

James Montoya

Vice President,
Higher Education
Relationship Development

Wayne Camara

Vice President,
Research & Development

SAT® Report on College & Career Readiness

Sept. 24, 2012



Opening Remarks



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James Montoya

It is a pleasure to be here today to talk to you about this year's annual SAT Report on College and Career Readiness. In reviewing this year's report, one overarching theme emerges: students who complete a rigorous core curriculum do better in high school; they do better on the SAT; and they are more prepared for college. This holds true across all socioeconomic and ethnic lines.

It may seem like common sense, but students who are better prepared for college are more likely to do well in college, to stay in college and to graduate from college. Helping prepare students for college is the core mission of the College Board. We are proud of the role we play in helping guide students on the path to higher education, because we believe that increasing the number of Americans with postsecondary degrees is critical to the nation's long-term competitiveness and prosperity.

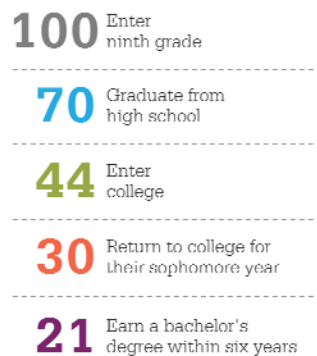
As a membership organization created and governed by educators, the College Board is deeply committed to the mission of enrolling and supporting first-generation college students. This year's report found that one of the strongest indicators of success in college and on the SAT is having a parent with a postsecondary degree. These students do not succeed simply by virtue of their parents' education; but they are better prepared to navigate the path to college graduation, since they have someone in their corner who has already completed the journey and is more familiar with the college admission and financial aid processes.

We all recognize the importance of college readiness, and the importance of making sure our kids are prepared to compete in a hyper-competitive global economy. The SAT is a critical piece of that preparation.

The combination of high school GPA and SAT scores is a better predictor of college success than high school GPA alone. The SAT is an important yardstick that can be used to measure the skills students need to succeed in college, so that eventually they will succeed at whatever they want to do in life. Through our extensive research and work in ensuring the validity and fairness of the SAT, we know the test is measuring the right things — again, the skills students need to be prepared for college and career. Based on research, we also know that the SAT is a valid and effective predictor of college performance and retention. And finally, based on research, we know that — regardless of socioeconomic group — kids who do well on the SAT have a better chance of staying in college and graduating.

The need for a rigorous core curriculum and a focus on the needs of first-generation college students — these are the two most important stories in this year's report. But they aren't the only stories. So now, let's go into some more detail.

The Education Landscape



Source: The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems persistence and completion data.



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James Montoya:

This is the state of American education today. For every 100 students who enter ninth grade, only 44 will go to college and only 21 will earn a bachelor's degree within six years.

These are alarming statistics both for individuals and for our nation. Individuals with only a high school diploma are about twice as likely to be unemployed than college graduates. As a nation, the United States now ranks 16th worldwide in the number of people aged 25-to-34 with a college degree.

At a time when the importance of a college degree is increasing, the ability of the United States to compete in a global economy is decreasing. If we want to prepare our workforce to compete in a global economy, we have to prepare more students to succeed in college.

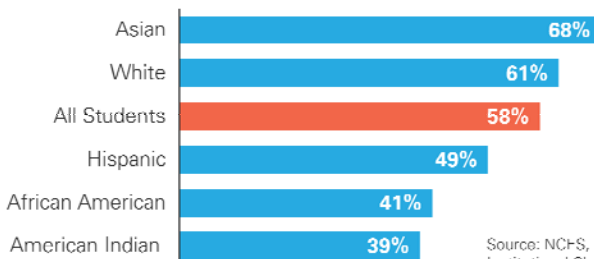
High School and College Graduation Rates

Public High School Average Graduation Rates 2008-09



Source: NCFS, *Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2008-09*, 2011.

Six-Year Graduation Rates of Bachelor's Degree-Seeking Students 2008



Source: NCES, *IPEDS Graduation and Institutional Characteristics Surveys*, 2008.



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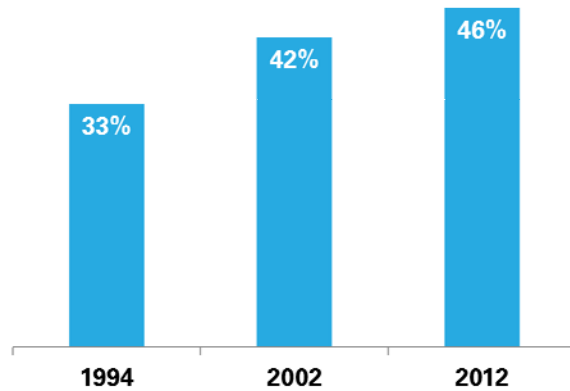
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James Montoya:

This slide shows that only three-quarters of all public high school students graduate, and fewer than 60 percent of college students earn a four-year college degree within six years. Members of underserved minority groups are less likely to graduate from both high school and college.

High School Grades Continue to Increase

Percentage of SAT® Takers Reporting "A" Grade Point Average



SAT Takers Mean GPA

1994	2002	2012
3.17	3.31	3.36

NOTE: Includes students reporting A+, A, A- equivalent grade point average (3.67 or higher); Based on four-point system, where A=1.00.



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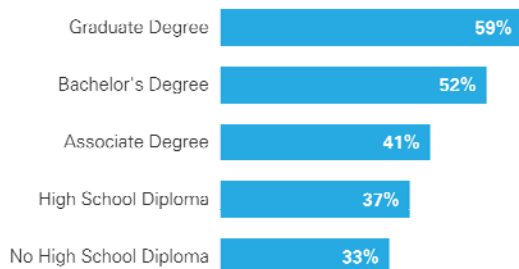
James Montoya:

It's also interesting to note that at a time when high school graduation rates suggest our education system is struggling, the mean grade point averages are actually increasing. Is there some grade inflation here? Without question.

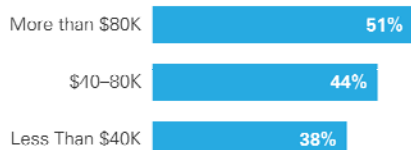
This exemplifies why it is important for college admission officers to have other valid and reliable measures of college readiness that are immune from grade inflation.

High School Grades — by Nonschool Factors

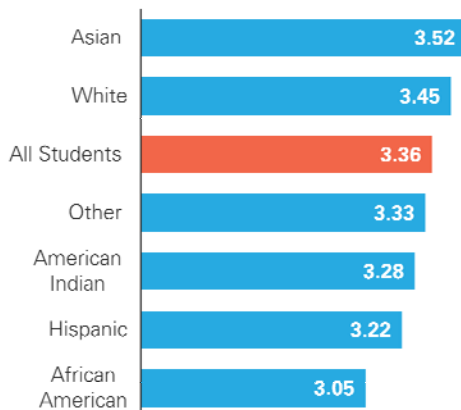
Percentage of SAT® Takers Reporting "A" GPA — by Parental Education



Percentage of SAT® Takers Reporting "A" GPA — by Family Income



Mean GPA of SAT® Takers — by Race/Ethnicity



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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James Montoya:

Here we see disparities in high school GPA among various groups of students. Students whose parents do not have a college degree face socioeconomic hurdles that are difficult to overcome — even if their parents are hard working, involved and concerned. Given that students whose parents have a college degree and who come from families with higher incomes tend to have a higher mean GPA, our organization is focused on ensuring that college becomes a family tradition.

Research Confirms Validity of SAT® in Predicting Success Throughout College

	Correlations*— 1 st -Year GPA	Correlation*— 4 th -Year Cumulative GPA
SAT Mathematics	0.47–0.49	0.48
SAT Critical Reading	0.48–0.50	0.51
SAT Writing	0.51–0.53	0.54
SAT (CR, M, W)	0.53–0.56	0.56
High School GPA	0.54–0.56	0.56
SAT + High School GPA	0.62–0.64	0.64

*All correlations have been corrected for restriction of range.



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Wayne Camara:

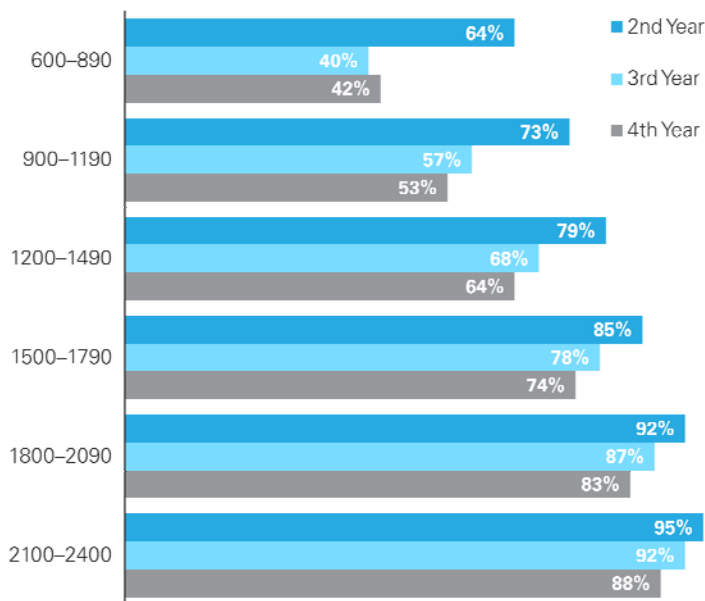
This slide summarizes findings from the College Board's most recent national validity study utilizing data from students at more than 200 four-year colleges and universities. As you can see, the SAT and high school GPA are virtually identical in their predictive validity of first-year GPA and are equally predictive of fourth-year cumulative GPA.

To be clear, while the SAT is a valid and reliable tool for predicting college success, the College Board advises that the SAT always be used in conjunction with other measures. No one measure — be it high school GPA, SAT score, or class rank — can ever paint a complete picture of an applicant's certainty for college success.

As these results show, the best predictor of college success is the combined use of SAT scores and high school GPA.

College Retention — by SAT® Score Band

SAT SCORE RANGE



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Wayne Camara:

Here we see rates of college retention broken down by SAT score band, confirming the value of the SAT in predicting a student's likely retention to the second, third, and fourth years of college.

If we want students to graduate from college, we need to support them so that they stay in college and are able to successfully complete the work. And as you can see, students who do well on the SAT are significantly more likely to make it to their fourth year of college. This is true across all socioeconomic lines.

Common Core State Standards and NAEP

SAT® Knowledge and Skills Topic are reflected in the Common Core State Standards.

SAT Reading Knowledge and Skills Topics

Determining the Meaning of Words

Author's Craft

Reasoning and Inference

Organization and Ideas

Understanding Literary Elements

SAT Writing Knowledge and Skills Topics

Manage Word Choice and Grammatical Relationships Between Words

Manage Grammatical Structures Used to Modify or Compare

Manage Phrases and Clauses in a Sentence

Recognize Correctly Formed Sentences

Manage Order and Relationships of Sentences and Paragraphs

SAT Math Knowledge and Skills Topics

Number & Operations

Algebra & Functions

Geometry & Measurement

Data, Statistics & Probability

Problem Solving

Representation

Reasoning

Connections

Communication

The SAT is the only college admission test to which NAEP was statistically linked.

The SAT College & Career Readiness Benchmark scores in reading and math are very close to the NAEP proficient cut scores in those subjects.



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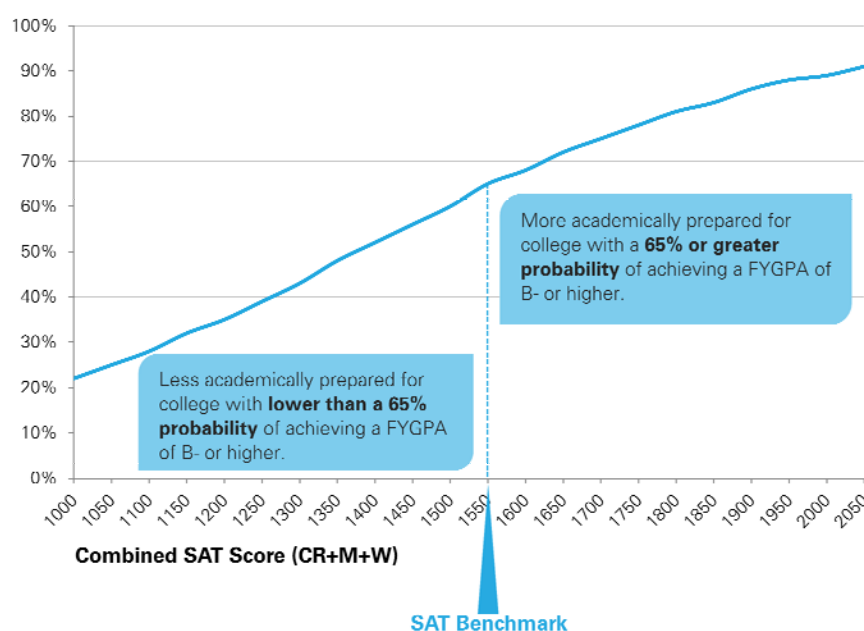
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Wayne Camara:

The Common Core State Standards have been designed to provide a rigorous learning platform that prepares our nation's students to perform in the classroom, to succeed in college and to prosper in their careers. As most of you know, the College Board has been an advocate for and collaborator in the development of the Common Core State Standards.

The SAT is aligned to the Common Core State Standards as well as — or better than — any assessment that has been developed for college admission and/or placement. Here we see the list of knowledge and skills topics for each section of the SAT, all of which are reflected in the Common Core State Standards.

Probability of Achieving FYGPA of B- or Higher — by SAT® Score



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Wayne Camara:

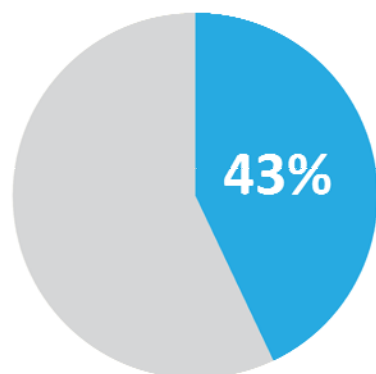
The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 indicates a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B-average or higher during the first year of study at a four-year college. Research shows that students who achieve a first-year GPA of B- or higher have a stronger likelihood of college success and completion.

In this chart, you can see the relationship between composite SAT score and the probability of achieving a first-year GPA of B-minus or higher. The higher the combined SAT score, the higher likelihood achieving a first-year GPA of B- or higher.

Of course, it's important to note that college readiness is dependent on many factors including non-academic characteristics that are outside the scope of the SAT. This is why we see that some students who do not meet the SAT Benchmark still achieve a FYGPA of B- or higher, though at significantly lower rates than their more academically-prepared peers.

The SAT Benchmark is an excellent aggregate measure of the college readiness of a group of students. We want to be very clear that the SAT Benchmark should not be used to evaluate an individual student's college readiness.

Percentage of SAT® Takers Who Met the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark



2012 College-Bound Seniors Total Group

43% of SAT takers achieved the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark, indicating a strong likelihood of succeeding in college.

- Achieved SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark
- Did Not Achieve SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark

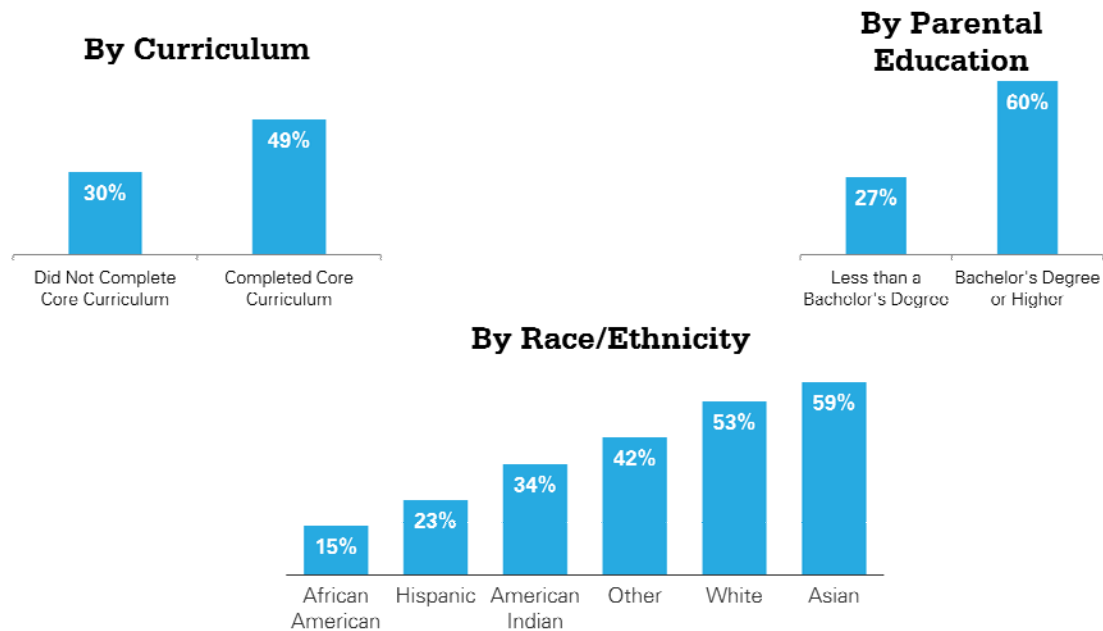


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James Montoya:

Among SAT takers from the class of 2012, 43 percent achieved the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark. This is consistent with the class of 2011, in which students also had a 43 percent achievement rate.

SAT® Benchmark Achievement —



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



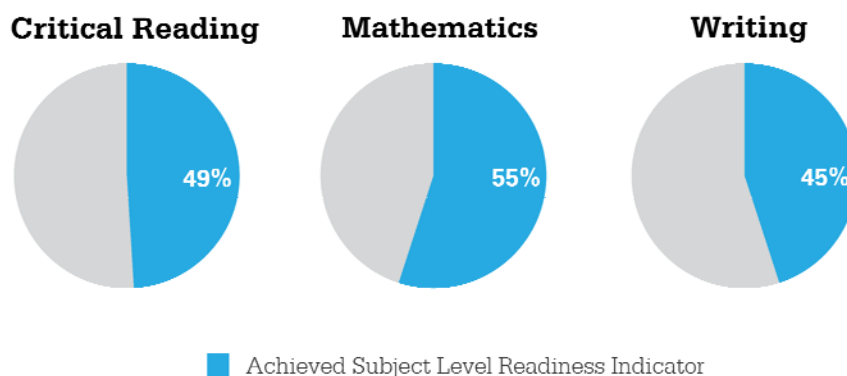
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James Montoya:

Here we see SAT Benchmark achievement broken down by various groups. Students who completed a core curriculum are far more likely to be college ready, as are students whose parents have a college degree. When we look at college readiness by ethnicity, we see that underserved students are less likely to be college ready.

There are significant inequities in our education system as evidenced by these results and other measures discussed earlier, including graduation rates and high school GPA. Unless we work together to find ways to close the achievement gap, some students will continue to fall behind.

Percentage of SAT® Takers Achieving Subject-Level College Readiness Indicators



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



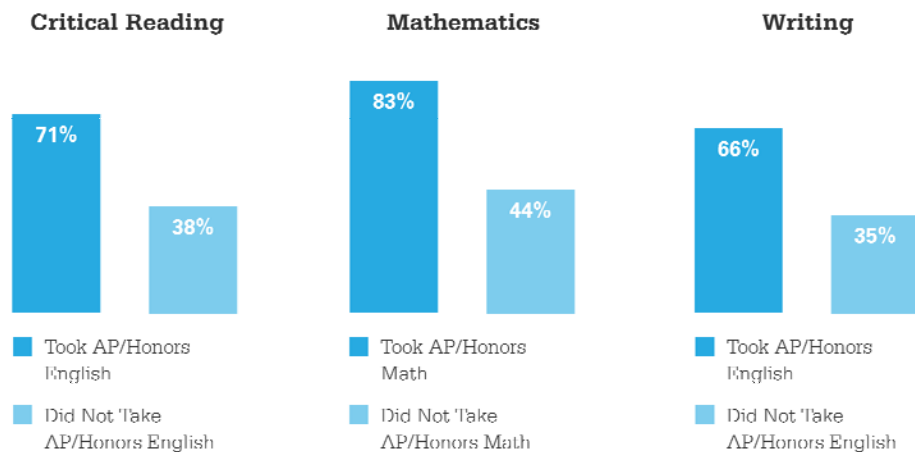
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Wayne Camara:

Because each section of the SAT is an independently-valid and reliable measure, we were able to create subject-level college readiness indicators that provide insight into the percentage of students who are college ready across each section of the SAT.

The subject-level readiness indicator for each section of the SAT is a score of 500. As one would expect, the rates of achievement for the subject-level indicators are higher than for the overall benchmark.

Percentage of SAT® Takers Achieving Subject-Level College Readiness Indicators — by AP®/Honors Participation



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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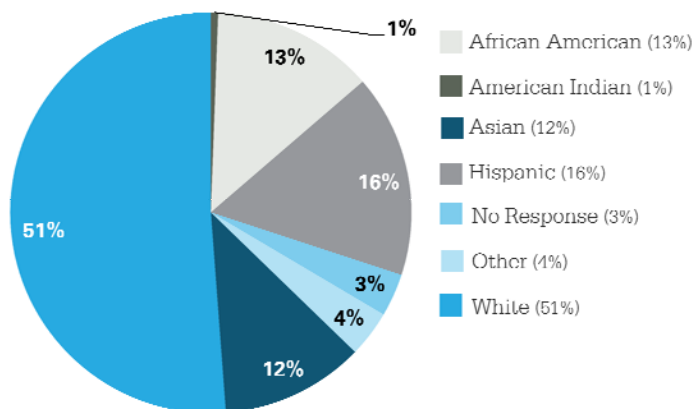
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James Montoya:

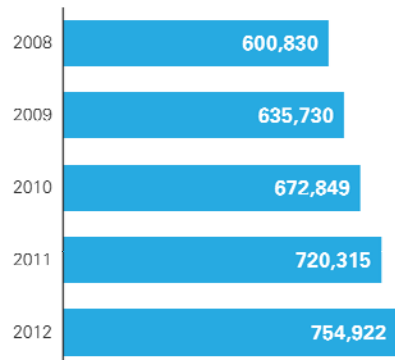
This chart underscores the importance of rigorous coursework in preparing for college and career. As a former Dean of Admission, I strongly encourage prospective students to make sure they are challenging themselves with the most rigorous course work available in their high schools. As this slide illustrates, students who took AP or honors courses in English and math were far more likely to achieve the subject-level SAT college readiness indicators.

SAT® Takers — by Race/Ethnicity

SAT Class of 2012



Minority Participation



Source: College Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2008-2012.



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James Montoya:

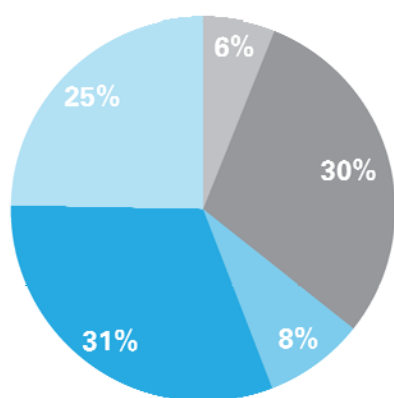
As an organization committed to access and equity in education, we are extremely pleased that SAT takers reflect the diversity in our nation's classrooms.

Among SAT takers in the class of 2012, 45 percent were minority students, making this the most diverse class of SAT takers ever. And minority participation continues to grow, increasing more than 25 percent since 2008.

Why is this important? Trends show that the United States will become a majority-minority country by 2050, and there is a need for more minority leadership in politics, business, education, science, the arts and many other critical fields.

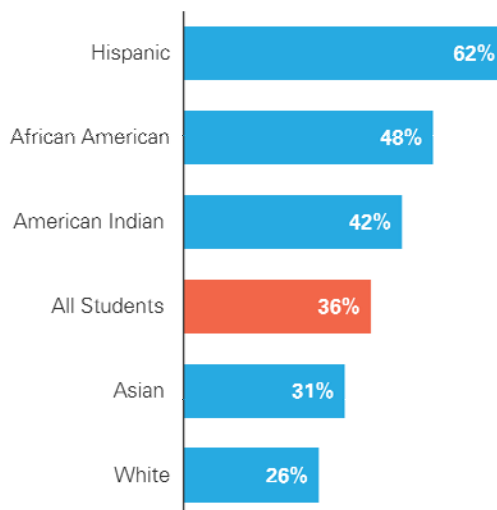
Reaching these students now is a critical part of the College Board's effort to increase the number of Americans with a college degree.

SAT® Class of 2012 — by Parental Education



■ Less than High School Diploma (6%)
 ■ High School Diploma (30%)
 ■ Associate Degree (8%)
 ■ Bachelor's Degree (31%)
 ■ Graduate Degree (25%)

Percentage of First-Generation College Goers — by Race/Ethnicity



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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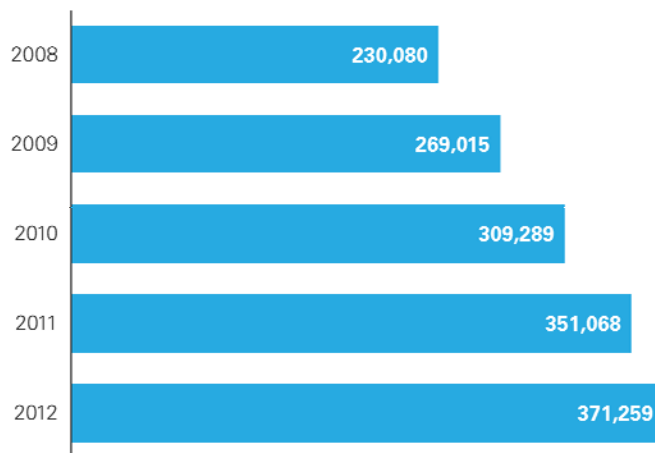
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James Montoya:

As noted earlier, parental education is one of the factors that can affect educational outcomes. Here we see that 36 percent of SAT takers reported their parents' highest level of education as a high school diploma or less. Hispanic, African American and American Indian students make up 46 percent of these first-generation college goers. Hispanic SAT takers are the least likely to have parents with a postsecondary degree.

It is absolutely critical that we support first-generation college families. When one generation succeeds, it raises the bar for each successive generation. If we are going to reach our goal of 55 percent of Americans holding a college degree by 2025, we are going to have to make major inroads with first-generation college families.

SAT® Fee-Waiver Recipients — 2008–2012



22%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 **took the SAT for free** through the College Board's SAT Fee-Waiver Service.

61%

increase in fee-waiver usage since 2008.

Source: College Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2008–2012.



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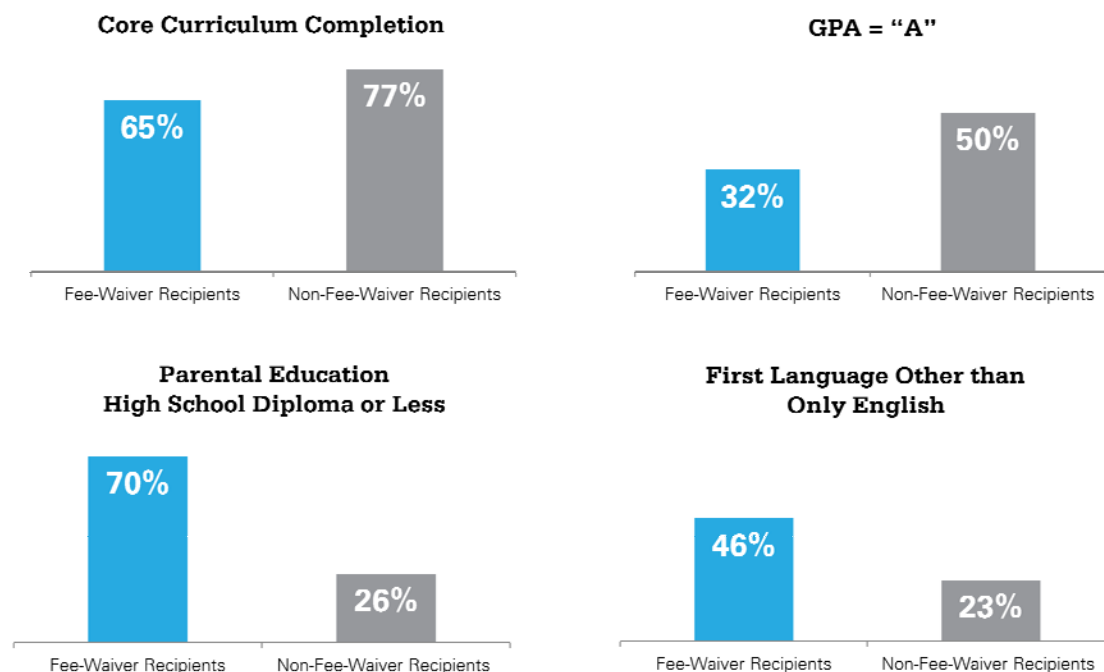
James Montoya:

The College Board is committed to helping all students make a successful transition to higher education, which is why we work to ensure that our programs are accessible to low-income students.

More students in the class of 2012 utilized SAT fee waivers than any class in the history, with 22 percent of all SAT takers — and 27 percent of all public school SAT takers — taking the SAT for free through this program.

During the 2011–2012 academic year, the College Board expended more than \$44 million in fee waivers and related services to support low-income students.

SAT Takers — by Fee Waiver Status



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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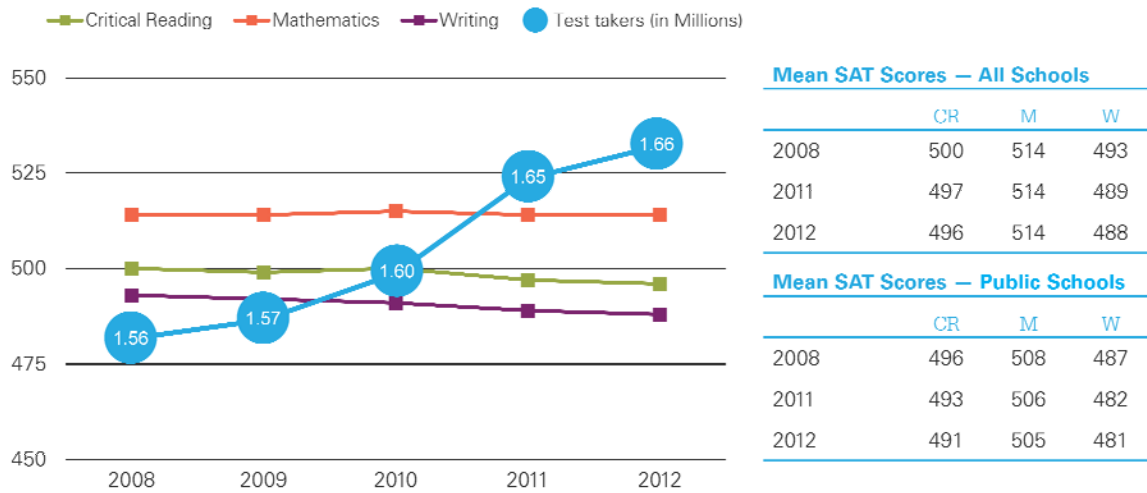
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James Montoya:

So there are clearly a great number of students who need fee waivers. But what do we know about these students? Low-income students are less likely to have parents who graduated from college, less likely to participate in rigorous courses, less likely to have completed a core curriculum, and less likely to report an "A" GPA.

Again, we see here the inequities in our education system, the challenges facing low-income students, and the clear need to support their educational aspirations.

Mean SAT Scores and Participation — 2008–2012



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2008–2012.



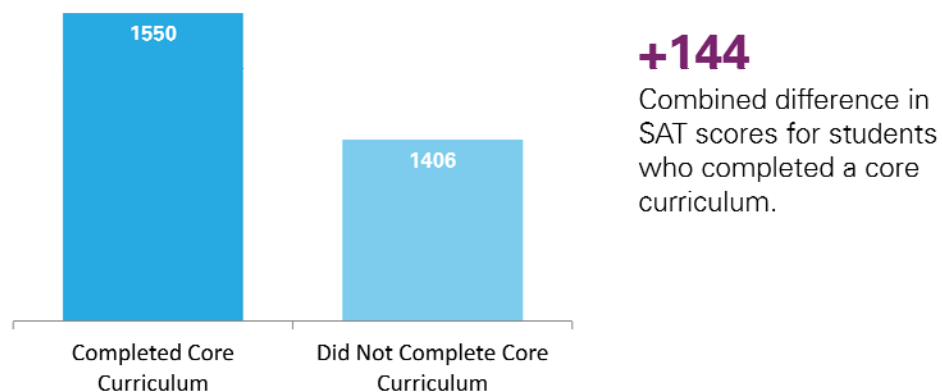
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James Montoya:

This chart shows the trend in SAT participation and performance over the last five years. 1,664,479 students in the class of 2012 took the SAT, and the number of SAT takers has increased by six percent since 2008. The mean critical reading score is down a point from last year, the mean mathematics score held steady, and the mean writing score is also down a point.

High School Curriculum and SAT® Performance

SAT® Class of 2012: Mean Scores by Core Curriculum Participation



Source: College Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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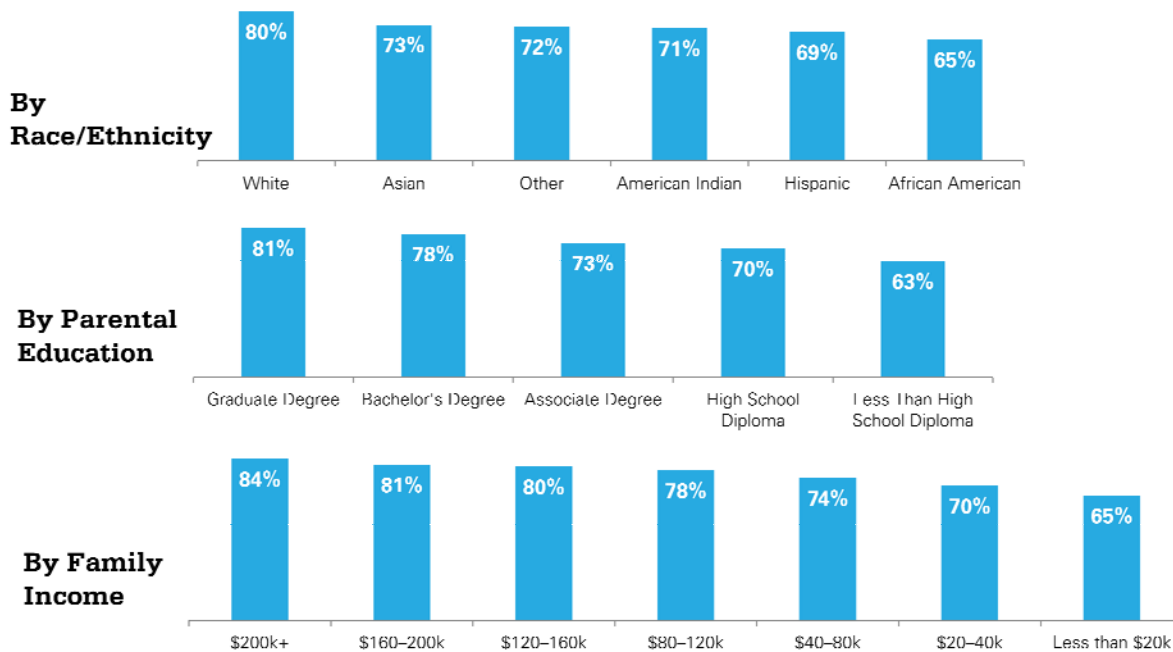
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James Montoya:

Once again—and these numbers make this very, very clear—this year’s report underscores the importance of core course work in preparing students for success on the SAT.

There is a 144-point difference in the mean SAT scores of those students who completed a core curriculum and those who did not.

SAT® Class of 2012: Core Curriculum Completion



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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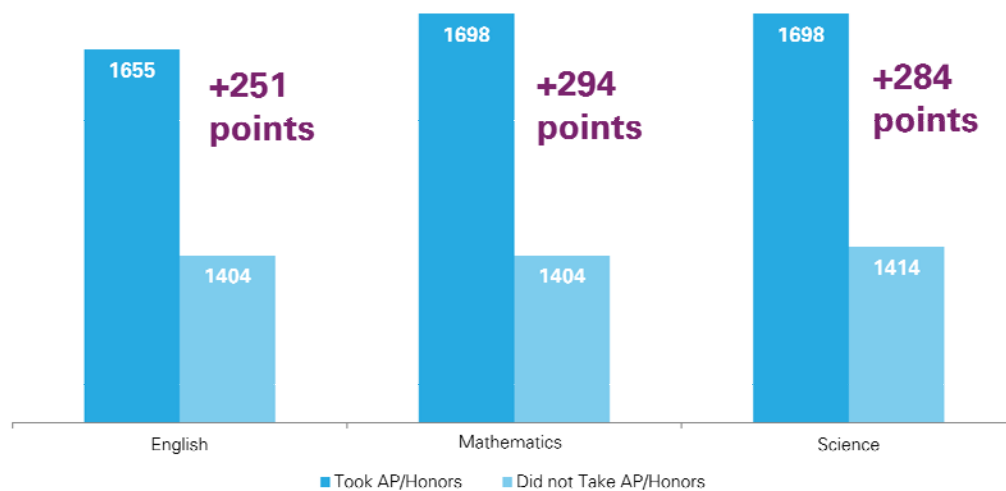
James Montoya:

This chart shows core curriculum completion by various nonschool factors including ethnicity, parental education and family income.

We know that completing a core curriculum is critical. However, underserved minority and low-income students are less likely than their peers to be completing the core course work that is fundamental to college success.

Conversely, students whose parents have higher levels of formal education or higher incomes are more likely to have completed a core curriculum.

AP[®]/Honors Course Work and SAT[®] Performance



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



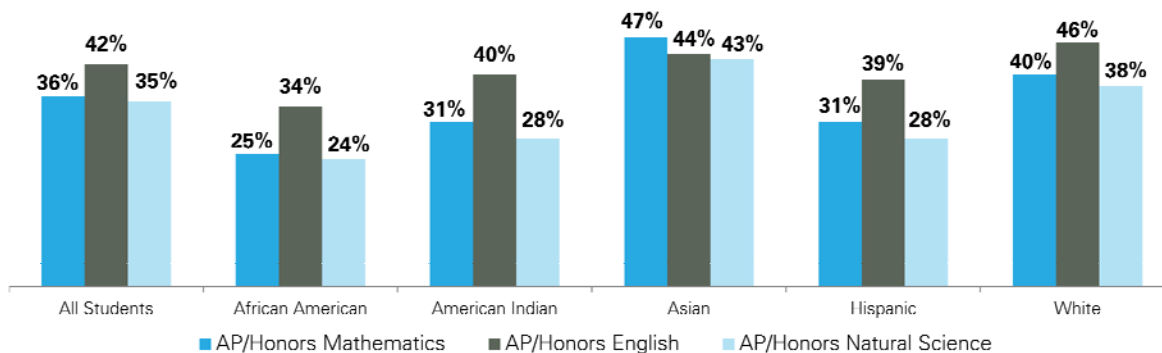
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James Montoya:

This slide again underscores the important relationship between rigorous course work and SAT performance. We saw earlier that students who participate in honors or AP courses meet the subject-level college readiness indicators at higher rates. Here we see why.

SAT® Class of 2012: AP®/Honors Participation — by Race/Ethnicity



Source: College Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



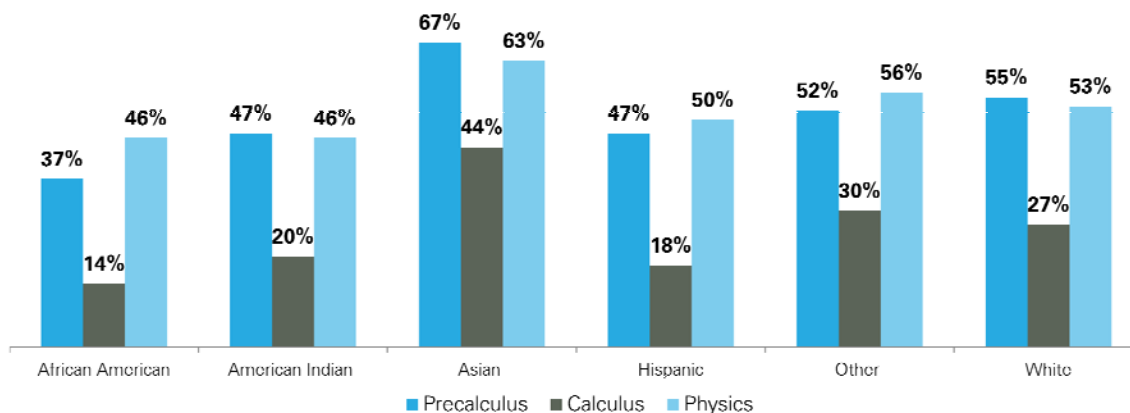
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James Montoya:

This chart shows AP and honors participation by race and ethnicity. Underserved minority students have lower rates of participation, particularly in STEM subjects.

As we found in our last AP Report to the Nation, there are many students with the potential to succeed in AP who do not take these courses. Reaching these students and putting them in a classroom with a high level of rigor and the highest set of standards is one of our most important goals.

SAT® Class of 2012: Advanced Math & Science Course Work Participation — by Race/Ethnicity



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



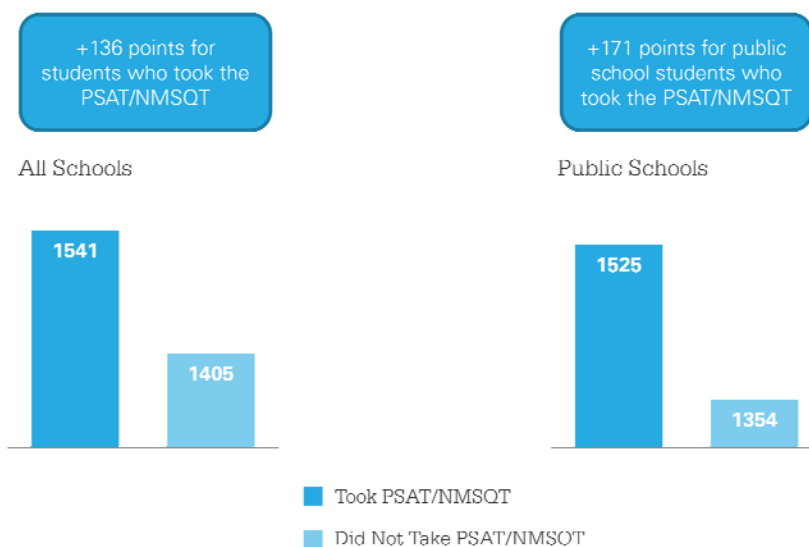
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James Montoya:

This chart shows participation in precalculus, calculus and physics courses.

Again, American Indian, African American and Hispanic students are less likely than their Asian and white peers to participate in these courses.

SAT® Class of 2012: Mean SAT® Scores — by PSAT/NMSQT® Participation



Source: College-Bound Seniors data, College Board, 2012.



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James Montoya:

Here we see SAT performance by participation in the Preliminary SAT / National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Students who took the PSAT scored significantly higher on the SAT than those who did not.

More than 22,000 high schools will administer the PSAT in October, providing more than 3.5 million students with an early indicator of their college readiness in time to prepare for the SAT.

The PSAT also helps educators identify students with potential to succeed in Advanced Placement courses.

Closing Remarks



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James Montoya:

From the data in this report, our mission is clear: expand access to a rigorous core curriculum, and improve our efforts to reach first-generation college students.

Moreover, these data reinforce what educators know: success on the SAT —and ultimately success in college — is tied to what students are learning in the classroom.

That is why the best way for students to get ready for the SAT is to take rigorous, challenging courses in high school, to study hard, and to do well in those courses.

We believe that education can be the great equalizer in American society. Unfortunately, there are many students who have the potential to succeed in college who are not being supported by our education system.

But we are working hard to close the gaps, to support talented students everywhere, and to help educators create a college-going culture that will last for generations.

That's what we owe our kids and our country. This report is a call to action. And by our actions we intend to prove that a student's potential is limited only by his or her effort.



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For more information:
College Board Press Office
212-713-8052
communications@collegeboard.org

SAT[®] Report on College & Career Readiness Q&A

