

# NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education



Dr. Mark K. McQuillan  
Commissioner

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Contact: Tom Murphy 860.713.6525

## **Connecticut's Class of 2007 Exceeds National Average on SAT Writing Test; Scores in Reading, Writing, and Math Decline; Participation Fourth in Nation**

HARTFORD –Connecticut's 2007 public school graduates again had a strong showing on the SAT writing test – nine points above the national average — even though their average score declined one point, while their scores in reading and math declined for the second consecutive year. The state's 80 percent participation rate among public school students was fourth in the nation.

Approximately 83 percent of all test takers in Connecticut are from public high schools. Nine percent of test takers are from private religiously affiliated high schools and eight percent are from private independent high schools. Only public school test-takers are reported in this news release.

### **Highlights of Connecticut's Public School Scores:**

- The number of SAT test-takers in Connecticut increased by 6.7 percent, compared to a 5.5 percent increase nationwide;
- Connecticut's SAT test-takers were **54 percent female and 46 percent male**;
- There was an **increase in the number of Black and Hispanic students** taking the test in Connecticut – 2,917 Black (a 32.5 percent increase) and 2,310 Hispanic (a 24.9 percent increase) compared to nationwide increases of 10 percent and 14.8 percent respectively;
- **Connecticut's average Math score declined by 6 points in the past year to 504.** It is 5 points below the national public school average Math score of 509;
- **Connecticut's average of 502 points on the Critical Reading section** (formerly called verbal) **fell 3 points** and now exceeds the national public school average by four points. The national average reading score declined by two points to 498 this year.
- This was the second year that the SAT included a **writing component** and **Connecticut's 2007 public school graduates scored 503—a decline of one point. This is 15 points above the national average** (488) for public school students which declined by four points.

“The SAT is an important gauge of high school students' academic skills, and Connecticut students continue to perform well compared to the nation,” said Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan in releasing Connecticut's scores. “While our strong participation rate demonstrates a growing number of students with aspirations for college, we are concerned about the decline in scores. Reading and Math scores of our graduates are down for the second consecutive year.”

Governor M. Jodi Rell said, “It is critical that Connecticut continue to lead the nation in student achievement. The 2007 SAT scores tell us that more needs to be done to prepare our students – all of our students — for success on the college campus and in the world. That is why we committed more than \$180 million in new funding for school improvement this year, and with that new financial commitment, there are greater expectations for the success of every child. New legislation also places

greater accountability on school systems to address the needs of every student. This is not just about more money; it's about our children learning."

The SAT is a standardized test that The College Board administers nationally. It is one of two national tests that most colleges use in their admissions process. The SAT tests students in reading, math and, and beginning with the class of 2006, writing. The test results are reported on a scale of 200 to 800. The SAT is administered seven times per year. The results reported by the College Board include only the most recent test results of the class of 2007.

All scores in this news release are based on public school students. Department releases prior to 2006 reported data for all Connecticut students. The national SAT press release of The College Board is based upon the results of all students. Recent comprehensive reporting of the results of public school students by The College Board has made this change possible.

Since the populations of students tested may not be comparable, it is inappropriate to use the SAT or any single assessment to compare states' scores. SAT participation rates may differ from state to state because 1) states have different percentages of graduates who plan to attend college; 2) students in other states take a different college entrance test; and 3) the community colleges in a state may not require the SAT for admission.

"We should view test results over several years, not one or two. However, a two-year decline in reading and math has our attention," said Commissioner McQuillan.

**Statewide Performance and Participation**

Table 1 compares the average SAT scores of 2007 Connecticut public school graduates for reading and math from 1997 to 2007, to all public school graduates nationally.

**Table 1. SAT Public School Averages, Connecticut and the Nation 10-Year Trends**

Year of Graduation	Reading		Math		Writing	
	CT	Nation	CT	Nation	CT	Nation
1997	505	502	503	508		
1998	504	502	503	509		
1999	504	502	503	508		
2000	501	501	503	510		
2001	502	502	503	510		
2002	502	501	503	512		
2003	504	503	508	513		
2004	508	504	508	513		
2005	510	505	512	515		
2006	505	500	510	514	504	492
2007	<b>502</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>488</b>

**Participation.** Roughly 29,000 public school students in Connecticut took the SAT. The College Board estimates that Connecticut's participation rate is **80 percent**. This places Connecticut **fourth behind Maine, New York, and Massachusetts**. Nationally, an estimated **42 percent** of the 2007 public high school graduates took the SAT. Many college-bound students in other states, particularly those in the Midwest, take the ACT Assessment.

**Student Characteristics.** Of the students tested, 53.9 percent were female, 23.2 percent were minority and 20.4 percent first learned a language other than English. The percentage of female test-takers is the same as 10 years ago. The percentage of minority test-takers is 4.7 percentage points higher than 10 years ago. The percentage of students reporting they first learned a language other than English has increased 7.0 percentage points since 1997. In addition, in 2007, 58.5 percent of the students came from families in which one or both parents had earned at least a bachelor’s degree, an increase of 5.4 percentage points since 1997.

**Performance Gaps**

The performance gaps between minority and non-minority students persist. Table 2 compares the reading and math performance of white graduates who took the SAT to their black, Hispanic and Asian counterparts from 1997 to 2007.

**Table 2. CT Public Schools 10-Year SAT Trends by Race**

Year of Graduation	Reading				Math				Writing			
	Black	Asian	Hisp.	White	Black	Asian	Hisp.	White	Black	Asian	Hisp.	White
1997	416	496	443	524	402	544	437	521				
1998	416	503	436	524	406	550	437	522				
1999	417	507	437	524	398	556	433	524				
2000	417	506	432	523	403	556	430	525				
2001	416	502	442	523	402	550	439	525				
2002	410	498	434	521	399	556	430	523				
2003	416	504	438	523	403	549	434	528				
2004	415	503	444	524	405	549	441	523				
2005	417	513	447	528	408	561	445	529				
2006	418	522	445	523	404	567	441	530	416	526	442	522
2007	416	515	439	522	405	560	434	525	<b>416</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>523</b>

- The 2007 Critical Reading averages for white and Asian graduates were 522 and 515, respectively with a 7 point decline for Asian students since 2006. The average reading score of 439 for Hispanic students was down 6 points from 2006 and 4 points below the average from 1997. The average reading score of 416 for Black students was down two points from last year, which was the highest in the past 10 years.
- The average SAT math scores were highest for Asian graduates at 560, followed by 525 for white, 434 for Hispanic and 405 for black graduates. Only black students showed any increase, one point.
- The average writing scores in 2007 were 522 for Asian, 523 for white, 439 for Hispanic and 416 for black graduates. The average writing score for white graduates declined one point and Asian graduates declined 4 points, while Hispanic graduates’ scores declined by 3 points and black graduates’ scores were unchanged from last year.

“The gaps in performance among racial groups are reflected in the 2007 SAT scores. They may be up from a decade ago, but 90- or 100-point gaps between white students and blacks and Hispanics are still entirely unacceptable,” Commissioner McQuillan said. “We need to find better ways to prepare our black and Hispanic students for college beginning with guaranteed access to the PSAT, better preparatory courses for the SAT and a new look at how high schools are structured to meet the needs of all students.”

**Students scoring 600 and above on at least one test**

Approximately 29% of all Connecticut test takers scored 600 or above on at least one test. This figure includes students from public, private religiously affiliated and independent high schools.

### Gender Subgroup Performance

The performance gaps between males and females continue with females excelling in writing and males in math; males hold a slight edge in reading. Table 3 compares the reading and math performance of male and female graduates who took the SAT from 1997 to 2007.

**Table 3. CT Public School SAT Averages  
Male and Female 10-Year Trends**

Year of Graduation	Reading		Math		Writing	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1997	507	503	520	488		
1998	509	501	522	488		
1999	506	503	521	488		
2000	502	500	519	488		
2001	507	498	522	488		
2002	502	501	520	488		
2003	510	499	527	491		
2004	513	503	529	490		
2005	514	507	529	497		
2006	506	504	528	494	497	510
2007	504	500	523	489	497	508

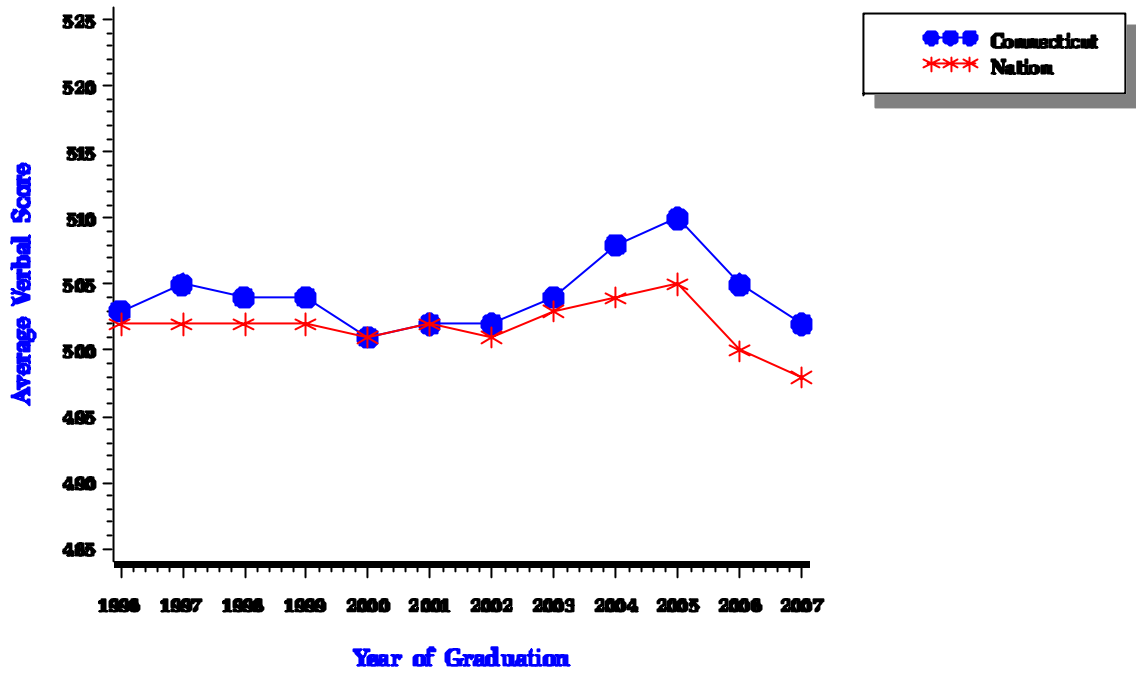
- Although the male average score in reading of 504 was 4 points higher than that of females, both averages were 3 points below the 1997 average.
- The male average score in math of 523 and the female average score of 489 were both slightly above their 1997 averages. The 34-point gap between males and females increased by two points since 1997.
- Females outscored males by an average of 11 points in writing. Both male and female students from Connecticut public schools outscored their peers nationally.

**SAT Reasoning Test Test-Takers by Type of High School**

Type of High School	Number	Pct	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Public	29,140	83	46	54	502	504	503
Religiously Affiliated	3,212	9	54	46	526	521	529
Independent	2,717	8	54	46	588	593	591

School districts will be releasing individual high school scores in the coming weeks.

**SAT Average Critical Reading Scores for Connecticut and the Nation**



**SAT Average Math Scores for Connecticut and the Nation**

