

SAT® School Day in a Large Urban District

A case study profiling one district's implementation experience

WHAT IS SAT® SCHOOL DAY?

The College Board's SAT® School Day program enables states and districts to create a unique opportunity for all of their 11th-grade and/or 12th-grade students to take the SAT in their own schools, among their peers and in a supportive setting during a regularly scheduled school day. SAT School Day sends a powerful message about a state's or district's commitment to preparing all students for the next step. Until recently, most students accessed the SAT by registering individually and taking the test on a Saturday. Since the 2009-10 school year, the College Board has partnered with states and school districts to administer the SAT during the school day, making it possible to reach all students and particularly students who are underserved. SAT School Day generates a more reliable, measurable college readiness baseline for states and districts because the results are more inclusive of all students. State and district leaders can use SAT School Day data to more confidently address skill weaknesses and target interventions to address the needs of all students.

Context

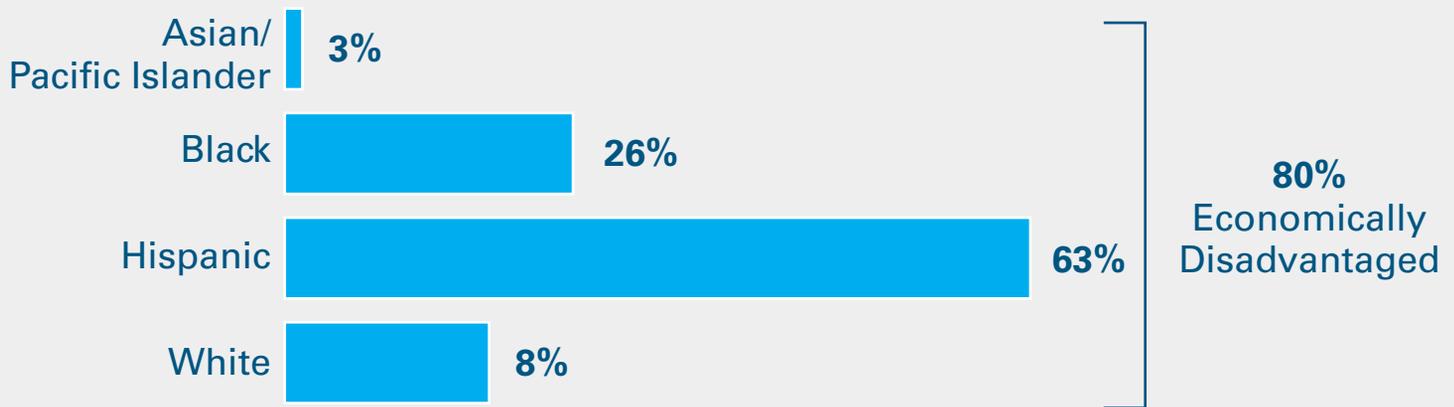
- The large urban district described in this case study is one of the largest districts in the U.S., serving approximately 200,000 students.
- The district's leaders have systematically laid the foundation for **all students to have access to college readiness tools and resources by minimizing barriers**. The introduction of SAT School Day in this large urban district was a result of the superintendent's unrelenting focus on access, which was in turn implemented by the superintendent's leadership team. There was a clear "cascade" communication strategy through the district's school improvement team to school leaders about the need to implement SAT School Day quickly and efficiently.
- **The clarity of purpose and focus on access outweighed any initial resistance** to launching SAT School Day. School leaders were on board with school day administration from the get-go and were trained in both the assessment procedures and a data-based decision-making process once results were available.
- After the first year of SAT School Day implementation, educators, families and students were able to see the dramatic increase in access, which reinforced the **need to continue the program**. Some community members have questioned continued funding for SAT School Day in light of tighter budgets and the relationship between additional funds and declining average scores. The overwhelming support among members of the school district community has far outweighed any resistance.



To read more about statewide SAT School Day, visit pathway.collegeboard.org.

To read more about SAT School Day in a suburban district, visit pathway.collegeboard.org.

District at a Glance



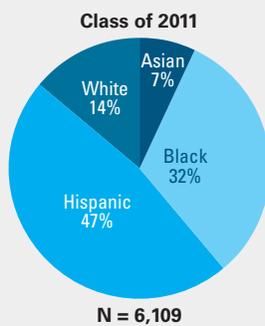
Total size of the student population \approx 200,000

Total number of schools \approx 300

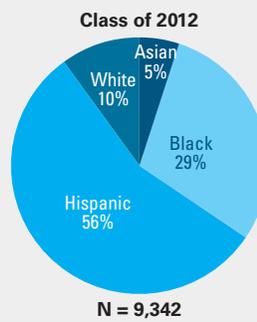
Major Impact on Participation

- Overall participation in the SAT has nearly doubled in the last several years; **SAT participation has increased 53% since the implementation of SAT School Day.**¹ Participation in the SAT was increasing in the district prior to the introduction of SAT School Day, although the introduction of SAT School Day resulted in larger increases in participation.
- Prior to SAT School Day, student participation patterns did not mirror overall district demographics. SAT School Day has resulted in a **distribution of test-takers that is more reflective of the student population** at large.
- The percentage of Hispanic SAT test-takers increased following SAT School Day implementation and is closer to the overall percentage of total Hispanic students. **Participation among Hispanic students — the largest student subgroup in the district — increased at the greatest rate, from 2,795 students to 4,962 (+78%).**

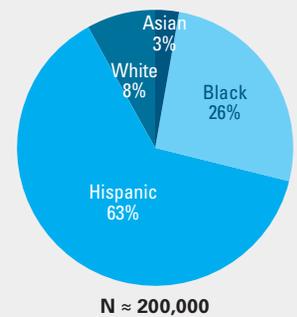
SAT College-Bound Seniors Pre-SAT School Day



SAT College-Bound Seniors Who Participated in SAT School Day as Juniors



Overall Student Demographics²



Increases in Access Following SAT School Day Implementation

Class of 2012 SAT College-Bound Seniors	9,342
Number of Additional Students³	3,233 More Students:
More students took the SAT ⁴	↑ 31 Asian
	↑ 738 Black
	↑ 2,167 Hispanic
More prospective first-generation college goers took the SAT ⁶	↑ 1,296 students
More students achieved at least one Subject-Level Readiness Indicator ⁷	↑ 493 students
More students met the College Readiness Benchmark ⁸	↑ 99 students

1. Unless otherwise noted, SAT results are presented for College-Bound Senior cohorts. College-Bound Seniors presents data for high school graduates in the specified year who participated in the SAT Program. Students are counted only once, no matter how often they tested, and only their latest scores and most recent SAT questionnaire responses are summarized. Data presented throughout this case study are intended to be descriptive; comparisons over time should be interpreted with caution and data should not be used to predict achievement patterns in other states or districts implementing SAT School Day. When the pool of test-takers changes substantially, it is not appropriate to directly compare pre- and post-program results.

2. Most recent publicly available demographic information from district website.

3. Class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors compared to class of 2011 College-Bound Seniors.

4. Race/ethnicity is self-reported by test-takers.

5. Students indicated "Other" or did not respond.

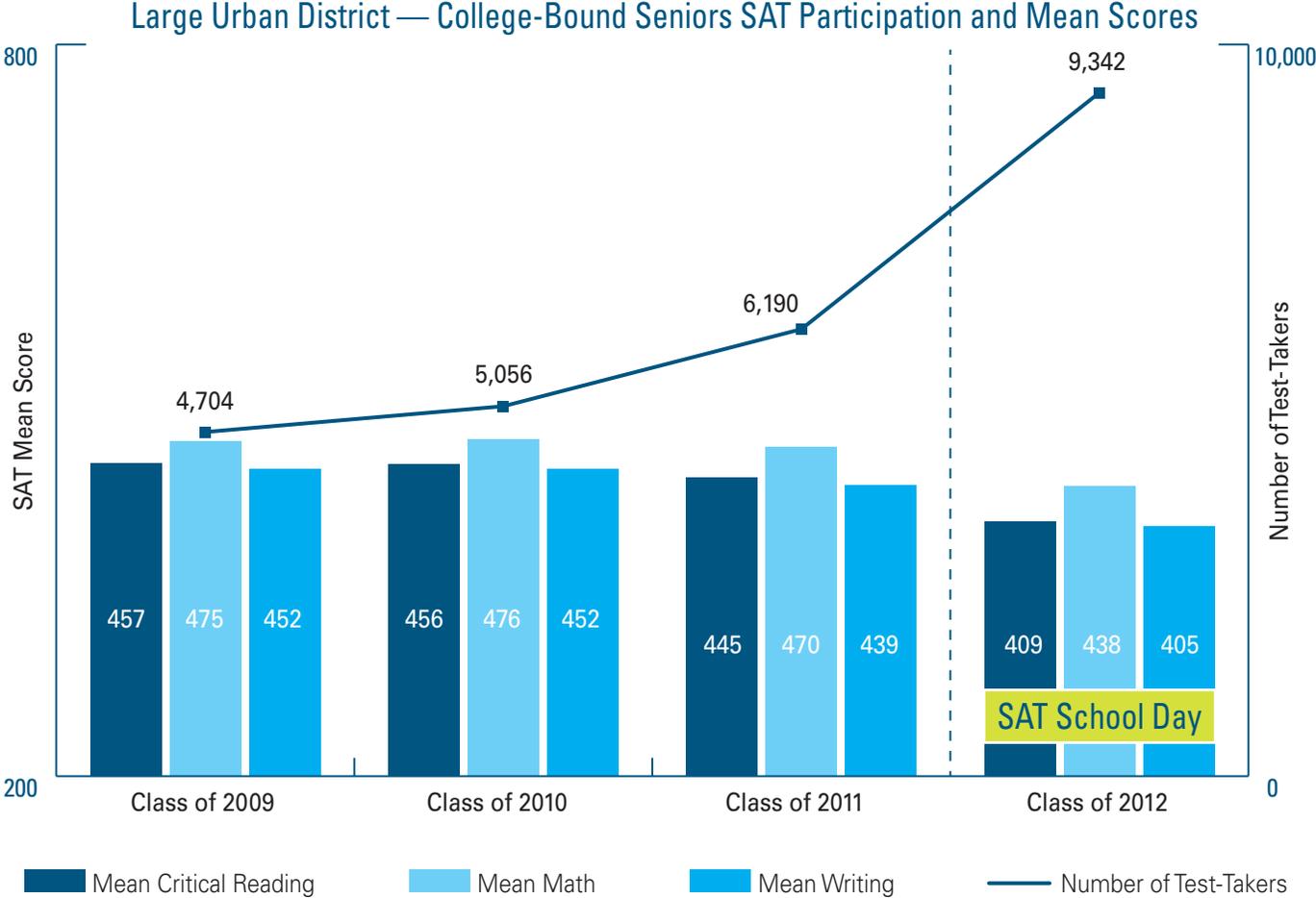
6. Test-takers are identified as first-generation college goers if they reported that neither parent holds an associate or two-year degree, a bachelor's or four-year degree, some graduate or professional schools, or a graduate or professional degree.

7. The SAT Subject-Level Readiness Indicators measure students' preparedness in critical reading, mathematics and writing. The SAT Subject-Level Readiness Indicator score is 500 for each of the SAT sections.

8. The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark is a score of 1550 (critical reading, mathematics and writing scores combined), which indicates a 65% likelihood of achieving a B grade point average or higher during the first year of college.

Changes in Student Achievement and Performance

- Data from all SAT School Day states and districts suggest that when access is more inclusive, more students participate, though mean scores tend to decline. In particular, participation tends to increase among traditionally underserved student groups — particularly Hispanic students and prospective first-generation college goers.
- Substantial changes in the test-taking population in the district resulted in changes in achievement. School and district leaders were prepared for changes in mean scores following SAT School Day implementation; mean scores dropped about 30 points in each SAT section (critical reading, math and writing) during the first year of the program.
- A subset of the Class of 2013 College-Bound Senior cohort — 11th-grade test-takers, who for the most part are likely taking the SAT for the first time — posted the same or slightly higher mean scores than 11th-graders in the Class of 2012, with similar numbers of students participating in both years.



Taking Action

- The district implemented SAT School Day as one piece of an overall college-preparatory system, which also:
 - Funds the PSAT/NMSQT® for all 10th-grade students in the district, which in turn provides valuable practice for the SAT, detailed feedback on each students' academic skills and access to college-preparatory tools; and
 - Features a new middle school curriculum program focused on rigor and alignment to high school college-preparatory courses.
- SAT and other key assessment outcomes are uploaded to the district's college and career planning online program that counselors use with students, which enables students to access their full portfolio while planning for college. Students are able to compare their achievements to those of students at specific colleges and universities, which has helped them choose colleges that are right for them.
- The district provides test-preparation resources to all students at no additional charge, including The Official SAT Study Guide™ and The Official SAT Online Course™.
- High schools in the district have developed a successful strategy to support achievement: SAT "boot camps" that are open to all students. These free preparatory classes were offered to familiarize participants with all aspects of the SAT.
 - The district kicked off the camps with pep rallies and rewarded participants with awards and badges to build interest in the camps, which are offered during weekends or vacation times.
 - By promoting student interest and enthusiasm for the SAT School Day program, participation in boot camps has exceeded initial expectations. In addition, the boot camps help build a culture of college readiness while providing valuable information to aid in preparing for the test.

COMMUNICATION MATTERS

The College Board encourages states and districts to prepare for SAT School Day by:

- Communicating the purpose of SAT School Day to all stakeholders (school leaders, teachers, counselors, families and students); and
- Focusing on supporting high academic achievement for all students, with the goal of achieving both high participation and performance over time.

The College Board supports SAT School Day partners to plan a comprehensive rollout and communication strategy addressing the three phases of SAT School Day implementation:

- **Announcement and Awareness** covers pretest communications to inform students, parents, districts and schools about the general purpose and goals of SAT School Day as well as key "what to expect" information.
- **Readiness and Preparation** covers communications school personnel will need to prepare and deliver the actual SAT School Day experience.
- **Post-Test Activity Reminders and Updates** covers important information for school personnel, participants and parents, as well as communications to all those who contributed to the success of SAT School Day.

“ Removing barriers that previously kept many students from taking SAT exams has revealed that any of our students has the ability to perform at high academic levels if given the chance and a bit of encouragement. This data validates the Board of Education’s commitment to ensuring that no student misses a chance to take these tests just because they can’t afford to pay. ”

—District Superintendent



A Closer Look at College-Bound Seniors’ Changes in District SAT Mean Scores

CHANGE IN MEAN SCORE	ALL STUDENTS	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	PROSPECTIVE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE GOERS
Critical Reading	-36	-29	-26	-30	-17	-17
Math	-32	-23	-18	-27	-18	-13
Writing	-34	-30	-22	-29	-16	-14

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY — COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS

- Mean scores dropped between 32 and 36 points per SAT section (critical reading, math and writing) following SAT School Day implementation.⁹
- Prior to SAT School Day, mean scores among Hispanic students were approximately 100 points lower than mean scores for white students; following SAT School Day, the mean scores for Hispanic students dropped by 27–29 points per section, compared to drops of 16–18 points for white students in each section, highlighting an opportunity for the district to increase support for skill development and support programs. (See “Taking Action” section for emerging strategies.)
- Mean scores among 11th-grade test-takers, most of whom are likely taking the SAT for the first time (and which is a subset of all students in the College-Bound Senior cohorts reported otherwise in this case study), were the same or slightly higher for the class of 2013 compared to the class of 2012, with similar numbers of students participating in both years. Careful analysis of and response to this data are likely to result in sustained improvement.
- Following SAT School Day, about 17% of test-takers achieved the College Readiness Benchmark:
 - 59% of Asian students (264 students)
 - 9% of black students (244 students)
 - 10% of Hispanic students (48 students)
 - 62% of white students (548 students)¹⁰
- Roughly one in three test-takers in the class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors scored just below the SAT Subject-Level Readiness Indicator, between 400–499, in each section:
 - 28% of test-takers in critical reading (2,608 students)
 - 34% of test-takers in math (3,178 students)
 - 30% of test-takers in writing (2,768 students)

SAT School Day Works for States and Districts

- Increases access to and participation in the SAT — a critical step in driving college enrollment
- Sets high standards for student achievement and measures progress
- Identifies current gaps in skill level to drive knowledge-based curriculum decisions
- Opens more doors and creates more opportunities for prospective first-generation college goers

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9. Difference between mean scores of class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors and class of 2011 College-Bound Seniors.

10. Eighteen percent of students who did not indicate their race/ethnicity also achieved the College Readiness Benchmark. Fewer than 10 Native American students participated in the SAT.