



DELIVERING OPPORTUNITIES

How the SAT[®] Is Helping More Minnesota Students Get Into College

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Delivering More Opportunities for Students

For more than a century, College Board has dedicated itself to getting young people the education they need and deserve. The pandemic of 2020 has made that mission more crucial—and more difficult. The massive disruption of daily life has affected families and schools, deepened anxieties for students, and created new challenges for parents and teachers.

With so much stress and uncertainty, it's more important than ever that College Board helps students, especially vulnerable students, clear a path to college. And it's vital that everyone in education, from parents to policymakers, has clear insights into how students learn. We can't get better results if we don't measure results. Our goal is to expand student access for all types of postsecondary opportunity, whether it's two-year, four-year, or trade and technical schools.

Our mission is to open more doors for more students, to help everyone find a college or training program that matches their interests and abilities. We believe the best way to help students achieve their goals beyond high school is to give them personalized career advice early, help them understand their potential and their pathways to success, and have them connect their interests to concrete steps they can take in high school.

Through the SAT® Suite, we first connect with students in eighth grade and continue to monitor them every year until they apply, enroll, and graduate from college. For far too long, SAT results revealed that most students weren't prepared for college-level work or workforce training programs. That's why the SAT Suite of Assessments was designed to measure college readiness from grades 8–12, giving students time to prepare for a more promising path beyond high school.

Ideally, our work establishes a student's college readiness baseline in the eighth and/or ninth grade, then offers clear feedback that can be used to diagnose learning gaps and recommend solutions.

PSAT/NMSQT® and PSAT™ 10 in the 10th and/or 11th grade give students the chance to check their progress. Results throughout the SAT Suite can be linked to Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy® to create free, personalized practice that has been associated with improved student outcomes. This puts students in a better position to take the SAT in the second half of their junior year, which gives them time to develop a practice plan to strengthen college readiness skills and improve SAT performance by the fall of their senior year. All students, regardless of background, can take steps to strengthen their skills, improve their scores, and increase their likelihood of going to college and earning a degree.

The report summarizing national results of delivering opportunities in 2018-19 can be found at <https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/college-board-delivering-opportunities-sat-suite-results-2018-19.pdf>.

This report details progress in delivering opportunities to students in Minnesota in 2018-19.

Major Findings

Taking college readiness assessments early is associated with improved readiness.

- This was the first year College Board could study a cohort that had access to the full SAT Suite of Assessments, and initial results are promising: Students who regularly take assessments improve their scores and their college readiness rates as shown in the table below for the cohorts who took each of the SAT Suite assessments in 2018-19 in Minnesota. The cross-sectional view of performance in the table shows that the average score was 817 for PSAT™ 8/9 test takers in the eighth grade in 2018-19 and 1284 for SAT test takers in the class of 2019, with a similar upward trend in mean scores across sections.

TABLE 1 Cross-sectional Performance of 2018-19 Minnesota Student Cohorts by Program

Assessment/Grade	Test Takers	Total Mean Score	ERW Mean Score	Math Mean Score	
SAT	Class of 2019	2,567	1284	636	648
PSAT/NMSQT	Grade 11	15,335	1122	564	558
or PSAT 10	Grade 10	6,507	1097	551	546
PSAT 8/9	Grade 9	1,343	965	482	484
	Grade 8	453	817	408	409

The percentage of Minnesota 11th-grade PSAT/NMSQT test takers who are on track for college and career readiness has increased since 2015-16 for some, but not all racial/ethnic groups.

- The college readiness rates of 11th-grade students from 2015-16 to 2018-19 have increased for these racial/ethnic groups in Minnesota: Asian, White, Two or More Races.

TABLE 2 Comparison of Readiness Rates for 11th-Grade Cohorts in Minnesota 2015-16 and 2018-19, by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2015-16 11th-Grade Minnesota Test Takers: Met Benchmarks	2018-19 11th-Grade Minnesota Test Takers: Met Benchmarks
Asian	62%	63%
Black	37%	36%
Hispanic	49%	45%
White	71%	73%
Two or More Races	64%	67%
All Minnesota	67%	67%

Note: Some groups couldn't be reported due to low n-counts.

More Minnesota students are increasing their readiness for college and career training programs.

- The average score of the 2019 cohort of Minnesota students who took PSAT/NMSQT in 2017-18 was 1270. The average score for this cohort increased to 1284 one year later. We also see average score increases for all racial/ethnic groups during this period, except for Hispanics.

TABLE 3 Longitudinal Cohort of Minnesota Students 2017-18 to 2018-19

Racial/Ethnic Group	2017-18 PSAT/NMSQT N-Count	2017-18 PSAT/NMSQT Average Score	2018-19 SAT Cohort N-Count	2018-19 SAT Cohort Average Score
Asian	424	1259	554	1321
Black	65	1114	112	1134
Hispanic	977	1221	151	1201
White	1,109	1286	1,532	1293
Total	1,835	1270	2,567	1284

Note: Some groups couldn't be reported due to low n-counts.

Students take different combinations of assessments to monitor their college readiness.

- Thirty-seven percent of SAT test takers in Minnesota in the class of 2019 took the PSAT/NMSQT before taking the SAT. An additional third of SAT test takers in Minnesota in the class of 2019 took both the PSAT-related assessments in the 10th and 11th grades. Overall, 19% of SAT test takers in the class of 2019 in Minnesota had no previous PSAT-related assessment experience.

TABLE 4 Class of 2019 Participation in Assessment Pathways for Minnesota Students, by Race/Ethnicity*

PSAT-related History	Total Group	Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines origin)	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (including Spanish origin)	Two or more races, non-Hispanic	White (including Middle Eastern origin)
All Assessments	4%	5%	2%	7%	7%	4%
Took 10 and 11	32%	38%	15%	29%	29%	32%
Took 10 only	5%	3%	4%	7%	3%	6%
Took 11 only	37%	35%	39%	33%	41%	39%
Took 9 and 10	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Took 9 and 11	2%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1%
Took 9 only	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Took none	19%	15%	37%	22%	19%	17%
Total	2,567	554	112	151	143	1,532

* Note: Some groups couldn't be reported due to low n-counts.

While there are multiple assessment paths available to students, Minnesota students who took any of the SAT Suite of Assessments alone or in combination before taking the SAT tended to score higher than students who didn't take any PSAT-related assessment.

TABLE 5 Class of 2019 Performance of Minnesota Students by Assessment Pathway

PSAT-related History	SAT Test Takers		Average SAT Suite Score			
	N	%	9th	10th	11th	SAT
All Assessments	113	4%	1152	1237	1303	1353
Took 10 and 11	815	32%		1224	1303	1358
Took 10 only	138	5%		1116		1229
Took 11 only	952	37%			1225	1286
Took 9 and 10	16	1%	1058	1128		1284
Took 9 and 11	40	2%	1088		1239	1315
Took 9 only	15	1%	1014			1193
Took No Assessment	478	19%				1154
Minnesota Total	2,567					1284

More low-income students are taking the SAT than ever before.

- The primary goal of SAT School Day is to get lower-income and underrepresented students into the college-going pipeline earlier, connect them to higher education options sooner, and give them more time to develop their college readiness skills. Through spring 2019, over 3.7 million students in more than 3,000 school districts and 9,000 schools nationally had participated in SAT School Day.
- In Minnesota, the number of students participating in SAT School Day in 2015-16 was 13; two years later, 44 students participated. SAT School Day makes it possible for more students to test, and it also makes the student pool a more socioeconomically diverse group. To date, few students in Minnesota participate in School Day.

State and district policies have expanded the use of the SAT Suite of Assessments in the U.S.

- The use of the SAT Suite of Assessments has dramatically increased across the U.S. The SAT Suite is used as accountability assessments, as college readiness measures, as college and career readiness indicators in accountability, as an alternative for high school graduation, and to help more students identify and then clear their paths to higher education opportunities.

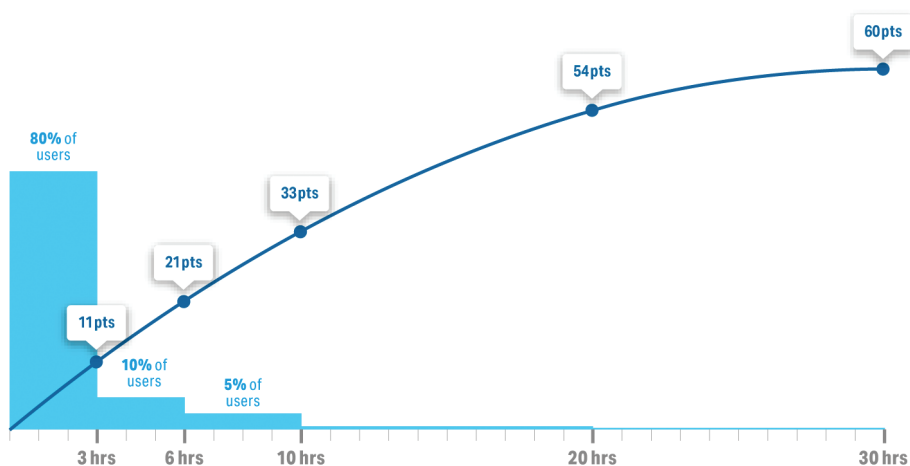
When a college entrance examination is given to all students, we see increases in four-year college-going rates and enrollment in institutions with higher BA completion rates. Students from underrepresented backgrounds benefit the most.

- Four independent research studies show that after the introduction of college entrance examinations administered to all students, four-year college-going rates increased as much as 10%, students were more likely to attend colleges with higher completion rates, and underrepresented students, particularly lower-income and students from rural areas, tended to benefit the most—with higher college enrollment rates, for example.

There is a positive association between time spent on Official SAT Practice (OSP) and composite SAT scores. Six hours of practice is associated with an additional 21 points on the SAT, regardless of demographics, based on a national sample of SAT test takers.

- The figure below shows the additional SAT score points associated with OSP time in hours when we control for gender, race/ethnicity, PSAT/NMSQT scores, and parental education. Students who linked their College Board account to OSP but spent no time practicing earned a mean SAT score of 1099, compared to students who didn't link their account, who scored an average SAT score of 1053. The average SAT score associated with spending six hours on practice was 1120, a 21-point improvement. Unfortunately, only 10% of students in the model spent more than six hours on OSP. These findings hold true regardless of student demographics.

FIGURE 1 Additional SAT Points Associated with Hours of Practice, Including Percentage of Sample



Note: The percentages in the figure do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

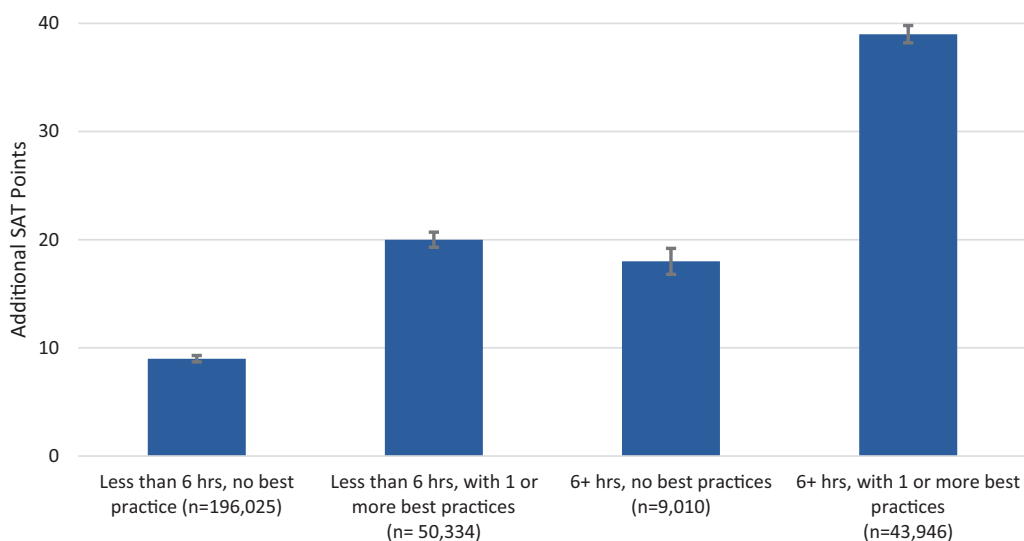
- In Minnesota, 858 SAT test takers in 2019 linked their College Board and OSP accounts, which is approximately 33% of the total group. Of the total cohort, 752—29%—linked their accounts and practiced for six hours on OSP. A total of 206—8% of the cohort—linked their accounts and took at least one full-length practice test. The national and state data suggest that too few students are engaging in higher levels of practice despite the advantages that could accrue to them if they did. More needs to be done to help Minnesota students engage in best practices so that they can maximize the benefits of free, world-class practice.

Research says three best practices help students get the most from time spent in Official SAT Practice.

- We see from research on students nationally that at least three best practice behaviors can help students get the most out of their practice: (1) following skill recommendations; (2) completing a full-length practice test, especially between taking the PSAT/NMSQT and their first SAT; and (3) leveling up skills through practice in 15 or more skills.

- We examined whether students who engaged in these best practices attained better outcomes on the SAT than students who didn't when we control for student attributes and PSAT/NMSQT test scores. The figure below shows the additional SAT points associated with each of four categories: Students who spent less than six hours on OSP but didn't do a best practice behavior; students who spent less than six hours and did at least one best practice; students who spent at least six hours but didn't do a best practice; and students who spent at least six hours on OSP and did at least one best practice. Students who spent at least six hours on OSP and did a best practice scored an average of 39 points higher on the SAT than students who didn't spend any time on OSP. These findings hold true regardless of student demographics. In spite of what the data show as beneficial practices, far too few students are engaging in them.

FIGURE 2 Association Between OSP Usage and Composite SAT Achievement, Controlling for Student Attributes and PSAT/NMSQT Scores



Note: The "I" at the top of the bar graphs represents the standard error of estimate.

About 91% of the nearly 200,000 students nationally who used our career exploration tool completed their interest road map, with 27% discovering at least one career of interest to them. The most popular career is registered nurse, followed by surgeon and pediatrician.

- Five of the top 10 careers identified by students nationally are healthcare related, and fewer than 4% of all careers of interest were nursing jobs. In a survey, we found that students have a strong interest in learning more about different college- and career-related goals and majors, as well as understanding which training programs and employers might be a good fit for them.

Retaking the SAT increases college access, especially for low-income and underrepresented students nationally.

- In a national study, students who retake the SAT tend to have substantial increases in scores. They also see up to a 33 percentage point increase in four-year college enrollment, thereby reducing the four-year college enrollment gap 10% by race/ethnicity and 20% by income.

More students are finding more scholarship opportunities through the SAT Suite of Assessments.

- College Board has greatly expanded awareness of the many scholarships available to low-income students through our 19 scholarship partners, including our longstanding partner National Merit Scholarship Corporation, the College Board Opportunity Scholarships (CBOS), and College Board National Recognition Programs. In 2019, over \$74M was awarded to students through our scholarship partners, \$4.6 M was awarded through CBOS, and, in 2020, three new recognition programs, in addition to the National Hispanic Recognition Program, were launched. The message is being heard.
- In 2019, there were 258 applicants for these scholarships from Minnesota, with 7 students receiving awards, for a total award amount of \$38,685.

Fee waivers improve college access for low-income students nationally.

- Nearly all students granted fee waiver benefits use one or more of them. That's good news, but not good enough, because too many students aren't taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them. College Board reached many more eligible students this year, thanks in large part to greater connections through School Day. The overall percentage of the past 10 public school graduating classes who had access to one or more SAT tests at no cost to them has risen steadily from 23% in the class of 2010 to roughly 60% in the past three years. Despite these increases, we can't rest until every student uses all the fee waivers available to them.

AP courses are a valuable tool for students that strengthen college readiness.

- AP[®] and Pre-AP[®] courses help students develop skills and routines that allow them to tackle college-level work. In a recent study in West Virginia, students who take at least one AP Exam score higher on all three components of the SAT Essay, particularly on the analysis component, compared to students who take no AP Exams. This indicates that the skills students acquire while engaging in an AP curriculum are highly transferable to the type of writing skills they will need in college.

Small nudges can change students' trajectories by encouraging students with potential to take AP courses and assessments in a national randomized controlled study.

- Yet another barrier is coming down: in a randomized controlled study, teachers and students across the U.S. received letters, emails, and other communications encouraging students to take AP courses for which they had potential. Students in urban high schools who received one of those messages were 5%–6% more likely to take a matched AP Exam, compared to students who didn't receive outreach.

What These Results Mean for Minnesota

We continue to be encouraged by the results of our efforts with the state of Minnesota to deliver more opportunities through the SAT Suite. While we have a lot more research to do, we think the results to date show our efforts have helped more students in Minnesota prepare for college and workforce training programs.

- College readiness can be improved for students in all groups. We know instruction can improve readiness, but we also know that earlier assessments can guide instructional interventions, which increase student readiness. We can see this progress from early high school through graduation across the various Minnesota cohorts and racial/ethnic groups.

- Access to School Day testing can expand access to college for all Minnesota students.
- Research has shown that when a college entrance exam is given to all students, we see four-year college-going rates increase, higher enrollment in institutions with higher BA completion rates, and students from underrepresented backgrounds benefitting the most.
- Practice matters, and practice focused on completing one or more best practices that research has shown to increase readiness matters most.
- Encouraging Minnesota students to retake the SAT can increase their opportunities for college access, especially for low-income and underrepresented students.
- Students tell us that they have a strong interest in learning more about different college- and career-related goals and majors, and about training programs and employers who might be a good fit for them. Minnesota students could benefit from more assistance from counselors, mentors, and others to help them connect their educational goals to careers and local employment.
- Minnesota students should be strongly encouraged to apply for all the many scholarship opportunities available to them through the SAT Suite. Too few Minnesota students are applying for these scholarships.
- Minnesota students with the potential to take AP should be encouraged to do so. Nudges work and students who receive that encouragement are 5%–6% more likely to take AP courses and AP Exams, which open doors for college access and credit.

What's Next?

The COVID-19 pandemic is deepening the longstanding inequities that College Board was founded to combat. Vulnerable students are at heightened risks of missing the opportunities they've earned, and our society is at risk of losing valuable talent we will badly need in the years to come. College Board will continue to work with educators, state departments of education, and higher education officials in Minnesota to better understand how student actions and strategies—whether they be testing behaviors, quality and frequency of practice, career planning, use of fee waivers, and applying for scholarships— can help clear a path to college. The research results in this report provide tangible steps that can be taken to more effectively deliver opportunities to more Minnesota students, an effort that calls for our full commitment.

About College Board

College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, 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, 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.

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