



The SAT[®] Report on College & Career Readiness: 2012



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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 over 6,000 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 <http://www.collegeboard.org>.

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Introduction

First administered in 1926, the SAT® was created to democratize access to higher education for all students. Today the SAT serves as both a **measure of students' college readiness and as a valid and reliable predictor of college outcomes**. Developed with input from teachers and educators, the SAT covers core content areas presented as part of a rigorous high school curriculum and deemed critical for success in college — critical reading, mathematics and writing. The SAT measures knowledge and skills that are considered important by both high school teachers and college faculty, and the content areas tested on the SAT are represented in the Common Core State Standards.

The SAT Report on College & Career Readiness: 2012 provides students and families with helpful information about the role and value of the SAT in high schools and higher education, and shines a light on educational inequities that must be overcome to guarantee that all students are ready for, and succeed in, college. When used appropriately, the SAT can be a valuable tool for high school educators, college-bound students, and higher education.

Each year, the College Board releases data on the SAT performance of that year's high school graduating class. However, these data represent far more than a simple mean score; they give a snapshot of the state of American education. The detailed information students share about their academic preparation and personal backgrounds enables the College Board to offer greater insight into how many of these students are college-ready and what attributes they share. These data enable anyone concerned about educational access and equity to more easily identify areas of success and areas most in need of improvement. With more students taking the SAT each year, *The SAT Report on College & Career Readiness: 2012* is a key signpost along the path to increased college readiness and completion.



About the SAT[®]

Each academic year, **millions of students** take the SAT at nearly **7,000 test centers in more than 170 countries**. Nearly all four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. — including test-optional institutions — use SAT scores because the SAT is a **reliable measure of college readiness as well as a fair and valid indicator of likely college success for students from all backgrounds**.

The SAT **measures the reading, mathematics and writing knowledge and skills that are part of a rigorous high school curriculum**, and how well students can apply that knowledge. The SAT also measures academic preparedness for college by **examining how a student reasons, communicates and solves problems**.

EDUCATOR SURVEYS

The College Board periodically conducts [curriculum surveys](#) of high school and college educators to ensure **the SAT reflects** the skills and knowledge considered important by both high school teachers and college professors.

SAT + HSGPA

Research shows that the **SAT along with high school grades** is a highly effective combination for predicting how well a student will perform in college.

Curriculum-Based Content

The SAT measures the reading, mathematics and writing skills that are part of a rigorous high school curriculum and that students need to be successful in college.

- The **reading section** assesses students' ability to draw inferences, synthesize information, distinguish between main and supporting ideas and understand vocabulary as it is used in context.
- The **mathematics section** requires students to apply mathematical concepts, solve problems and use data literacy skills in interpreting tables, charts and graphs.
- The **writing section** requires students to communicate ideas clearly and effectively; improve writing through revision and editing; recognize and identify sentence-level errors; understand grammatical elements and structures and how they relate to each other in a sentence; and improve coherence of ideas within and among paragraphs.

A Valid Predictor of College Success

Admissions officers use the SAT in conjunction with other measures such as high school GPA to predict how well a student will perform academically at a particular college or university.

In college admissions, **predictive validity refers to the ability of an admissions factor** (SAT scores, HSGPA, etc.) **to successfully predict a specific outcome** (first-year GPA, retention to second year, etc.).

The College Board conducts regular validity research to evaluate the efficacy of the SAT. Research shows that the combination of the SAT with high school grades is a better predictor of college success than SAT scores or high school grades alone.

In 2006 the College Board initiated a multiyear, national validity study to follow cohorts of students through their college years, enabling the College Board to acquire longitudinal data about the efficacy of the SAT to predict college outcomes beyond the first year. To date, more than 200 four-year colleges and universities have participated in the national validity study. The participants represent a broad cross-section of four-

year higher education institutions, based on size, sector (public/private), selectivity and geography.

The national validity studies have found that the SAT is not only a valid predictor of first-year college GPA, but also predicts fourth-year cumulative GPA equally as well as high school GPA. As always, the combined use of the SAT and high school GPA is the best predictor of college GPA.

VALIDITY OF THE SAT AND HIGH SCHOOL GPA IN PREDICTING COLLEGE OUTCOMES

KEY FINDINGS:

Each section of the SAT is a valid and strong predictor of college performance.

The SAT (CR, M, W) predicts first-year GPA and fourth-year cumulative GPA **as well as high school GPA.**

The combined use of the SAT (CR, M, W) and HSGPA is the best predictor of both first-year GPA and fourth-year cumulative GPA.

	Correlations– 1st Year GPA	Correlation– 4th 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

COLLEGE BOARD RESEARCH:

The College Board Research & Development department supports the SAT through a combination of research, evaluation and publications. To learn more about the most recent College Board R&D publications: research.collegeboard.org

VALIDITY STUDIES BY COLLEGES

Colleges and universities utilize a variety of academic factors such as high school GPA, SAT scores and strength of curriculum to assess an applicant's likelihood of success at that institution. As a result, college and universities need to be sure that each admission factor is a valid and reliable predictor of desired college outcomes for their specific population of students.

Colleges and universities are encouraged to conduct regular SAT validity studies, either independently or through The [Admitted Class Evaluation Service™](#) (ACES™), the free College Board validity study service. Last year, more than 175 colleges and universities conducted nearly 250 separate validity studies through ACES.

Fair for All Students

A substantial body of literature indicates that test bias has been largely mitigated in today's admission tests due to extensive research and development of question items...

— NACAC Report of the Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in undergraduate Admission (2008)

The idea that differences in test scores among different groups of students is somehow the result of testing bias "...is unequivocally rejected within mainstream psychology."

— Paul R. Sackett, Matthew J. Borneman and Brian S. Connelly; University of Minnesota (2008)

The College Board is committed to ensuring that the SAT is fair for all students. As a rigorously researched and designed standardized test, **the SAT is consistently shown to be a fair and valid predictor of college success for all students, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status.**

Great care goes into developing and evaluating every question that appears on the SAT. College Board test development committees made up of experienced educators and subject-matter experts determine the test specifications and the types of questions that are asked.

Before appearing in a test form that will count toward a student's score, every potential SAT question is:

- ◆ **Reviewed by external subject matter experts** (math or English teachers) to make sure it reflects the knowledge and skills that are part of a rigorous high school curriculum.
- ◆ Subjected to an independent, **external sensitivity review** process.
- ◆ **Pretested on a diverse sample of students from around the world** in live testing conditions (this is the extra "unscored section" that test-takers complete as part of every SAT test). Any question that performs differently for any gender or racial/ethnic group is eliminated.

There are numerous research studies demonstrating the fairness of the SAT, including studies by researchers at the University of California–Santa Barbara and the University of Minnesota. In particular, a recent studyⁱ published in *Psychological Science* showed that the SAT and high school GPA remain essentially as predictive of first-year GPA after controlling for student socioeconomic status, indicating that the SAT is not a measure of socioeconomic status.

Mean score differences among various groups of students reflect the many underlying factors related to performance on the SAT, including access to — and participation in — core courses and more advanced course work, family background and parental education.

5,515

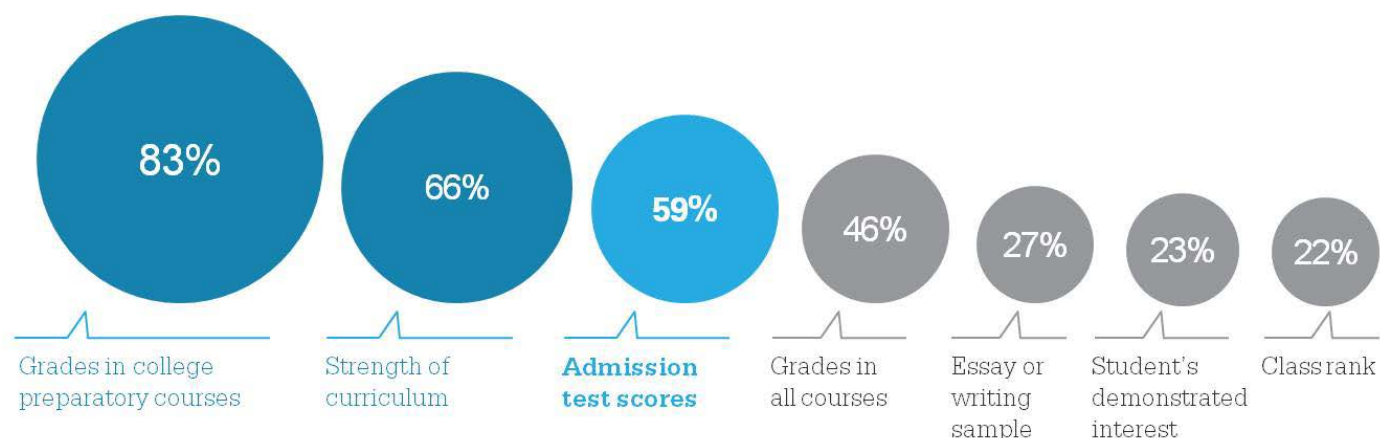
different colleges and universities received SAT score reports from students in the class of 2012.

Integral to College Admission

With more students than ever pursuing a college degree, **admission officers consider college entrance exams such as the SAT integral to the college admission process.** In the most recent [“State of College Admission”](#) report from the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), **admission test scores ranked as the third-most important factor in college admission, behind only grades in college preparatory courses and strength of curriculum**, and ahead of factors such as grades in all courses, application essay and class rank. Nearly 60 percent of admission officers stated admission test scores were of “considerable importance,” up from 46 percent in 1993.

FACTORS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE IN COLLEGE ADMISSION

Source: [NACAC State of College Admissions 2011](#)



The SAT is an important tool for college admission officers seeking to build the most promising freshman class for their particular institution. What each college or university defines as “most promising” may differ, but the SAT is a valuable predictor of college success regardless of an institution’s specific goals, as evidenced by the national SAT validity research discussed earlier.

[Recently published research](#)ⁱⁱ also has demonstrated that the **SAT adds incremental value above HSGPA in the prediction of cumulative GPA across all college majors** and that the SAT tended to be most predictive of cumulative GPA in the STEM majors.

75%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 planned to apply for financial aid.

51%

planned to pursue a master's degree or higher level of postsecondary education.

POSTSECONDARY PLANS OF SAT TAKERS: 10-YEAR TRENDS

	2002	2011	2012
INTENDED DEGREE			
Certificate program	1%	1%	1%
Associate degree	1%	1%	1%
Bachelor's degree	24%	30%	30%
Master's degree	30%	29%	30%
Doctoral/related degree	21%	21%	22%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Undecided	21%	16%	16%
FINANCIAL AID			
Plan to apply for financial aid	73%	75%	75%
INTENDED CAREER PATH			
Health-Related	15%	19%	19%
Business/Commerce	14%	11%	11%
Arts: Visual and Performing	8%	8%	7%
Education	9%	6%	5%
Engineering	9%	8%	9%
Biological Sciences	5%	6%	7%

The positive relationship between SAT scores and college retention is evidenced by the higher average retention rates for those students with higher SAT scores.

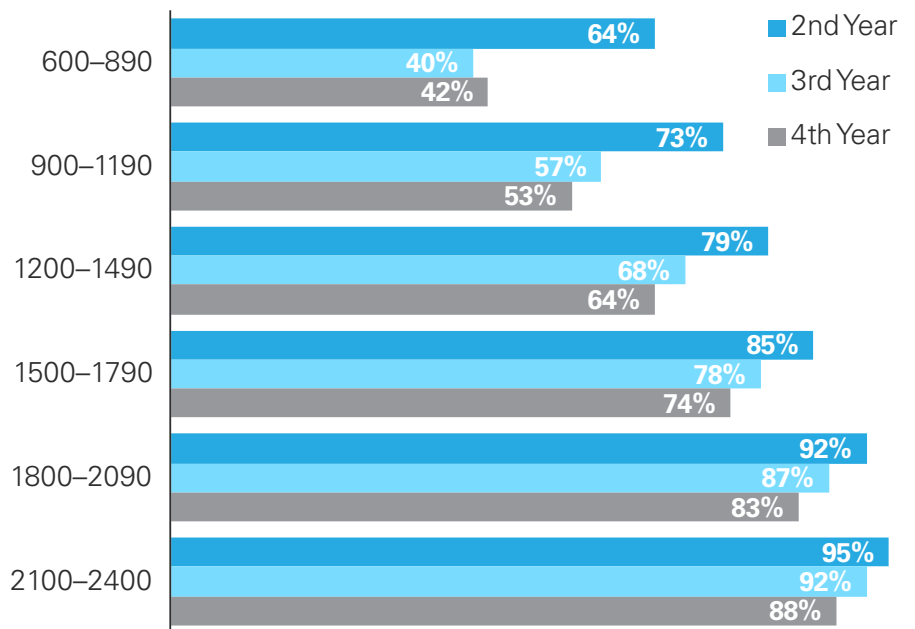
A Strong Indicator of College Retention

Retention continues to be an important issue in higher education. More than 40 percent of four-year college entrants will not complete their four-year degree.ⁱⁱⁱ

Just as the SAT is a valid predictor of college success throughout all four years of undergraduate study, SAT scores are a strong indicator of a student's likely [retention beyond freshman year](#).

COLLEGE RETENTION RATES BY SAT SCORE BAND

SAT SCORE RANGE



A Partner in the Common Core

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) 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.

The College Board has been a consistent advocate and committed collaborator in the development of the Common Core State Standards. Our organization helped draft the original College and Career Readiness Standards, provided feedback on the K–12 standards and served on the advisory group that guided the initiative. The College Board is committed to helping states and districts understand how to implement these new common standards.

The SAT is aligned to the Common Core State Standards as well or better than any assessment that has been developed for college admission and/or placement. The College Board will continue to invest and is committed to building deeper alignment to ensure the SAT reflects the key components of the CCSS.

Completing core course work and participating in advanced courses plays a significant role in academic performance, affecting not only SAT performance but other measures such as GPA and graduation rates. In the long run, if we are going to achieve the 55 by 25 goal of our [College Completion Agenda](#) (55 percent of Americans holding a postsecondary degree by 2025), we must ensure that all students — including traditionally underserved minority and low-income students — complete core course work and have access to the most rigorous courses possible. We are confident that the Common Core State Standards will help achieve that goal.

2



SAT Access and Equity

Founded in 1900, the College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. The organization promotes excellence and equity in America's education system through its programs and services in college readiness and college success, and through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools. The SAT itself was established to democratize access to higher education; to ensure that students who did not attend the most exclusive high schools had a chance to go to college. That mission continues today in a rapidly changing world.

The class of 2012 represented the most diverse class of SAT takers in history, underscoring the College Board's continued commitment to access and equity.

754,922

minority students in the class of 2012 took the SAT, up from 600,830 in 2008.

457,971

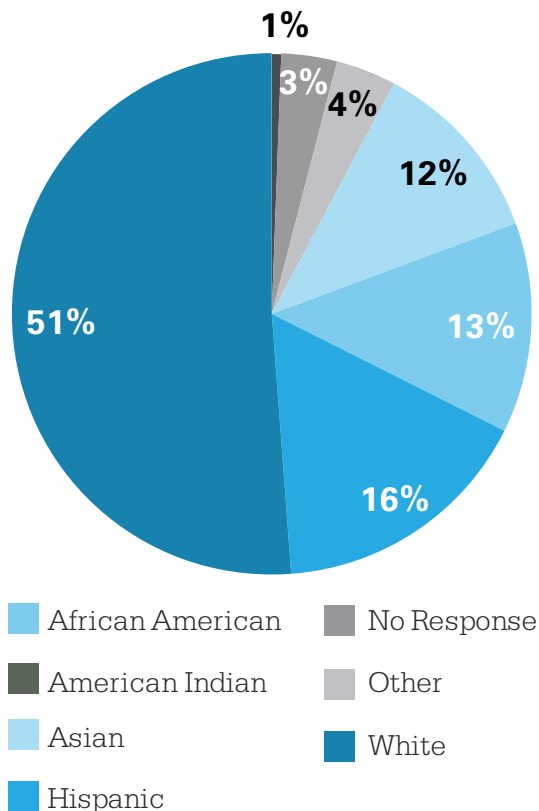
class of 2012 SAT takers spoke a first language that was not exclusively English, up from 347,512 in 2008.

The Increasing Diversity of SAT Takers

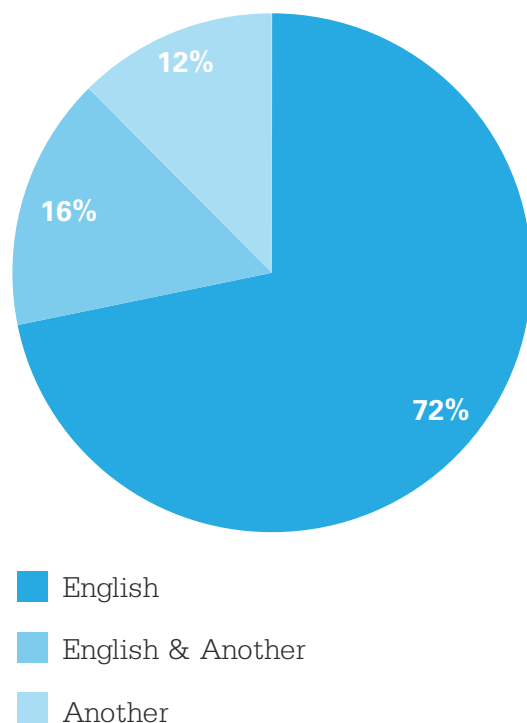
More than ever, the population of students taking the SAT reflects the diverse makeup of America's classrooms. Among SAT takers in the class of 2012, **45 percent were minority students** (up from 44 percent in the class of 2011 and 38 percent in the class of 2008) making this **the most diverse class of SAT takers ever**. Among public school SAT takers in the class of 2012, 46 percent were minority students, up from 39 percent five years ago.

More high school students and aspiring college goers are English language learners or those who spoke English and another language at home. Among SAT takers in the class of 2012, **28 percent reported that English was not exclusively their first language** (up from 27 percent in the class of 2011 and 24 percent in the class of 2008). Among public school SAT takers in the class of 2012, 25 percent reported that English was not exclusively their first language, up from 23 percent five years ago.

SAT CLASS OF 2012
— BY RACE/ETHNICITY



SAT CLASS OF 2012
— BY FIRST LANGUAGE



46%

of first-generation college goers in the SAT class of 2012 are underserved minority students.

62%

of Hispanic SAT takers in the class of 2012 are first-generation college goers.

48%

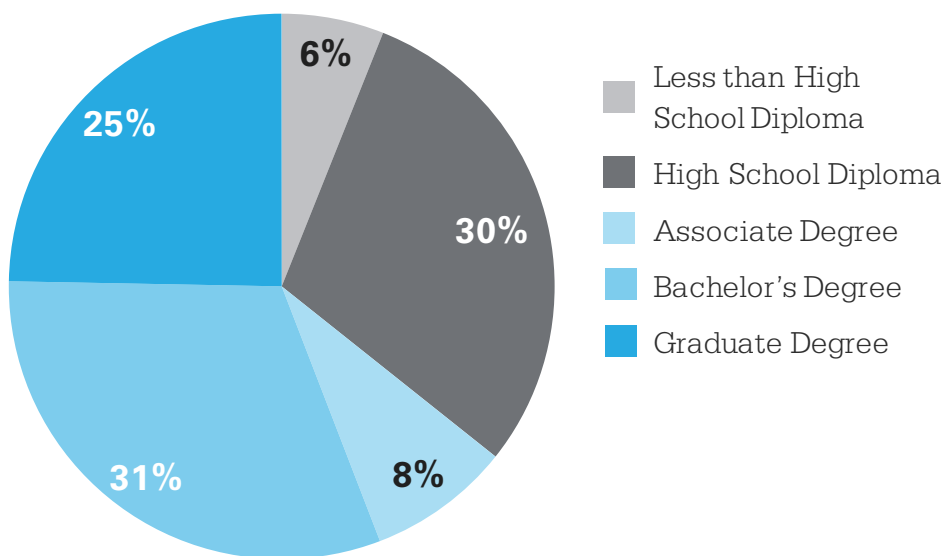
of African American SAT takers in the class of 2012 are first-generation college goers.

First-Generation College Goers

Any long-term plan for increasing the number of Americans with a college degree must include outreach to first-generation or prospective first-generation college students. It is especially important that we reach minority and underserved students, who are less likely to have parents with a college degree.

Among the SAT class of 2012, **36 percent of all students reported their parents' highest level of education as a high school diploma or less.** Underserved minority students accounted for 46 percent of first-generation college goers. Conversely, underserved minority students accounted for only 20 percent of SAT takers in the class of 2012 who reported their parents had a postsecondary degree.

SAT CLASS OF 2012 — BY PARENTAL EDUCATION



Percentage of Racial/Ethnic Group Who Were First-Generation College Goers

Hispanic	62%
African American	48%
American Indian	42%
Asian	31%
White	26%

\$44+ million

was expended by the **College Board on SAT Fee Waivers and related expenses** during the 2011-12 academic year.

22%

of all SAT takers in the class of 2012 (371,259 students) **took the SAT for free** through the College Board's SAT Fee-Waiver Service.

70%

of all SAT fee-waiver recipients in the class of 2012 **reported their parents' highest level of education as a high school diploma or less**, compared to 26 percent of non-fee-waiver SAT takers.

46%

of all SAT fee-waiver recipients in the class of 2012 **reported that English was not exclusively their first language**, compared to 23 percent of non-fee-waiver SAT takers.

Assisting Low-Income Students

Taking a college entrance exam is a critical step on the road to higher education, but many traditionally underserved students face financial, familial and geographic barriers that can prevent them from testing. Low-income students are less likely to have parents who went to college, less likely to participate in rigorous courses, and less likely to have completed a core curriculum. Providing these students with the support and resources they need is crucial to meeting our nation's long-term college completion goals.

SAT FEE-WAIVER SERVICE

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

Participation in the College Board's SAT Fee-Waiver Service has increased 61 percent since 2008. Among the class of 2012, more students utilized SAT fee waivers than in any other class in the history of the program.

SAT Access and Equity: 10-Year Trends

	2002	2011	2012
ETHNICITY			
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%
Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander	8%	11%	12%
Black or African American	9%	13%	13%
Hispanic	8%	15%	16%
White	53%	53%	51%
Other	3%	4%	4%
No Response	19%	4%	3%
PARENTAL EDUCATION			
No high school diploma	5%	6%	6%
High school diploma	32%	31%	30%
Associate degree	9%	8%	8%
Bachelor's degree	28%	31%	31%
Graduate degree	26%	25%	25%
CITIZENSHIP			
U.S. citizen	92%	91%	91%
Permanent resident	4%	3%	3%
Citizen of another country	4%	6%	6%
FIRST LANGUAGE			
English	81%	73%	72%
English and another	10%	15%	16%
Another	9%	12%	12%
GENDER			
Female test-takers	54%	53%	53%

3



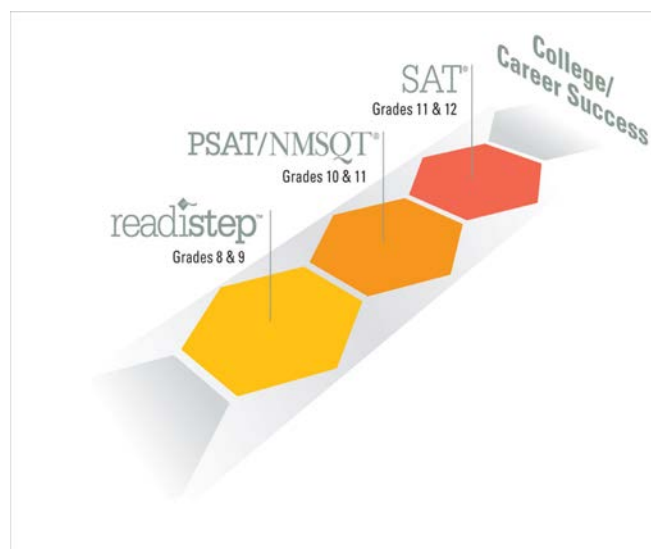
The College Board in K-12

The College Board recognizes that students will traverse different paths after high school. Some will need remediation and additional practice in order to achieve postsecondary academic success; others will be ready for college-level course work in high school. Research-validated programs and resources that support teachers, students and families can be extremely beneficial in cultivating college readiness. To support its mission to connect more students with college success and opportunity, the College Board has developed a flexible, integrated series of college readiness assessments, provides rigorous curricula and offers professional development resources that educators can use to ensure more students are prepared for educational opportunities after high school.

The College Board's College and Career Readiness Pathway

The College Board's College and Career Readiness Pathway is a series of integrated assessments — ReadiStep™, PSAT/NMSQT®, and SAT — that measure a student's college readiness from the eighth through 12th grades. When educators use these assessments as a comprehensive program, they **systematically and progressively measure** the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills that are critical for success.

The feedback and tools within the Pathway also help students **improve their skills** and enable immediate academic intervention by teachers to enhance learning, which is critical in the drive to increase college and career readiness.



ReadiStep™

Intervening Early (Grades 8–9)

Offering early feedback to help students identify the skills they need to be college ready.

PSAT/NMSQT®

Identifying Opportunity (Grades 10–11)

Identifying potential success in AP® and areas of opportunity for improved college readiness.

Research indicates that PSAT/NMSQT scores are strong predictors of student success in AP. The PSAT/NMSQT can provide high school educators with guidance in identifying students who may be ready for the rigor of AP.

SAT

Providing College Access (Grades 11–12)

Providing insight into a student's level of college readiness and potential for college success.

3.5+ million

students are expected to take the **PSAT/NMSQT** during the 2012-13 school year.

22,000+

high schools will administer the **PSAT/NMSQT** during the 2012-13 school year.

TEST DATES FOR 2012

are Wednesday, October 17 and Saturday, October 20.

+136 points

Combined difference in SAT scores for **all students** who took the PSAT/NMSQT.

+171 points

Combined difference in SAT score for **public school students** who took the PSAT/NMSQT.

PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT / National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) provides an early indication of a student's readiness for college-level work and can help educators identify students with the potential to succeed in Advanced Placement® courses. The PSAT/NMSQT Score Report offers extensive, personalized feedback about each student's performance in reading, mathematics and writing that will help better prepare them for the SAT and college.

Students who take the PSAT/NMSQT receive access to My College QuickStart™, a free, personalized college-planning tool developed by the College Board. My College QuickStart includes: an enhanced score report with each test question, the student's answer and the correct answer with explanations; a customized SAT study plan based on PSAT/NMSQT performance; tools to help the student discover potential majors and careers; and a starter list of colleges based on the student's home state and intended major.

PSAT/NMSQT AND SAT PERFORMANCE

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.

	%	CR	M	W
ALL SCHOOLS				
Took the PSAT/NMSQT	78%	512	525	504
Did not take the PSAT/NMSQT	22%	462	489	454
Difference		50	36	50
Combined Difference		+136		
PUBLIC SCHOOLS				
Took the PSAT/NMSQT	80%	507	521	497
Did not take the PSAT/NMSQT	20%	453	463	438
Difference		54	58	59
Combined Difference		+171		

45,000+

students across seven states, including **all public school juniors in Delaware and Idaho**, participated in SAT School Day during the 2011-12 school year.

> 40%

of all students who participated in SAT School Day during 2011-12 qualified for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

The SAT in K-12

Districts and states that offer the SAT to every student help establish new opportunities for students to achieve their higher education aspirations. Teachers and administrators at the secondary school level can use SAT results to measure their students' college readiness and to tailor a curriculum that best addresses the needs of their students.

SAT SCHOOL DAY

The College Board now offers states and districts the option of hosting the SAT during a school day. The SAT School Day, offered in the fall and the spring, helps states and districts foster a college-going culture. It also sends a powerful message of a state or a district's commitment to preparing all students for life after high school.

During the 2011-12 school year, the SAT was administered during the school day to more than 45,000 students in districts across seven states, including all public school juniors in Delaware and Idaho. The overall **participation rate for SAT School Day was 93 percent**, meaning virtually all eligible students took advantage of the opportunity to take a college entrance exam at no charge. At least 40 percent of students in every participating state or district qualified for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

"After participating in SAT School Day, we heard students share that they never would have considered pursuing higher education or taken the SAT exam, but after taking part, they realized college was an option for them. This is about providing opportunity for all of our students."

—Delaware Secretary of Education Dr. Lillian M. Lowery

4



The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark

The SAT Benchmark was designed to measure the college readiness of groups of students. The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 is associated with a 65 percent probability of obtaining a first year GPA (FYGPA) of a B- or higher, which in turn is associated with a high likelihood of college success. Students meeting the benchmark score of 1550 were more likely to enroll in a four-year college, had higher first-year GPAs and were more likely to be retained for their second and third year than those students who did not attain the SAT benchmark.

The SAT Benchmark **can assist secondary school administrators, educators and policymakers in evaluating the effectiveness of academic programs in order to better prepare students for success in college.**

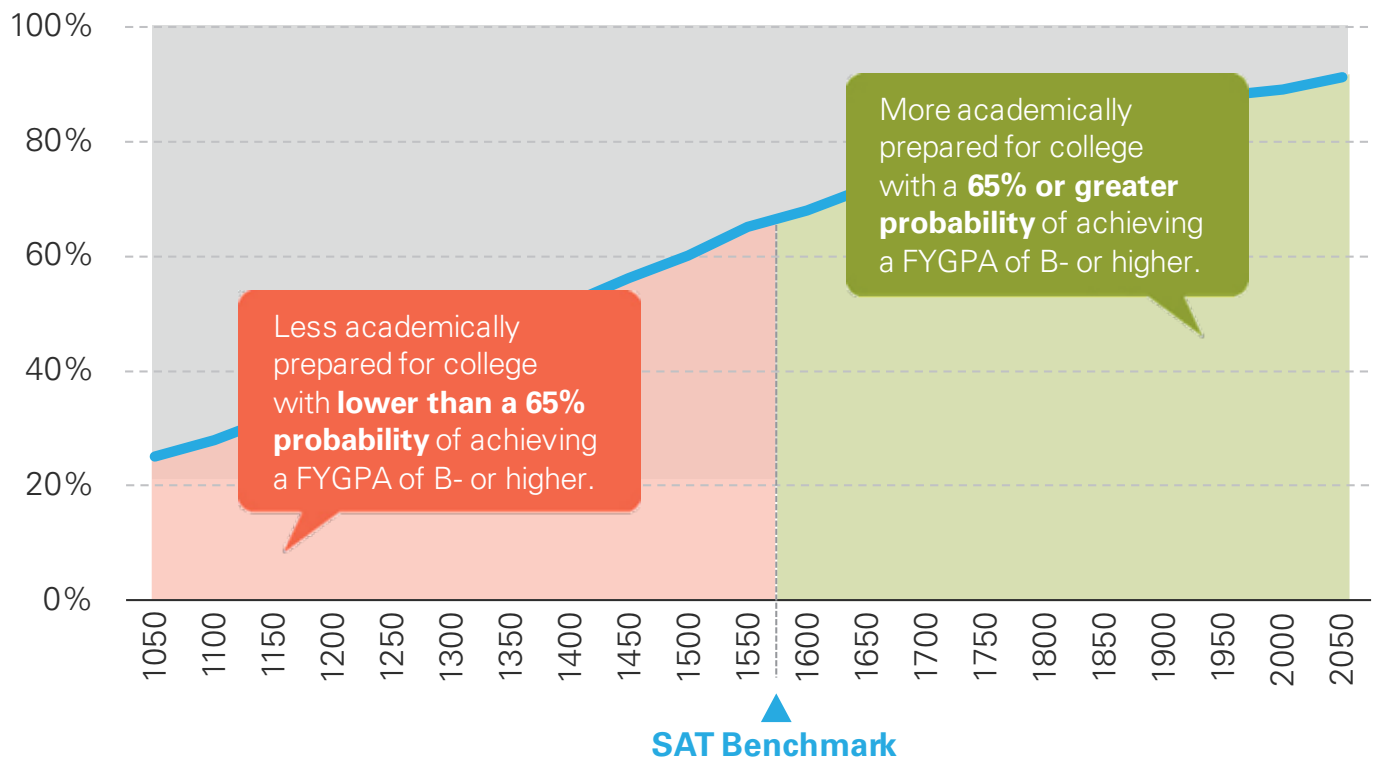
The SAT Benchmark is designed for groups of students and **should not be used for high-stakes decisions regarding the college readiness of any individual student.** As college readiness depends on a number of factors, meeting or not meeting this benchmark does not guarantee success or failure in postsecondary education for any individual student. The benchmark should never be used to discourage students from pursuing postsecondary education.

The College Readiness Continuum

Many factors contribute to college readiness. A student is considered college ready when he or she has the knowledge, skills and behaviors to successfully complete a college course of study. Because college readiness and completion is dependent on many academic and non-academic factors, **students who score below the SAT Benchmark can still succeed in college.**

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.**

PROBABILITY OF ACHIEVING A FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE GPA OF A B- OR HIGHER — BY SAT PERFORMANCE



1550

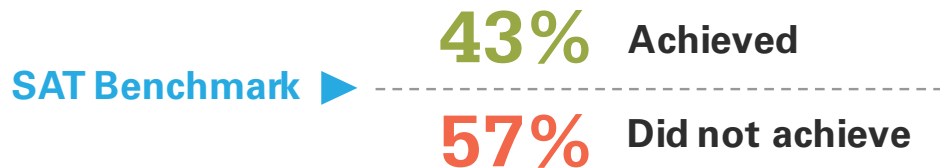
The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 indicates a 65 percent likelihood of achieving a B-average or higher during the first year of college, which research suggests is indicative of a high likelihood of college success and completion.

100+

colleges and universities participated in the College Board's validity study from which the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark was developed.

SAT Benchmark Achievement: Class of 2012

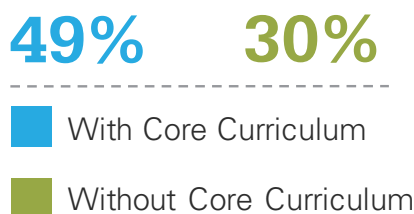
Among the high school class of 2012, 43 percent of all SAT takers met the SAT Benchmark. This percentage is consistent with the class of 2011, which also met the SAT Benchmark at a rate of 43 percent.



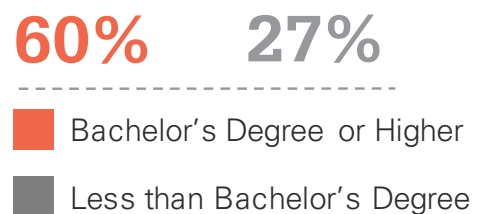
Success on the SAT is closely related to the type and rigor of course work students pursue in high school. Similarly, students in the SAT class of 2012 who met the SAT Benchmark were more likely to have completed a core curriculum. These results illustrate the need for common standards that will enable all students to develop the core competencies critical to college and career success.

Students in the class of 2012 who met the SAT Benchmark also were more likely to have parents with a four-year degree.

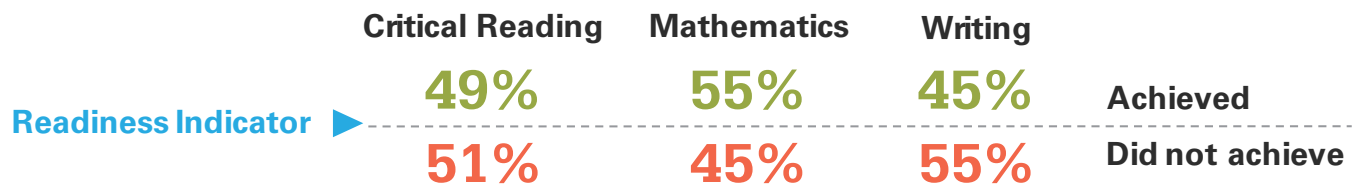
PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS WHO MET SAT BENCHMARK — BY CORE CURRICULUM COMPLETION



PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS WHO MET SAT BENCHMARK — BY PARENTAL EDUCATION

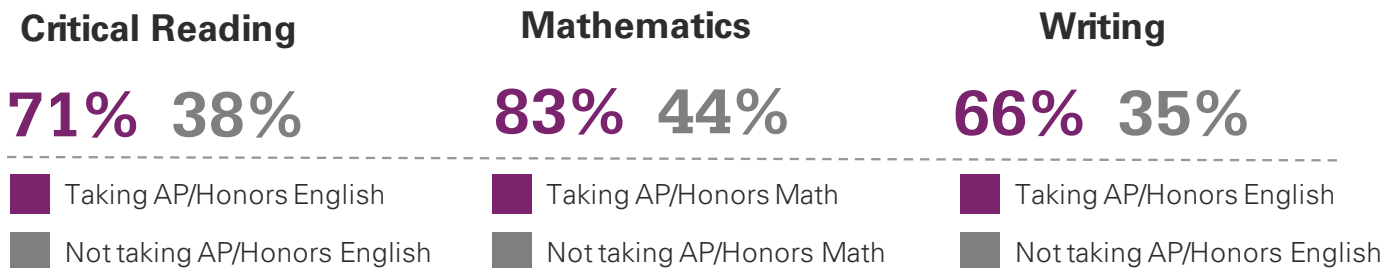


In addition to the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark, the College Board provides subject-level readiness indicators for each section of the SAT — critical reading, mathematics and writing — as a supplemental tool that can be used to help educators measure students’ preparedness in each subject area. More than 40 percent of all SAT takers met the subject-level college readiness indicators in critical reading and writing, while more than half met the subject-level indicator in mathematics.



SAT takers in the class of 2012 who met the subject-level college readiness indicators were more likely to have participated in rigorous honors or Advanced Placement courses.

PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS WHO MET SUBJECT-LEVEL COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS — BY AP/HONORS PARTICIPATION



Using the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark with Confidence



VALIDATED RESEARCH

The SAT Benchmark is based on the **most extensively researched college entrance exam**. 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.

DIVERSE STUDENT SAMPLE

The SAT Benchmark **is based on a diverse sample of students** enrolled in a nationally representative range of four-year colleges and universities across the United States.

DEFINING SUCCESS

The SAT Benchmark defines its criteria for success as a **65 percent probability of achieving a B- grade point average**, providing a strong and rigorous predictor of college success.

ONE MEASUREMENT

The SAT Benchmark offers educators the benefit of **one strong, straightforward combined score that captures students' cross-disciplinary skills**. The College Board also provides SAT readiness indicators in each of the three sections — critical reading, mathematics, and writing — as a supplemental tool that can be used to help educators measure students' preparedness in each subject area.

FRESHMAN YEAR

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. Other benchmarks measure success based on student performance in specific freshman year classes (i.e. biology) not taken by all students. **The SAT benchmark measures success based on the totality of the student's first-year college record.**

5



SAT Participation and Performance

More than 1.66 million students from the 2012 graduating class participated in the college-going process by taking the SAT.

SAT performance of students in the high school graduating class of 2012 continues to reinforce 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.

+6%

more students took the SAT in the class of 2012 than in the class of 2008.

SAT Participation and Performance

More than 1.66 million students took the SAT in the class of 2012, making it the largest class of SAT takers in history. The mean scores for the SAT class of 2012 were 496 in critical reading, 514 in mathematics and 488 in writing. Since 2008, SAT participation has increased 6 percent, while critical reading scores have declined four points, writing scores have declined five points, and mathematics scores have remained stable.

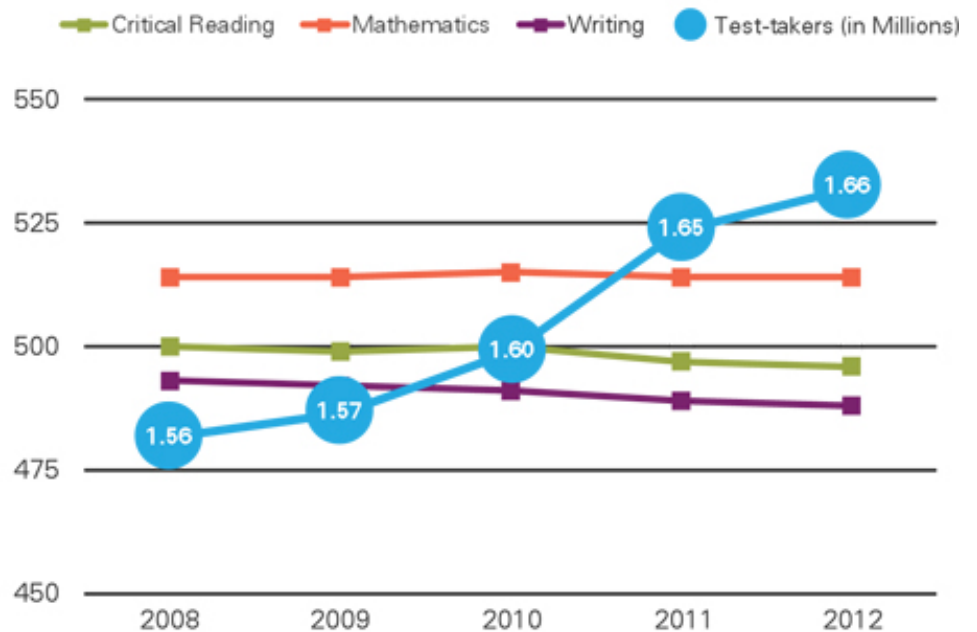
PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE — 2008-12

Mean SAT Scores — All Schools

	CR	M	W
2008	500	514	493
2011	497	514	489
2012	496	514	488

Mean SAT Scores — Public Schools

	CR	M	W
2008	496	508	487
2011	493	506	482
2012	491	505	481



CORE CURRICULUM

For the majority of students, core curriculum completion is associated with stronger SAT performance.

75%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 reported completing a core curriculum.

+144

Combined difference in SAT scores for students across all schools who complete a core curriculum.

+149

Combined difference in SAT scores for public school students completing a core curriculum.

High School Course Work and SAT Performance

Academic preparedness for college is in large part dependent on the type and rigor of courses that students take in high school. Students in the class of 2012 who reported completing a core curriculum performed better on the SAT than those who did not complete a core curriculum.

	%	CR	M	W
ALL SCHOOLS				
Core	75%	515	529	506
Non-Core	25%	466	483	457
Difference		49	46	49
Combined Difference			+144	
PUBLIC SCHOOLS				
Core	74%	510	524	499
Non-Core	26%	461	473	450
Difference		49	51	49
Combined Difference			+149	

**Completed
Core
Curriculum**



1550

Average SAT score

**Did Not
Complete
Core
Curriculum**



1406

Average SAT score

65–80%

Rates of core curriculum completion vary **by ethnicity.**

63–81%

Rates of core curriculum completion vary **by parental education.**

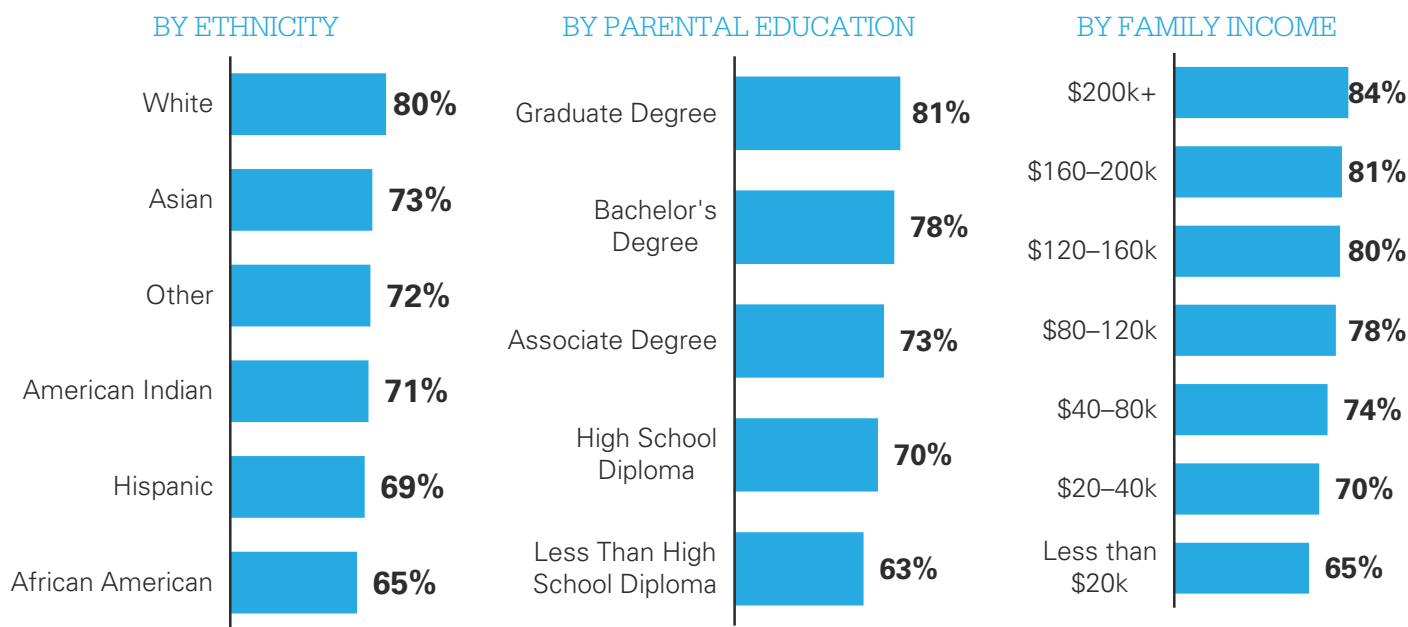
65–84%

Rates of core curriculum completion vary **by reported family income.**

DIFFERENCES IN CORE CURRICULUM COMPLETION

While students who complete a core curriculum tend to perform better on the SAT, rates of core curriculum completion vary in relation to numerous demographic and socioeconomic factors. This is a critical issue for American educators, as academic preparedness for college is strongly linked to the type and rigor of courses that a student takes in high school. That is why the College Board has been a partner in the Common Core State Standards initiative from the beginning. Providing a rigorous learning platform that prepares all of our nation's students to perform in the classroom is crucial to our nation's future prosperity.

PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS COMPLETING A CORE CURRICULUM



4%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 achieved an SAT score between 2100–2400.

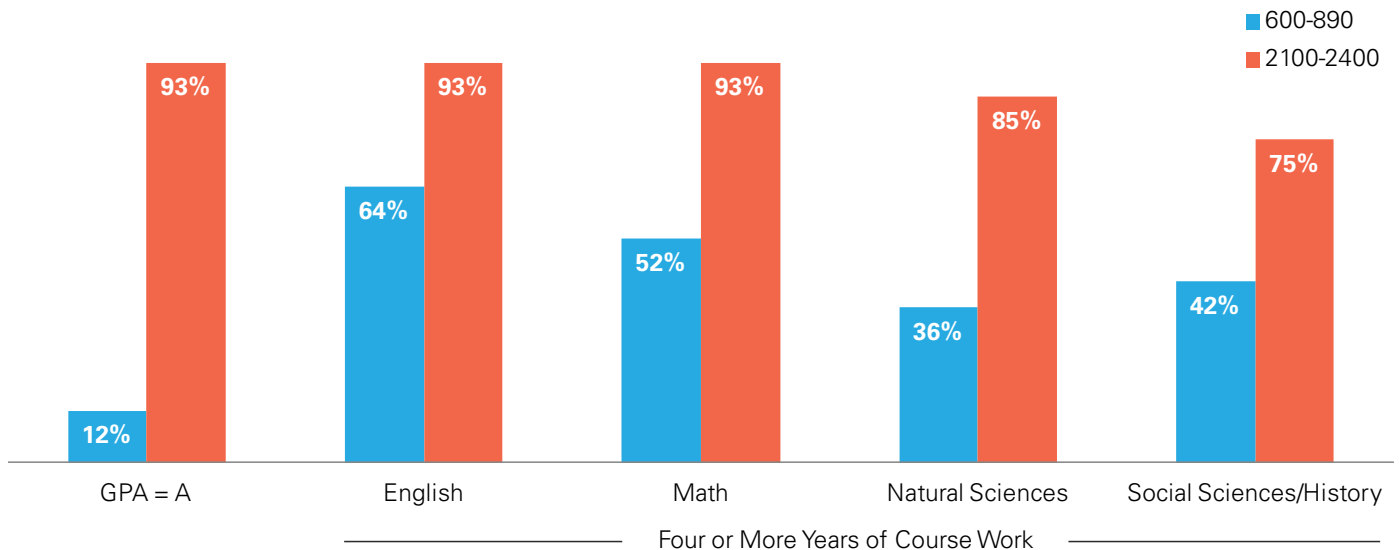
2%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 achieved an SAT score between 600–890.

Academic Preparation at Each End of the SAT Performance Spectrum

While completing a core curriculum is associated with stronger SAT performance, going above and beyond a core curriculum seems to be a key difference between high performing SAT takers and those who perform at the lower end of the SAT score range. Those students who spend years slowly acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills develop a broad foundation for academic success that can sustain them throughout the pursuit of college and career success.

PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS WHO REPORTED AN “A” GPA OR COMPLETED 4 OR MORE YEARS OF COURSE WORK IN CORE SUBJECTS — BY SCORE RANGE



Advanced Course Work and SAT Performance

+294 points

Combined difference in mean SAT score for students who took AP/Honors Math.

+251 points

Combined difference in mean SAT score for students who took AP/Honors English.

+284 points

Combined difference in mean SAT score for students who took AP/Honors Natural Science.

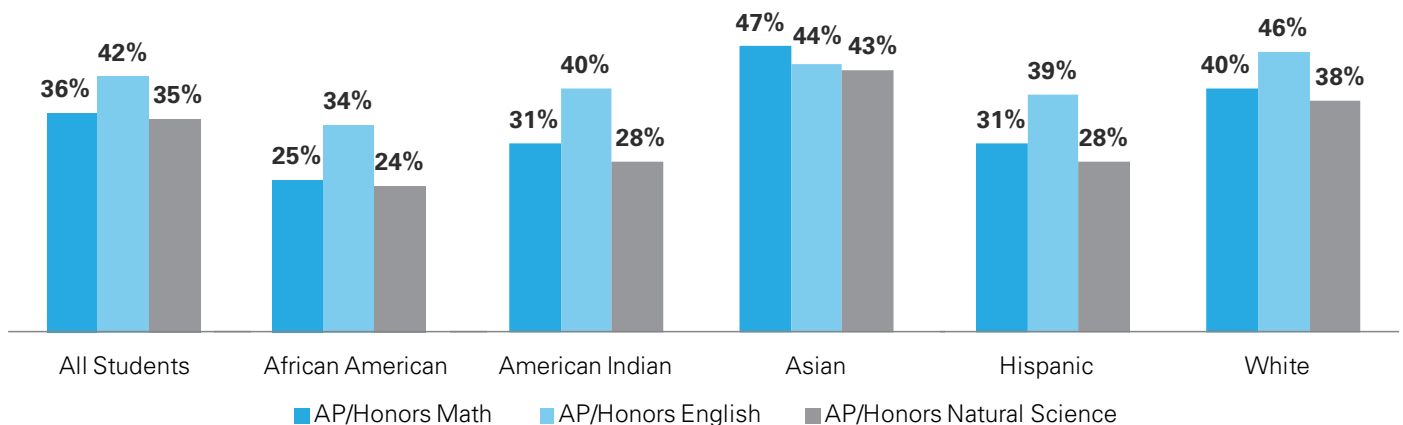
The College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP) represents a high standard of academic rigor. Research consistently shows that students who score a 3 or higher (out of 5) on AP Exams typically experience greater academic success in college and have higher graduation rates than their otherwise comparable non-AP peers. As in previous years, **students who reported taking Advanced Placement or honors courses outperformed their peers on the SAT.**

MEAN SAT SCORES — BY AP/HONORS MATH, ENGLISH, OR NATURAL SCIENCE PARTICIPATION

Math	English	Natural Science	
1698	1655	1698	■ AP/Honors
1404	1404	1414	■ No AP/Honors

AP is an especially powerful tool for underserved students. The National Center for Educational Accountability found that minority and low-income students who took AP courses, particularly those who scored a 3 or higher on the exam, were much more likely to earn a college degree within five years. Despite strides made in recent years, minority and low-income students participate in AP/Honors course work at lower rates than their peers.

PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS PARTICIPATING IN AP/HONORS COURSES — BY ETHNICITY



360

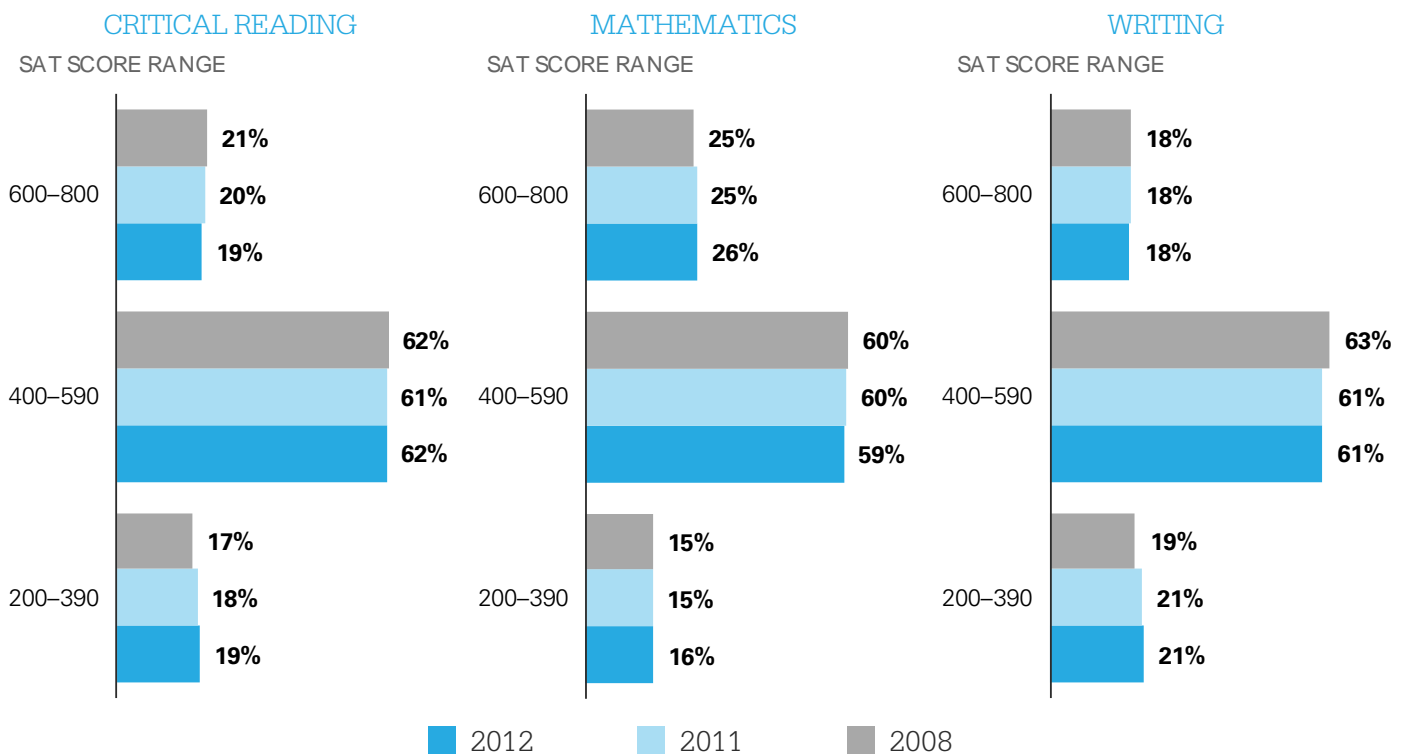
SAT takers in the class of 2012 achieved the highest possible score (2400).

SAT High-Achievers

The SAT has enjoyed a significant increase in participation while maintaining a consistent percentage of high-achieving test-takers. This is yet more evidence that diversity does not equal dilution, and that excellence and equity are indeed compatible.

Despite a decline in mean scores, there are more high performers on the SAT than ever before, and the percentage of students scoring in the top two score bands (600–800) on each section of the SAT has remained fairly stable during the last five years.

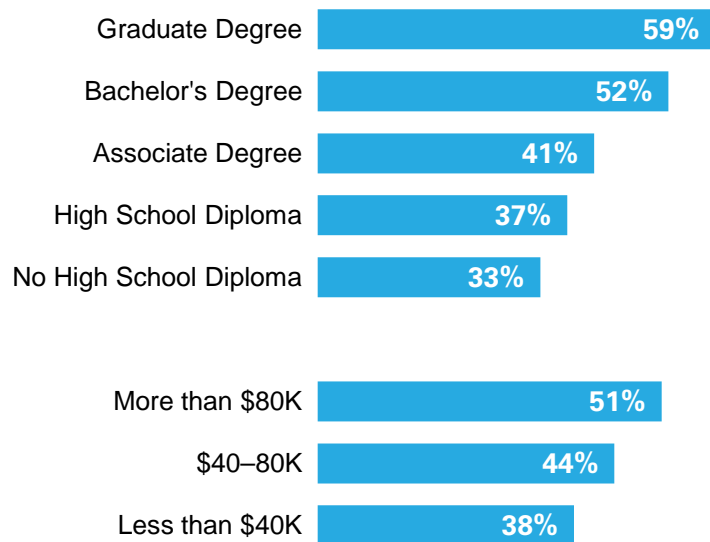
PERCENTAGE OF SAT TAKERS IN EACH SCORE BAND — BY INDIVIDUAL SECTION



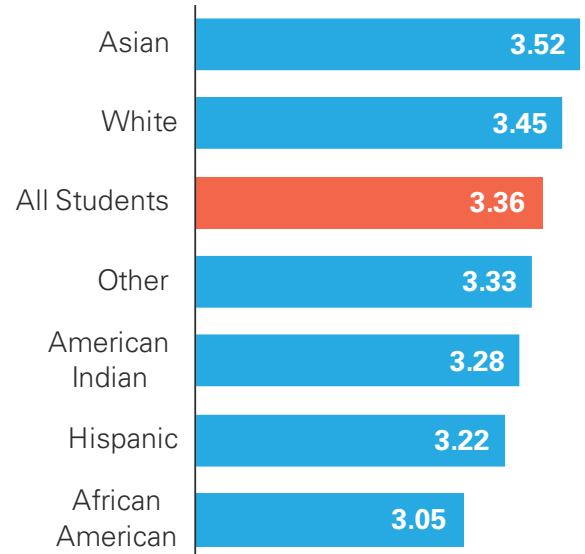
Nonschool Factors and Academic Achievement

There are many nonschool factors that may affect academic achievement and SAT performance, including parental education, family income and language barriers. These factors are associated with key educational experiences on both assessments such as the SAT and in day-to-day schoolwork. These are important issues that should be examined if we are to reach our national goal of providing truly equitable access to higher education.

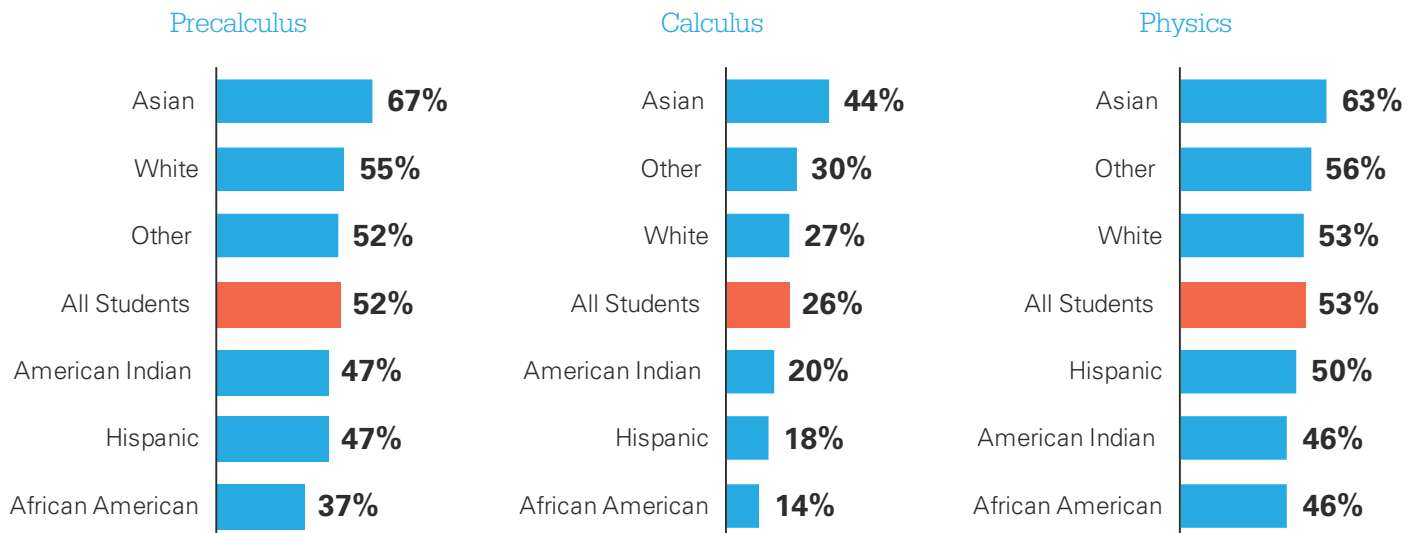
PERCENTAGE REPORTING AN "A" GPA —
BY PARENTAL EDUCATION AND FAMILY INCOME



AVERAGE GPA —
BY RACE/ETHNICITY



PERCENTAGE COMPLETING ADVANCED COURSES — BY RACE/ETHNICITY



3.36

is the average GPA reported by SAT takers in the class of 2012, **up from a mean of 3.31 in 2002.**

84%

of SAT takers in the class of 2012 attended public school.

STEM

course work is being completed at slightly higher rates than it was 10 years ago.

The High School Experience of SAT Takers: 10-Year Trends

	2002	2011	2012
TYPE OF SCHOOL			
Public	83%	84%	84%
Non-public	17%	16%	16%
CUMULATIVE GPA			
A+, A, A- grade averages	42%	45%	46%
B+, B, B- grade averages	47%	45%	44%
C+, C, C- grade averages	11%	10%	10%
SUBJECT-SPECIFIC GRADES			
Art and Music	3.74	3.74	3.75
English	3.28	3.39	3.40
Foreign/Classical Languages	3.25	3.33	3.35
Mathematics	3.10	3.17	3.18
Natural Sciences	3.22	3.27	3.29
Social Sciences/History	3.36	3.40	3.41
Grade average for all subjects	3.31	3.34	3.36
COURSE-TAKING PATTERNS			
Precalculus	45%	51%	52%
Calculus	25%	25%	26%
Physics	49%	51%	53%
Chemistry	86%	89%	89%
U.S. Government/Civics	65%	60%	59%
Economics	45%	42%	43%
Spanish	67%	70%	69%

PRACTICE QUESTIONS AND TEST-TAKING TIPS

The SAT student website features free practice resources such as SAT test directions, sample questions, test-taking approaches and an official practice test.

GETTING READY FOR THE SAT

This downloadable booklet contains important information about the SAT, the types of questions on each section and how to prepare for test day.

OFFICIAL PRACTICE TEST

A full-length practice test with immediate scoring capability is available online. The test includes an essay section. Students can choose to print out the test for a paper version.

THE OFFICIAL SAT QUESTION OF THE DAY™

A free daily practice SAT question that can be accessed online or received by email. Hints and detailed answer explanations are provided for each question.

SAT SKILLS INSIGHT™

An online tool that outlines the academic skills tested on the SAT.

Preparing for the SAT

As illustrated throughout this report, performance on the SAT is closely associated with the courses taken in high school, the number of years spent studying core subjects, and the rigor of a student's curriculum. Contrary to popular opinion, cramming and short-term prep cannot substitute for hard work in school when preparing for the SAT. A number of credible, independent research studies show that **the average score gain resulting from short-term test preparation is very similar to the average score gain resulting from testing a second time.**

While there is no substitute for real learning, students often find it useful to familiarize themselves with the SAT format and question types in advance of test day. In order to help students get familiar with the test, the College Board uses retired test content to create free practice tools that are available on the SAT student website.

Large-scale evaluations of coaching conducted over the past 10 years provide a general consensus on its average effect on admission exam performance — a positive effect that is small in magnitude. The effect of coaching tends to be larger on the math section of the exam (10-20 points) than for the critical reading section (5-10 points).

—NACAC discussion paper:
Preparation for College Entrance Exams (2009)



Appendix

As measures of developed critical reading, mathematical and writing abilities important for success in college, SAT scores, in conjunction with other measures such as high school GPA, are useful in making decisions about individual students and assessing their academic preparedness for college-level work. Because of the increasing public interest in educational accountability, aggregate test data continue to be widely publicized and analyzed. However, it is important to note that **aggregate results of performance on these tests may not reflect the educational attainment of all students in a school, district or state.**

Using Aggregate SAT Data

Appropriate Uses

While the SAT was created as an individual measure of a student's college readiness, states and districts can, if certain conditions are met, **use aggregate SAT performance data in conjunction with other outcome measures to evaluate the general direction of education in a particular district or state.** Aggregate SAT data must always be considered in the context of other conditions that affect the educational system.

Important Considerations

Aggregate SAT performance data should always be used in conjunction with other measures, such as the number of courses taken in various academic subjects; scores on other standardized assessments (AP, PSAT/NMSQT, state exams); student–teacher ratios; teacher credentials; expenditures per student; participation rates; retention and attrition rates; and graduation rates.

Inappropriate Uses

Useful comparisons of students' performance are possible only if all students take the same test. **It is not appropriate to rank or rate teachers, educational institutions, districts or states solely on the basis of aggregate scores derived from tests that are intended primarily as an individual measure.**

From [Guidelines on the Uses of College Board Test Scores and Related Data](#). Copyright © 2011 by College Board. All rights reserved.

MEAN SCORES BY YEAR — 1972-2012

YEAR	Male			Female			All		
	CR	M	W**	CR	M	W**	CR	M	W**
1972	531	527	-	529	489	-	530	509	-
1973	523	525	-	521	489	-	523	506	-
1974	524	524	-	520	488	-	521	505	-
1975	515	518	-	509	479	-	512	498	-
1976	511	520	-	508	475	-	509	497	-
1977	509	520	-	505	474	-	507	496	-
1978	511	517	-	503	474	-	507	494	-
1979	509	516	-	501	473	-	505	493	-
1980	506	515	-	498	473	-	502	492	-
1981	508	516	-	496	473	-	502	492	-
1982	509	516	-	499	473	-	504	493	-
1983	508	516	-	498	474	-	503	494	-
1984	511	518	-	498	478	-	504	497	-
1985	514	522	-	503	480	-	509	500	-
1986	515	523	-	504	479	-	509	500	-
1987	512	523	-	502	481	-	507	501	-
1988	512	521	-	499	483	-	505	501	-
1989	510	523	-	498	482	-	504	502	-
1990	505	521	-	496	483	-	500	501	-
1991	503	520	-	495	482	-	499	500	-
1992	504	521	-	496	484	-	500	501	-
1993	504	524	-	497	484	-	500	503	-
1994	501	523	-	497	487	-	499	504	-
1995	505	525	-	502	490	-	504	506	-
1996	507	527	-	503	492	-	505	508	-
1997	507	530	-	503	494	-	505	511	-
1998	509	531	-	502	496	-	505	512	-
1999	509	531	-	502	495	-	505	511	-
2000	507	533	-	504	498	-	505	514	-
2001	509	533	-	502	498	-	506	514	-
2002	507	534	-	502	500	-	504	516	-
2003	512	537	-	503	503	-	507	519	-
2004	512	537	-	504	501	-	508	518	-
2005	513	538	-	505	504	-	508	520	-
2006	505	536	491	502	502	502	503	518	497
2007	503	532	487	500	499	499	501	514	493
2008	502	532	486	499	499	499	500	514	493
2009	502	533	485	497	498	498	499	514	492
2010	502	533	485	498	499	497	500	515	491
2011	500	531	482	495	500	496	497	514	489
2012	498	532	481	493	499	494	496	514	488

MEAN SCORES BY STATE, BY PARTICIPATION RATE — ALL SCHOOLS

Mean SAT scores are not appropriate for state comparisons because the percentage of graduates taking the SAT varies widely across states. In some states, a very small percentage of the college-bound seniors take the SAT. Typically, these students have strong academic backgrounds and are applicants to the nation's most selective colleges and scholarship programs. Therefore, it is expected that the SAT critical reading, mathematics and writing averages reported for these states will be higher than the national average. In states where a greater proportion of students with a wide range of academic backgrounds take the SAT, the scores are closer to, or below, the national average.

	2012				2011				2002		
STATE	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M
Delaware	100%	456	462	444	74%	489	490	476	70%	502	500
Maine	93%	470	472	452	93%	469	469	453	74%	503	502
New York	90%	483	500	475	89%	485	499	476	83%	494	506
Massachusetts	89%	513	530	508	89%	513	527	509	82%	512	516
Connecticut	88%	506	512	510	87%	509	513	513	82%	509	509
District of Columbia	83%	466	460	456	79%	469	457	459	78%	480	473
Georgia	81%	488	489	475	80%	485	487	473	74%	489	491
New Jersey	78%	495	517	499	78%	495	516	497	79%	498	513
New Hampshire	75%	521	525	510	77%	523	525	511	75%	519	519
Maryland	74%	497	502	488	74%	499	502	491	66%	507	513
Pennsylvania	74%	491	501	480	73%	493	501	479	72%	498	500
South Carolina	73%	481	488	462	70%	482	490	464	65%	488	493
Virginia	72%	510	512	495	71%	512	509	495	70%	510	506
Indiana	69%	493	501	476	68%	493	501	475	63%	498	503
Rhode Island	69%	490	491	485	68%	495	493	489	71%	504	503
Vermont	69%	519	523	505	67%	515	518	505	64%	512	510
North Carolina	68%	491	506	472	67%	493	508	474	65%	493	505
Florida	66%	492	492	476	64%	487	489	471	56%	496	499
Hawaii	66%	478	500	467	64%	479	500	469	55%	488	520
Texas	62%	474	499	461	58%	479	502	465	49%	491	500
Washington	58%	519	530	503	57%	523	529	508	51%	525	529
Oregon	57%	521	523	498	56%	520	521	499	55%	524	528
California	55%	495	512	496	53%	499	515	499	47%	496	517
Alaska	54%	512	507	485	52%	515	511	487	53%	516	519
Nevada	49%	491	493	466	47%	494	496	470	31%	509	518

	2012				2011				2002		
STATE	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M
Montana	28%	536	536	511	26%	539	537	516	26%	541	547
Arizona	27%	517	525	499	28%	517	523	499	31%	520	523
Idaho	20%	547	541	525	20%	542	539	517	18%	539	541
Ohio	19%	543	552	525	21%	539	545	522	27%	533	540
Colorado	17%	575	581	562	19%	570	573	556	29%	543	548
West Virginia	17%	516	502	497	17%	514	501	497	19%	525	515
New Mexico	13%	550	546	529	12%	548	541	529	13%	551	543
Tennessee	10%	576	570	566	10%	575	568	567	17%	562	555
Louisiana	9%	542	536	529	8%	555	550	546	8%	561	559
Alabama	8%	538	531	527	8%	546	541	536	10%	560	559
Minnesota	7%	592	606	573	7%	593	608	577	10%	581	591
Kansas	6%	584	594	561	7%	580	591	563	9%	578	580
Kentucky	6%	579	575	566	6%	576	572	563	12%	550	552
Utah	6%	568	566	548	6%	563	559	545	6%	563	559
Illinois	5%	596	615	587	5%	599	617	591	11%	578	596
Missouri	5%	589	592	575	5%	592	593	579	8%	574	580
Nebraska	5%	576	585	562	5%	585	591	569	8%	561	570
Oklahoma	5%	568	566	546	6%	571	565	547	8%	565	562
Wyoming	5%	567	579	549	5%	572	569	551	13%	531	537
Arkansas	4%	565	566	549	5%	568	570	554	6%	560	556
Michigan	4%	586	603	574	5%	583	604	573	11%	558	572
Mississippi	4%	561	544	551	4%	564	543	553	4%	559	547
Wisconsin	4%	594	605	577	5%	590	602	575	6%	583	599
Iowa	3%	603	606	580	3%	596	606	575	5%	591	602
North Dakota	3%	588	610	568	3%	586	612	561	4%	597	610
South Dakota	3%	589	610	570	4%	584	591	562	5%	576	586
All students		496	514	488		497	514	489		504	516

* The percentage of high school graduates is based upon the projection of high school graduates in 2002, 2011 and 2012 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)†, and the number of students in the class of 2002, 2011 and 2012 who took the SAT in each state.

† *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022*, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008.

MEAN SCORES BY STATE, BY PARTICIPATION RATE — PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mean SAT scores are not appropriate for state comparisons because the percentage of graduates taking the SAT varies widely across states. In some states, a very small percentage of the college-bound seniors take the SAT. Typically, these students have strong academic backgrounds and are applicants to the nation's most selective colleges and scholarship programs. Therefore, it is expected that the SAT critical reading, mathematics and writing averages reported for these states will be higher than the national average. In states where a greater proportion of students with a wide range of academic backgrounds take the SAT, the scores are closer to, or below, the national average.

	2012				2011				2002		
STATE	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M
Maine	100%	465	467	446	100%	465	464	448	76%	501	501
Delaware	100%	437	446	424	69%	471	476	455	61%	484	485
New York	88%	478	498	469	85%	480	497	470	78%	492	508
Massachusetts	84%	506	523	500	84%	505	521	500	75%	505	511
Connecticut	83%	498	504	502	81%	502	505	506	75%	502	503
Georgia	76%	483	485	469	74%	481	483	467	68%	486	489
New Jersey	74%	492	516	495	74%	492	516	494	73%	496	515
New Hampshire	71%	512	516	499	73%	514	516	502	70%	509	510
Maryland	70%	489	498	480	69%	492	497	483	58%	502	513
Pennsylvania	69%	488	500	475	68%	489	500	475	67%	494	500
Indiana	68%	489	498	472	67%	489	499	471	60%	495	503
Virginia	68%	508	510	492	67%	509	507	492	64%	507	504
South Carolina	66%	477	487	458	64%	479	489	459	58%	489	496
North Carolina	65%	487	505	467	65%	489	506	469	61%	491	505
Rhode Island	65%	477	480	470	64%	482	482	474	62%	496	501
District of Columbia	64%	401	395	388	60%	404	392	391	60%	400	396
Florida	64%	489	490	472	62%	483	486	466	50%	493	498
Vermont	64%	519	522	504	63%	515	516	503	61%	512	511
Texas	58%	470	496	456	54%	475	500	461	45%	488	499
Hawaii	56%	456	475	440	52%	454	474	441	45%	462	493
Washington	53%	517	528	500	52%	520	527	505	46%	522	528
Oregon	51%	518	521	494	50%	516	520	494	50%	522	528
California	50%	491	510	491	48%	494	513	494	42%	490	516
Alaska	49%	512	510	486	46%	516	514	488	49%	517	522
Nevada	45%	489	491	463	43%	493	495	468	28%	508	519

	2012				2011				2002		
STATE	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M	W	%*	CR	M
Montana	25%	535	539	510	23%	539	540	515	23%	544	553
Arizona	24%	516	525	497	24%	515	523	496	27%	518	524
Idaho	17%	546	540	523	17%	542	540	517	15%	539	545
Colorado	14%	578	587	565	16%	574	580	560	25%	542	551
Ohio	14%	540	553	519	16%	535	545	516	21%	530	541
West Virginia	14%	514	500	493	15%	511	499	494	17%	523	514
New Mexico	10%	539	533	514	9%	535	529	514	10%	544	537
Alabama	7%	530	527	520	7%	539	538	530	8%	559	562
Louisiana	6%	531	529	513	5%	545	543	528	4%	562	559
Kansas	5%	595	599	570	5%	590	598	569	7%	584	587
Minnesota	5%	600	610	575	5%	601	610	578	8%	582	593
Tennessee	5%	579	572	568	5%	577	570	565	11%	556	551
Wyoming	5%	565	584	547	5%	575	575	555	12%	535	542
Illinois	4%	606	630	594	4%	608	633	598	9%	580	606
Kentucky	4%	580	582	565	4%	578	580	563	9%	547	553
Nebraska	4%	574	583	558	4%	582	590	565	7%	559	573
Oklahoma	4%	569	564	542	4%	568	560	541	6%	561	559
Arkansas	3%	565	567	547	4%	568	573	553	4%	560	558
Iowa	3%	608	617	588	3%	602	612	581	4%	595	609
Michigan	3%	587	608	575	4%	583	608	572	9%	555	574
Mississippi	3%	548	530	539	3%	549	529	540	3%	561	549
Missouri	3%	584	587	564	3%	592	592	573	5%	571	581
South Dakota	3%	597	614	574	3%	590	594	565	5%	577	587
Utah	3%	587	588	563	4%	585	580	565	4%	584	584
Wisconsin	3%	600	610	579	3%	595	606	577	5%	587	608
North Dakota	2%	581	605	560	3%	593	620	570	4%	598	614
All students		491	505	481		493	506	482		501	512

* The percentage of high school graduates is based upon the projection of high school graduates in 2002, 2011 and 2012 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)†, and the number of students in the class of 2002, 2011 and 2012 who took the SAT in each state.

† *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992-2022*, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008.

DATA NOTES

- This report presents data on high school graduates in the class of 2012 who took the SAT at least once during high school. Students are counted only once, no matter how often they tested, and only their latest scores and most recent SAT Questionnaire responses are summarized. Because the accuracy of self-reported information has been documented and the college-bound population is relatively stable from year to year, SAT Questionnaire responses from these students can be considered highly accurate.
- Beginning with the class of 2011, College-Bound Seniors cohort data reflect 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. College-Bound Seniors cohort data for 1972–2006 reflect all students in a graduating class who took the SAT at least once through March of their senior year.
- Writing data are based on students who took the current version of the SAT, first administered in March 2005. All students in the 2009 to 2012 cohorts took the SAT writing section. Of the 1,563,272 students in the 2008 cohort, 1,562,590 students have scores on the SAT writing section. Of the 1,534,457 students in the 2007 cohort, 1,531,703 students had scores on the SAT writing section. Of the 1,465,744 students in the 2006 cohort, 1,376,745 students had scores on the SAT writing section.
- The verbal section of the SAT was renamed critical reading on the current version of the SAT, first administered in March 2005.
- In April 1995, mean SAT scores were reset at or near the midpoint of 500 of the 200 to 800 point score scale, a process called recentering. Means after 1996 are recentered, and those for 1996 are based on recentered scores plus scores converted from the original to the new scale. Means for 1987–1995 were recomputed after individual scores were converted from the original to the new scale; and means for 1972–1986 were converted to the new scale after a formula was applied to the original mean and standard deviation.
- Unless otherwise noted, data reflect SAT takers from all school types. Data specific to public school SAT takers are marked as such.
- High school grade point averages are based upon SAT takers. Before 2005, this number was calculated using the number of all students who registered for, but did not necessarily take, either the SAT or SAT Subject Tests. Historical GPA values were recalculated to allow for valid comparison across years.
- “First-generation” indicates that neither parent earned an associate degree or higher.
- “Parental education” indicates the highest level of either parent’s education.
- Due to space constraints, the race/ethnicity options have been abbreviated. When students register to take the SAT they are asked, “How do you describe yourself? (Mark only one.)” They can choose from the following options: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Mexican or Mexican American; Puerto Rican; Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin American; White; Other.
- “Underserved minority” refers to SAT takers who reported their race/ethnicity as American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; or Mexican or Mexican American; Puerto Rican; Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin American.
- “Core course work” indicates that a student has taken four or more years of English, three or more years of mathematics, three or more years of natural sciences and three or more years of social sciences and history based on self-reported answers to the SAT Questionnaire.
- The “mean” is defined as the arithmetic average.
- “Percent” is a way of expressing a proportion, a ratio or a fraction as a whole number by using 100 as the denominator.

ⁱ *The Role of Socioeconomic Status in SAT-Grade Relationships and in College Admissions Decisions.* By Paul R. Sackett, Nathan R. Kuncel, Adam S. Beatty, Jana L. Rigdon, Winny Shen, and Thomas B. Kiger. University of Minnesota (2012).

ⁱⁱ *The Validity of the SAT for Predicting Cumulative Grade Point Average by College Major.* By Emily J. Shaw, Jennifer L. Kobrin, Brian F. Patterson, and Krista D. Mattern. The College Board (2012).

ⁱⁱⁱ *Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action.* By Tinto, V. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (2012).