



# NEWS

## Connecticut Department of Education

### Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner

For Immediate Release  
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### **Connecticut's 2005 Grads Continue Strong Performance on SAT**

Verbal Score up Two Points; Math up Two Points; Total at 31-Year High  
Connecticut is Tied for Second Among States in SAT Participation

(Hartford, Connecticut)—Connecticut's 2005 high school graduates recorded the highest combined average SAT scores in 31 years, according to results issued by The College Board, which administers the SAT. The results also indicated that Connecticut had one of the nation's highest percentages of students taking the exam in anticipation of attending college this fall. "We continue to see strong incremental gains in our students' SAT scores. This is positive," said Commissioner of Education Betty J. Sternberg. "The percentage of Connecticut students planning to go to college is impressive. This shows the high expectations we hold for students and the expectations they hold for themselves."

The College Board reported this year that 34,313 of Connecticut's 39,856\* high school graduates (public and nonpublic combined)—an estimated 86 percent—took the SAT. This compares with a national average of 49 percent.

The state's combined average score was up four points to 1034—six points above the national average (1028), which was up two points from last year.

Connecticut's performance represents the following:

- one of the highest participation rates in the nation—86 percent;
- Connecticut's highest combined score since 1974;
- a two-point increase in mathematics, bringing the average to the highest level (517) since the data were first reported for the graduating class 33 years ago;
- a two-point increase in the verbal score, bringing it to the highest level (517) in 19 years; and
- the highest scores for black, Hispanic, Asian and white students ever since the data were first reported by race 29 years ago.

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*\*Based on Projection of High School Graduates in 2005 by Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education*

## **PERFORMANCE GAPS**

### **The SAT performance gap between minority and nonminority students in Connecticut**

Although black students in Connecticut this year have achieved at the highest level in 29 years, and have increased seven points compared to last year's total score, there continues to be a large achievement gap between black and white students—219 points on the combined averages. “We need to continue to do all we can to close the achievement gaps,” said Commissioner Sternberg. “We must take action by addressing the state's expectations and preparation of all students so that our high school graduates are well prepared for college.”

The average total score for Hispanic students remained at 901, the same level as last year and the highest level since the data were first recorded in 1975-76. The gap between Hispanic and white students is 163 points.

The average total score for Asian students increased by 26 points to a record high of 1098 points. This exceeds the national average (1091) for Asian students by seven points. The Asian total score was 34 points above that for white students in Connecticut.

### **The SAT performance between males and females**

The gap in math performance between females and males in Connecticut narrowed to 32 points this year as male scores were unchanged and female scores increased by five points. Nationally, the gap is 34 points. In Connecticut, this gap has ranged from a low of 30 points in 2002, to a high of 45 points in 1982.

In verbal, males outperformed females in Connecticut and nationally. The male-female gap in Connecticut was seven points compared with eight points in the nation.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Connecticut's performance was among the best in the nation when taking into account both participation rate and total average score: tied for second with Massachusetts and New Jersey in participation and third in both verbal and math among the 19 states with participation rates of 60 percent and above.
- Connecticut's 2004-05 seniors who took the SAT and reported taking the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) both as sophomores and as juniors scored 193 points higher than seniors who had never taken the PSAT and 123 points higher than those who took the PSAT only as juniors. This shows the importance of preparation by taking the PSAT in both preliminary years. “It is essential that all students, especially those in our urban school districts, are prepared for the SAT. One strategy that we know works is to have all students participate in the PSAT both as sophomores and as juniors,” Dr. Sternberg emphasized.

- Connecticut had a high percentage of students, scoring 600 or above either on the verbal or math sections. Almost one-quarter of Connecticut SAT takers (24.9 percent) reached this standard on the verbal test and 26.6 percent did so on the math section. Both percentages are the highest levels since the State Department of Education began tracking these statistics in 1977 and both are above the national average.
- Connecticut student performance was strong in just about all categories, with most scores the highest in many years:
  - Average verbal scores (male): unchanged, maintained highest level in 15 years.
  - Average verbal score (female): up two points—highest level in 19 years
  - Average math score (male): unchanged—maintained highest score in three decades.
  - Average math score (female): up five points—highest score in three decades.

Since participation rates differ state to state, it is inappropriate to compare individual states' average SAT scores. "Neither this assessment, nor any single assessment should be the sole indicator of student achievement," said Commissioner Sternberg.

The SAT is only one indicator of student academic achievement. Connecticut's annual Strategic School Profiles (SSP) and annual Condition of Education report provide other information on student achievement and on our public schools. The information is available on the Department's website at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde>.

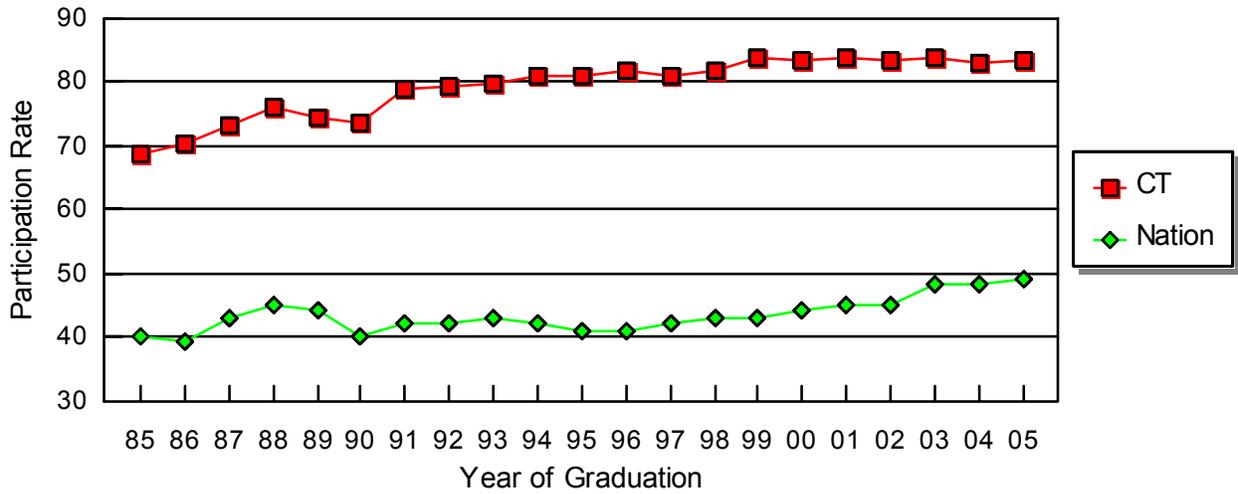
### **Writing Test Introduced**

The College Board introduced a new component to the SAT in March 2005. The data will be reported for the Class of 2006. This new writing assessment became part of the SAT along with changes in the verbal section. "We expect Connecticut students to do extremely well on the SAT writing assessment," said Dr. Sternberg. "We've been testing our students' writing skill in a similar way since the mid-1980s. Our students have demonstrated strong and continuously improving writing performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test in Grades 4, 6 and 8, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test in Grade 10, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress."

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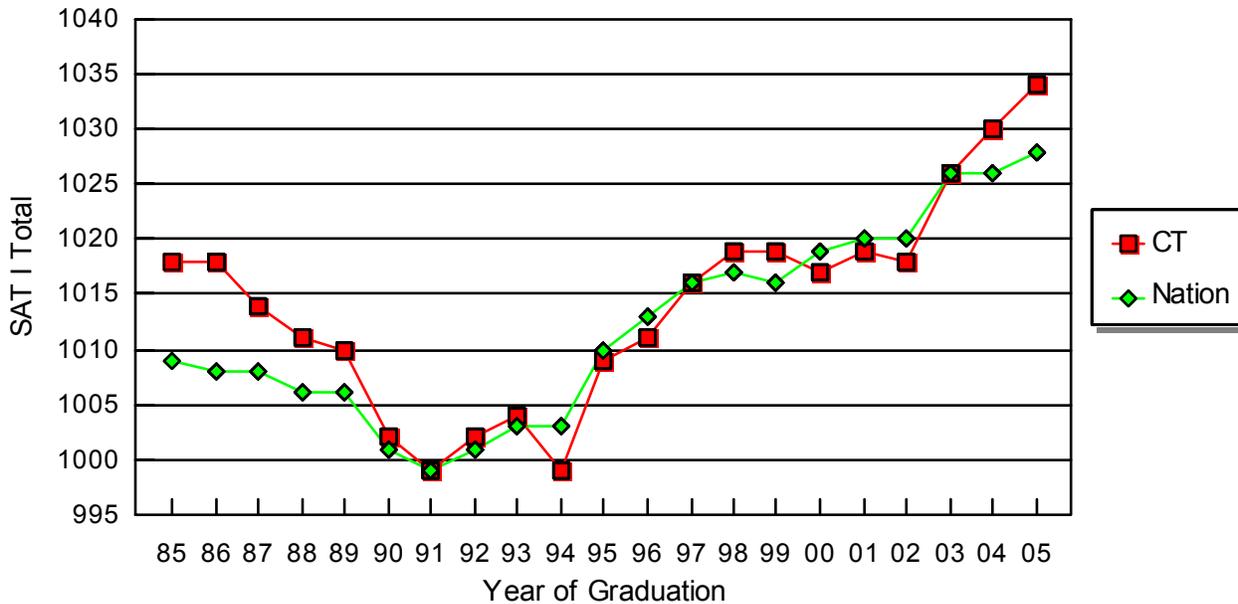
# SAT-I PARTICIPATION RATES

Connecticut and the Nation



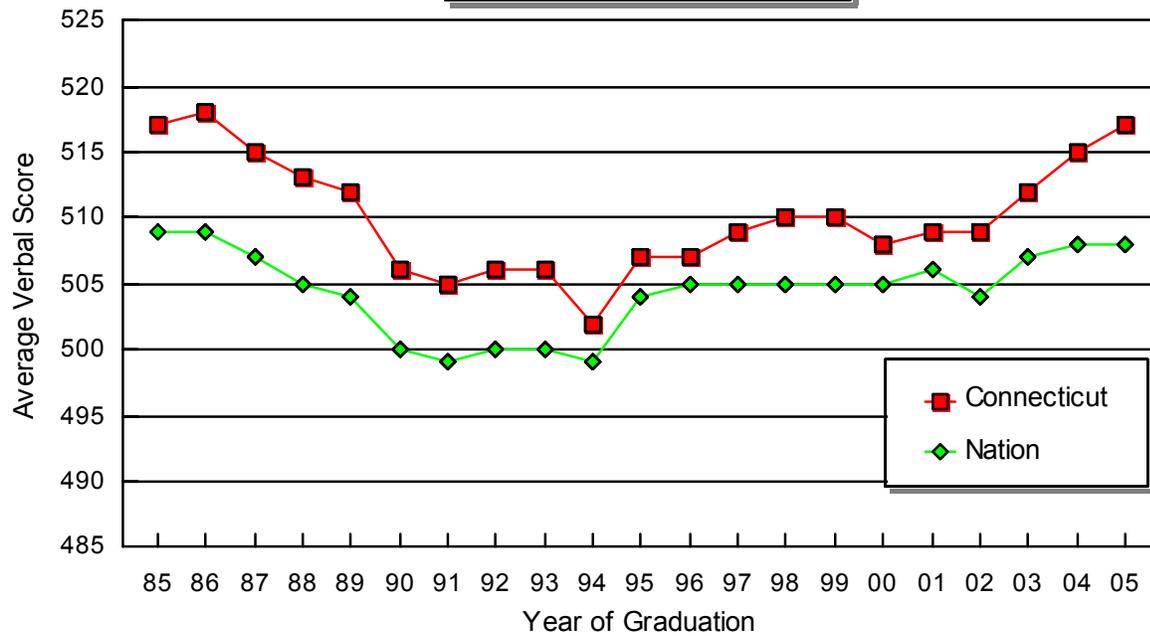
A competing test of college-bound students, the ACT, tested about 40% of the U.S. graduates in 2005.

# SAT I. MATH & VERBAL TOTAL



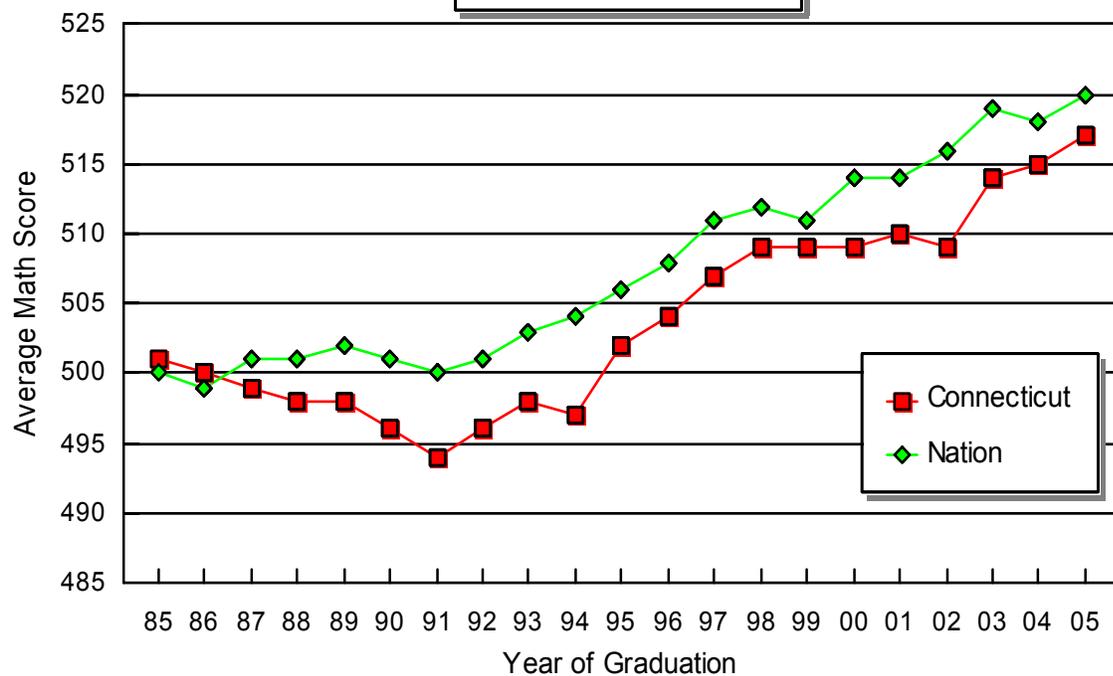
# SAT I. VERBAL

Connecticut and the Nation



# SAT I. MATH

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**Percentage of SAT Takers Identifying Themselves as Minorities  
Connecticut**

