Leading with Purpose: Fulton County Schools Expands Access and Achievement on the SAT

1. Introduction

In 2025, Fulton County Schools (FCS) returned to **pre-pandemic levels of SAT participation and performance.** A total of **5,135 students** sat for the exam, the district's highest number of test takers since 2019, and the average score of **1076** matches Fulton's strong pre-COVID performance.

This means that FCS has not only recovered from the disruptions of the pandemic but also reclaimed its position as one of Georgia's strongest and most expansive SAT-testing districts.

- **Participation surged** by 309 students compared to 2024, showing that more students than ever are stepping up to college-level readiness.
- **Achievement held strong**, with scores outpacing the state (1029) by 47 points and the national public-school average (996) by 80 points.

Behind the numbers are powerful stories: flagship schools like **Innovation Academy (1,281) and Northview High (1,254) are performing at elite national levels, while others, such as Westlake (+167 test takers)** and **Alpharetta (+89 test takers),** have dramatically expanded participation. The message is clear: **FCS is widening the gateway to college readiness without lowering the bar.**

2. A District on the Rise

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Fulton County Schools has remained focused on providing high-quality instruction, adopting district-wide resources, offering impactful summer learning opportunities, implementing The Science of Reading fully, and implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for students who benefit from targeted interventions. **Exhibit 1. FCS and State Scores** show the results of this approach. In 2025, Fulton's district average rose from **1063 to 1076**, a 13-point gain, while the state average moved slightly downward from 1030 to 1029. This growing margin illustrates how Fulton is building momentum on top of an already strong foundation.

The data reflects a systemwide alignment of resources, leadership, and policy that enables both access and achievement. The increase of **309 test takers** from 2024 suggests that systemic barriers to participation, such as access to prep resources, testing logistics, and student engagement, are being addressed. Fulton County Schools is expanding the pipeline to higher education without compromising academic standards, demonstrating a well-functioning educational system.

Several schools posted notable gains:

- **Centennial (+45 to 1070)** led the district in improvement, showing a sharp rebound from 2024.
- **Chattahoochee (+39 to 1236)** returned to the ranks of Fulton's top performers.
- **Westlake (+13 to 959)** and **Langston Hughes (+13 to 855)** demonstrated strong progress.

- **Banneker (+8), Creekside (+9), Tri-Cities (+9), Global Impact Academy (+8),** and **Riverwood (+6)** all posted steady increases.

Fulton also sustained excellence at the top end. **Innovation Academy (1281)** and **Northview (1254)** remain among the state's elite, while **Alpharetta (1207)**, **Johns Creek (1212)**, and **Chattahoochee (1236)** continue to perform well above 1200.

At the same time, Exhibit 1 highlights opportunities for renewed focus. **North Springs (-54 to 957)** and **FAVE (-50 to 1029)** experienced the largest declines, while **Roswell (-11)** and **Northview (-14)** slipped slightly but remain strong overall.

Taken together, the data demonstrate that Fulton's gains are broad-based. Multiple schools improved scores, focused campuses showed meaningful progress, and the district's top performers continue to compete nationally. Fulton is not only maintaining its advantage but extending it through consistent improvement across schools. In the coming weeks, district staff will conduct a deeper analysis of the data to understand the drivers of these results and identify strategies to sustain and build upon this positive trend.

Exhibit 1. FCS and State Scores

School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2024 vs. 2025
Alpharetta High School	1189	1265	1223	1214	1185	1207	**22**
Banneker High School	823	882	889	861	860	868	**8**
Cambridge High School	1206	1191	1160	1153	1165	1153	**-12**
Centennial High School	1092	1127	1066	1074	1025	1070	**45**
Chattahoochee High School	1233	1249	1247	1225	1197	1236	**39**
Creekside High School	863	911	893	854	845	854	**9**
FAVE High School	N/A	N/A	N/A	1022	1079	1029	**-50**
Global Impact Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	996	1004	**8**

School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2024 vs. 2025
Hapeville Charter Career	882	921	932	862	868	875	**7**
Independence High School	1000	969	N/A	N/A	893	TFS	N/A
Innovation Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1286	1281	**-5**
Johns Creek High School	1220	1241	1214	1219	1218	1212	**-6**
Langston Hughes High School	862	873	880	875	842	855	**13**
Milton High School	1164	1201	1178	1163	1150	1141	**-9**
North Springs High School	1073	1069	1011	991	1011	957	**-54**
Northview High School	1282	1301	1298	1263	1268	1254	**-14**
Riverwood High School	1077	1116	1077	1055	1053	1059	**6**
Roswell High School	1160	1141	1126	1118	1113	1102	**-11**
Skyview High School	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tri-Cities High School	864	859	877	851	820	829	**9**
Westlake High School	995	987	974	944	946	959	**13**
District	**1078**	**1128**	**1101**	**1085**	**1063**	**1076**	**13**
State	**1043**	**1077**	**1052**	**1045**	**1030**	**1029**	**-1**

3. Expanding Access Through Participation

Exhibit 2. FCS Test Takers illustrates Fulton County Schools' strongest SAT participation since before the pandemic. In 2025, **5,135 students** sat for the exam, an increase of **309 students compared to 2024** and the highest total since 2019. This marks a full return to FCS' historic levels of participation, placing the district just under 300 students shy of its all-time peak in 2019. Several schools led the expansion:

- **Westlake High School (+167 to 445)** posted the largest increase in the district, now representing Fulton's largest SAT cohort.
- **Innovation Academy (+125 to 366)** nearly matched Westlake's growth, combining elite academic outcomes with rapidly expanding participation.
- **Alpharetta High School (+89 to 400)** also surged, demonstrating that high-performing schools can broaden access while sustaining achievement.
- **Global Impact Academy (+62 to 134)** nearly doubled its test-taker count, reflecting growing momentum in a newer school community.
- **Cambridge High School (+52 to 331)** and **Northview High School (+31 to 387)** posted meaningful increases that strengthened the districtwide total.

Other schools showed steadier or declining participation. **Johns Creek (+9 to 331)** and **Riverwood (+9 to 213)** made incremental gains, while **Langston Hughes (-34 to 322)** and **Tri-Cities (-12 to 250)** slipped but continue to send large cohorts of students to the exam.

The overall increase reflects more than simple growth. It demonstrates a **system-wide alignment of resources, leadership,** and **policy that actively removes barriers** to participation. The addition of 309 test takers in a single year suggests that challenges such as access to preparation resources, testing logistics, and student engagement are being addressed. FCS is expanding its pipeline to higher education while maintaining strong academic performance, ensuring that opportunities are broad and sustainable.

Exhibit 2. FCS Test Takers

School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs. 2024
Alpharetta High School	422	298	336	376	311	400	**89**
Banneker High School	331	117	140	148	158	156	**-2**
Cambridge High School	384	332	377	383	279	331	**52**

School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs. 2024
Centennial High School	290	165	284	237	255	251	**-4**
Chattahoochee High School	314	289	331	618	325	294	**-31**
Creekside High School	324	122	229	227	282	278	**-4**
FAVE	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	19	26	**7**
Global Impact Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	TFS	72	134	**62**
Hapeville Charter Career	114	43	55	120	132	112	**-20**
Independence High School	24	17	TFS	TFS	TFS	TFS	TFS
Innovation Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	241	366	**125**
Johns Creek High School	345	299	328	380	340	331	**9**
Langston Hughes High School	341	204	235	263	356	322	**-34**
McClarin High School	35	12	TFS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Milton High School	425	331	348	379	322	322	**0**
North Springs High School	203	177	209	167	196	191	**-5**
Northview High School	363	306	368	393	356	387	**31**
Riverwood High	275	191	225	204	204	213	**9**

School	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025 vs. 2024
Roswell High School	374	274	342	313	326	312	**-14**
Skyview High School	TFS	TFS	TFS	TFS	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tri-Cities High School	229	143	180	138	262	250	**-12**
Westlake High School	318	249	306	399	278	445	**167**
District	**5114**	**3573**	**4317**	**4487**	**4826**	**5135**	**309**

4. Section Performance: Math and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW)

In 2025, **FCS students averaged 542 in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and 534 in Math**, both of which were comfortably above state and national levels. Georgia's averages were **520 EBRW and 509 Math**, while national public-school averages were **502 EBRW and 494 Math**. This means FCS students outperformed the state by more than 20 points in each section and outpaced the nation by nearly 40 points.

Exhibit 3. SAT Section Performance by School highlights how that districtwide strength translates across campuses:

- **Innovation Academy** leads the district in both **EBRW (642)** and **Math (640)**, setting the pace for academic excellence with virtually perfect balance across the two domains.
- **Northview High School (623 EBRW, 631 Math)** and **Chattahoochee High School (616 EBRW, 620 Math)** also demonstrate exceptional performance, joining Innovation in the state's top tier with scores that rival elite schools nationally.
- **Johns Creek (612 EBRW, 600 Math)** and **Alpharetta (609 EBRW, 598 Math)** provide further evidence that FCS's flagship schools combine broad access with consistently high achievement.

The chart also shows important patterns across the district:

- **Cambridge (587 EBRW, 566 Math)** and **Milton (584 EBRW, 557 Math)** display strength across both sections, continuing their tradition of high performance.
- **Roswell (564 EBRW, 538 Math)** and **Centennial (548 EBRW, 521 Math)** illustrate steady growth, landing comfortably above the district mean in both domains.

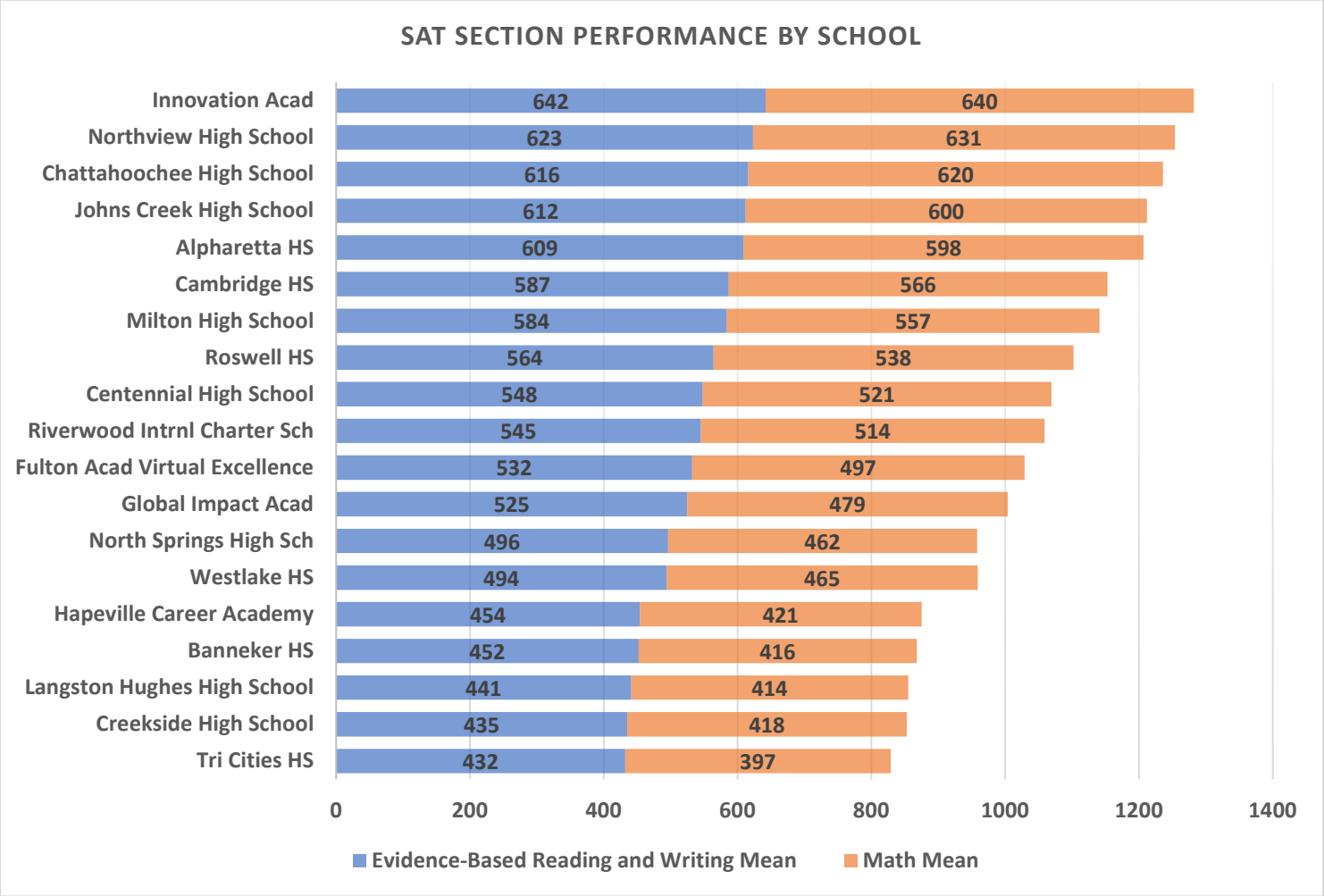
- **Fulton Academy of Virtual Excellence (532 EBRW, 497 Math)** and **Global Impact Academy (525 EBRW, 479 Math)** show well-rounded instructional approaches, keeping both sections closely aligned.

At the same time, the data highlight emerging opportunities:

- **North Springs (496 EBRW, 462 Math)** and **Westlake (494 EBRW, 465 Math)** reflect balanced achievement, though at levels slightly below the district average, pointing to areas where targeted support could yield gains.
- Schools such as **Banneker, Langston Hughes, Creekside, and Tri-Cities** post lower averages in both EBRW and Math, but their steady participation growth signals that more students are engaging in college-readiness pathways than ever before.

Together, these results show that FCS is not only excelling at the top end but also strengthening alignment across schools. High-performing campuses are consistently achieving elite results, while a growing number of schools are ensuring that students are prepared in both reading and math. The consistency across sections reflects the impact of FCS's districtwide strategies in literacy, numeracy, and academic support.

Exhibit 3. SAT Section Performance by School



5. **Statewide Comparison**

Fulton County Schools leads the state, with four schools in the top 10 — more than any other district in Georgia. Together, these campuses represent 1,378 test takers, showing that FCS's excellence extends across both scale and performance:

- **Johns Creek High School** – 1212
- **Chattahoochee High School** – 1236
- **Northview High School** – 1254
- **Innovation Academy** – 1281

Forsyth County follows with three schools in the top 10:

- South Forsyth High School – 1226
- Lambert High School – 1235
- Alliance Academy – 1282

Other districts with one Top 10 school each include:

- **Walton High School** – 1260 (Cobb)
- **Atlanta Classical Academy** – 1245 (Atlanta)
- **Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science and Technology** – 1360 (Gwinnett)

Why This Matters

A review of the data shows that **Fulton County Schools has more high schools in the state's top 10 than any other district.** This reflects not only exceptional performance at flagship campuses but also the **breadth of academic strength across FCS.** Unlike other districts where excellence is concentrated in one or two schools, Fulton's high performance is **distributed across multiple communities**, underscoring the district's ability to sustain college readiness on a larger scale.

6. **FCS Leads Metro in Access and Performance**

Among Atlanta's largest school systems, **Fulton County Schools tested the highest share of its students while maintaining scores above both the state and national averages.**

While Gwinnett County tested the largest number of students overall, their average SAT score (1003) fell below the state benchmark. Cobb County reported a slightly higher average score (1116) but tested a smaller percentage of its students. **As Exhibit 4 shows, FCS is unique in combining strong performance with broad access: 5,135 students were tested in 2025, representing nearly six percent of the district's enrollment — more than any other high-performing metro district.**

Exhibit 4. Metro Atlanta SAT Participation and Performance, 2025

District	Enrollment (2024–25)	Test Takers	% of Students Tested	Avg SAT Score
Gwinnett County	182,518	12,719	7.0%	1003
Fulton County (FCS)	**86,839**	**5,135**	**5.9%**	**1076**
Cobb County	105,213	5,073	4.8%	1116
DeKalb County	91,638	4,486	4.9%	934
Forsyth County	55,056	3,061	5.6%	1178
Atlanta Public Schools (APS)	49,740	2,164	4.4%	939
Clayton County	50,926	2,052	4.0%	888
Henry County	42,917	1,743	4.1%	986
Cherokee County	41,861	1,889	4.5%	1085
Fayette County	19,806	1,067	5.4%	1124
Rockdale County	15,276	534	3.5%	995
Marietta City Schools	8,692	268	3.1%	1065
Buford City Schools	5,994	280	4.7%	1141
City Schools of Decatur	5,356	307	5.7%	1169
State-wide	**761,832**	**40,778**	**5.4%**	**1029**

7. Conclusion

Fulton County Schools' 2025 SAT results confirm that the **district has fully returned to pre-pandemic strength**, matching its historic performance while expanding opportunity to more students than ever before. With an average score of 1076, FCS stands 47 points above the state and 80 points above the national public-school average, reaffirming its place among Georgia's academic leaders.

What makes 2025 especially significant is that **achievement rose alongside access**. More than **5,100 students took the SAT this year, the district's highest total since 2019**, with participation surging at both **flagship schools** and **emerging campuses**. This demonstrates that FCS is expanding the gateway to higher education while maintaining a rigorous standard of performance.

These outcomes reflect more than individual school success. They are the result of a coherent, systemwide strategy: strong instruction, consistent adoption of resources, focused literacy and numeracy initiatives, summer learning opportunities, and a multi-tiered support system that ensures students are ready for the next level.

The 2025 results are not an endpoint but a milestone. They demonstrate that FCS is building momentum on top of a strong foundation, preparing each student not only to take the SAT but to thrive in college and beyond.