

For Immediate Release
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Cobb Graduates' SAT Scores Hold Steady; Six Schools Post Significant Increases

Achievement Gap Among Student Groups Narrows

The average SAT score for Cobb County's 2011 graduating seniors held steady at 1522, with six high schools showing an overall increase of more than 10 points over last year's scores. The Cobb average has again topped both the national and state averages, both of which declined, and Cobb's results show the district is continuing to make progress in closing the achievement gap among student groups.

Osborne High School posted the District's largest year-to-year gain with an average of 1246, a 52-point increase from 2010; other schools making improvements over last year include McEachern (34 points), Allatoona (32 points), Pope (21 points), Sprayberry (19 points), and Walton (12 points). While Cobb's class of 2011 maintained the same average SAT score, the state average declined eight points (1445) and the national average dipped nine points (1500). Seven of Cobb's 16 high schools had combined totals higher than the national average, including Harrison, Kennesaw Mountain, Lassiter, Pope, Walton and Wheeler.

The District also saw a significant jump in the participation rate for the SAT in 2011; 81 percent of Cobb's total 2011 graduating class voluntarily took the SAT, compared to just 67 percent in 2010. Typically, scores tend to decrease when participation rises, but Cobb's 2011 seniors maintained the same average score from 2010 despite the much higher number of students taking the test this year. Even as more students have shifted toward the ACT in recent years, the SAT remains a popular and recognizable measure of college readiness.

Cobb students' two-point increase in the Writing area of the test (497) helped offset one-point decreases in the Reading (510) and Mathematics (515) segments. National and state scores declined in all three subject areas.

In the diverse class of 2011, Cobb saw an increase in the numbers of Black and Hispanic test takers, and a slight decline in Asian, White and Multi-racial students taking the test. Hispanic students posted a six-point increase (1428) in average SAT score over 2010. Black students posted a two-point increase (1322), and White students posted a single point gain (1617). These scores are an indicator that Cobb continues to close the achievement gap for lower-scoring student groups, while sustaining the performance of student groups that have

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traditionally scored higher on average. Closing the achievement gap among student groups is a top goal for the Board of Education and Dr. Hinojosa in 2011.

“By comparison with the state and nation, our high school graduates are well prepared for college and careers,” said Superintendent Dr. Michael Hinojosa. “We need to be diligent with instruction, especially in Reading and Math and with new standards on the horizon. Considering our students’ strong performance on the ACT and the SAT, I am confident that colleges and universities across the nation will continue to see Cobb County students as well-prepared and competitive.”

The SAT is designed to predict a student’s potential for success in the first year of college. It tests students’ knowledge and application of Reading, Writing and Math. The writing section of the test asks students to write an essay that requires them to take a position on an issue and use reasoning and examples to support their position. The Math section of the test includes topics from third-year college-preparatory math, such as exponential growth, absolute value, functional notation, and negative and fractional exponents. The Critical Reading section, previously known as the Verbal section, includes short and long reading passages.

Many factors affect SAT scores from year to year, including the percentage of students taking the test, student academic preparation, knowledge of English, parents’ education, and locality. Cobb information shows that the higher the grades and rank-in-class achieved, generally the higher the mean SAT scores.

This year’s SAT release reflects changes in the way the College Board calculates scores. In prior years, averages for schools, districts and the nation were based on scores for seniors taking the SAT through March of the reporting year. In order to provide a more complete view of the college-bound population, 2011 trend data details are based on a “full cohort”, which means it includes test scores through June of the reporting year. This change in calculation may have contributed to Cobb’s increased participation rate for 2011. Historical data in this release has been adjusted based on the change.

Parents who desire more information about their student’s SAT scores should contact counselors in the local high school who can provide proper interpretation to help make the best use of test results.

SAT scores for individual Cobb high schools are listed in Table II.

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Quick Facts about the Cobb County School District 2011 Seniors taking the SAT

- The overall total SAT score for the District was 1522. This is 77 points higher than the State's score of 1445, and 22 points higher than the National average of 1500.

- Cobb's overall 2011 SAT score was unchanged from the previous year, while state averages declined 8 points. The national average decreased 9 points.

- A total of 5,789 graduating seniors in Cobb voluntarily took the SAT in 2011. This represents 81% of the total graduating senior class and an increase in participation compared to 67% last year.

- Six Cobb high schools had an increase of more than ten points in the SAT total over last year: Osborne (52), McEachern (34), Allatoona (32), Pope (21), Sprayberry (19), Walton (12).

- Seven Cobb high schools had SAT total scores higher than the national average: Harrison, Kell, Kennesaw Mountain, Lassiter, Pope, Walton, Wheeler.

- The number of male students taking the SAT was 2721, (47%). The number of females taking the test was 3068 (53%). The average score for male seniors was 1528, ten points lower than last year, while the average for female seniors increased seven points from 1509 in 2010, to 1516 in 2011.

- 83% of the test takers were English-only speaking students. Nine percent identified themselves as speaking English and one other language. Eight percent of the testing seniors identified themselves as speaking a language other than English.

- Seniors taking the SAT identified their ethnicity as:

	2010		2011	
	%	Score	%	Score
Native American	0.4%	1479	0.2%	1498
Asian	7.0%	1660	6.4%	1676
Black	25.9%	1320	27.0%	1322
Hispanic	6.8%	1422	7.3%	1428
White	54.9%	1617	54.2%	1618
Other / Multiracial	3.6%	1470	3.1%	1546
No Response	1.4%	1462	1.8%	1416

- Seniors identifying themselves as Native American scored 19 points above last year's average for that student group. Latino/Hispanic students had a higher total score by 6 points from the previous year. The total score for Black students was up 2 points, and for White students increased 1 point higher than in 2010.

- Thirty percent of the test takers indicated their parents had a high school diploma or associate degree. Forty-two percent indicated their parents had a Bachelor's or 4-year degree. Twenty-five percent of the testing seniors indicated their parents had a graduate or professional degree.

- 2010 Seniors taking the SAT identified their family income as:

less than \$60,000	37%
\$60,000 to less than \$120,000	38%
\$120,000 and above	<u>25%</u>

- District-wide, the self-reported overall GPA for the seniors taking the SAT was 3.23.

**A FIVE YEAR COMPARISON OF SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TEST (SAT)
SCORES FOR COLLEGE BOUND SENIORS*
2007 to 2011**

READING

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>COBB COUNTY</u>	<u>GEORGIA</u>
2011	497	510	485
2010	500	511	488
2009	499	514	489
2008	500	510	490
2007	501	513	492

MATHEMATICS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>COBB COUNTY</u>	<u>GEORGIA</u>
2011	514	515	487
2010	515	516	489
2009	514	519	489
2008	514	512	490
2007	514	515	492

WRITING

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>COBB COUNTY</u>	<u>GEORGIA</u>
2011	489	497	473
2010	491	495	474
2009	492	499	477
2008	493	498	480
2007	493	500	481

Scale: 200 - 800

Percentage of Students Taking the SAT:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
NATIONAL**	48%	45%	46%	47%	48%
GEORGIA**	79%	79%	77%	74%	80%
COBB COUNTY	82%	80%	68%	71%	81%

* All scores reflect the "full cohort" trend calculation

** Estimated percentage of graduating seniors

**COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TESTS (SAT) SCORES*
2009 to 2011**

AREA/ SCHOOL	PERCENTAGE TESTED**			Critical Reading Scores			Mathematics Scores			Reading & Math Total			Writing Scores***			New Total		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
NATIONAL	46%	47%	48**	499	500	497	514	515	514	1013	1015	1011	492	491	489	1505	1506	1500
COBB COUNTY	68%	71%	81%	514	511	510	519	516	515	1033	1027	1025	499	495	497	1532	1522	1522
GEORGIA	77%	78%	77**	489	488	485	489	489	487	978	977	972	477	474	473	1455	1451	1445
ALLATOONA	--	66%	85%	--	484	498	--	488	493	--	972	991	--	470	483	--	1442	1474
CAMPBELL	62%	53%	66%	500	496	483	494	486	481	994	982	964	488	485	475	1482	1467	1439
HARRISON	73%	82%	91%	536	531	528	541	535	538	1077	1066	1066	519	509	512	1596	1575	1578
HILLGROVE	70%	74%	84%	489	497	495	491	491	490	980	988	985	482	480	485	1462	1468	1470
KELL	62%	72%	85%	502	507	510	512	522	515	1014	1029	1025	485	491	487	1499	1520	1512
KENNESAW MTN.	69%	69%	84%	523	520	516	523	530	524	1046	1050	1040	505	505	498	1551	1555	1538
LASSITER	77%	88%	95%	555	547	544	567	564	559	1122	1111	1103	536	526	531	1658	1637	1634
MCEACHERN	62%	60%	78%	466	452	467	464	445	452	930	897	919	451	437	449	1381	1334	1368
NORTH COBB	61%	55%	72%	486	491	492	482	479	485	968	970	977	469	468	471	1437	1438	1448
OSBORNE	45%	42%	45%	427	406	417	433	401	422	860	807	839	420	387	407	1280	1194	1246
PEBBLEBROOK	52%	52%	70%	441	442	439	425	437	430	866	879	869	433	434	432	1299	1313	1301
POPE	80%	81%	97%	550	549	552	568	565	573	1118	1114	1125	538	541	551	1656	1655	1676
SOUTH COBB	50%	46%	63%	453	446	439	450	443	441	903	889	880	443	439	429	1346	1328	1309
SPRAYBERRY	58%	56%	72%	485	497	501	491	492	491	976	989	992	473	467	483	1449	1456	1475
WALTON	85%	94%	100%	575	566	572	589	592	593	1164	1158	1165	556	555	560	1720	1713	1725
WHEELER	63%	68%	79%	544	556	544	550	566	551	1094	1122	1095	529	539	525	1623	1661	1620
	0.82253	0.80009		0.71494	0.80717													

Note: All scores have been adjusted to reflect "full cohort" trend calculation

Score range 200-800 for all tests

-- No scores for Allatoona prior to 2009

* All Scores are reported on the recentered SAT score scale.

** Estimated percentage of graduating seniors.

Data Source: 2011 College Board Highlights
2011 College Board Profile