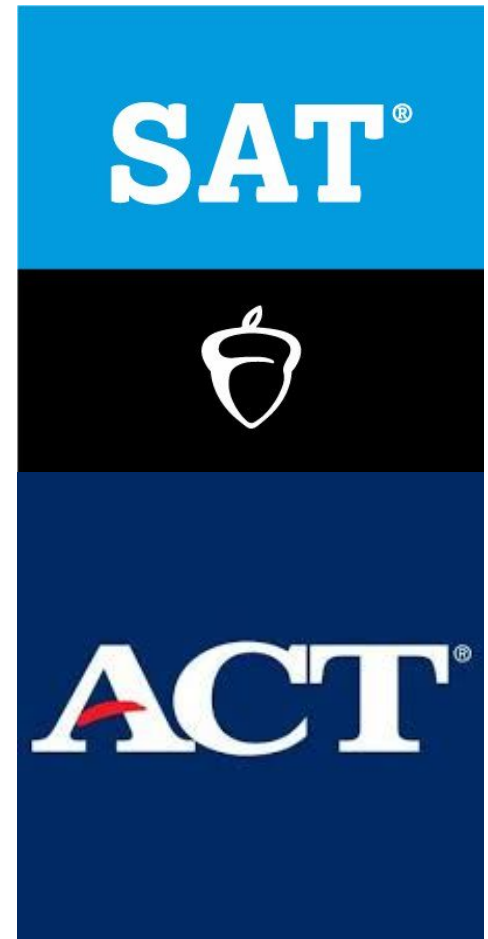


# SAT vs ACT

An analysis of participation rates and  
test results over 2017 and 2018



GA DSI-20  
Samuel Cheah

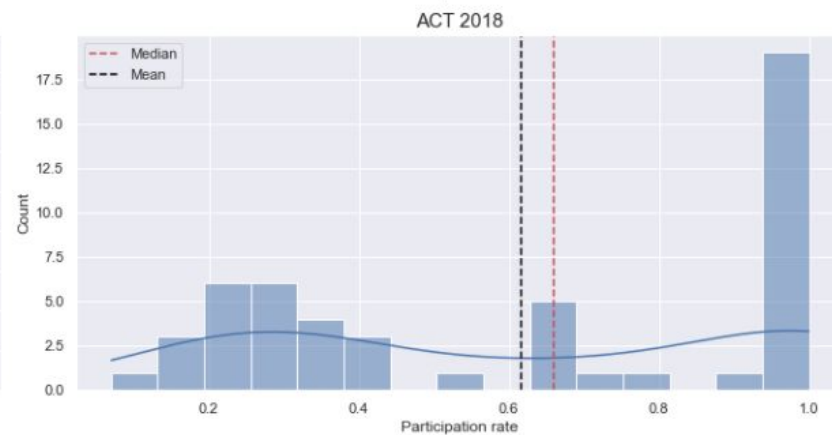
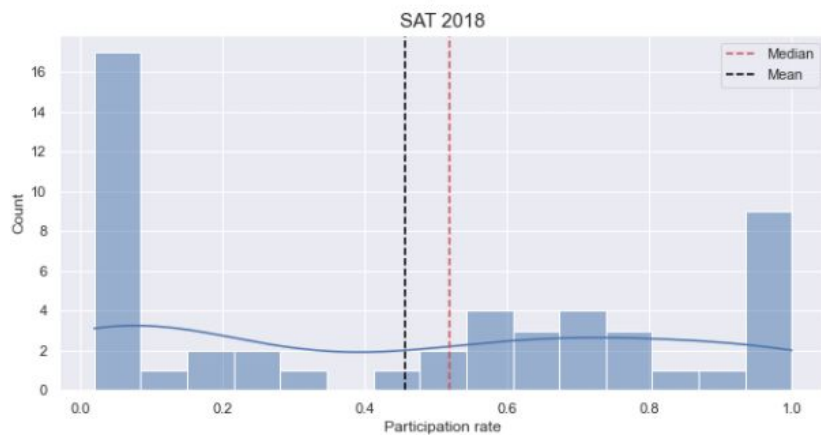
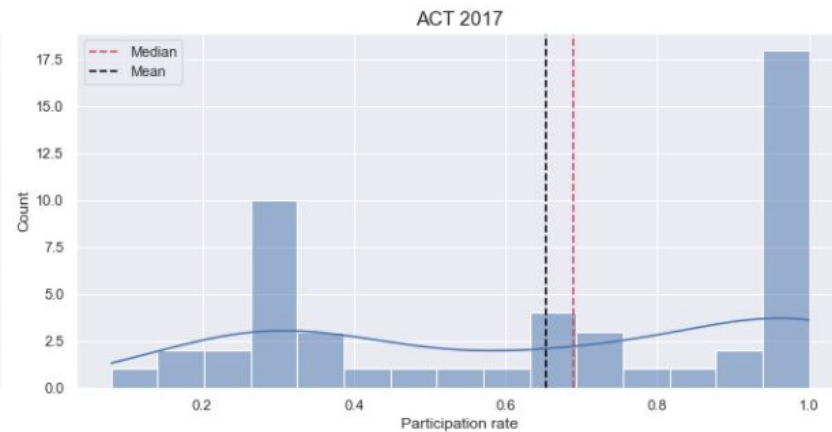
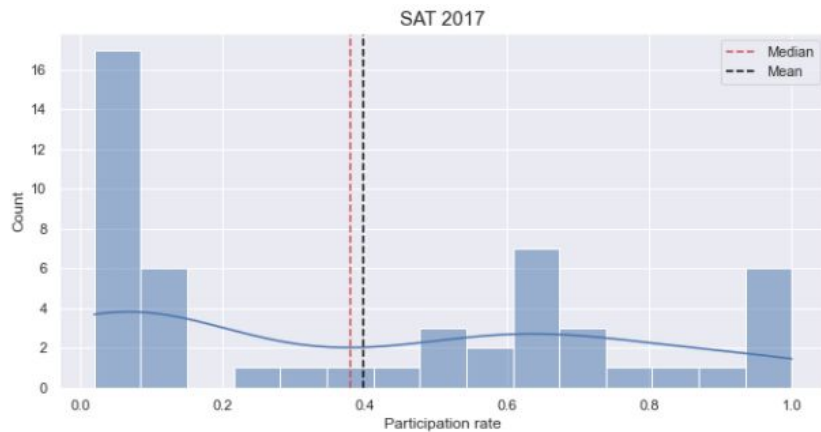


# Which one should I take?



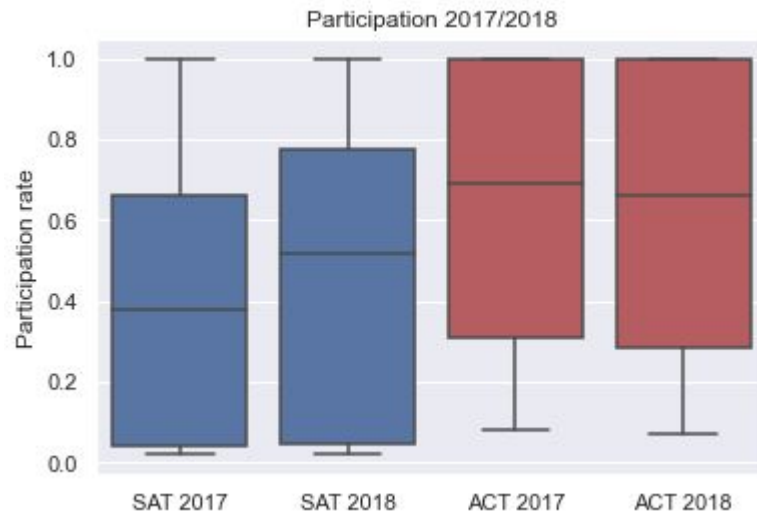
- SAT and ACT are both popular choices for students going to college.
  - ◆ Most colleges require scores from 1 of these tests as part of admissions.
- As part of the College Board, how can we encourage more students to take the SAT?

# Participation rates



# Participation rates

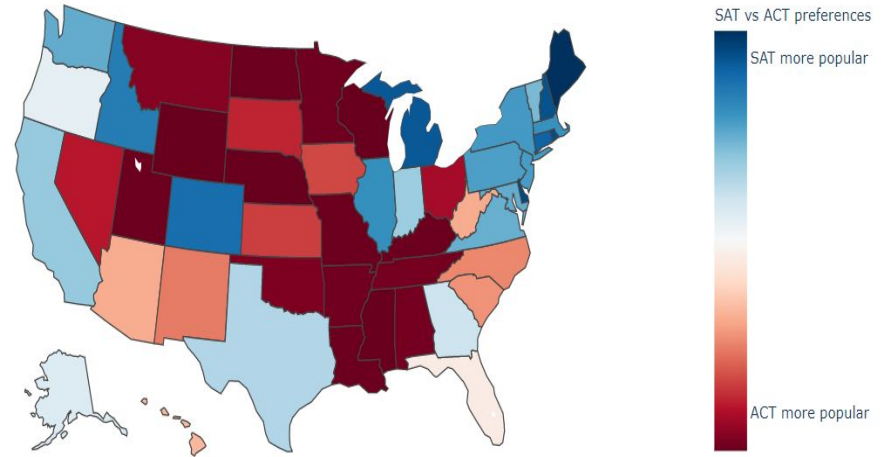
- ACT more popular than the SAT
- Some increase seen in 2018 SAT participation.
  - ◆ Median increased from **38%** to **52%**
  - ◆ But not statistically significant
    - $p = 0.21$



# But why?

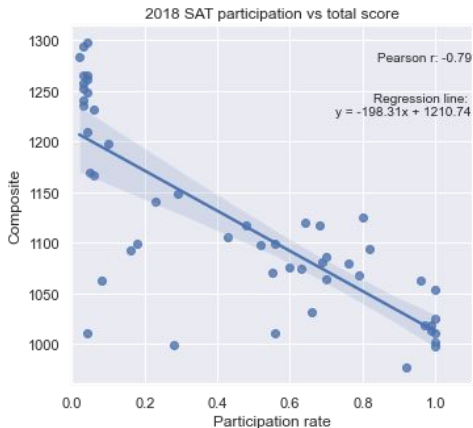
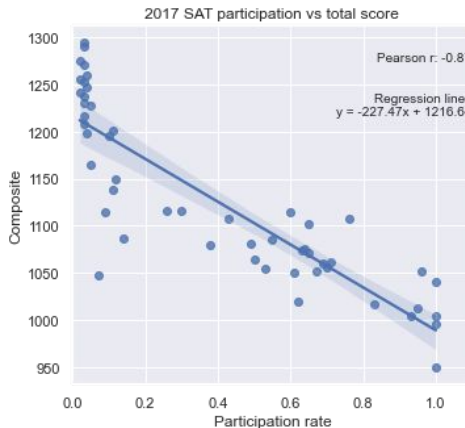
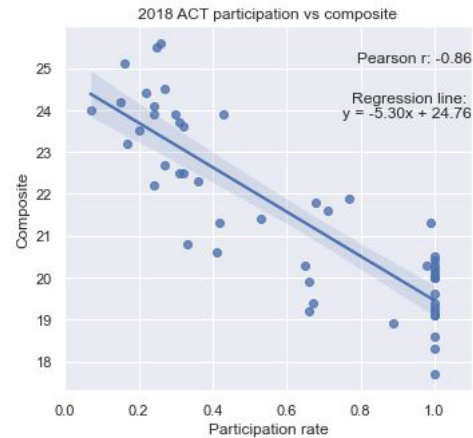
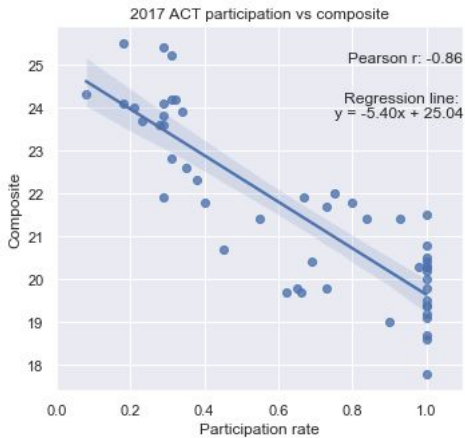
SAT vs ACT (2018) participation rates

- Short answer: No actual reason.
- Participation in either test usually up to state policy.
  - ◆ Certain regions simply tend to favor one test over the other.



# Participation vs scores

- Strong negative correlation between participation and score, for BOTH SAT and ACT.
- In other words, choosing to take one test over the other is not going to give you a better score.



How do we boost participation in the SAT?

# Factors affecting participation

## 1. State educational policy

- a. Certain states mandate students to take either the SAT or ACT
- b. These states would use these tests in lieu of their own standardized testing.

## 2. Financial underwriting

- a. States with 100% participation in the SAT, like Colorado and Connecticut, administer the SAT free of charge to all students.
- b. Low income students participating in the SAT School Day get significant fee waivers, or even take it for free.

## 3. Logistical considerations

- a. The SAT School Day helps to bring the SAT to school, allowing students to take the test on campus on a school day, instead of having to go elsewhere on their own time to take it.



Which state represents a potential growth target for the SAT?

# Arizona

## 1. SAT or ACT not yet mandatory

- Arizona uses its own high school assessment, the AzMERIT.
- Presents an opportunity for College Board to convince Arizona to use the SAT instead.
- Easier to get a foothold in a state not already contracting with ACT.



## 2. Low SAT participation compared to ACT participation

| state   | sat_2017_participation | sat_2018_participation | act_2017_participation | act_2018_participation |
|---------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Arizona | 0.30                   | 0.29                   | 0.62                   | 0.66                   |

## 3. SAT School Day not yet rolled out statewide

- Presents an opportunity to increase financial and logistical support for students.