College and Career Readiness
2013-14 Report:
SAT and ACT Testing

Department of Evaluation and Assessment

July 2014

Mike Miles
Superintendent of Schools
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Approved Report of the
Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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L. Shane Hall, Ph.D.

Nancy Kihheman, Ph.D.
Director – Program Evaluation

Cecilia Oakeley, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent – Evaluation and Assessment

Mike Miles
Superintendent of Schools
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COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
2013-14 REPORT: SAT AND ACT TESTING

Project Evaluator: L. Shane Hall, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The SAT and ACT are the most widely used college entrance exams in the United States. Dallas Independent School District wants to increase participation in college admissions testing and increase the number of high school seniors who meet the college readiness benchmarks established under the district’s Destination 2020 improvement plan. Those benchmarks are a composite score of at least 21 on the ACT or a combined reading and math score of 990 on the SAT. Data for 2013-14 showed that more than 5,300 Dallas ISD seniors took at least one of the college entrance examinations during high school. More students took the SAT than the ACT. For the SAT, 4,200 seniors took the test, and 22.9 percent met the Destination 2020 benchmarks. On the ACT, 3,321 students took the test, and 20.1 percent met the Destination 2020 benchmark. Smaller proportions of seniors met the higher Texas Success Initiative (TSI) and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) benchmarks on the SAT and ACT. Of the 5,315 Dallas ISD seniors who took either or both exams, 22.1 percent met the Destination 2020 benchmarks. Across the entire senior class of 7,914 students, 14.8 percent met or exceeded the Destination 2020 benchmarks for either the SAT or ACT.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Background Information

The SAT and the ACT are the most widely used college admissions tests in the United States. The tests are typically taken by high school juniors and seniors interested in attending college after high school. The SAT, developed and administered by the College Board, tests students’ aptitude in critical reading, mathematics, and writing. It is scored on a scale from 200 to 800 for each of the three sections. The composite SAT score is the sum of either the reading and math sections or of all three sections. Composite scores can range from 400 to 1600 (reading and math) or 600 to 2400 (all three sections). The ACT, administered by ACT, Inc., consists of four sections: English, reading, mathematics, and science, each with a score ranging from 11 to 36. The ACT Composite is the average of these four sections.

Purpose and Goal

As part of its Destination 2020 Improvement Plan, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) wants to increase the percentage of high school seniors who achieve “college-ready” scores on the SAT and ACT. The plan defines a “college-ready” score as at least a 21 composite on the ACT or a 990 (reading and math combined) on the SAT. ACT’s college readiness benchmarks are as follows: English, 18; Mathematics, 22; Reading, 21; and Science, 24, for a composite of 21. A concordance study by ACT and College Board sought to identify comparable scores for the two tests and concluded that an SAT score of 990, with a range from 980 to 1010, was comparable to an ACT composite of 21.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this report is to document the number and proportion of Dallas ISD seniors who participated in SAT or ACT testing while in high school, and report their results. This information will assist the district in documenting student progress toward meeting Dallas ISD college readiness goals.

MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

How well did Dallas ISD seniors perform on the SAT?

Methodology

The College Board provided data on SAT scores to the district throughout the year. The evaluator merged these with district data to determine how many 2013-2014 Dallas ISD seniors took the SAT during high school. Analysis of the data included assessing the number and proportion of seniors who met the following college readiness benchmarks: Destination 2020, Texas Success Initiative (TSI), and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The TSI benchmark is the score students must achieve to
be exempt from placement testing and remedial courses in college. The benchmark is a score of at least 500 in both reading and math, and a total score of at least 1070. The AEIS benchmark is reported by the state of Texas as part of its annual accountability reports. The AEIS benchmark is a combined reading and math score of at least 1110.

Results

Analysis of the SAT data for 2013-14 revealed that 4,200 Dallas ISD seniors, or 53.1 percent of the class of 2014, took the SAT at least once during high school. The majority of these students took the test during their senior year of high school, though some tested in the previous year as 11th graders. Hispanic students accounted for 63.3 percent of students tested; African-Americans, 26.4 percent; whites, 6.5 percent; Asian students, 2.4 percent; other, 1.3 percent. The majority of students taking the SAT were female (57.3%), and 78.5 percent were economically disadvantaged. This count applies only to 2013-14 seniors. The district paid for all 11th grade students (the class of 2015) to take the SAT in February 2014 (see EA14-520-2.2).

Figure 1 displays the proportion of seniors who took the SAT and met the Destination 2020 college readiness benchmark of 990 (reading and math combined), by campus and for the district overall. Past Dallas ISD research has shown that students who successfully completed college had SAT scores averaging between 980 and 1010. Among seniors who took the SAT (N=4,200), 22.9 percent met or exceeded the Destination 2020 benchmark. Among non-magnet campuses, W.T. White and Woodrow Wilson high schools had the highest percentages of seniors meeting the benchmark. Kimball and South Oak Cliff, meanwhile, had some of the lowest percentages.

Far fewer seniors overall met the higher TSI and AEIS benchmarks, as shown in Figure 2, which displays results for the 4,200 seniors who took the SAT. Among these students, 12.7 percent met the TSI benchmark (at least 500 each in reading and math, and 1070 overall), and 10.7 percent met the AEIS benchmark (1110 reading and math combined). Figure 2 displays these percentages by campus and for the district as a whole.
Figure 1: Seniors Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmark for SAT, by Campus

- Townview SEM
- TAG
- Rangel
- Arts Magnet
- Public Service
- Health Magnet
- Business
- Garza
- White
- Wilson
- Lassiter
- Educ. Magnet
- Hillcrest
- Dallas ISD Total
- Seagoville HS
- Skyline
- Wilmer-Hutchins
- Gilliam
- B. Adams
- Sunset
- Adamson
- Jefferson
- Conrad
- Molina
- Roosevelt
- Samuell
- N. Dallas
- Spruce
- Madison
- Carter
- Pinkston
- Alt. schools
- Lincoln
- Kimball
- S. Oak Cliff

% of Seniors Tested

0 20 40 60 80 100
Figure 2: Seniors Meeting TSI and AEIS Benchmarks for SAT, by Campus
Table 1 displays 2013-14 SAT results by ethnicity, displaying the rates at which student groups met the Destination 2020 benchmark. Results are based only on seniors who took the test at some point during high school. Proportions range from 15.9 percent (African American) to 72.8 percent (White).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>No. Tested</th>
<th>% Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1,109</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2,660</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How well did Dallas ISD seniors perform on the ACT?

**Methodology**

ACT, Inc. provided data on ACT results to the district throughout the year. The evaluator merged these with district data to determine how many 2013-14 Dallas ISD seniors took the ACT during high school. Analysis of the data included assessing the number and proportion of seniors who met the Destination 2020, TSI, and AEIS benchmarks. For the ACT, the benchmarks are 21 composite for Destination 2020; TSI, 23; and AEIS, 24. The ACT composite is the average of the four tests: English, math, reading, and science. Scale scores on the ACT range from 11 to 36.

**Results**

In years past, fewer Dallas ISD seniors took the ACT than the SAT, and the data for the class of 2014 demonstrated that this was the case again. Overall, 3,321 seniors took the ACT during their time in high school. As shown in Figure 3, 20.1 percent of the seniors tested met the Destination 2020 benchmark on the ACT. Figure 4 displays the percentages of seniors tested who met the TSI or AEIS benchmarks. Only 11.7 percent of seniors tested met the TSI benchmark (23 composite or higher), and only 9.1 percent met the AEIS benchmark (24 composite or higher). At some high schools, no students met these higher benchmarks for college readiness.
Figure 3: Seniors Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmarks for ACT, by Campus
Figure 4: Seniors Meeting TSI and AEIS Benchmarks for ACT, by Campus

- Madison
- Lincoln
- Alt. campuses
- Carter
- Pinkston
- Kimball
- Conrad
- S. Oak Cliff
- Samuell
- Spruce
- Molina
- Wilmer-Hutchins
- Roosevelt
- N. Dallas
- Jefferson
- Seagoville HS
- Sunset
- Skyline
- Adamson
- Gilliam
- B. Adams
- Lassiter
- Dallas ISD Total
- Educ. Magnet
- Hillcrest
- White
- Business Magnet
- Garza
- Wilson
- Health Magnet
- Public Service
- Rangel
- Arts Magnet
- Townview SEM
- TAG

Legend:
- % Meeting TSI
- % Meeting AEIS
Table 2 displays ACT results for Dallas ISD seniors by ethnicity. Results are based only on those seniors who took the ACT sometime during high school, whether in their senior year or earlier. The percentage of students meeting the Destination 2020 benchmarks ranged from 13.8 percent (African American) to 68.9 percent (White).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>No. Tested</th>
<th>% Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,321</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 5,315 Dallas ISD seniors (67.0% of the class of 2014) took either the SAT, ACT, or both at some point during high school. Table 3 breaks down senior participation in college admissions testing. Among the 5,315 who took a college admissions test, the largest number (2,206) took both the SAT and ACT. Out of 5,315 who tested, 1,172 (22.1%) met the Destination 2020 benchmarks of either 21 composite on the ACT or 990 (reading and math combined) on the SAT.

Table 3: Senior Participation in College Admissions Testing, 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pct. of Sr. Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT only</td>
<td>1,994</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT only</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT and ACT</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Tested</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,315</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Tested</td>
<td>2,599</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,914</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another approach to SAT and ACT results is to calculate the number of seniors meeting the Destination 2020 benchmarks as a percentage of the entire senior class of 7,914, as reported in Table 3 above. The 7,914 figure includes seniors who took either or both exams, as well as those students who did not take a college admissions test. Figure 5 displays the proportion of the entire senior class who met the Destination 2020 benchmarks by campus. As shown in Figure 5, magnet campuses had the highest percentages of seniors meeting the benchmarks. Among comprehensive high schools, Wilson and White had the highest percentage of seniors meeting the Destination 2020 benchmarks.
Figure 5. Proportion of Seniors Meeting Destination 2020 Benchmarks for SAT or ACT, by Campus
SUMMARY

Many Dallas ISD seniors who plan to attend college after high school take either the SAT, ACT, or both exams at some time during high school. The Destination 2020 improvement plan calls for increasing the readiness of Dallas ISD seniors for college-level work by increasing the proportion of seniors who meet college readiness benchmarks on either test. Those benchmarks are 21 composite on the ACT or 990 (the sum of reading and math scores) on the SAT. Past district research has shown that past Dallas ISD graduates who went on to earn college degrees had average SAT and ACT scores in this range.

More students took the SAT than the ACT. For the SAT, 4,200 seniors took the test, and 22.9 percent met the Destination 2020 benchmarks. Fewer students met the higher TSI and AEIS benchmarks for college readiness. On the ACT, 3,321 students took the test, of which 20.1 percent met the Destination 2020 benchmark. Proportions meeting the TSI and AEIS benchmarks on the ACT were 11.7 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively.

Overall, 5,315 Dallas ISD seniors took either the ACT, SAT, or both tests during high school. Of this tested population, 1,174, or 22.1 percent, met the Destination 2020 benchmarks. As a proportion of the entire senior class of 7,914, 14.8 percent met the benchmark.

Dallas ISD plans to continue its efforts to encourage more students to further their education beyond high school by taking either of these college admissions tests. For the first time, the district funded school-day SAT testing for all 11th grade students (see EA14-520-2.2) and plans to fund ACT testing for all seniors in 2014-15.