

Washington again leads nation in SAT scores

State students earn the highest combined average score where at least 45 percent of eligible students participate in the college-entrance exam

OLYMPIA (September 24, 2012) — Washington students' combined average score on the SAT (1545) is the highest in the nation — tied with Vermont — among states in which at least 45 percent of the eligible students took the test, according to figures released by the College Board today. The percentage of students tested is significant because generally the more students who test, the lower the overall average score. However, Washington has bucked that trend for the past decade.

Washington again had the nation's highest score in math (528), was tied for second in writing (500) and was third in reading (517) among states with a participation rate of 45 percent or more. The ranking is based on students taking the SAT who were 12th graders in the Class of 2012.

"Students who take the SAT have their eye on attending college," State Superintendent Randy Dorn said. "To have that many high school students do that well on the test says a lot about the preparation they're getting in school."

The overall participation rate of Washington's public school students saw a slight increase of 0.7 percent from 2011, compared to an increase of 1.2 percent, nationally. Washington's SAT participation rate of 53 percent was higher than all Western states (except Hawaii at 56 percent). Participation among American Indians increased by 15.9 percent in Washington, compared to 4.2 percent, nationally, followed by Hispanics (14.8 percent in Washington; 9.1 percent, nationally), blacks (3.2 percent in Washington; 1.2 percent, nationally) and Asians (2.6 percent in Washington; 3.8 percent, nationally). White student participation decreased by 1.9 percent in Washington, compared to a decrease of 1.2 percent, nationally.

"I am pleased that Washington's participation rate among underrepresented populations is increasing," Dorn said. "Overall, it's increasing faster in our state than in many other states across the country. We need to keep that momentum going."

Results for Washington's public school students who took the SAT are generally stable when compared to last year's results. Math scores, overall, increased by 1 point. Reading and writing scores decreased by 3 and 5 points, respectively. But fluctuations of just a few points are statistically insignificant on a test where each of the three components is worth 800 points.

The SAT is a legislatively approved alternative to Washington's high school state exams in reading, math and writing. After students take the state's high school exam once, they can apply to use qualifying scores from the ACT or SAT to meet the graduation requirements. Students who transfer into Washington public schools in the 11th or 12th grade from out of state or an in-state non-public

school setting can apply for a “transfer student waiver” to use one of the alternatives without taking a state exam.

The College Board also released preliminary results for Advanced Placement performance and participation by Washington students. While the results are not yet complete, Dorn is encouraged by what he sees: Early AP results show state student participation increased across all ethnic groups. Overall, their scores increased by 7.1 percent from 2011 and their college-mastery level (scores of 3, 4 or 5) by 8.8 percent. A total of 38,437 Washington public school students took 64,851 AP exams.

More information

- [National 2012 SAT results](http://www.collegeboard.com)
(<http://www.collegeboard.com>)
- [Complete SAT Skills Insight](http://www.collegeboard.org/satskillsinsight)
(<http://www.collegeboard.org/satskillsinsight>)
- [List of legislatively approved alternatives to state high school exams](http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/CAAoptions)
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About OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K–12 education in Washington state. Led by State School Superintendent Randy Dorn, OSPI works with the state’s 295 school districts and nine educational service districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students.

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Contact

Kristen Jaudon
Communications Specialist
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
kristen.jaudon@k12.wa.us
(360) 725-6032