

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY  
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

**TITLE:** Report on the Results of the SAT Reasoning Test for the Class of 2007      **DATE:** SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

**OVERVIEW:**

The SAT report for the graduating class of 2007 presents for the second time the scores on the new SAT Reasoning Test, which includes three sections—critical reading, mathematics, and writing. According to the College Board report, Howard County graduates in 2007 achieved outstanding performance with an average score of 538 for the critical reading test, an average score of 557 for the mathematics reasoning test, and an average score of 538 for the writing test. This is a composite score of 1633 out of a possible 2400. The performance of our students is markedly above the national average of 502 for critical reading, 515 for mathematics, and 494 for writing. Our students also exceeded the state average of 500 for critical reading, 502 for mathematics, and 496 for writing. The report generated for the College Board is based on self-report data from students participating in the SAT program and may include errors in reporting schools or demographics. When we receive the data file from the College Board, we are able to confirm records and correct errors. Thus when reporting SAT data, particularly trend data, we prefer to use the HCPSS analyses, which form the basis for the attached briefing.

**RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The performance by HCPSS graduates in the Class of 2007 continues to exceed state and national averages. Strategic initiatives implemented over the last four years coupled with the hard work of our students, parents, and staff have brought us these excellent scores. However, there is still work to be done to achieve the high standards we have set for ourselves in the *Bridge to Excellence* plan. With the advent of a new SAT Reasoning test, HCPSS staff members have made adjustments to our curriculum and instruction at both the middle and high school levels to better prepare students for the additional elements on the new SAT. Staff members will continue to examine the data, to study research, and to design improvement plans at the school and system level to continue to produce high performance for every child.

**Submitted by:**

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**Approval/  
Concurrence:**

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Sydney Cousin  
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Deputy Superintendent

## Introduction

The SAT report for the graduating class of 2007 presents for the second time the scores on the new SAT Reasoning Test, which includes three sections—critical reading, mathematics, and writing. According to the College Board report, Howard County graduates in 2007 achieved outstanding performance with an average score of 538 for the critical reading test, an average score of 557 for the mathematics reasoning test, and an average score of 538 for the writing test. This is a composite score of 1633 out of a possible 2400. The performance of our students is markedly above the national average of 502 for critical reading, 515 for mathematics, and 494 for writing. Our students also exceeded the state average of 500 for critical reading, 502 for mathematics, and 496 for writing.

The report generated by the College Board is based on self-report data from students participating in the SAT program and includes only the most recent score of a graduating senior. Any errors in the self-report data are difficult for the College Board to recognize or correct. However, when we receive the data file from the College Board, we are able to confirm that the students are actually enrolled in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), to eliminate duplicate records, and to correct errors in demographic information or school of attendance. Therefore, we are more confident in presenting data, particularly trend data, on the SAT using our own files. The remainder of this briefing will present information from the HCPSS analysis of SAT data.

## Results for the Graduating Class of 2007

There were 2787 students in the graduating class of 2007 who participated in SAT testing—the largest number of participants ever, representing 73 percent of the graduating seniors. Table 1 presents the mean scores and number of test takers for the county and each high school.

Table 1: Summary of Mean Scores and Participation for the Graduating Class of 2007

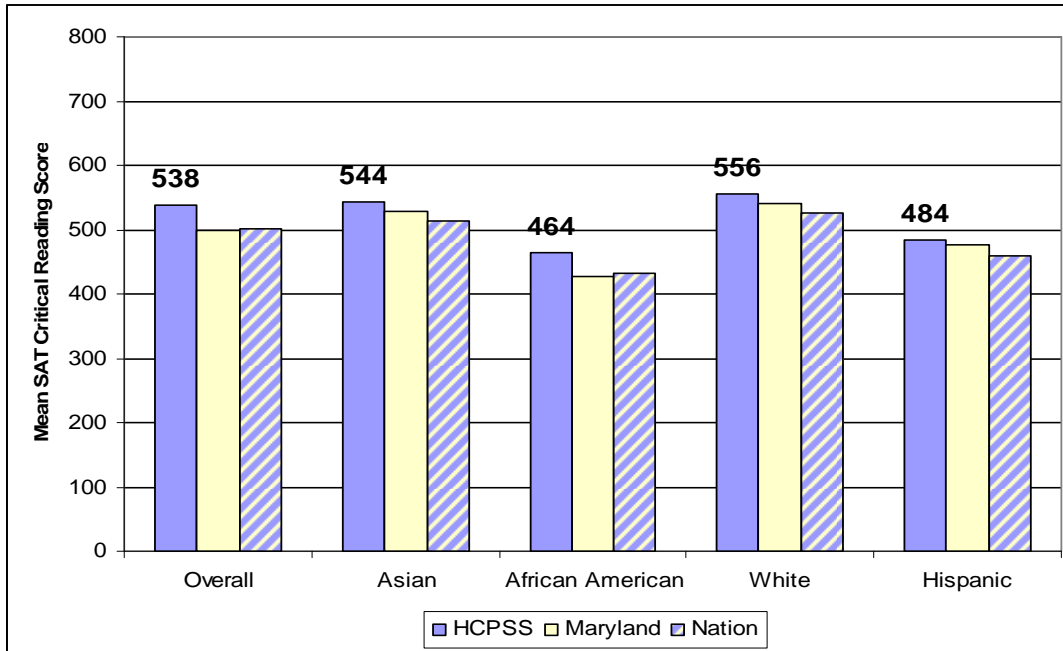
School	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Number Tested
County	538	557	538	2787
Atholton	559	573	548	249
Centennial	575	605	581	357
Glenelg	553	570	548	235
Hammond	512	507	510	220
Howard	511	536	515	241
Long Reach	503	530	505	229
Mt. Hebron	541	569	542	313
Oakland Mills	510	524	503	176
Reservoir	518	534	523	217
River Hill	568	596	574	319
Wilde Lake	524	533	521	231

The performance of our high schools continues to exceed state and national averages. The state average for critical reading was 500 and the national average was 502. All high schools surpassed both marks. In mathematics, the state average was 502 and the national average was 515. All of our high schools had a mean score above the state average, and all but one of our high schools' mean scores were better than the national average. In writing, all of our high schools exceeded the state average of 496 and the national average of 494.

## Performance by Student Groups

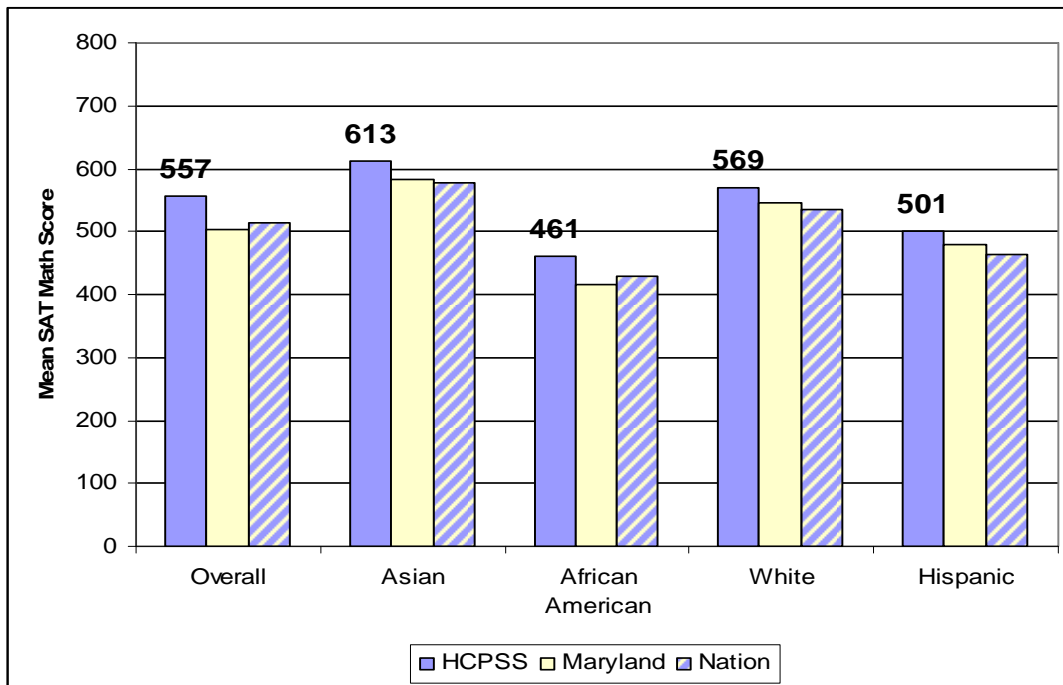
The performance of HCPSS for every racial/ethnic group exceeded state and national averages for the graduating class of 2007 as shown in the figures below.

Figure 1: SAT Critical Reading Mean Score 2007 Results by Student Group



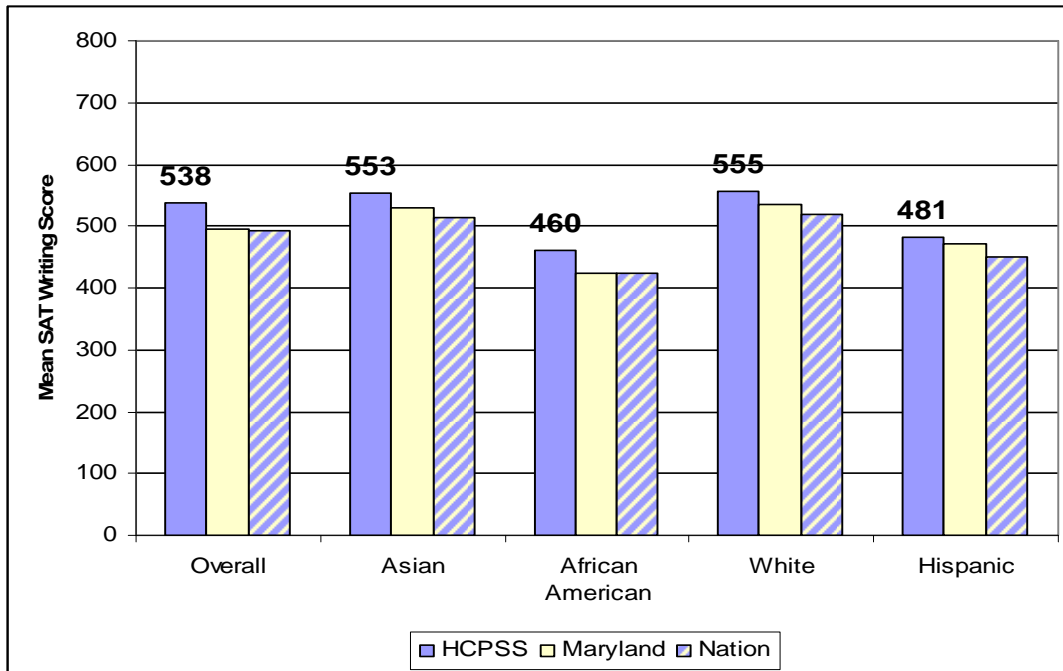
Note: Scores for American Indian/Alaskan Native are not included in any of the figures because fewer than 10 students are included in that student group.

Figure 2: SAT Mathematics Mean Score 2007 Results by Student Group



Note: Scores for American Indian/Alaskan Native are not included in any of the figures because fewer than 10 students are included in that student group.

Figure 3: SAT Writing Mean Score 2007 Results by Student Group



Note: Scores for American Indian/Alaskan Native are not included in any of the figures because fewer than 10 students are included in that student group.

### Trend Performance

While the College Board presents trend data for a 5 year period in its report, it is important to note that the SAT Reasoning Test changed significantly for the graduating class of 2006. The verbal test became a critical reading test, which included more reading passages and vocabulary items from the passages rather than presented in the analogy format familiar to many students. The mathematics test was also changed with the addition of items related to the content of Algebra 2 courses. The writing test was a completely new test which included multiple choice items on grammar and the construction of an essay. Although the College Board asserts that the old SAT sections are comparable to the new SAT sections, it is important to consider the impact of these changes to the test when examining trend data. Therefore, it was determined that analyzing trend performance on the new SAT would prove most relevant to HCPSS. Table 2 presents performance on the new SAT since 2006 for all students and each student group. The 2007 results represent the largest number of SAT participants in HCPSS history.

Table 2: Trend Performance for HCPSS

	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Two-Year Change
Students Participating	2720	2787	+67
Verbal/Critical Reading	538	538	0
Mathematics	558	557	-1
Writing	535	538	+3

Examining trend data for all racial/ethnic student groups reveal slight changes from 2006 with increases on one test coupled with declines on another. A similar pattern occurred at both the state and national levels as well. However, there continues to be an increase in the number of students participating or the participation rate for every student group. Tables 3 through 5 include the trend mean scores for student groups on the critical reading, mathematics, and writing SAT. [Note: The American Indian student group is not included due to fewer than 5 students participating.]

Table 3: Trend Performance on the Critical Reading SAT

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Overall	538	538
Male	537	533
Female	539	542
Asian	544	544
African American	470	464
White	554	556
Hispanic	508	484

Table 4: Trend Performance on the Mathematics SAT

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Overall	558	557
Male	576	567
Female	541	548
Asian	614	613
African American	466	461
White	567	569
Hispanic	509	501

Table 5: Trend Performance on the Writing SAT

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Overall	520	538
Male	510	524
Female	530	551
Asian	540	553
African American	460	460
White	530	555
Hispanic	493	481

## Summary and Future Direction

The performance by HCPSS graduates in the Class of 2007 continues to exceed state and national averages. Strategic initiatives implemented over the last three years coupled with the hard work of our students, parents, and staff have brought us these excellent scores. However, there is still work to be done to achieve the high standards we have set for ourselves in the *Bridge to Excellence* plan.

With the advent of a new SAT Reasoning test, HCPSS staff members have made adjustments to our curriculum and instruction at both the middle and high school levels to better prepare students for the additional elements in the areas of critical reading and writing. As teachers and students become more familiar with the types of

questions on the new SAT, it is expected that strategic practice with those types of items will lead to an increase in scores. This type of systemic effort is critical, as the best test preparation is a well-taught curriculum.

The administration of the PSAT to both 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students continues to provide valuable information to parents, students, and schools as they prepare for the SAT. The PSAT mirrors the SAT in content and format, thus providing students with information on their strengths and areas for improvement. For many students, taking the PSAT helps them to realize their potential for success in college and may drive decisions about course selection or future goals.

Staff members will continue to examine the data from the PSAT and SAT, to study research, and to design improvement plans at the school and system level to continue to encourage every student to strive for excellence.