

August 25, 2009

NCSS Announces 2009 SAT Data

GROUP	Number of Test Takers	READING (College Prep w/Distinction Most Recent)	READING (All-Most Recent)	Math (College Prep w/Distinction)	MATH (All-Most Recent)	WRITING (College Prep w/Distinction Most Recent)	WRITING (All-Most Recent)
Alcovy	99	510	462	508	454	498	451
Eastside	112	533	474	518	461	519	461
Newton	112	506	463	480	451	496	457
NCSS	323	517	467	502	455	506	456
GEORGIA	63,440	NA	490	NA	491	NA	479
NATION	1,530,128	NA	501	NA	515	NA	493

According to information released by the College Board, Newton County School System's College Preparatory with Distinction students are outpacing the state in all categories and the nation in two testing categories—Critical Reading and Writing. The system's College Preparatory with Distinction students were just 13 points below the national math average this year. While the NCSS College Preparatory with Distinction students surpassed their statewide peers, the district's overall scores for the most recent test takers did see a drop in 2009.

"The curriculum for Newton County's College preparatory students' who graduated with distinction was more rigorous and challenging which was reflected in their SAT scores," said Dr. Carl Skinner, NCSS Director of Testing, Research, and Evaluation.

The SAT is a national college entrance exam some colleges and universities utilize to measure critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems. It is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors.

Each section of the SAT is scored on a scale of 200—800, with two Writing sub-scores for multiple-choice and the essay. It is administered seven times a year in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories, and six times a year overseas. Students may take the test multiple times over multiple years. Colleges and universities will use for admission purposes the highest score from a testing category; regardless of how many times the student has taken the test. The College Board, however, only reports collectively the most recent scores achieved by students.

Overall, 323 NCSS students took the SAT in 2009; this marked the second consecutive year that NCSS passed the 300 mark in number of test takers. According to the College Board report, the most recent average scores for all Newton County students are 467 in Critical Reading, 455 in Mathematics, and 456 in Writing, making a 1378 composite score. These district scores reflect an increase of two points in Critical Reading, a decrease of 15 points in Math, and a decrease of one point in Writing compared to the 2008 scores. The school system's most recent scores are lower than the state averages of 490 in Critical Reading, 491 in Mathematics, 479 in Writing, and 1460 for the composite. Although Newton County students did see a two point improvement in Reading, Georgia's average scores dropped

across the board. The national average score for math remained the same at 515 in 2009; however, the reading and writing scores did decrease by one point with average scores of 501 in Reading and 493 in Writing.

“Our SAT scores are certainly not where we would like to see them as a system,” said Dr. Linda Hayden, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. “Much work and disaggregation of data will go into determining why certain areas were low. We will work with teachers to push our students even more academically so that they can compete beyond high school for the top tier universities. We want our students very prepared for college life!”

“Although the SAT data are not a indication of where we would like to be statically, we are continuously working towards addressing these areas of concern through disaggregation of the data to determine where to place our efforts to improve the scores in an effort to help our students compete nationally and globally,” said Dr. Carl Skinner.

At the school level, Alcovy High School (AHS) students posted a six-point gain in Reading and maintained their average score of 451 in writing in 2009. The school’s average math score did decrease by 11 points in 2009. Overall, Alcovy students averaged a composite score of 1367. While the school’s overall scores were lower than the state average, students in Alcovy’s College Prep with Distinction program scored well above the state average in each category. The group also bested the national averages in both Critical Reading and Writing and was just seven points under the national average in math.

“The 2009 SAT Scores for the first graduating class of Alcovy High School that has matriculated their entire high school career indicates that the students are encouraged and motivated to attend college and other institutions of higher learning,” said Dr. LaQuanda Brown, principal of Alcovy High School. “The latest SAT score reports indicate that there is still much to be accomplished in an effort to prepare our students for success on the SAT. The reports also indicate that much attention must be focused on rigorous instructional practices and assessment measures that reflect students thinking on deeper levels in the content areas. It is a daily practice of the teachers at AHS to prepare students for academic success that will garner positive attention on their performance from the district, state, and national levels.”

Eastside High School’s most recent average scores on the SAT did see decreases compared to the school’s 2008 scores. The school’s average scores in 2009—474 in Critical Reading and 461 in both Mathematics and Writing, were four, eleven, and eight points below their 2008 average scores. Eastside’s composite score in 2009 was 1396. Although the school’s overall scores did fall short of the state average scores, Eastside’s College Prep with Distinction students surpassed both the state and the nation in every category.

“We are not satisfied with the overall decrease in our SAT results,” said Mr. Dennis Roddenberry, principal of Eastside High School. “Our plan is to develop strategies that can assist our student body with testing strategies and overall performance on all formal assessments. Even with the decrease in the SAT results, we must add that Eastside’s 2009 graduating class received over \$6,000,000 in scholarship offers to colleges and technical schools.”

Although Newton High School’s writing score of 457 was a five-point increase and the Reading score of 463 was only one point lower than last year’s average, Newton High did post a 22-point decrease in Math, going from 473 in 2008 to 451 in 2009. The school’s composite score was 1371 this year. Newton High School’s College Prep with Distinction students surpassed the state and nation in both Reading and Writing in 2009.

“The College Prep with Distinction students continue to display the level of academic achievement we expect from all Newton High students,” said Dr. Roderick Sams, principal of Newton High School. “Preparation of students for postsecondary educational opportunities will continue to be a goal for Newton High School. We will continue to focus on promoting academic excellence on all assessments, including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).”

For more information on Newton County School System’s 2009 SAT data, please contact the Office of Public Relations at 770-784-2908.
