core curriculum met the SAT Benchmark, compared to only 30 percent of those who did not complete core course work. Not surprisingly, the mean SAT score for students who completed a core curriculum was, on average, 144 points higher.

An additional feature of the new 44-page report is a chapter entitled "About the SAT" that answers all of the questions we hear day in and day out. Among the topics covered are discussions about the validity and fairness of the SAT – important concepts that aren't particularly well understood beyond those who have a deep and abiding interest in psychometrics. These foundational properties are vital in ensuring that the SAT, the most researched college entrance exam in the United States, offers all students an equal chance at success and consistently reports accurate scores. There are also sections outlining the role and importance of the SAT in college admission, as well as a discussion of the relationship between the SAT and the Common Core State Standards. There's even a page that describes the role and importance of practice and the many free and low-cost resources offered by the College Board for students planning to take the SAT.

The College Board is a mission-based organization that focuses on access and equity for all students – that is, connecting all students to college opportunity and success; the SAT is an essential component of that mission. The diversity of SAT takers accurately reflects the increasingly diverse makeup of America’s classrooms, with 45 percent of students classifying themselves as minorities. 28 percent of SAT takers report that English was not exclusively their first language and 36 percent shared that they will be the first in their family to attend college.

As a member of the SAT Program, I hope that everyone takes advantage of the information provided in this report. The [education of America’s students](#) is critical to their future and the future of the country, and each of us has a role to play in that success.