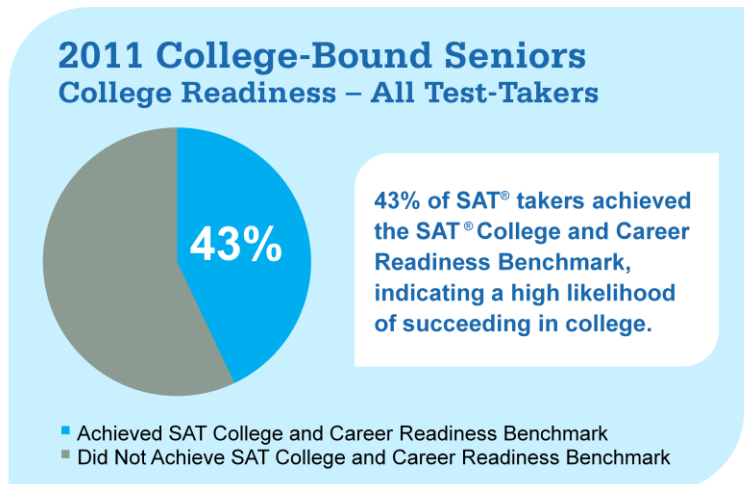


For Release: Sept. 14, 2011

43% of 2011 College-Bound Seniors Met SAT[®] College and Career Readiness Benchmark

Nearly 1.65 Million Students Take SAT[®];
2011 SAT Takers Largest and Most Diverse Class in History

NEW YORK – The College Board today announced that **43 percent of 2011 college-bound seniors met the SAT[®] College and Career Readiness Benchmark**. The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark represents the level of academic preparedness associated with a high likelihood of college success and completion. The SAT Benchmark is a very reliable tool for measuring the college and career readiness of groups of students. It was developed to help secondary school administrators, educators and policymakers evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs in order to better prepare students for success in college and beyond.



The College Board also announced that more college-bound students in the class of 2011 took the **SAT** than in any other high school graduating class in history. **Nearly 1.65 million students from the 2011 graduating class participated in the college-going process by taking the SAT.** The class of 2011 SAT takers represented the most diverse class in history, underscoring the College Board's continued commitment to access, equity and minority participation.

“The SAT is the national leader in assessing college readiness and students who meet the College Board’s College Readiness benchmark are more likely to enroll in, succeed and graduate from college,” said College Board President Gaston Caperton. “Ensuring that students are ready to attend and complete college provides them with the competitive

advantage they need to successfully compete in the global economy, which is critical to the future of our nation.”

SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark Showcases Student Preparation for College and Beyond

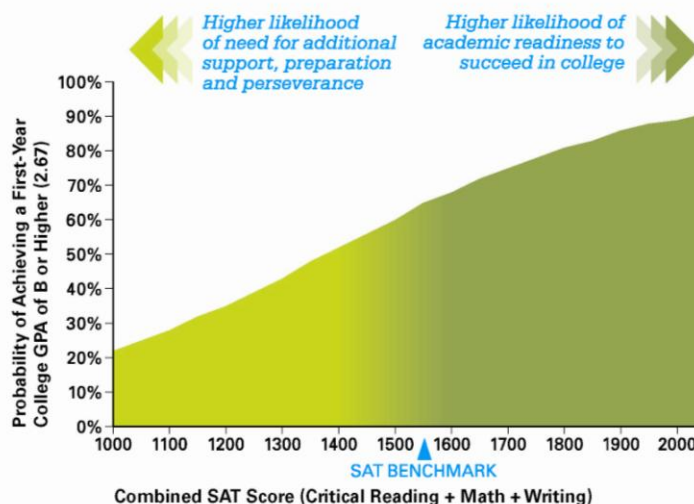
The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark was developed based on rigorous research analyzing the SAT scores and college performance of a nationally representative student sample at more than 100 colleges and universities. The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 (Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing score combined) indicates a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B-average or higher during the first year of college, which in turn is indicative of a high likelihood of college success and completion.

College Board research also shows that **students who meet or exceed the SAT Benchmark have a substantially higher college retention rate than those students who do not attain the SAT Benchmark.** Furthermore, students who attain the SAT Benchmark are highly likely to achieve strong scores on AP[®] Exams, which measure performance of college-level course work taken in high school.

The SAT Benchmark is intended to be used to measure the college readiness of groups of students. The SAT Benchmark should never discourage students from pursuing postsecondary education, nor should it be used for high-stakes decisions about the readiness of any individual student.

SAT Benchmark data for the entire 2011 College-Bound Seniors cohort provides a broad indicator of college readiness for the entire population of College-Bound Seniors. The SAT Benchmark was developed as a tool to help secondary school administrators, educators and policymakers evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs in order to better prepare students for success in college and beyond. The College Board is currently working in partnership with state education leaders to review SAT Benchmark research and determine how state-level benchmarks may be implemented in a meaningful way.

Continuum of College Readiness



“In today’s knowledge-based, global economy, it’s more critical than ever that American students are adequately prepared to pursue advanced degrees and compete for the jobs of the future. Growing participation in the SAT is an encouraging sign that more students are taking the necessary steps toward enrolling in higher education. But the overall preparedness rate from these SAT results reinforces the need to invest in reforms that prepare more students for success in college.”

— Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

Many factors contribute to college readiness, and students that score below the SAT Benchmark may still be successful in college, especially with additional preparation and perseverance. The College Board continues to advise that, for individual high-stakes decisions such as admission, SAT scores should always be used together with high school grades and other factors.

Setting a New Standard for College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark has many unique characteristics that differentiate it from other available tools. For instance:

- The SAT Benchmark is based on the most thoroughly researched college admission exam in the United States. Internal and external research shows the SAT to be an excellent predictor of college outcomes that is fair and valid for all students.
 - Additionally, each section of the SAT is valid and reliable as an individual measure of the skills and knowledge in critical reading, mathematics, or writing that students need for success in college.
- The SAT Benchmark defines its criteria for success as a 65 percent probability of achieving a B-grade point average, providing a powerful and rigorous predictor of college success.
- By using overall first-year GPA as its college performance metric, the SAT Benchmark applies to all students and covers the full range of freshman year course work taken and encompassing the entirety of students' first-year performance.
- The SAT Benchmark offers educators the benefit of one straightforward yet powerful combined score that captures students' overall academic knowledge and cross-disciplinary skills.
 - The College Board also provides SAT subject-level readiness indicators in each of the three sections – critical reading, mathematics, writing – as a supplemental tool that can be used to help educators measure students' preparedness in each subject area.
- The SAT Benchmark is based on a nationally representative, diverse sample of students enrolled in a nationally representative range of colleges and universities across the United States.

SAT College and Career Readiness connected to NAEP, the “Nation’s Report Card”

A multiyear validity research program led by the [National Assessment Governing Board \(NAGB\)](#) has found strong content alignment and statistical linkages between the SAT and the [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) – commonly known as the Nation’s Report Card.

The NAGB is the independent, bipartisan federal board established to set policy for the NAEP, and is undertaking this research effort to enable NAEP to report on the preparedness of 12th-graders for postsecondary education and job training.

The first component of the research program, a content-alignment study, found that “NAEP and the SAT assess almost the same content areas of mathematics with similar emphasis for each.” The content assessed on the SAT critical reading test is somewhat distinct from the NAEP reading; however, “both tests emphasize many of the same or closely related specific skills.”

The second component of the program, a statistical relationship study, found that the SAT College and Career Readiness score for mathematics is “very close to the NAEP Proficient cut score” and that the SAT College and Career Readiness score for reading is “almost exactly the same as the NAEP Proficient cut score.”

These findings, together with extensive research demonstrating the SAT’s role as a fair and effective indicator of student preparedness for college, support the use of NAEP performance scores in math and reading as indicators of college preparedness.

The SAT is the only college admission test to which NAEP was statistically linked, and for which such close empirical connections have been demonstrated.

SAT BENCHMARK ATTRIBUTE	SAT BENCHMARK STRENGTH
65% probability of achieving a B- average or higher in the first year of college	Powerful predictor of college success.
Overall first-year GPA (FYGPA) as college performance metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicable to <u>all</u> students across different majors and coursework • Comprehensive metric that encompasses the entirety of students’ first-year performance and is strongly correlated with college retention
Combined score of critical reading, mathematics and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad measure of college readiness that allows for some variation in student performance across subject areas • Straightforward yet powerful tool for educators
Developed through rigorous research	Reliable measure based on the most thoroughly researched college admission exam in the United States

College Board College Readiness Pathway

To provide educators and administrators with a reliable and effective way to measure, monitor and help direct student progress from middle school through high school, the College Board developed the College Readiness Pathway, a series of integrated assessments consisting of ReditStep™ in eighth grade, the PSAT/NMSQT® in 10th and 11th grades, and the SAT in 12th grade.

Like the SAT, the PSAT/NMSQT and ReditStep include benchmarks that students should meet or exceed at each respective grade level to be considered on track for college success. The Pathway Benchmarks help educators guide students on the path toward college and career readiness and facilitate timely intervention for students in need of extra support.

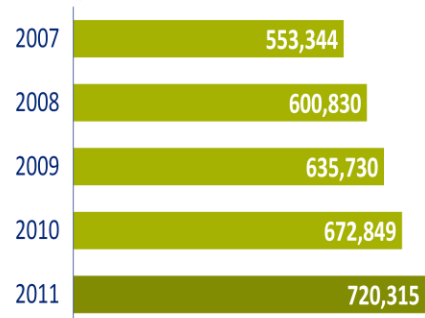
Increasing college readiness among all students is critical if the United States is to return to its place as the global leader in educational attainment. While the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark is an extremely reliable measure of college readiness for groups of high school students, the College Board recognizes that the road to college readiness begins long before students take the SAT.

In 2008, the [College Board's Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education](#) set a goal to increase the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds who hold an associate degree or higher to 55 percent by the year 2025. To meet this goal, the Commission made a series of recommendations for renewing the education system, from pre-K through postsecondary school:

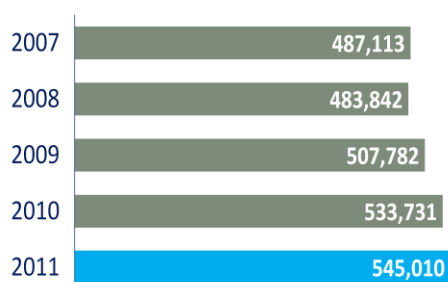
1. Provide a program of voluntary preschool education, universally available to children from low-income families so that all children enter school ready to learn.
2. Improve middle and high school college counseling by meeting professional standards and involving colleges and universities in college planning.
3. Implement the best research-based dropout prevention programs to identify students at risk of dropping out and then provide them with a safety net.
4. Align the K–12 education system with international standards and college admission expectations so that all students are prepared for college, work and life.
5. Improve teacher quality and focus on recruitment and retention.
6. Clarify and simplify the admission process to encourage more first-generation students to apply to college.
7. Provide more need-based grant aid while simplifying and making financial aid processes more transparent.
8. Keep college affordable by controlling college costs, using available aid and resources wisely, and insisting that states meet their obligations for funding higher education.
9. Dramatically increase college completion rates by reducing dropouts, easing transfer processes and using data-based approaches to improve completion rates.
10. Provide postsecondary opportunities as an essential element of adult education programs.

Expanding Access and Equity

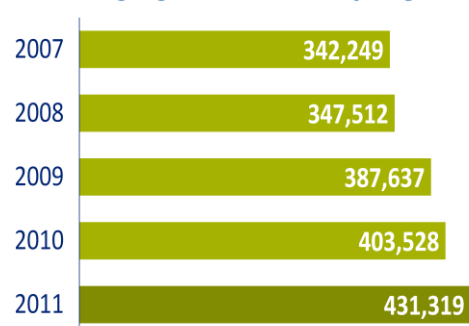
Minority Participation



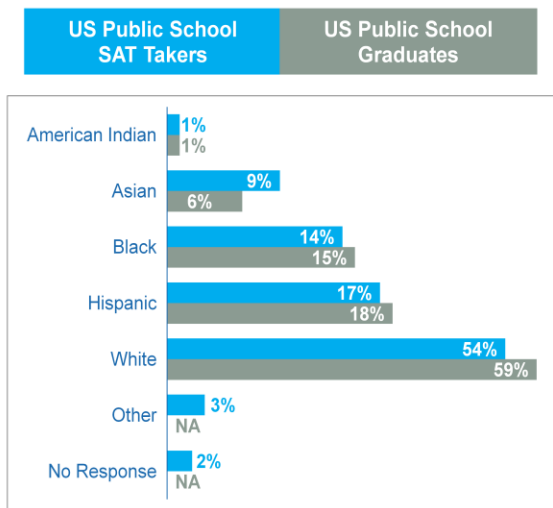
Prospective First-Generation College Goers



First Language Other than Only English



Distribution by Race/Ethnicity



Source: 2011 June Cohort (Total Group Profile Report, Table 7), WICHE 2008

Increasing SAT Participation Among Traditionally Underrepresented Student Populations

The College Board has long been committed to expanding access and equity and increasing minority participation. More than ever, the population of students taking the SAT reflects the diverse makeup of America's classrooms.



44 percent were minority students

Among SAT takers in the class of 2011, 44 percent were minority students, making this the most diverse class of SAT takers ever.



36 percent were first-generation college goers

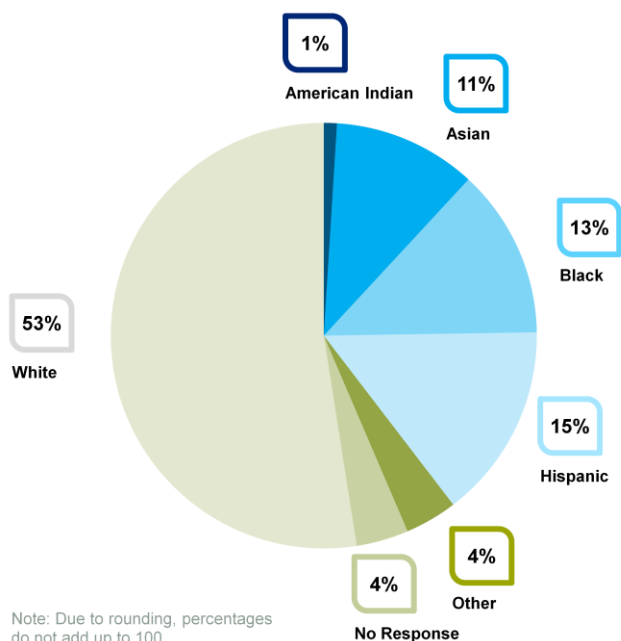
the first in their family to attend college



27 percent do not speak English exclusively

431,319 of SAT takers in the class of 2011 report that English was not the only language first learned at home

2011 College-Bound Seniors by Race/Ethnicity

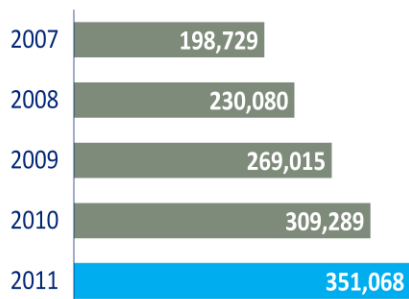


Note: Due to rounding, percentages do not add up to 100.

Eliminating Barriers Through SAT Fee Waivers, School-Day Initiatives and Test Center Expansion

NEWS RELEASE

Beneficiaries of the SAT Fee-Waiver Program



Taking a college entrance exam is a critical step on the road to higher education, but many traditionally underserved students face additional financial, familial and geographic barriers that can prevent them from testing. Through the [College Board's SAT Fee-Waiver Program](#), the SAT is extending its reach to help more of these college-aspiring students take the SAT than ever before.

More SAT Fee Waivers

Since 1970, the College Board has provided SAT fee waivers to low-income students for whom exam fees would present an unnecessary challenge in the college-going process. With the assistance of high school counselors throughout the country, the [College Board's SAT Fee-Waiver Program](#) is making it possible for more low-income students than ever before to get on the road to college.



More than 350,000 students utilize SAT fee waivers

More than 21 percent of SAT takers in the graduating class of 2011 took the SAT for free through the SAT Fee-Waiver Program.



77 percent increase since 2007

The number of college-bound seniors who benefitted from SAT fee waivers increased nearly 77 percent since 2007 (from 198,729 students in the class of 2007 to 351,068 students in the class of 2011).



More than \$37 million in SAT services

During the 2010-11 academic year, the [College Board provided more than \\$37 million in SAT fees and services](#) to students in grades 9–12.

More Test Centers Nationwide

The College Board is establishing new test centers across the country to reach more students in both high-density urban and rural communities.



900 new SAT test centers

During the 2010-11 academic year, the College Board opened 900 new test centers in the United States, bringing the total number of SAT test centers to more than 7,000 worldwide.

SAT School-Day Initiative

The College Board also is partnering with states and districts to administer the SAT during the school day, making it possible to reach even more underserved students.

During the 2010-11 school year, the SAT was administered during the school day in:

- The state of Delaware
- The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida
- Providence Public Schools, Rhode Island
- Corpus Christi ISD, Texas
- Houston ISD, Texas
- Irving ISD, Texas

The state of Idaho recently announced that it will fund school-day SAT exams for all public school juniors during the 2011-12 school year.

The SAT continues to underscore the value of a rigorous high school education. Data confirm that students who complete a core curriculum and enroll in honors and/or Advanced Placement® courses perform better on the SAT.

Students who complete a core curriculum and/or take more rigorous, advanced coursework tend to outperform their peers on the SAT.

Impact of Core Curriculum

Students in the class of 2011 who reported completing a core curriculum – defined as four or more years of English, three or more years of mathematics, three or more years of natural science, three or more years of social science and history – performed better on the SAT than those who did not complete a core curriculum.



143 points higher combined for students completing a core curriculum

Impact of Honors or AP Course Work

In addition to course-taking patterns, the rigor of a student’s course work also plays a critical role in college readiness. As in previous years, students in the class of 2011 who reported taking the most demanding honors or Advanced Placement courses performed better on the SAT.



163 points higher combined for students taking AP or Honors English



204 points higher combined for students taking AP or Honors Mathematics

College-Bound Seniors – Class of 2011 – Mean Scores by Curriculum

Curriculum	SAT Takers– All Schools			SAT Takers– Public Schools		
	CR	M	W	CR	M	W
Core Curriculum	515	529	506	510	524	500
Noncore	467	482	458	463	474	452
<i>Difference</i>	+48	+47	+48	+47	+50	+48
<i>Combined Difference</i>		+143			+145	

College-Bound Seniors – Class of 2011 – Mean Scores by AP® or Honors Participation

Students	Mean Scores		
	CR	M	W
Taking AP or Honors English	556	560	547
All Test-Takers	497	514	489
<i>Difference</i>	+59	+46	+58
Taking AP or Honors Math	561	590	553
All Test-Takers	497	514	489
<i>Difference</i>	+64	+76	+64

Demonstrating Readiness for College STEM Programs

SAT Subject Tests™ are the only reliable standardized measures of student achievement in high-school-level biology, chemistry and physics.

At a time when the United States needs to dramatically increase the number of students choosing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), the World Economic Forum ranks the United States 48th in the quality of its mathematics and science education. Data from the National Science Foundation (NSF) indicates that only 11 percent of U.S. students earn science and engineering bachelor degrees, while students in China and the European Union are earning science and engineering degrees at nearly twice that pace. NSF data also indicates that the U.S. ranks 20th out of 24 industrialized countries in the percentage of 24-year-olds who had earned a first degree in the natural sciences or engineering.

Colleges and universities offering programs in STEM disciplines need a reliable, standardized measure through which academically prepared prospective students can be identified. Similarly, students interested in pursuing STEM-related careers need a way to demonstrate mastery of high-school-level science course work. In both cases, SAT Subject Tests in mathematics and science can serve as an important tool in the admission process.

“At Caltech, where the academic emphasis is on STEM fields, it is critical for us to require and evaluate certain SAT Subject Tests in math and science to get a stronger sense of a student’s true passion and strength in these areas,” said Jarrid Whitney, executive director of admissions and financial aid, California Institute of Technology (Caltech). “We select candidates from a talented pool of applicants, and SAT Subject Tests help us to better understand a student’s preparation for our demanding curriculum.”

SAT Subject Tests are the only valid and reliable standardized measures of student achievement in high-school-level biology, chemistry and physics; rather than testing reading comprehension of science topics, SAT Subject Tests enable students to demonstrate understanding of core science concepts and their ability to apply that knowledge. An upcoming College Board research study shows that students who take SAT Subject Tests in science and mathematics are five times more likely to declare a college major in STEM subject areas than students who took SAT Subject Tests in other disciplines.

Students who complete SAT Subject Tests in mathematics and science also tend to perform better on the SAT than students who do not take SAT Subject Tests.

College-Bound Seniors – Class of 2011 – Mean Scores by SAT Subject Test Participation

SAT Subject Test Taken	Mean Scores		
	CR	M	W
Mathematics Level 1	576	620	587
Mathematics Level 2	597	658	608
Biology – Ecological	596	618	600
Biology – Molecular	609	645	620
Chemistry	614	678	625
Physics	599	692	614
<i>All Test-Takers</i>	497	514	489

The PSAT/NMSQT®:

Part of the College Readiness Pathway

More than 3.5 million high school students took the PSAT/NMSQT during the 2010-11 school year, making it the most widely used preliminary college entrance exam.

In addition to a core curriculum and rigorous coursework, the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is another important step on the path to college readiness. The PSAT/NMSQT provides valuable tools that can help students and educators identify the students' academic strengths and weaknesses in time to prepare for the SAT and educational opportunities beyond high school.



79 percent of SAT takers in the class of 2011 reported taking the PSAT/NMSQT

Impact of PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT measures the same skills as the SAT, and students who take the PSAT/NMSQT generally perform better on the SAT than students who did not take the PSAT/NMSQT.



On average, 145 points higher on the SAT for those who took the PSAT/NMSQT

College-Bound Seniors – Class of 2011 – Mean Scores by PSAT/NMSQT Participation

	SAT Takers–All Schools			SAT Takers–Public Schools		
	CR	M	W	CR	M	W
PSAT/NMSQT Takers	514	525	505	508	522	498
Non-PSAT/NMSQT Takers	461	486	452	453	462	437
<i>Difference by CR, M, W</i>	+53	+39	+53	+55	+60	+61
<i>Combined Difference</i>		+145			+176	

AP Potential™

Research indicates that PSAT/NMSQT scores are strong predictors of student success in AP. When used in conjunction with other criteria such as high school grades, grades in previous same-discipline course work, and the number of same-discipline courses a student has taken, the PSAT/NMSQT can provide high school educators with reliable guidance in identifying additional students who may be ready for the rigor of AP.

Class of 2011 SAT Participation and Performance

A Note About Mean Score Declines

It is common for mean scores to decline slightly when the number of students taking an exam increases because more students of varied academic backgrounds are represented in the test-taking pool. However, a decline in mean scores does not necessarily mean a decline in performance. There are more high-performing students among the class of 2011 than ever before.

Largest class of SAT takers ever



Nearly 1.65 million students took the SAT

1,647,123 students in the class of 2011 participated in the college-going process by taking the SAT during high school.

College-Bound Seniors Mean Scores	SAT Takers All Schools			SAT Takers Public Schools		
	CR	M	W	CR	M	W
2007 College-Bound Seniors	501	514	493	497	508	487
2010 College-Bound Seniors	500	515	491	497	510	486
2011 College-Bound Seniors	497	514	489	494	506	483

This year's college-bound seniors averaged 497 in critical reading, 514 in mathematics and 489 in writing. Since 2007 – the first year for which June cohort data are available – students' critical reading and writing scores have each experienced a four-point decline, while mathematics scores have remained stable.

The 2011 College-Bound Seniors Total Group Profile Report and State Profile Reports are available at www.collegeboard.org/SATpress. Trend data in the 2011 College-Bound Seniors Total Group Profile Report and the 2011 College-Bound Seniors State Profile Reports include students in the class of 2011 who took the SAT through June of their senior year.

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The SAT®

Created by educators to democratize access to higher education, the SAT® is a highly reliable standardized measure of college readiness used in the admission process at nearly all four-year, not-for-profit undergraduate colleges and universities in the United States. Aligned to high school curricula, the SAT tests the reading, mathematics and writing skills and knowledge students acquire during high school. The SAT also measures how well students can apply their knowledge, a factor that educators and researchers agree is critical to success in college. The SAT is consistently shown to be a fair and valid predictor of college success for all students. Studies regularly demonstrate that the best predictor of college success is the combination of SAT scores and high school grades. In addition to admission, colleges often use the SAT for course placement and scholarships. During the 2010-11 school year, the SAT was administered to more than two million students worldwide. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,900 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

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College-Bound Seniors Data Notes

SAT Cohort Data

The College-Bound Seniors cohort traditionally included students who tested through March of their senior year. However, the College Board has observed a trend in which more students are taking the SAT for the first time in May or June of their senior year. Beginning with the class of 2011, College-Bound Seniors cohort data reflects all students in a graduating class who took the SAT at least once through June of their senior year. For comparative purposes, College-Bound Seniors data for the 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 cohorts has been recalculated to include all students who tested through June of their senior year.

Type of High School

Unless otherwise noted, data reflect all students in the class of 2011 who took the SAT at least once during high school. Data specific to public school SAT takers are marked as such.

Public School Participation and Mean Scores:

A number of factors can contribute to yearly fluctuations in public school participation levels and mean scores, including a state's efforts to foster a college-going culture, the academic preparedness of students taking the SAT®, and changes in student behavior when completing the SAT Questionnaire. Public school participation levels are calculated based on optional, self-reported data students provide when completing the SAT Questionnaire during registration. Unanticipated increases or decreases in the number of students providing their high school's unique code can influence year-over-year differences in public school participation and influence mean scores. A decline in the number of students providing their high school's unique code among the classes of 2009 and 2010 resulted in a decline in reported public school participation for those years. The College Board carefully monitors changes in student data and has enhanced the registration process to encourage more students to report school affiliation. As a result, the percentage of students reported by school type in the class of 2011 has increased. As with any data, the College Board recommends looking at public school mean score trends over time rather than in one-year increments that tend to overemphasize any changes. Trends over a longer period of time, in this case 2007–2011, will give a more accurate picture of both student participation and mean scores.

Comparing SAT Mean Scores

Media and others often rank states, districts and schools on the basis of SAT® scores despite repeated warnings that such rankings are inappropriate. The SAT is a strong indicator of trends in the college-bound population, but it should never be used alone for such comparisons because demographics and other nonschool factors can have a strong effect on scores. If ranked, schools and states that encourage students to apply to college may be penalized because scores tend to decline with a rise in percentage of test-takers.

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