

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

**TITLE:** Report on the Results of the SAT Reasoning Test for the Class of 2008      **DATE:** SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

**OVERVIEW:**

The Class of 2008 again has achieved a noteworthy performance on the SAT with an average performance of 541 on the Critical Reading section; an average performance of 557 on the Mathematics section, and an average performance of 545 on the Writing section. With these average scores, students achieved a composite score of 1643 of a possible 2400. The average scores of this 2008 class top the average scores of the nation and the state. National results are 502 for Critical Reading; 515 for Mathematics; 494 for Writing. State results are 499 for Reading; 502 for Mathematics; 497 for Writing. The results for Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) students are based on our analysis which has corrected errors and confirmed records of our student takers. HCPSS student takers' results may vary slightly from those published by College Board because those reports are based on student self-reported data which may include errors in demographics and school information. Results for the nation and Maryland are extracted from the results published by the College Board.

**RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The graduating Class of 2008 performed beyond the state and national averages. Examination of the performance data of our student groups reveals that we have challenges to face even as we celebrate our successes. Performance by our African American and Hispanic students is below that of our students overall and other student groups. Average performance of the African American on all sections and Hispanic students on the Writing section is below 500, the minimum score for acceptance to many colleges.

To improve performance, HCPSS staff will use various intervention strategies, some specifically targeted to African American and Hispanic students. Initiatives will be developed and implemented to reduce the achievement gap.

**Submitted by:**

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**Approval/  
Concurrence:**

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## Introduction

This SAT report presents scores on the SAT Reasoning test for the Class of 2008. Results are reported for the three sections of the test – Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. The results for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) students are based on our analysis which has corrected errors and confirmed records of our student takers. HCPSS student takers' results may vary slightly from those published by College Board because those reports are based on student self-reported data which may include errors in demographics and school information. Results for the nation and Maryland are extracted from the results published by the College Board.

The Class of 2008 again has achieved a noteworthy performance on the SAT with an average performance of 541 on the Critical Reading section; an average performance of 557 on the Mathematics section, and an average performance of 545 on the Writing section. With these average scores, students achieved a composite score of 1643 of a possible 2400. The average scores of this 2008 class top the average scores of the nation and the state. National results are 502 for Critical Reading; 515 for Mathematics; 494 for Writing. State results are 499 for Reading; 502 for Mathematics; 497 for Writing.

## Results for the Graduating Class of 2008

There were 2806 students in the graduating class of 2008 who participated in the SAT testing. This number represents 73% of the graduating seniors and is the largest number of participants to date. Table 1 shows the average scores for HCPSS and each of our high schools. An examination of the average scores at the high schools further supports HCPSS' noteworthy performance as all of our high schools equaled or exceeded the national and state averages in all sections of the test.

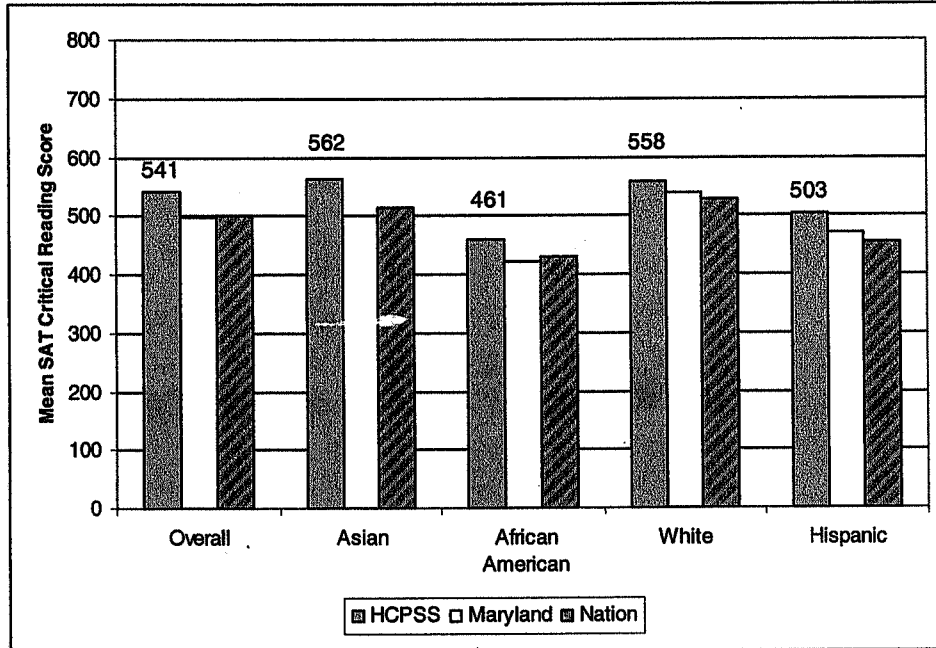
Table 1: Summary of County and School Mean Scores and Participation: Graduating Class of 2008

School	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Number Tested
County	541	557	545	2806
Atholton	559	574	562	287
Centennial	577	604	583	295
Glenelg	544	571	550	233
Hammond	514	516	511	208
Howard	520	528	526	235
Long Reach	502	527	513	167
Mt. Hebron	539	565	541	239
Marriotts Ridge	561	580	566	220
Oakland Mills	516	523	514	182
Reservoir	527	538	529	231
River Hill	568	588	579	290
Wilde Lake	528	529	529	219

## Performance by Student Groups

In reviewing average results for Critical Reading by student groups, we see that all student groups edged out the national and state averages. The performance of those groups is depicted below in Figure 1.

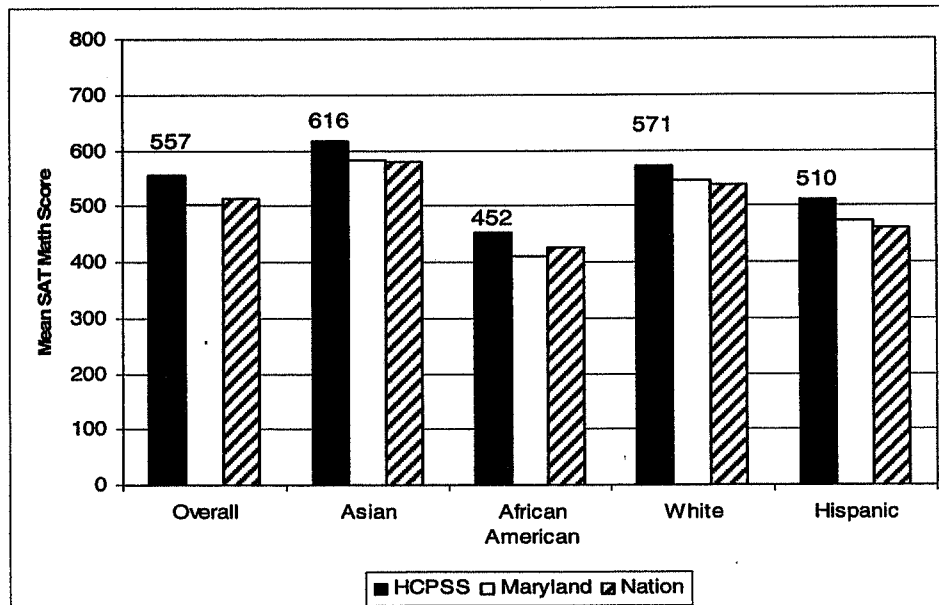
Figure 1: SAT Critical Reading Mean Score 2008 Results by Student Group



Note: American Indian/Alaskan Native scores are not included because fewer than 10 are included in that student group.

Figure 2, showing average Mathematics performance by student groups, shows the continued trend of besting national and state average scores.

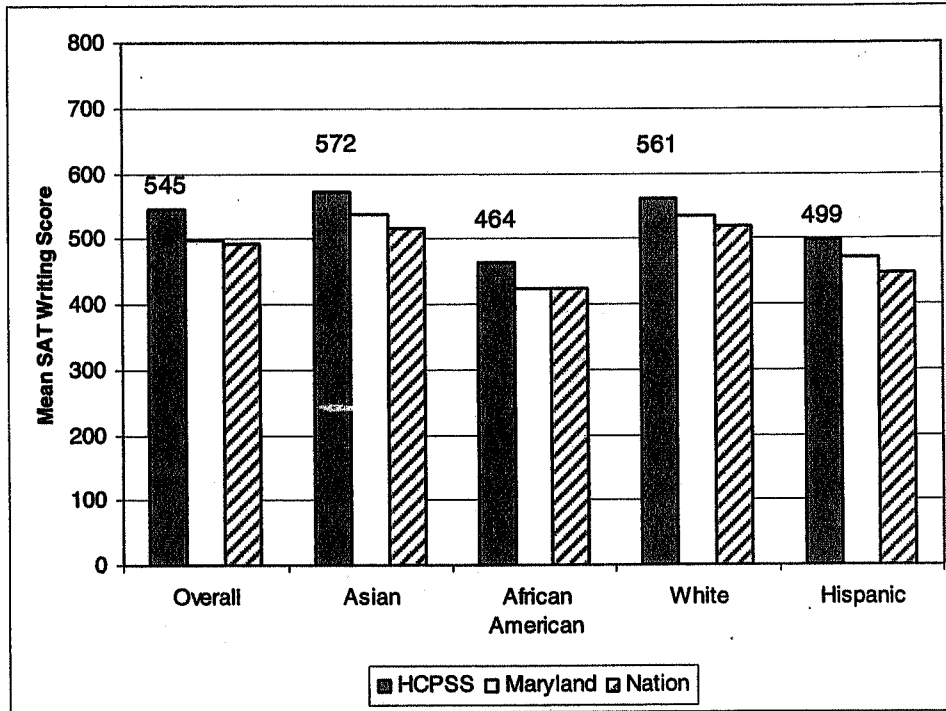
Figure 2: SAT Mathematics Mean Score 2008 Results by Student Group



Note: American Indian/Alaskan Native scores are not included because fewer than 10 are included in that student group.

Figure 3 which follows shows that the same pattern of exceeding the nation and the state is true for performance of student groups on the Writing section of the test.

Figure 3: SAT Writing Mean Score 2008 Results by Student Group



Note: American Indian/Alaskan Native scores are not included because fewer than 10 are included in that student group.

### Trend Performance

This report begins the trend performance with the Class of 2006 because it was that year that the College Board made a significant change to the test. 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. 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.

Table 2 presents the trend performance for HCPSS on all three sections of the test. The following points are evident:

- Participation increased.
- The average score for Critical Reading increased.
- The average score for Mathematics remained unchanged.
- The average Writing score increased.

Table 2: Trend Performance for HCPSS

	Class of 2006	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	One-Year Change
Number Students Participating	2720	2787	2806	+19
Critical Reading	538	538	541	+3
Mathematics	558	557	557	0
Writing	535	538	545	+7

Trend performance for student groups on all three sections of the SAT are displayed in Tables 3, 4 and 5. An examination of the data in the tables reveals the following:

- Class of 2008 students overall and most student groups increased their average scores.
- Average performance by the female student group decreased in Critical Reading (-3) and Mathematics (- 9).
- Average performance by the African American student group decreased in Critical Reading (-3) and Mathematics (- 9).
- The Hispanic and Asian student groups demonstrated the greatest increase in average performance on the Critical Reading section and the Writing section.
- The male student group demonstrated the greatest increase in average performance on the Mathematics section.

Note: American Indian/Alaskan Native scores are not included because fewer than 10 are included in that student group.

Table 3: Trend Performance on the Critical Reading SAT

	2006	2007	2008	One-Year Change
Overall	538	538	541	+3
Male	537	533	544	+11
Female	539	542	539	-3
Asian	544	544	562	+18
African American	470	464	461	-3
White	554	556	558	+2
Hispanic	508	484	503	+19

Table 4: Trend Performance on the Mathematics SAT

	2006	2007	2008	One-Year Change
Overall	558	557	557	0
Male	576	567	577	+10
Female	541	548	539	-9
Asian	614	613	616	+3
African American	466	461	452	-9
White	567	569	571	+2
Hispanic	509	501	510	+9

Table 5: Trend Performance on the Writing SAT

	2006	2007	2008	One-Year Change
Overall	520	538	545	+7
Male	510	524	536	+12
Female	530	551	554	+3
Asian	540	553	572	+19
African American	460	460	464	+4
White	530	555	561	+5
Hispanic	493	481	499	+18

## **Summary and Future Direction**

The graduating class of 2008 performed beyond the state and national averages. Examination of the performance data of our student groups reveals that we have challenges to face even as we celebrate our successes. Performance by our African American and Hispanic students is below that of our students overall and other student groups. Average performance of the African American on all sections and Hispanic students on the Writing section is below 500, the minimum score for acceptance to many colleges.

HCPSS will continue to administer the PSAT to all 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. The PSAT proves to be a great tool. Because it matches the SAT Reasoning test in content and format, the PSAT provides valuable information for teachers, parents, and students as well as provides a practice opportunity for students.

To improve performance, HCPSS staff will use various intervention strategies, some specifically targeted to African American and Hispanic students. Initiatives will be developed and implemented to reduce the achievement gap.