

SOUTH WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL
161 Nevers Road
South Windsor, CT 06074

TO: Mr. Daniel Sullivan, Principal

September 1, 2009

FROM: Carl Myslinski
 Guidance Department Chair

RE: SAT Results for the South Windsor High School
 Class of 2009

Introduction

SAT scores are a useful predictor of college success, but only one predictor. The rate of participation of South Windsor High School seniors was 82% versus 83% statewide and 46% nationally. This speaks directly to the expectations and aspirations that South Windsor High School graduates have for themselves. The 2009 scores of South Windsor students place the district's students above their state and national counterparts. Of particular note, the overall math scores exceeded the state by twenty-five points and the nation by twenty-three points. Critical Reading scores exceeded the state by ten points and the nation by eighteen points.

Background

The new SAT debuted five years ago. The SAT Program consists of the SAT Reasoning Test (formerly known as the SAT I) and the SAT Subject Tests (formerly known as the SAT II). The SAT Reasoning Test is what we think of as the traditional SAT. It is a combination of multiple choice questions and a writing sample. It measures writing skills as well as verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities related to successful performance in college. SAT Subject Tests are required by a number of colleges for admission. Some colleges specify the test to be taken, while others allow applicants to choose.

Comparison of participant group of South Windsor students to test takers in Connecticut and the nation

Out of a class of 375 seniors who graduated in June 2009, 310 took the SAT Reasoning Test. The rate of participation was 82%. According to College Board, the most significant factor in interpreting SAT scores is the proportion of eligible students taking the tests. The national participation rate is 45%. Connecticut's participation rate, at 83% is the fourth highest of the states. South Windsor High School's participation rate dropped significantly over the past year from 87% to 82%. This seems to be a trend apparent over the past five years.

This year, South Windsor's overall scores significantly exceeded both the state and the nation. In Math, South Windsor High School exceeded the state by twenty-five points and the nation by twenty-three points. The overall Critical Reading score was ten points above the state and eighteen points above the nation. In the new writing section we exceeded the state by eleven points and the nation by thirty points.

TABLE 1

Comparison of 2009 SAT Mean Scores of all participating South Windsor High School Seniors to CT and the nation.

	MATH			CRITICAL READING			WRITING		
	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean
SWHS	561	519	538	529	510	519	523	523	523
CT	529	497	513	511	507	509	507	519	512
Nation	534	499	515	503	498	501	486	499	493

TRENDS IN SCORES OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

Table 2 lists the scores of South Windsor High School students over the last ten years. In drawing conclusions about these scores, one should note that changes in scores can be due to differences in the group of test takers. According to College Board, which administers the SAT, the higher the percentage of students taking the test, the lower the average scores. South Windsor's participation rate has historically been at or above the state's and nearly double that of the nation.

TABLE 2

Mean SAT Scores for College-Bound Seniors 1998-2008

	MATH			CRITICAL READING			WRITING (new 05)		
	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean	Male	Female	Total Mean
98-99	547	531	538	525	524	525			
99-00	550	529	539	512	520	516			
00-01	523	510	516	504	501	502			
01-02	533	523	528	488	519	505			
02-03	561	513	536	521	499	510			
03-04	545	552	549	518	526	522			
04-05	550	540	545	515	524	519			
05-06	562	524	541	528	512	519	518	513	515
06-07	558	512	534	517	512	515	513	520	517
07-08	572	521	548	527	523	525	534	526	531
08-09	561	519	538	529	510	519	523	523	523

In past years, we have reviewed the SAT performance of selected segments of our graduating classes. These analyses are important because our high participation rate lowers the mean scores of the group as a whole. Table 3 compares the performance of SWHS seniors.

TABLE 3

Comparison of SAT Reasoning Test Mean Scores of Graduates in the Class of 2009 to Peers with Similar Percentile Rank in CT and the Nation

	TOTAL SCORES MATH			TOTAL SCORES READING			TOTAL WRITING		
	75%	50%	25%	75%	50%	25%	75%	50%	25%
SWHS	590	540	450	580	510	450	590	520	450
CT	600	510	430	580	510	430	580	510	430
NATION	600	500	420	580	500	420	580	490	410

Conclusion

While SAT scores may be a useful predictor of success in college, they are only one part of the data upon which the decision for college admission is made. The district's 82% participation rate in the SAT reflects the continuing aspirations of the large majority of South Windsor High School graduates to pursue continuing education. 88% of the class of 2009 are planning to attend two year or four year colleges or universities. This illustrates a record of successful admissions. The current SAT scores are slightly lower than last year but must be looked at in light of the fact that last year's scores were the highest in over a decade. The drop in the participation rate may be due to a drastic shift in the number of our students who attend Manchester Community College. In the past this often was a fall back choice for students, but now it is the primary choice of many talented students whose families have been affected by the down turn in the economy.