

ASSESSMENT BRIEF

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SAT Results for the Graduating Class of 2019

Author: Robert A. Veigel, M.S., Research Specialist

Other Contact Person: Lisa A. Banicky, Ph.D., Executive Director of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability

ABSTRACT

The results of graduates of Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) who took the SAT one or more times while they were in high school are summarized in this brief. Results are also included for test takers at the state level and for all SAT test takers. The brief focuses mainly on graduates from the 2018-19 school year, but also includes data from earlier graduating classes. The SAT mean section scores for 2019 VBCPS graduates—561 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) and 542 in Math—were 2 and 3 points lower, respectively, than the mean section scores of 2018 graduates. These scores, in addition to the SAT mean total score, surpassed the mean scores of every other Hampton Roads school division, except for Chesapeake which had the same mean score for ERW (561). When VBCPS was compared to Virginia public high schools, the mean section scores for ERW and math were 3 and 6 points lower, respectively, while the overall mean score was 11 points lower. However, VBCPS scores were at least 14 points higher than the mean scores of graduates in the total group (i.e., all 2019 graduates who took the SAT in the U.S. and abroad.) The percentage of VBCPS test takers in the Class of 2019 who met the ERW College and Career Readiness Benchmark (82%) was 1 percentage point higher than the percentage of Virginia public high school graduates who met the benchmark; while the percentage of VBCPS test takers who met the Math College and Career Readiness Benchmark (54%) was 1 percentage point lower than the percentage of Virginia public high school graduates who met the benchmark.

BACKGROUND

The first Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was administered in 1926 to a group of about 8,000 high school students.¹ Recently, the College Board reported that over 2.2 million graduates in the Class of 2019 took the SAT at least once during high school. The total includes students in the US and abroad.

This assessment brief summarizes the results of seniors who took the SAT and indicated their intent to graduate in 2019. Data are reported at the school, division, state, and national levels, and data from previous graduating classes are included for comparisons.

KEY TOPICS:

Background.....	p. 1
Characteristics of SAT Test Takers.....	p. 2
SAT Participation	p. 3
SAT Mean Scores and College & Career Readiness Benchmarks.....	p. 3
SAT Results by High School	p. 4
Comparison With Local School Divisions .	p. 5
Summary	p. 6

¹ Frontline, *Secrets of the SAT: The 1926 Scholastic Aptitude Test*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sats/where/1926.html>, accessed on October 4, 2017.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAT TEST TAKERS

When students register for the SAT, they complete an online questionnaire that asks for demographic information such as gender, race/ethnicity, and their parents’ level of education. Students may choose to not answer certain questions. This caveat should be noted when analyzing and comparing data in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that in the graduating classes of 2018 and 2019, more female students (54%) than male students (46%) took the SAT. This was true for Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the total group of SAT test takers. The total group includes all graduates who took the SAT in the U.S. and internationally.

In general, the VBCPS percentages for each demographic characteristic were more similar to the percentages at the state level than they were to the percentages of the total group. Forty-three percent (43%) of the test takers in the total group reported belonging to the White student group. In VBCPS, the percent of test takers in the White group was 50 percent and for all of Virginia was slightly higher at 52 percent. The percent of VBCPS Black/African American SAT test takers increased by 1 percentage point from the Class of 2018 to the Class of 2019 while the state percentage decreased by 1 percentage point. The percent of Black/African American SAT test takers was maintained at 12 percent for the total group.

When data were examined by parental education, more than 60 percent of VBCPS and Virginia test takers reported the highest level of parental education was a bachelor’s or graduate degree, while fewer than half of the total group reported a four-year or graduate degree as the highest level of parental education.

Table 1: Demographic Summary of 2018 and 2019 Graduates Who Took the SAT

Characteristic	VBCPS		Virginia All		Total Group	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Total Number of Test Takers	3,218	2,935	61,576	61,182	2,136,539	2,220,087
Gender						
Female	54%	54%	53%	54%	52%	52%
Male	46%	46%	47%	46%	48%	48%
Race/Ethnicity						
Asian	8%	8%	9%	10%	10%	10%
Black/African American	19%	20%	19%	18%	12%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	11%	12%	10%	11%	23%	25%
White	52%	50%	53%	52%	44%	43%
Two or More Races	8%	9%	6%	7%	4%	4%
No Response	1%	1%	2%	2%	6%	5%
Highest Level of Parental Education						
No High School Diploma	2%	2%	3%	4%	8%	9%
High School Diploma	25%	25%	23%	22%	27%	27%
Associate Degree	10%	10%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Bachelor’s Degree	39%	38%	33%	34%	28%	28%
Graduate Degree	24%	23%	31%	31%	21%	21%
No Response	1%	1%	3%	2%	9%	8%

Notes: The total number of test takers includes graduates who took the most recent version of the SAT, first administered in March 2016. Percentages for characteristics may not add up to 100 due to decimal rounding and the omission of racial/ethnic groups comprising less than 1% of test takers.

Sources: 2019 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia, and Total Group.

SAT PARTICIPATION

Table 2 shows the number and percent of graduates from 2015 through 2019 for VBCPS, Virginia, and the total group who took the SAT at least once while they were in high school. The number and percent of students taking the SAT decreased from the VBCPS Class of 2018. There have also been decreases in the number of graduates participating in the SAT at the state level; however, the total group number of SAT test takers has increased each year since 2016.

Table 2: Number and Percent of Graduates Who Took the SAT - Five-Year Trends

Graduation Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
VBCPS	3,156	2,998	3,085	3,218	2,935
Percent of VBCPS Graduates	64.5%	61.7%	62.7%	62.5%	58.8%
Virginia All (Public and Private)	59,621	59,268	59,942	61,576	61,182
Total Group	1,698,521	1,674,169	1,839,327	2,136,539	2,220,087

Note: The 2017 totals for VBCPS, Virginia, and the total group include students who took the previous version of the SAT.

Sources: Virginia Department of Education Report of Combined Term Graduates, 2015-2019; 2015 – 2019 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia, and Total Group.

SAT MEAN SCORES AND COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS BENCHMARKS

Table 3 shows the SAT mean scores and the percentage of students who met the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks by racial/ethnic group for VBCPS, the Commonwealth, and for all test takers. The College Board has stated that “Students with an SAT Math section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in algebra, statistics, pre-calculus, or calculus [and] students with an SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in history, literature, social sciences, or writing classes.”²

Table 3: SAT Mean Scores and Percent Meeting Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity – 2019

Race/Ethnicity	Group	Number Tested	Mean Scores			Met Benchmarks		
			ERW	Math	Total	ERW	Math	Both
Asian	VBCPS	224	576	579	1155	86%	70%	69%
	Virginia Public	5,215	612	637	1249	90%	82%	79%
	Total Group	228,527	586	637	1223	83%	80%	75%
Black/African American	VBCPS	585	503	483	987	62%	26%	25%
	Virginia Public	10,216	494	473	967	56%	24%	22%
	Total Group	271,178	476	457	933	46%	22%	20%
Hispanic/Latino	VBCPS	339	550	525	1075	82%	45%	44%
	Virginia Public	6,202	540	524	1064	75%	46%	44%
	Total Group	554,665	495	483	978	55%	31%	29%
White	VBCPS	1,463	584	564	1148	89%	64%	63%
	Virginia Public	27,754	588	568	1156	90%	65%	64%
	Total Group	947,842	562	553	1114	80%	59%	57%
Two or More Races	VBCPS	264	564	542	1106	87%	54%	52%
	Virginia Public	3,733	566	544	1110	82%	54%	53%
	Total Group	87,178	554	540	1095	76%	53%	51%

² College Board, SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks Defined, <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/scores/benchmarks>, accessed on November 19, 2018.

Race/Ethnicity	Group	Number Tested	Mean Scores			Met Benchmarks		
			ERW	Math	Total	ERW	Math	Both
No Response	VBCPS	38	537	515	1052	74%	47%	45%
	Virginia Public	979	513	495	1008	62%	37%	36%
	Total Group	112,350	472	487	959	44%	34%	28%
All Test Takers	VBCPS	2,935	561	542	1102	82%	54%	52%
	Virginia Public	54,293	564	548	1113	81%	55%	54%
	Total Group	2,220,087	531	528	1059	68%	48%	45%

Note: Racial/ethnic groups comprising less than 1% of test takers were omitted.

Sources: 2019 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia Public Schools, and Total Group.

Individual student scores on the ERW and Math sections of the SAT range from 200 to 800. SAT total scores range from 400 to 1600, but the mean total score is not always the sum of the section mean scores due to decimal rounding error.

When scores were analyzed by race/ethnicity, test takers in the VBCPS African American, Hispanic, and no response student groups had mean scores on both sections of the SAT that surpassed each corresponding mean score for the same group in the total group and for public high school graduates in Virginia.

The mean score for all VBCPS graduates was 3 points lower than public school graduates in Virginia for the ERW section and 6 points lower for math section. The percent of VBCPS students who met both ERW and Math SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark was 2 points lower than the percent of Virginia public school graduates meeting both benchmarks. However, VBCPS had higher mean section scores and percentages of students meeting the benchmarks than the total group.

SAT RESULTS BY HIGH SCHOOL

Table 4 provides a two-year comparison of the number of SAT test takers and mean scores for the graduating classes of 2018 and 2019 at each VBCPS high school. The number tested and mean scores for the division, the state (public high school and all graduates), and the total group are shown at the bottom of the table.

Before examining the data, it is important to note the following advice from the College Board: “Caution is warranted when using scores to compare or evaluate teachers, schools, districts, or states, because of differences in participation and test taker populations.”³

Table 4: Number of SAT Test Takers and SAT Mean Scores by School - 2018 and 2019

School	Number Tested		ERW		Math		Total	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Bayside High	201	195	542	531	511	502	1053	1033
Cox High	333	295	576	565	561	558	1137	1123
First Colonial High	295	287	574	574	553	543	1127	1117
Green Run Collegiate	48	64	529	560	518	520	1047	1080
Green Run High	173	153	502	508	498	485	1000	992
Kellam High	392	354	573	570	550	547	1123	1117
Kempsville High	205	191	548	539	516	515	1064	1054
Landstown High	323	301	547	550	538	544	1085	1094

³ College Board, 2019 SAT Annual Report: Virginia Beach City Public Schools, p. 2.

Assessment Brief – SAT Results for the Graduating Class of 2019

School	Number Tested		ERW		Math		Total	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Ocean Lakes High	335	309	592	591	589	583	1181	1174
Princess Anne High	307	284	602	608	584	595	1186	1203
Salem High	276	243	548	542	526	519	1073	1061
Tallwood High	326	258	545	539	523	511	1068	1051
VBCPS	3,218	2,935	563	561	545	542	1107	1102
Virginia Public	54,902	54,293	563	564	547	548	1110	1113
Virginia All	61,576	61,182	567	567	550	551	1117	1119
Total Group	2,136,539	2,220,087	536	531	531	528	1068	1059

Notes: The sum of the mean section scores may not equal the corresponding mean total score due to decimal rounding error. The VBCPS number tested includes four SAT examinees in 2018 and one examinee in 2019 from Renaissance Academy.

Sources: *2018 and 2019 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia, Virginia Public Schools and Total Group; and SAT, PSAT, and AP High School Summary – Virginia Public Schools 2019.*

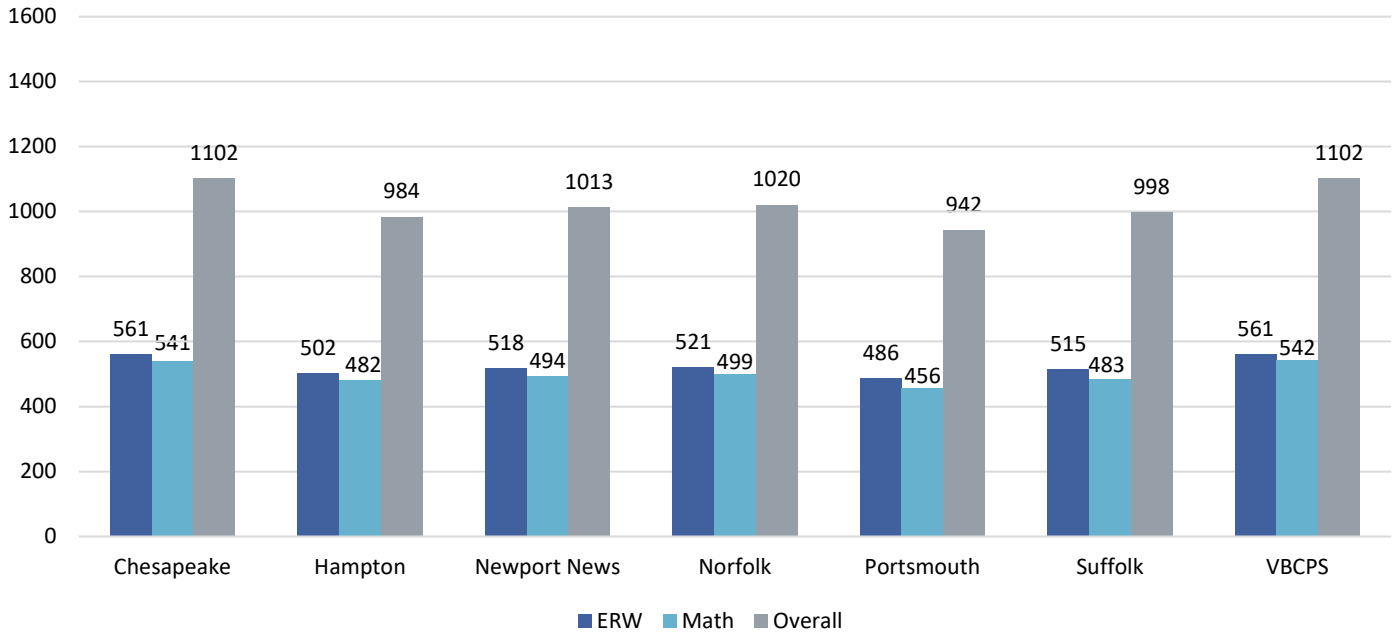
The mean scores of high schools that house advanced academic programs tend to be higher than the mean scores of other schools, due to the rigorous requirements for students who are accepted to the programs and their generally strong performances on the SAT. Ocean Lakes and Princess Anne high schools perennially have the highest SAT mean scores in Virginia Beach due in part to the scores of their Advanced Academic Program students.

The mean total scores of graduates at 9 VBCPS high schools decreased from 2018 to 2019, while three schools demonstrated increases. Princess Anne, Ocean Lakes, Cox, First Colonial, and Kellam high schools all had SAT mean total scores that surpassed the mean total score for students in Virginia who graduated from public schools in 2019.

COMPARISON WITH LOCAL SCHOOL DIVISIONS

The bar graph in Figure 1 shows the mean SAT section scores and mean total scores for graduates in the Class of 2019 in the seven school divisions in Hampton Roads. Virginia Beach City Public Schools continues to lead every other Hampton Roads school division, except for Chesapeake, in mean ERW, math, and overall scores. Chesapeake has the same mean ERW and overall score as VBCPS. Participation rates among Hampton Roads school divisions ranged from approximately 44 percent for Portsmouth Public Schools to 64 percent for Suffolk Public Schools, VBCPS's participation rate was 58 percent for the 2018-2019 school year. However, caution should be used when comparing across Hampton Roads due to differences in the student population.

Figure 1: SAT Mean Scores for Hampton Roads School Divisions



Note: The sum of the section scores may not equal the corresponding total score due to decimal rounding.

Source: SAT, PSAT, and AP District Summary – Virginia Public Schools 2019.

SUMMARY

A total of 2,935 students, or 58.8 percent, of the VBCPS graduating Class of 2019, took the SAT during high school. The mean section and mean total scores for the 2019 cohort decreased 2 to 5 points from the previous graduating class’s mean scores. While 82 percent of test takers in the Class of 2019 met the College and Career Readiness Benchmark score in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, 54 percent met the Math benchmark and 52 percent met both benchmarks. These percentages were relatively similar to 2019 public high school graduates in Virginia who met the benchmarks (81%, 55%, and 54%, respectively).

Aaron C. Spence, Ed.D., Superintendent
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038

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For further information, please call (757) 263-1199.

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