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Superintendent

*Engage. Inspire. Prepare.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Paulding SAT Scores Top National Average Despite Slight Decline in Unprecedented Year**

For the first time since the test was redesigned in 2017, Paulding County students have surpassed the nationwide average SAT score, recently released results from the College Board show. The Paulding County School District's average combined SAT score of 1,032 topped the national average of 1,030, but still trailed the state average of 1,043.

Likely due to the unprecedented environment in the spring of 2020 brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, SAT scores declined at the national, state, and local levels. Overall, the national average score declined nine points, the state average score declined five points, and the PCSD average score declined eight points. The 2020 drop halted what had been a three-year trend of improving scores for PCSD.

The pandemic forced PCSD to close all schools to in-person instruction on March 13, 2020 and resulted in numerous SAT testing opportunities being canceled or rescheduled. The disruption is evident in the number of Paulding County students taking the test, which fell from 1,245 students in 2019 to just 1,120 in 2020.

"This has been a year unlike any before," said Superintendent Dr. Brian Otott, "so I am not at all surprised to see that SAT scores declined at the national, state and local levels. In times like these it is important to focus on the positives, which are that two of our high schools showed improvement over 2019, and, as a whole, Paulding students surpassed the national average. That's a lot to build on, and I think that once we return to some normalcy as far as the pandemic goes, we will once again see PCSD students resume the trend of steady improvement that we were experiencing before COVID arrived."

*(The charts on the following pages summarize PCSD data)*

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### **SAT Summary Brief 2020**

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The SAT is the benchmark standardized assessment of the critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills students have developed over time and that they need to be successful in college. Typically, more than two million students take the SAT each year, but in 2020 that number fell to less than 1.5 million.

On average, Paulding students outperformed the nation's public schools. While two of our schools, East Paulding High School and Paulding County High School, both showed increases in the year-over-year scores from 2019 to 2020, Paulding's students overall did experience a slight decrease in scores of seven points. However, both the nation and state also saw decreases. This decline can be largely attributed to the unprecedented adversity and uncertainty the class of 2020 experienced amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 13, 2020, all PCSD schools closed for in-person instruction and students completed the school year by participating in remote digital instruction. Additionally, the pandemic caused a major disruption to the SAT testing schedule.

In past years, nearly every college in America has used the test as a common and objective scale for evaluating a student's college readiness. However, the College Board is now asking colleges to both extend deadlines for receiving test scores and to equally consider students for admission who are unable to test due to COVID-19. In addition, they are asking colleges to recognize that students may not be able to test more than once, as they indicate on their website that it is "more important than ever to pay close attention to the context in which all students live and learn" as colleges make admissions decisions.

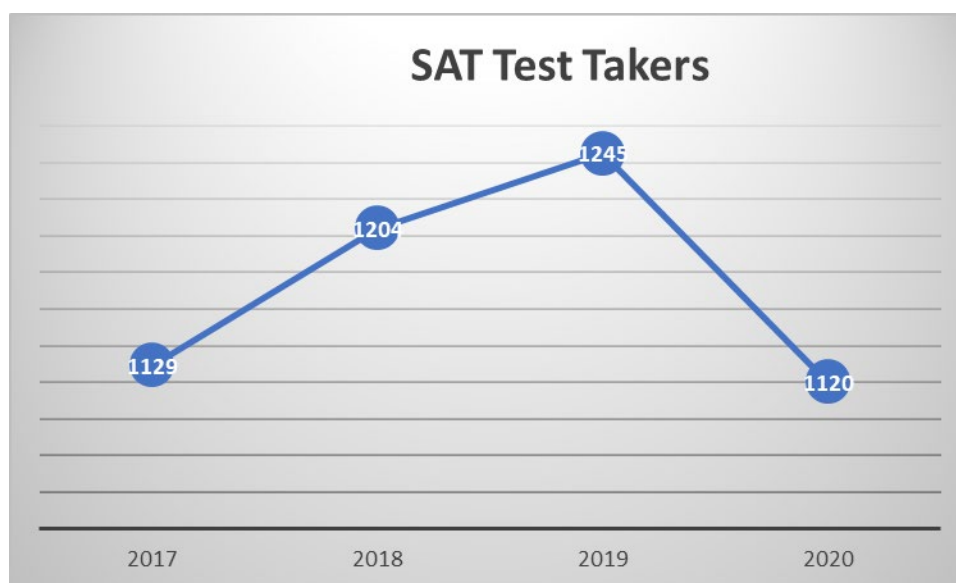
The SAT was redesigned in the spring of 2017. Several changes were made to the SAT including the essay becoming optional for students and reading writing became combined as ERW (Evidence-based Reading and Writing). Rather than focusing on general reasoning skills, the redesign focused on knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career success. There is a greater emphasis on the meaning of words in context and how word choice shapes meaning, tone,

and impact, rather than the old version which emphasized vocabulary in limited context. The scoring has been simplified to right scores only. Scores range from 400 to 1,600.

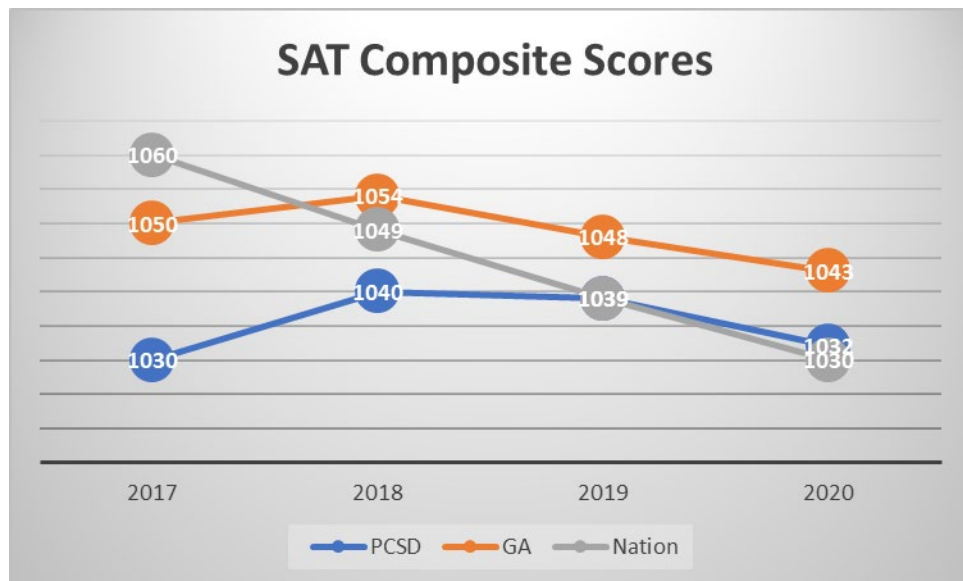
### Paulding County School District SAT Scores for 2020

2020 Scores	SAT 2020			
High School	SAT Test Takers	Mean Composite Score	ERW Score	Math Score
East Paulding High School	191	1032	528	504
Hiram High School	171	989	508	481
North Paulding High School	382	1042	532	510
Paulding County High School	187	1058	544	514
South Paulding High School	189	1024	524	501
Paulding County School District	1120	1032	528	504
State of Georgia	64,047	1043	532	511
U.S. Public Schools	1,445,155	1030	520	510

For the first time in three years, the number of PCSD students taking the SAT decreased. This is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting decrease in testing opportunities.



SAT scores declined nationally, statewide, and in PCSD in 2020. This universal drop can be attributed largely to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the academic environment in the spring of 2020 and the disruption of the SAT testing schedule. For the first time since the test was redesigned in 2017, PCSD's average composite score of 1,032 exceeded the national average of 1,030, but still trails the state average of 1,043.



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