



NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Connecticut Releases Results from First SAT School Day

(HARTFORD, CT)—The State Department of Education today released preliminary results from the first Connecticut SAT School Day, showing that of the Connecticut 11th graders who took the exam, 65 percent are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English language arts (ELA), and 39.3 percent are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in mathematics. These results set a baseline year of data from which to measure future growth.

With the first statewide administration of the SAT, Connecticut moved closer to its goal of equity and excellence by ensuring all public school students in the 11th grade take a college and career readiness exam that is often a requisite for admission to college.

Results can be accessed at the CSDE data portal, EdSight: <http://edsight.ct.gov>.

The results were released one year after Governor Dannel P. Malloy announced that Connecticut had sought and won federal approval to replace the 11th grade Smarter Balanced assessment – or SBAC exam – with the SAT. The move to the SAT eliminated duplicative testing at the high school level and was part of a broader effort by the State Department of Education to reduce the testing burden on students in Connecticut. Last spring, Governor Malloy and Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell announced the shortening of the Smarter Balanced assessment in grades 3-8 as another test reduction strategy.

“With graduation rates at record highs and now with the vast majority 11th graders taking the SAT in school, Connecticut students are preparing for college and career like never before,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “No longer will the cost of a test prevent a Connecticut student from applying to college and following his or her dreams. Still, we know we have more work to do to ensure every student has what it takes to succeed in college and career. When we raise the bar for our students and for ourselves, we rise to the challenge together and push for a brighter future for all.”

“By switching to the SAT, we responded to student and parent concerns about over testing and committed to an accountability measure that will help us know if we are delivering on our promise to our kids,” said Commissioner Wentzell. “We also took a big step toward greater equity in our schools by giving all Connecticut 11th graders a chance to take a college and career readiness exam that can unlock the door to higher education. I want to thank Governor Malloy for his leadership on this issue and I want to congratulate our schools and districts across Connecticut that shepherded a successful first administration of the Connecticut SAT School Day.”

The results of the first administration of the Connecticut SAT School Day show that 65 percent of 11th graders who took the exam are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English language arts (ELA), and 39.3 percent are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in mathematics. The results from the first statewide administration of the SAT cannot be compared to Connecticut SAT results from previous years, because this was the first time students took the newly redesigned SAT, which is more closely aligned to Common Core standards, and because this was the first year the test was administered to all public school students in the 11th grade. Still, the results offer a critical snapshot at how well our high school students are prepared to succeed in college and career post graduation.

The following table shows statewide average scale scores and percent meeting or exceeding achievement standards in ELA and math.

Categories	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Percent At or Above Level 3	Average Score	Percent At or Above Level 3	Average Score
ALL STUDENTS	65.0	520	39.3	502
Asian	78.9	565	67.2	582
Black or African American	36.4	451	12.4	431
Hispanic/Latino of any race	39.0	457	15.5	438
Two or More Races	63.7	517	33.4	493
White	77.4	548	49.9	529
Female	67.1	525	37.9	499
Male	63.0	514	40.8	504
Special Education	22.5	423	7.7	400
Eligible for Free Meals	36.1	451	13.6	432
Eligible for Reduced Price Meals	51.1	481	22.2	462
English Learner	3.5	380	3.4	382
High Needs*	37.1	453	14.5	434

(*includes students who are English Learners, students with disabilities or eligible for free or reduced price meals)

“These results show us that the majority of students are mastering college and career readiness in ELA, but they are continuing to struggle in math. Our commitment to equity and excellence in education means we have to double down on our efforts to raise student achievement across the board and give our students what they need to succeed,” said Commissioner Wentzell.

After last year’s release of the first year of Smarter Balanced results showed a similar challenge with math performance, Commissioner Wentzell brought together educators, industry and business leaders, and experts in math and STEM instruction on a Commissioner’s Council on Mathematics. This group spent the last year researching best practices, both in Connecticut and across the nation, and exploring innovative strategies in the areas of math instruction. That council will release its final report and recommendations in the fall.

The results also show achievement gaps, with fewer black and Hispanic students meeting proficiency levels for ELA and math on the SAT. Only 36.4 percent of black students and 39.0 percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded achievement standards in ELA, compared to 77.4 percent of white students. In math, 12.4 percent of black students and 15.5 percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded achievement standards, compared with 49.9 percent of white students. The results showed similar disparities among high needs populations of students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from low income families.

“With the State Board of Education’s adoption of a five-year strategic plan focused on creating high quality education for all students, we remain fiercely committed to the work of supporting all districts – and especially

our highest need districts – in their efforts to improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps,” Commissioner Wentzell said.

The SAT results are included in the state’s newly launched Next Generation Accountability System, which is being viewed as a national model as states across the country seek to design more comprehensive and holistic accountability systems aligned to the new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Connecticut also led the way in negotiating with the College Board to secure no-questions-asked testing accommodations on the SAT for students with disabilities who have those accommodations documented in an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan.

As part of its commitment to equity and in addition to administering the SAT to all public school 11th graders, the State Department of Education will continue to pay for administration of the PSAT in Alliance District high schools and will continue to cover the cost differential for Advanced Placement (AP) tests for students from low-income families. The PSAT is a requirement for students applying for several key scholarships, including the National Merit Scholarship.

The results of the first administration of the Connecticut SAT School Day also reveal a dramatic increase in the percentage of students who took the newly designated 11th grade mastery exam. While Connecticut met the overall goal of having a 95 percent participate rate on state mastery exams in the 2014-15 school year, there were pockets of decreased participation in some districts, mostly among 11th graders taking the SBAC. This year, nearly 38,000 high school students took the state mastery exam, bringing the participation rate to about 94 percent. While these results are preliminary, they represent a significant increase in the number of high school students taking the state mastery exam.

The state’s Alliance Districts, which receive additional funding to support district improvement plans tied to greater accountability, saw a significant increase in participation rate. In 2015, 11th graders in Alliance Districts had about an 81 percent participation rate on the Smarter Balanced exam. In 2016, the participation rate on the 11th grade SAT for Alliance Districts increased to 90 percent.

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