



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, & ASSESSMENT

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RESEARCH STUDY: FY20-FY25 COLLEGE READINESS BASED ON SAT AND ACT TEST RESULTS

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The SAT and ACT assessments help students monitor academic progress and prepare them to achieve their college and career goals. Graduating high school students who meet College Readiness Benchmarks are more likely to succeed in college-level courses. The criteria for meeting College Readiness Benchmarks for District students are specified by the test developers (for SAT, see [College Board Benchmarks](#); for ACT see [ACT Readiness Benchmarks](#)).¹

The Department of Research, Evaluation & Assessment (DREA) developed an interactive [SAT and ACT Results Dashboard](#) summarizing assessment data by school and student subgroup from FY20 to FY25. Data include the number of test-takers, participation rates, and percentage of test-takers meeting College Readiness Benchmarks. Although the annual SAT and ACT District profile reports summarize only grade 12 cohort students, this report includes test-takers in grade 11 to provide a comprehensive snapshot of FY20, FY21, FY22, FY23, FY24, and FY25 participation and performance for the District. This document outlines some high-level observations from the Dashboard.

Participation Rates: FY20 to FY25

- Grade 11 participation rate on the SAT or ACT remained steady overall from FY22 to FY25 at 88%. Participation rates for Black, Hispanic, and White students remained stable (within 2 percentage points) from FY22 to FY25.
- From FY22 to FY25, the grade 12 combined SAT or ACT participation rate was reduced by approximately 13 percentage points both at the District level and across most ethnic subgroups. This decline likely reflects increased participation in the CLT, resulting in fewer students using the SAT or ACT to obtain concordance scores.
- In FY25, the combined SAT or ACT participation rate was 65% overall, down slightly from 68% in FY24.
- Overall, SAT participation exceeded ACT participation. This difference may be partially attributed to the District's annual SAT Day, which offers the SAT free of charge to all grade 11 students.

Average Scores: FY20 to FY25

- SAT EBRW² average scores have remained relatively stable, with slight fluctuations, from 510 in FY20 to 511 in FY25
- SAT Math average scores have been gradually decreasing from 484 in FY20 to 468 in FY24, then slightly increased to 481 in FY25.
- ACT English and Reading average scores dropped from 19 to 18 from FY20 to FY23, but remained stable from FY23 to FY25.

¹ For the purposes of the present report, ACT's Reading and Mathematics sections were used.

² Evidence Based Reading and Writing

- ACT Math scores decreased from 18 to 16 in FY20 through FY24, with a slight uptick to 17 in FY25.

College and Career Readiness Benchmarks: FY20 to FY25

- The percentage of students in grades 11 meeting College Readiness Benchmarks in Reading on either the SAT or ACT increased from FY20 (57%) to FY22 (62%). However, a downward trend was observed from FY22 to FY25 (58%). The percentage of grade 11 students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks in Math declined from FY20 (32%) to FY24 (27%), followed by a slight rebound in FY25 (30%). The percent of students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks in both Reading and Math in grade 11 on either the SAT or ACT decreased from FY20 (31%) to FY22 (28%), but remained relatively stable from FY22 to FY25 (28%).
- The percentage of students in grade 12 meeting College Readiness Benchmarks in Reading on either the SAT or ACT remained relatively stable from FY20 to FY24, with an increase in FY25 (67%). The percentage of grade 12 students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks in Math and both Reading and Math demonstrated a similar pattern, slight declines in the percentage of students meeting benchmarks from FY20 to FY22 followed by an increase from FY22 to FY25.

Next Steps

Staff are encouraged to explore test participation and College Readiness data to guide students toward meeting graduation requirements and College Readiness Benchmarks. Several data sources are available to assist principals and staff including:

- 1) Potential Students for College and or Post-Secondary Readiness (Report number: RESQA0440): This EDW report provides a list of potential students for the cohort graduation year along with GPA, SAT scores, and ACT scores. College Readiness and Post-Secondary Readiness flags are also included.
- 2) Individual Student Graduation Status (Report number: RSSOA0549): This EDW report provides in-depth graduation status information for individual students including color-coded College Readiness data to illustrate whether students are “on track” or “not on track.”
- 3) K-12 Reporting Portal k12reports.collegeboard.org: This College Board portal is available to select guidance counselors and displays historical SAT score reports by school and student. The “Skills Insight” page provides student-specific suggestions for improving skills based on test scores and information about linking scores to SAT practice materials.

For questions regarding the SAT and ACT exam results, contact Dr. Paul Houchens, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment, 561-434-8780 or Dr. Adam Miller, Chief, Performance Accountability, 561-434-8851. For questions regarding individual school efforts and College Readiness results, please contact the appropriate regional superintendent or school principal.