

ASSESSMENT BRIEF

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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SAT Results for the Graduating Class of 2018

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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, national, and international levels. The brief focuses mainly on graduates from the 2017-18 school year, but includes data from earlier graduating classes. The SAT mean section scores for 2018 VBCPS graduates—563 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) and 545 in Math—were 6 and 11 points higher, respectively, than the mean section scores of 2017 graduates. These scores, in addition to the SAT mean total score, surpassed the mean scores of every other Hampton Roads school division. The mean scores for the VBCPS class of 2018 were within three points of the mean scores of 2018 graduates from Virginia public high schools, but they were at least 14 points higher than the mean scores of graduates in the total group (i.e., all 2018 graduates who took the SAT in the U.S. and abroad.) The percentage of VBCPS test takers in the class of 2018 who met the ERW College and Career Readiness Benchmark was higher than the percentage of Virginia public high school graduates; the Math benchmark percentages for VBCPS and Virginia public school graduates were the same.

KEY TOPICS:

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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 2.1 million graduates in the class of 2018 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 2018. Data are reported at the school, division, state, and national levels, and data from previous graduating classes are included for comparisons.

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. Questionnaires rely on the knowledge and honesty of respondents, so it is possible that some of the data in Table 1—shown on the next page—are not fully accurate.

In some cases, the precision of the data was affected by incorrect responses; in other cases, students chose 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 2017 and 2018, more female students than male students 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 characteristic were more similar to the percentages at the state level than they were to the percentages of the total group. The percent of VBCPS Black/African American SAT test takers decreased by 2 points from the class of 2017 to the class of 2018, while the decrease in Black/African American test takers was 1 percent at the state and total group levels.

Forty-four percent of the test takers in the total group reported belonging to the White student group. In VBCPS and Virginia, the percent of test takers

¹Frontline, *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.

in the White group was over half. Similarly, 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 college degree as the highest level of parental education.

Table 1
Demographic Summary of 2017 and 2018 Graduates Who Took the SAT

Characteristic	VBCPS		Virginia All		Total Group	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Total Number of Test Takers	3,001	3,218	57,453	61,576	1,715,481	2,136,539
Gender						
Female	55%	54%	53%	53%	53%	52%
Male	45%	46%	47%	47%	47%	48%
Race/Ethnicity						
Asian	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	10%
Black/African American	21%	19%	20%	19%	13%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	11%	11%	10%	10%	24%	23%
White	51%	52%	54%	53%	44%	44%
Two or More Races	7%	8%	6%	6%	3%	4%
No Response	1%	1%	2%	2%	5%	6%
Highest Level of Parental Education						
No High School Diploma	1%	2%	3%	3%	8%	8%
High School Diploma	27%	25%	25%	23%	28%	27%
Associate Degree	12%	10%	8%	7%	8%	7%
Bachelor’s Degree	35%	39%	33%	33%	28%	28%
Graduate Degree	23%	24%	28%	31%	20%	21%
No Response	2%	1%	4%	3%	9%	9%

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: 2018 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia, and Total Group.

SAT PARTICIPATION

Table 2 shows that the number of 2018 VBCPS graduates who took the SAT one or more times while they were in high school increased from the VBCPS class of 2017, but the percent of test takers decreased slightly. This occurred because the number of VBCPS graduates increased from 2017 to 2018. There have also been increases at the state

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

Graduation Year ↗	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
VBCPS	3,110	3,156	2,998	3,085	3,218
Percent of VBCPS Graduates	63.8%	64.5%	61.7%	62.7%	62.5%
Virginia All (Public and Private)	59,906	59,621	59,268	59,942	61,576
Total Group	1,672,395	1,698,521	1,674,169	1,839,327	2,136,539

and total group levels since 2016, the year the newest version of the SAT was introduced. At the same time more students were taking the new SAT, fewer students across the division, state, and nation were taking the other college entrance exam, the ACT.

SAT MEAN SCORES AND COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS BENCHMARKS

On the following page, 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 – 2018

Race/Ethnicity	Group	Number Tested	Mean Scores			Met Benchmarks		
			ERW	Math	Total	ERW	Math	Both
Asian	VBCPS	270	574	583	1157	85%	71%	68%
	Virginia Public	5,148	608	630	1239	90%	81%	78%
	Total Group	217,971	588	635	1223	85%	81%	75%
Black/African American	VBCPS	607	505	484	989	63%	28%	26%
	Virginia Public	10,993	498	473	971	58%	24%	23%
	Total Group	263,318	483	463	946	50%	23%	21%
Hispanic/Latino	VBCPS	340	551	525	1075	80%	47%	46%
	Virginia Public	5,840	543	525	1068	76%	48%	46%
	Total Group	499,442	501	489	990	58%	33%	31%
White	VBCPS	1,681	583	564	1147	90%	64%	63%
	Virginia Public	28,449	586	566	1152	90%	65%	64%
	Total Group	930,825	566	557	1123	82%	61%	59%
Two or More Races	VBCPS	259	568	549	1118	86%	58%	56%
	Virginia Public	3,309	568	547	1115	83%	56%	54%
	Total Group	77,078	558	543	1101	78%	54%	52%
No Response	VBCPS	41	564	529	1093	83%	46%	46%
	Virginia All	959	525	507	1032	68%	38%	37%
	Total Group	131,339	472	481	954	44%	31%	26%
All Test Takers	VBCPS	3,218	563	545	1107	83%	55%	54%
	Virginia Public	54,902	563	547	1110	81%	55%	54%
	Total Group	2,136,539	536	531	1068	70%	49%	47%

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

Sources: 2018 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.

Except for test takers in the VBCPS Asian and White student groups, the mean scores on both sections of the SAT for racial/ethnic groups in the VBCPS class of 2018 equaled or surpassed each corresponding mean score for the same group in the total group and for public high school graduates in Virginia. The SAT mean scores for Black/African American students who graduated from a VBCPS high school in 2018 were significantly higher than the mean scores of their counterparts at the state and total group levels.

The ERW mean scores for VBCPS graduates and public school grads in Virginia were the same, but the percent of VBCPS students who met the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark was 2 points higher than the percent of Virginia public school graduates. Although the math and mean total scores at the state level were slightly higher than the VBCPS means, the percent of students in Virginia Beach who met the math benchmark, as well as both benchmarks, were identical.

SAT RESULTS BY HIGH SCHOOL

At the top of the next page, Table 4 provides a two-year comparison of the number of SAT test takers and mean scores for the graduating classes of 2017 and 2018 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, readers should heed this 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

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

³College Board, *2018 SAT Annual Report: Virginia Beach City Public Schools*, p. 2.

Table 4
Number of SAT Test Takers and SAT Mean Scores by School – 2017 and 2018

School	Number Tested		ERW		Math		Total	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Bayside High	205	201	525	542	505	511	1030	1053
Cox High	291	333	566	576	547	561	1113	1137
First Colonial High	324	295	572	574	539	553	1111	1127
Green Run Collegiate	66	48	533	529	500	518	1033	1047
Green Run High	152	173	498	502	476	498	974	1000
Kellam High	315	392	570	573	545	550	1115	1123
Kempsville High	173	205	538	548	515	516	1053	1064
Landstown High	318	323	553	547	538	538	1090	1085
Ocean Lakes High	314	335	574	592	565	589	1139	1181
Princess Anne High	281	307	598	602	577	584	1175	1186
Salem High	251	276	540	548	518	526	1059	1073
Tallwood High	307	326	547	545	515	523	1061	1068
VBCPS	3,001	3,218	557	563	534	545	1091	1107
Virginia Public	51,613	54,902	558	563	538	547	1095	1110
Virginia All	57,453	61,576	561	567	541	550	1102	1117
Total Group	1,715,481	2,136,539	533	536	527	531	1060	1068

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 2017 and four examinees in 2018 from Renaissance Academy.

Sources: 2017 and 2018 SAT Suite Annual Reports – Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Virginia, and Total Group; and SAT, PSAT, and AP High School Summary – Virginia Public Schools 2018.

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 academy students.

The mean total scores of graduates at 11 VBCPS high schools increased from 2017 to 2018. 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 and private schools in 2018.

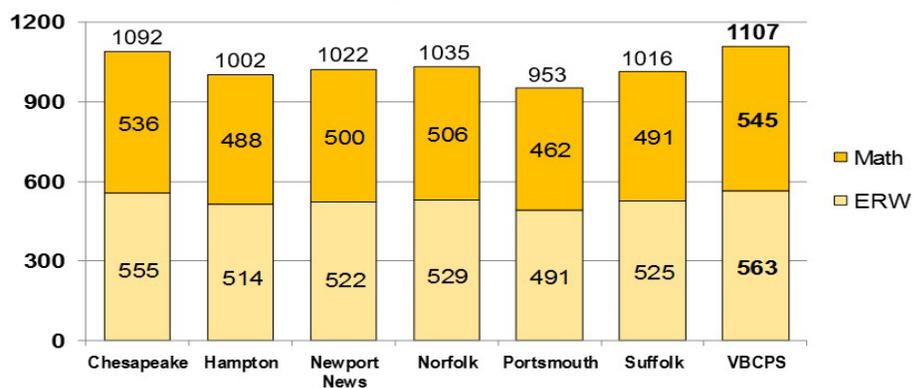
Nine high schools saw increases from 2017 to 2018 in the number of grads who took the SAT. Kellam High School had the largest increase as well as the most test takers in the class of 2018.

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 2018 in the seven school divisions in Hampton Roads. Virginia Beach City Public Schools continues to lead every other Hampton Roads school division school in mean section scores, shown inside each bar, and mean total scores, shown above each bar in Figure 1.

The SAT mean total score of 1107 exceeded the mean total score of Chesapeake Public Schools by 15 points. Chesapeake typically has the second highest SAT mean scores in Hampton Roads. Besides having the highest SAT mean scores, VBCPS consistently has the highest number of graduates in Hampton Roads who take the SAT during high school. In the class of 2018, VBCPS had nearly 500 more SAT test takers than the combined total of test takers in Chesapeake and Norfolk.

Figure 1
SAT Mean Scores for Hampton Roads School Divisions – 2018



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

Source: SAT, PSAT, and AP District Summary – Virginia Public Schools 2018.

SUMMARY

A total of 3,218 students, or 62.5 percent of the VBCPS graduating class of 2018, took the SAT during in high school. The mean section and mean total scores for the 2018 cohort increased significantly from the previous graduating class’s mean scores. While 83 percent of test takers in the class of 2018 met the College and Career Readiness Benchmark score in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, 55 percent met the Math benchmark and 54 percent met both benchmarks. These percentages were the same or higher than the percentages of 2018 public high school graduates in Virginia who met the benchmarks.