
Boosting SAT Participation Rates in the US

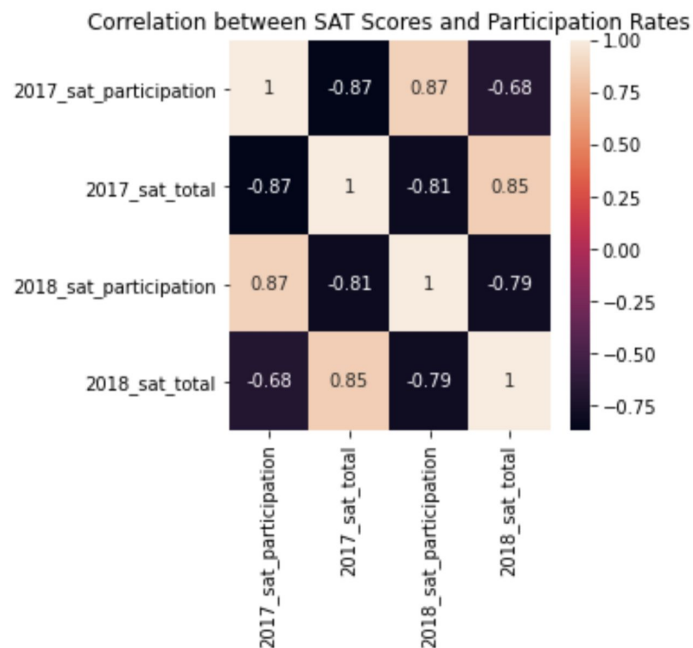
By Stanven, Lester & Graham

By using data and external research, can we help The College Board boost SAT participation rates?

Boosting SAT Participation

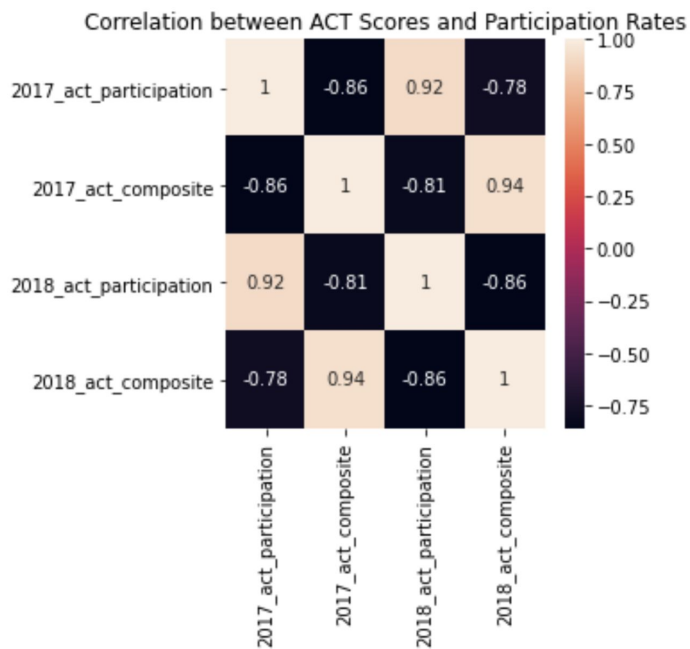
- **Exploring The Data in 2017-2018**
 - Scores - any relationship with Participation?
 - State Participation Rates
- **Why is SAT Participation Rising?**
 - Colorado and Illinois
- **What We Recommend**
 - More State Contracts
 - “Swing” States
 - Context is King - Alaska

SAT Scores vs Participation -



- The lower the SAT score, the higher the SAT participation rate?
- Does that mean anything?

ACT Scores vs Participation



- Our competition has the same odd phenomenon
- Who are these extreme scorers?

Top Scorers and their Participation Rates

- The usual suspects Year on Year. Why?

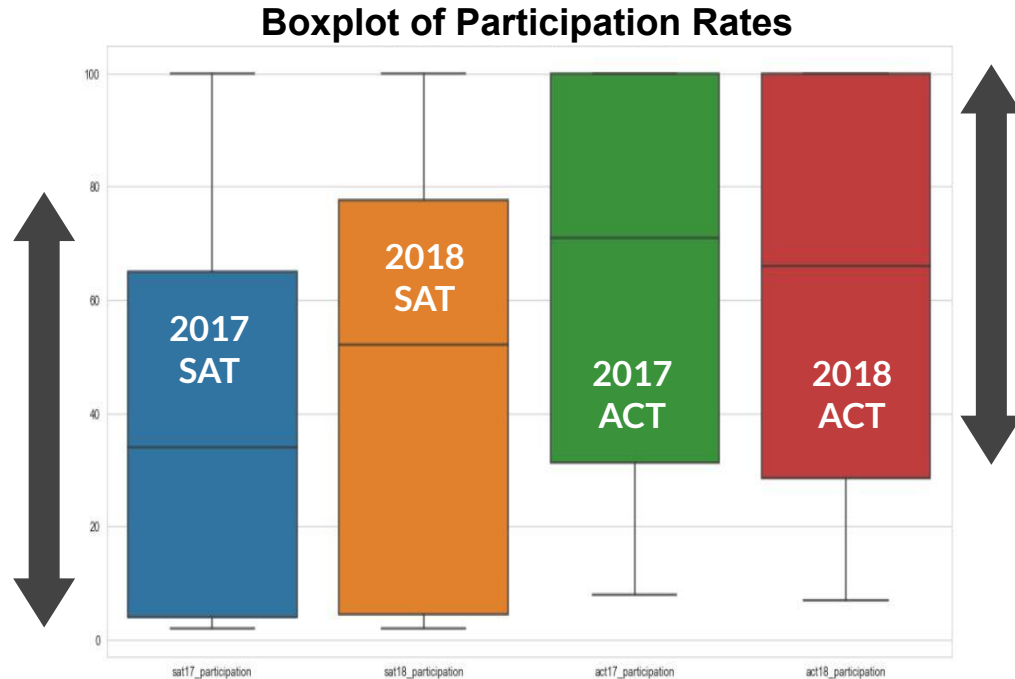
state	2017_sat_total	2018_sat_total	2017_sat_participation	2018_sat_participation
Minnesota	1295	1298	3	4
Wisconsin	1291	1294	3	3
Iowa	1275	1265	2	3
Missouri	1271	1262	3	4
Kansas	1260	1265	4	4

Scores Don't Really Help Us See How to Boost Participation Rates

It's better to look more closely at States and their Test Participation Rates data

Participation

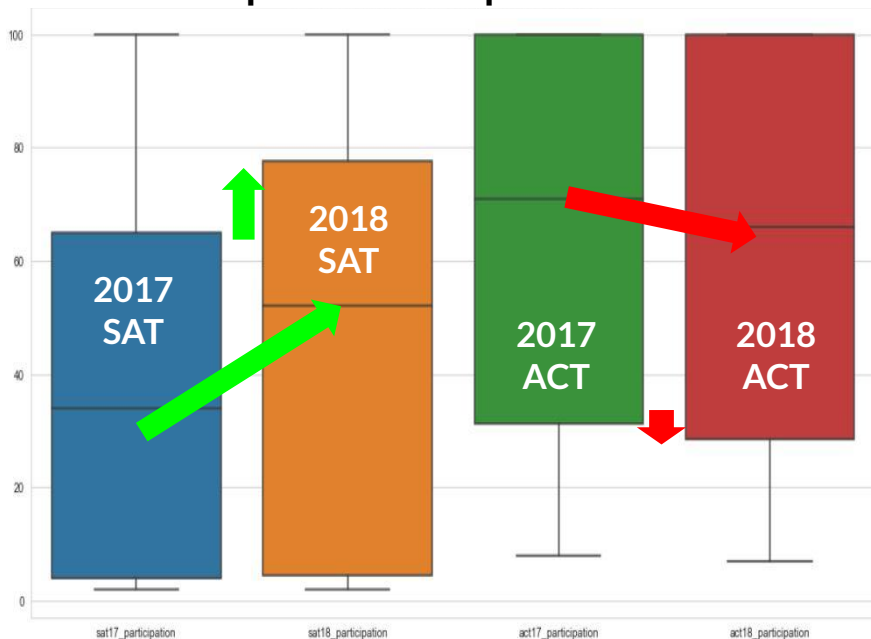
- ACT has enjoyed a significantly higher participation rate
- One third of all eligible states had 100% ACT participation rates for 2017 & 2018
- Mandatory legislation at time of 2018 favours ACT



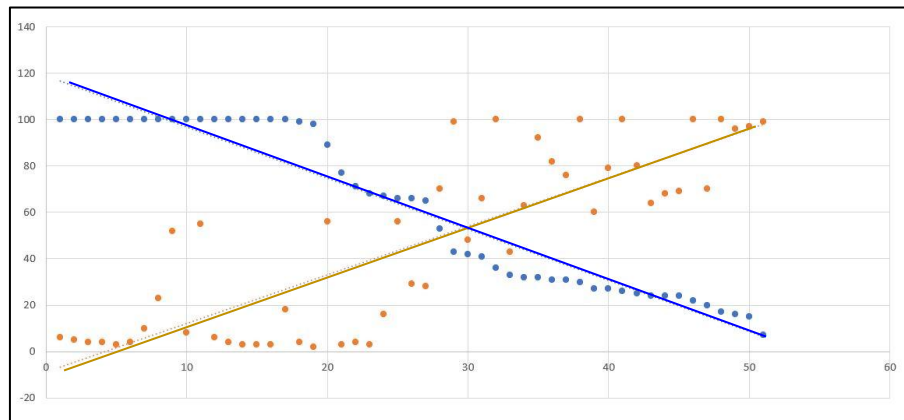
Participation

- Mean SAT participation rates increased year-on-year from 39% to 45%
- The participation range of SAT has also positively widened from 2017 to 2018
- ACT has experienced a slight dip over the same interval
- Opportunities for growth of market share due to increasing adoption of SAT

Boxplot of Participation Rates



2018 Test Participation Rates



● ACT 2018

● SAT 2018

Participation

Illinois

Colorado

2017 SAT Participation

9%

11%

2018 SAT Participation

99%

100%

2017 ACT Participation

93%

100%

2018 ACT Participation

43%

30%

Participation

- SAT overtook ACT in 2018 as the nation's most widely used college admission test (*Washington Post* . 24-Oct-18)
- College Board entered into new contracts with Colorado and Illinois and outnumbered ACT for the first time since 2012
- Mandating SAT tests were 'instrumental' in pivoting SAT as a front runner.



**2.1 million
Test Takers**

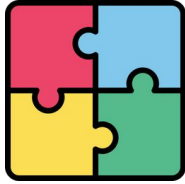
VS



**1.9 million
Test Takers**

Participation

MERITS OF THE SAT EXAM



Problem solving over
content-based tests



More time per question



Guessing penalty



Experimental Section



Tests critical thinking

What We Recommend

Replicate The
Illinois/Colorado
Success Strategy

Market To States
That Are On The
Fence

Taking Into
Account
Individual State
Circumstances

Convert highly populated ACT-dominant
States to *Mandatory SAT*

Replicating Success with Colorado and Illinois

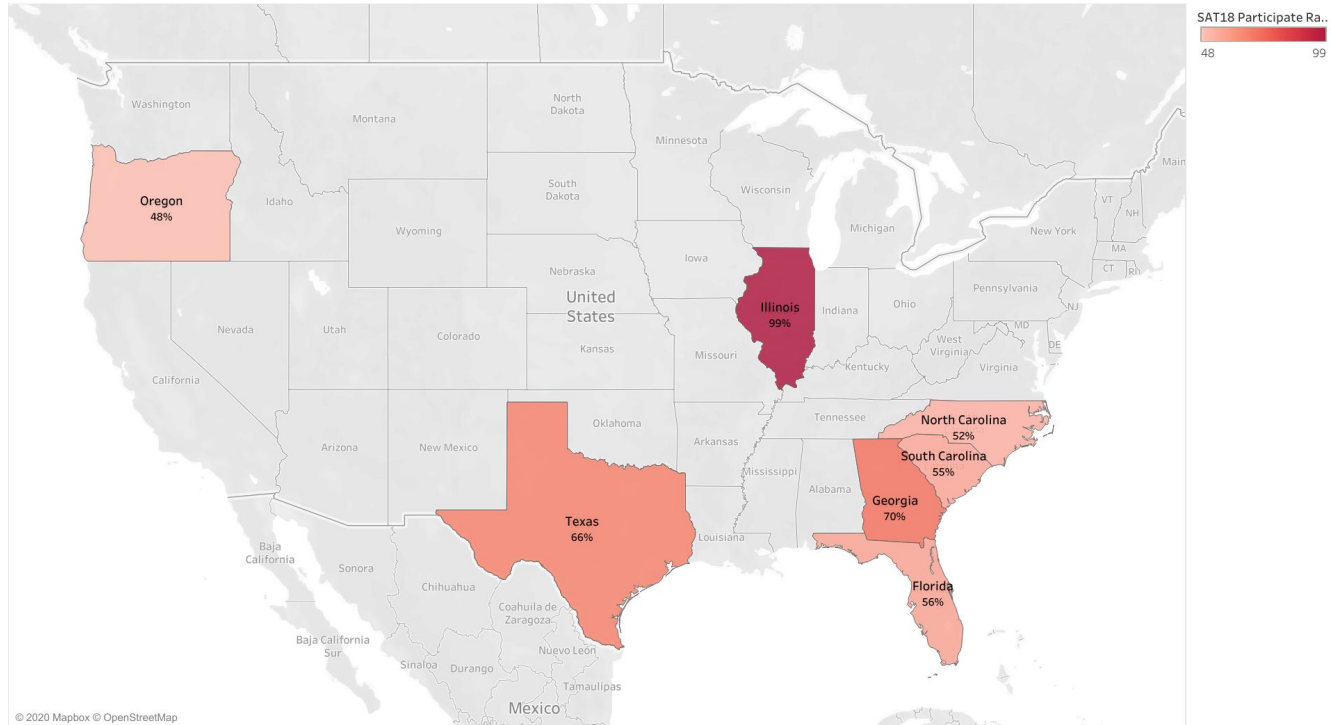


OHIO
TENNESSEE
MISSOURI
WISCONSIN
MINNESOTA

Ranked by population

States That Are On The Fence

States with >40% Participation Rate in SAT & ACT



Individual State Circumstances

Alaska's SAT/ACT 2018 Participation Rate



The End