

# SAT® School Day in a Suburban District

A case study profiling one district's  
implementation experience

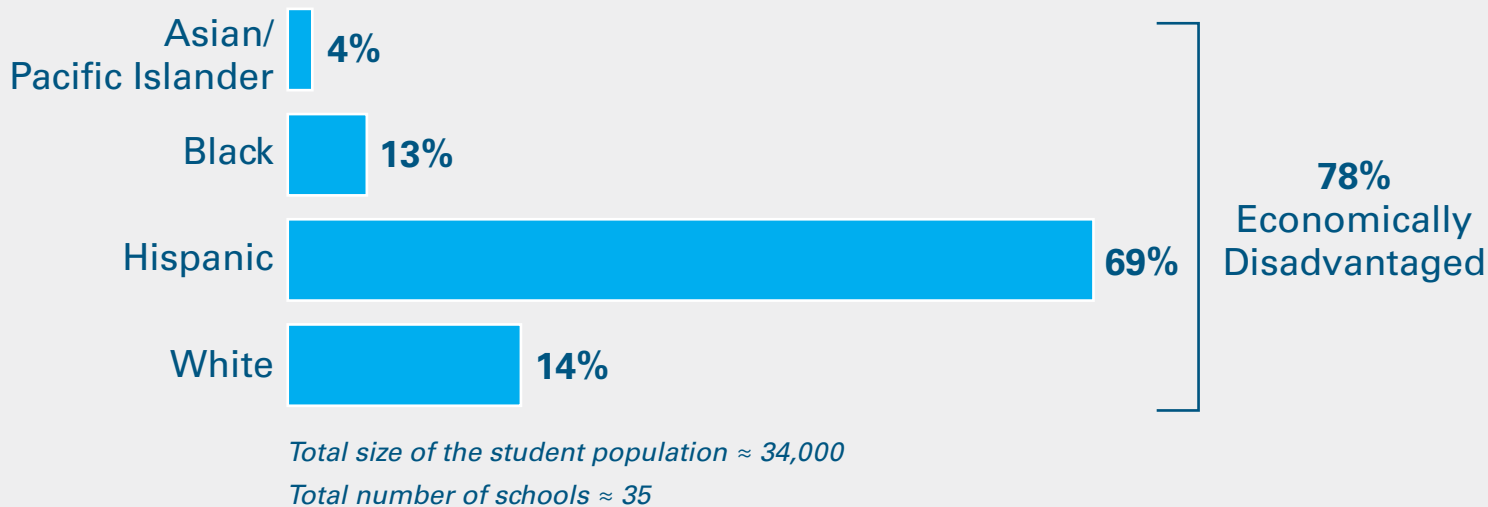
## WHAT IS SAT® SCHOOL DAY?

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 district described in this case study serves approximately 34,000 students.
- Over the past decade, **the suburban district's low-income student population has increased by about 20%**. Although most low-income students qualified for SAT fee waivers,<sup>1</sup> school and district leaders discovered that many vouchers were not being used. Because the district's two designated SAT test centers served students from neighboring districts in addition to the district's students, some students were unable to register for the SAT at their own high school or a nearby high school within the district. Other regional testing centers were up to 10 miles away and not easily accessible to students and families. Students also identified weekend work commitments as a barrier to SAT participation during Saturday test administration.
- District leaders identified the **need to reduce barriers to college readiness tools**. In 2008-09, the district's board of education established two academic goals related to college readiness: to increase participation to at least 60% in one or more college readiness assessments; and to increase average scores on college readiness assessments (including the SAT). The district was one of the first to offer SAT School Day to all 11th-grade students.
- District and school leaders felt that, **prior to SAT School Day, the profile of SAT takers was inconsistent and not representative of all students**. Furthermore, SAT results were reviewed by individual teachers and administrators in isolation, and there were few consistent practices for responding to SAT data in schools.

## District at a Glance



To read more about statewide SAT School Day, visit [pathway.collegeboard.org](http://pathway.collegeboard.org).  
To read more about SAT School Day in an urban district, visit [pathway.collegeboard.org](http://pathway.collegeboard.org).

1. The College Board offers fee waivers to help eligible lower-income students pay for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests™. <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-fee-waivers>.

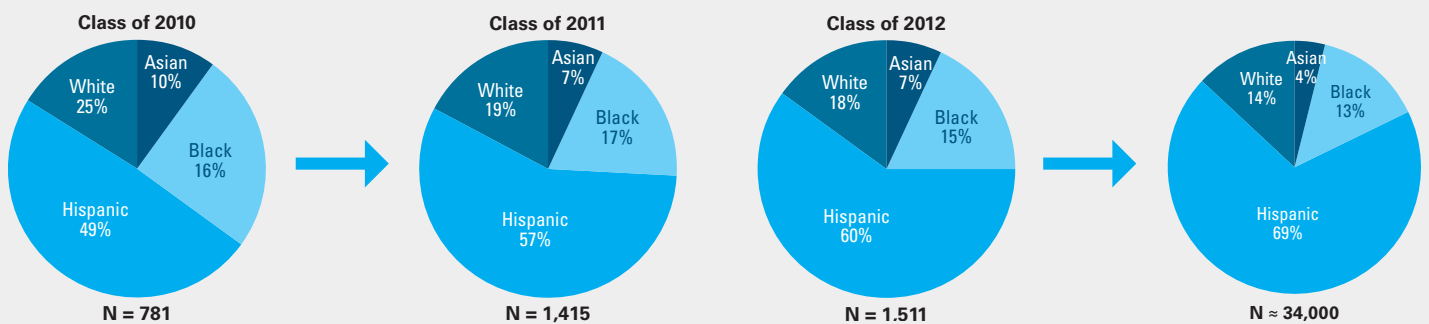
# Major Impact on Participation

- Over the two years of SAT School Day implementation, student participation in the SAT has increased dramatically, from about 25% to over 80% of all 11th-grade students.<sup>2</sup>
- The distribution of test-takers has become more reflective of the district's student population overall, and SAT participation is no longer limited to a self-selected, college-bound group of students. The participation increase among Hispanic students was most pronounced.
- The number of Hispanic students who had taken the SAT in high school more than doubled in the district.

SAT College-Bound Seniors  
Pre-SAT School Day

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

Overall Student Demographics<sup>3</sup>



## Increases in Access Following SAT School Day Implementation

Class of 2012 SAT College-Bound Seniors	1,511
<b>Number of Additional Students<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>730 More Students:</b>
More students took the SAT <sup>5</sup>	↑ 34 Asian                      ↑ 75 White ↑ 92 Black                      ↑ 19 Other <sup>6</sup> ↑ 510 Hispanic
	↑ 321 students
	↑ 152 students
More prospective first-generation college goers took the SAT <sup>7</sup>	↑ 50 students
More students achieved at least one Subject-Level Readiness Indicator <sup>8</sup>	
More students met the College Readiness Benchmark <sup>9</sup>	

2. Unless otherwise noted, SAT results are presented for College-Bound Seniors 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.

3. Most recent publicly available demographic information from NCES (2009-10), <http://nces.ed.gov/> and the 2011 district profile on the state department of education website.

4. Class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors compared to class of 2010 College-Bound Seniors.

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

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

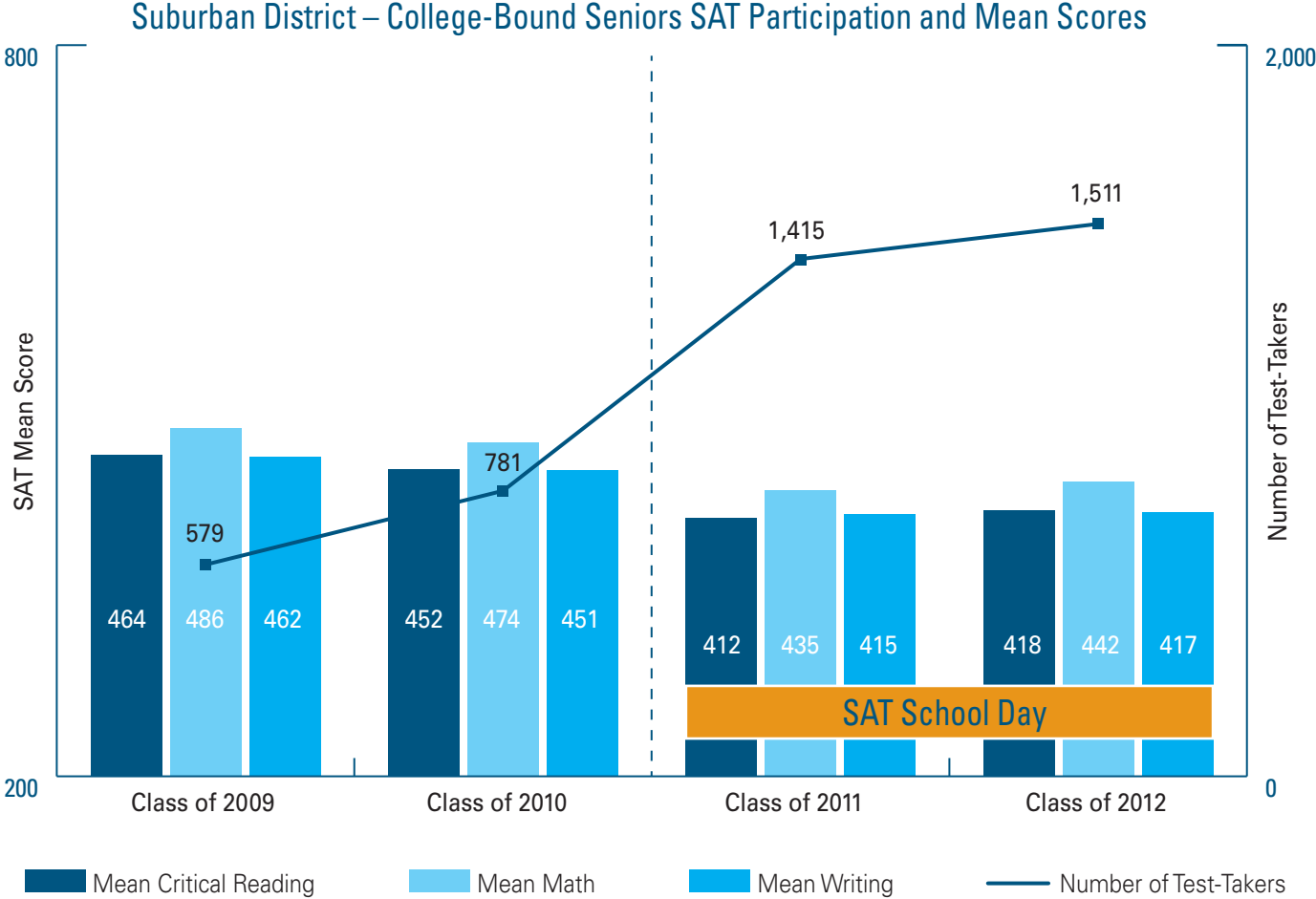
7. Test-takers are identified as first-generation college goers if they reported that neither parent holds an associate or two-year degree, a bachelor's or four-year degree, some graduate or professional schools, or a graduate or professional degree.

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

9. 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.
- Mean scores for the second cohort of College-Bound Seniors participating in SAT School Day increased two to seven points per section.



# Taking Action

- **SAT School Day has increased district and school leaders' confidence in SAT results;** they feel that scores over the past few years reflect a reliable baseline.
- District leaders indicated the emerging **SAT results are another tool school and district leaders can use to identify areas of strength and weakness** that teachers can address specifically in their classrooms. Following their SAT School Day administration in spring 2013, the district plans to use their three-year baseline of SAT School Day cohort results to inform an instructional response to the data. District leaders cited their successful efforts over the past few years to increase access to rigorous course work like AP® across high schools and the corresponding needs to increase student readiness, which they state the SAT measures well.
- High schools in the district have introduced or expanded **programs to support SAT success**, such as weekend prep workshops at no cost to students.

## 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.

“ The collaboration I experienced between the College Board, our team of central office administrators, the campuses and the community stakeholders to bring SAT School Day to our district was so powerful — and all for the benefit of the students. It is perhaps the most satisfying experience of my career. ”

— District Administrator



## 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	-34	-31	-8	-35	-22	-18
Math	-32	-31	-11	-28	-28	-16
Writing	-34	-45	-5	-30	-29	-15

### PERFORMANCE SUMMARY — COLLEGE-BOUND SENIORS

- Although the changes in achievement among Hispanic students are similar to changes for other subgroups — around 30-point decreases per section — mean scores for the class of 2012 are lowest for Hispanic students in critical reading and writing and slightly higher than black student achievement in math.<sup>10</sup>
- 35%–40% of all class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors scored just below the SAT Subject-Level Readiness Indicator, 400–499, in each section:
  - 35% of test-takers in critical reading (535 students)
  - 40% of test-takers in math (604 students)
  - 39% of test-takers in writing (585 students)
- Approximately 16% of all class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors achieved the College Readiness Benchmark:
  - 31% of Asian students (33 students)
  - 10% of black students (22 students)
  - 13% of Hispanic students (111 students)
  - 27% of white students (70 students)<sup>11</sup>

### 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

10. Difference between mean scores of class of 2012 College-Bound Seniors and class of 2010 College-Bound Seniors.

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