



Steve Barnette
Superintendent

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SAT Scores Top National Average 3rd Year in Row As Number of Test Takers Rises 38 Percent

Paulding County students have once again surpassed the nationwide average SAT score, recently released results from the College Board show. This year's results, along with the previous two, mark the only times Paulding students have exceeded the national average on the SAT. This year, the Paulding County School District's average combined SAT score of 1,032 topped the national average of 1,028, but still trailed the state average of 1,052. The results show, however, that PCSD students are now closer to their pre-pandemic SAT average than students are nationally.

In 2022, SAT scores declined across the board – at the national, state, and local levels – in part due to increased participation. When more students take the test, average results tend to decline. In 2022, participation rebounded from 2021 when colleges and universities made admissions tests optional and participation took a significant drop. Now that many major colleges and universities are again requiring the test, Paulding's participation increased from 751 test takers in 2021 to 1,037 test takers in 2022, an increase of 38 percent. Overall, the national average SAT score declined 10 points, the state average SAT score declined 25 points, and the PCSD average SAT score declined 21 points.

"2022 was a unique year for the SAT because we saw participation jump back up, even though it's still not to pre-pandemic levels," said Superintendent Steve Barnette. "I am not surprised to see that SAT scores declined at the national, state, and local levels, which is common when participation increases to that degree. Moving forward I think we will see this year as more of a new post-pandemic baseline from which our schools can grow."

Three of the district's five high schools topped the national average, and one school, Paulding County High School, equaled the state average score of 1,052.

(The charts on the following pages summarize PCSD data)

Press Inquiries Please Contact:

Paulding County School District Office of Public Information
communications@paulding.k12.ga.us



SAT Summary Brief 2022

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. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SAT was typically administered to more than two million students each year. Falling to less than 1.5 million in 2020, the number of SAT test takers in the high school class of 2022 who took the SAT at least once rose to 1.7 million participants nationwide. As participation rates increased, however, the United States, Georgia, and Paulding County all saw a decrease in scores from 2021 to 2022, possibly influenced by the broader range of ability reflected in a larger testing group.

On average, Paulding students outperformed the nation's public schools in the overall score and the Evidence-based Reading and Writing portion of the SAT. The number of Paulding County student taking the SAT rose by 38 percent, going from 751 students in 2021 to 1037 students in 2022. Although the results from this more representative group showed a decrease from the 2021 scores, most of the district's high schools returned to results that were reminiscent of the pre-pandemic years. South Paulding High School, however, saw an increase in their results from 2021 to 2022, raising their composite average by 11 points.

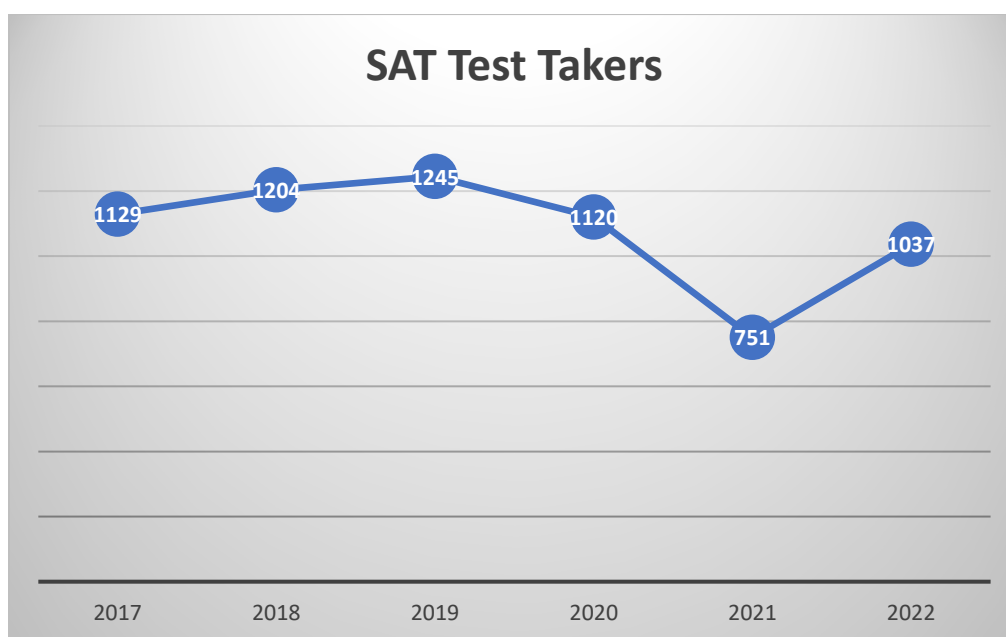
Prior to the pandemic, nearly every college and university in America used the test as a common and objective scale for evaluating a student's college readiness. Following the pandemic, many colleges and universities began to waive the test requirements associated with their admissions process. It should be noted that the University System of Georgia has continued to waive the SAT and ACT test requirements for admissions to most of its member schools, with the exceptions of the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, and Georgia College & State University. This decision mirrors those actions taken by many surrounding states, as well. As this policy remains in place, it will continue to impact the number of students participating in the SAT as well as the overall results.

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.

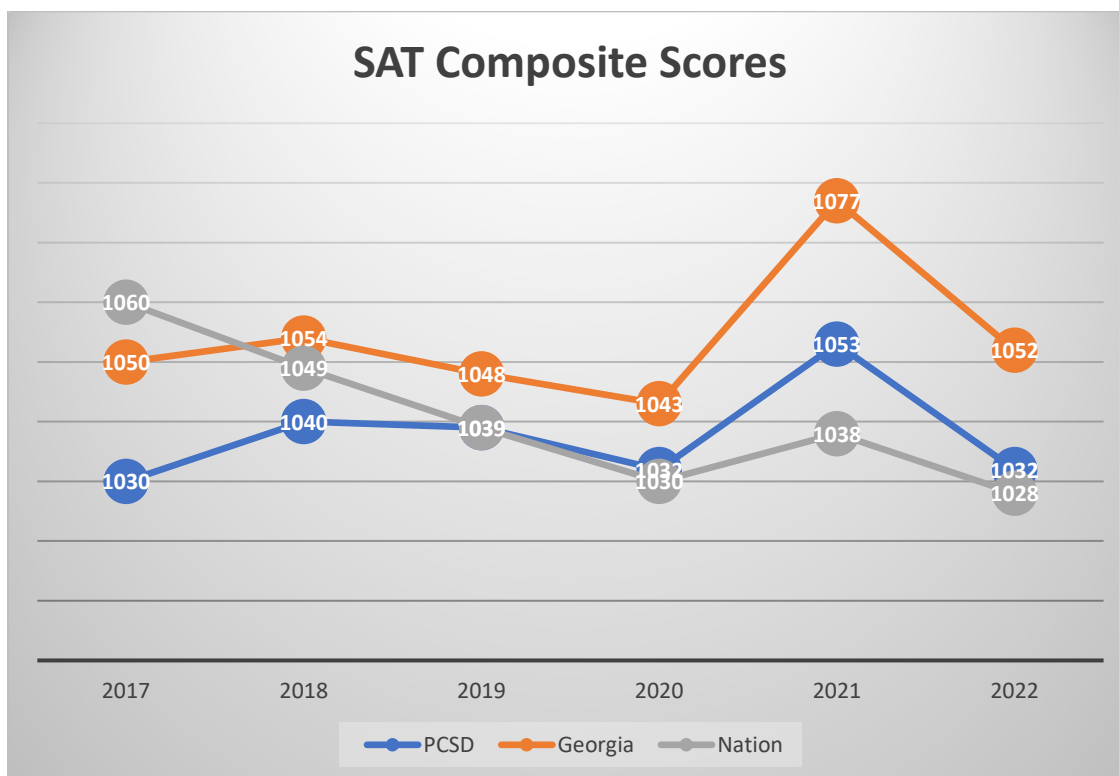
Paulding County School District SAT Scores for 2022

SAT 2022				
High School	SAT Test Takers	Mean Composite Score	ERW Score	Math Score
East Paulding High School	200	1022	522	499
Hiram High School	106	1000	514	486
North Paulding High School	369	1034	529	505
Paulding County High School	170	1052	540	511
South Paulding High School	192	1035	530	505
Paulding County School District	1,037	1032	528	503
State of Georgia	56,898	1052	536	516
U.S. Public Schools	1,450,575	1028	521	507

The number of PCSD students taking the SAT increased from 2021 by 38 percent but remains below the average number of test takers prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This decrease probably best reflects the University System of Georgia's decision to waive the SAT requirement for most colleges and universities.



SAT scores declined nationally, statewide, and in PCSD in 2022. This universal drop can possibly be attributed to an increase in the overall participation rate which reflects a larger testing group with a broader range of abilities. Since 2020, PCSD continues to exceed the national average although still below the state average.



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