



August 9, 2022

Dear Members of the House Public Education Committee:

On behalf of the College Board, thank you for inviting me to share information with you today about the SAT and how it impacts student success and opportunity in our Texas public schools.

Your interim charge focusing on the 2016 Next Generation Assessments Commission recommendations is very timely as the College Board is introducing our next generation of the SAT in 2024—a fully digital SAT Suite of Assessments. The SAT will be shorter, easier to give, and easier to take. Among the enhancements we're most excited about is that it will also connect students to information on two-year colleges, careers, and workforce training programs.

Because of the SAT's ongoing value to Texas students, some stakeholders have proposed replacing the STAAR EOC exams with the SAT. SAT scores are a valuable part of the college admissions process, can help inform instruction, and propel students toward college opportunity including connecting students to scholarship opportunities.

But we have also long held that an SAT score should never be a veto on a students' plans or ambitions. **We strongly discourage states from using the SAT as a high-stakes exit exam to determine whether or not a student graduates from high school.**

No state requires students to earn a score on the SAT in order to graduate from high school. Data shows that more students who take the SAT do not meet the college and career readiness benchmarks than students who fail their EOCs. That would result in a larger number of students needing to retest or go through the individual graduation committee process. For students needing to retest, neither ACT nor SAT administer individual portions of the exam, so students would be required to sit for the entire exam again.

The reality is that if meeting the college readiness benchmark were a graduation requirement, Texas would see a significant negative impact on the state's graduation rate.

Replacing STAAR EOCs with another exam would also create heavy operational lift for TEA. Federal law requires states to conduct an independent study to measure the assessments alignment to state education standards, submit a new statewide accountability plan, and submit evidence to the Department of Education on how the assessment meets 30 different federal requirements.

The members of the School Finance Commission were intentional in ensuring that the SAT was an *optional* assessment in their recommendations. We support this approach and appreciate how the HB 3 college readiness incentive policies are significantly accelerating education outcomes for students.

The HB 3 reforms added new college readiness incentives, including reimbursements for districts to optionally administer the SAT, ACT or TSI during the school day. Over the last decade, the SAT School Day Program was mostly popular in large and fast growth districts because it's a proven pathway that opens up postsecondary opportunities for a broader and more diverse set of students. As a result of the new HB 3 reimbursements to districts, more students across the state are now getting to take the SAT during the school day.

In the 2018-2019 school year, 784 Texas public schools offered the SAT during the school day serving 163,000 students. By the 2021-2022 when the HB 3 reforms were in effect, 1,222 schools optionally offered the SAT benefitting almost 300,000 students - an 84% increase.

SAT School Day is up an impressive 67% in rural districts since 2019, demonstrating that the state's new college readiness incentive reforms are having the reach and impact the Legislature intended. These gains were made in the middle of the pandemic, and as we emerge from it, we anticipate even stronger growth.

HB 3 also established a new outcomes-based College Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) bonus program where SAT scores are used as one of the readiness measures since it helps students demonstrate college readiness. Texas can be proud that more than 112,000 students from the Class of 2019 demonstrated college readiness on one of the multiple CCMR measures which helped districts secure millions of dollars in bonus funding.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and we look forward to our continued work with Texas schools and districts to support students' college and career readiness.

Respectfully submitted,



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College Board