

# THE Center for Education Reform



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## **A CLOSER LOOK AT SAT AND ACT RESULTS REVEAL CONCERN PRIVATE SCHOOL SCORES PLAY A ROLE**

**Washington, D.C.** – As American students enter another school year, results from the 2005 administration of both the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) are troubling, and provide indication that the nation's older students are still lagging in student achievement. This is one of the many indicators that the disconnect between high school preparation, core knowledge, and the demand of employers to supply a new generation of professionals, remains unaddressed.

The College Board claimed victory in the SAT 2-point gain in math (the only subject that increased). It appears, however, that private schools may have had a lot to do with that jump. According to the Council on American Private Education, "overlooked in the SAT news release, however, was the significant role played by private school students in the math uptick. It turns out that average public school math scores actually stayed stagnant at 515 from 2004 to 2005, while religious and independent schools logged gains – from 531 to 534 for religious schools and from 574 to 577 for independent schools. Private school students account for 17 percent of SAT test takers, although they enroll only about 7.5 percent of the nation's secondary school students."

Overall, a closer look at the numbers as a whole show an unremarkable change. Earlier this year the results of the Nation's report card yielded similar concerns, finding that students in twelfth grade had less progress on core assessments than any other subgroup tested. "High schoolers have not had the benefit of reforms like choice, charter schools and NCLB. Second, too many still report that high schools allow them to "just get by," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform.



Gaston Caperton, president of the college board stated, “the relatively flat trend in verbal scores indicates what we have observed for years: the need to redouble efforts to emphasize the core literacy skills of reading and writing in all courses across the curriculum starting in the earliest grades.”

ACT last week pointed to the disconnect between core curriculum in high school and the lack of preparation is reflected in their scores “once again indicates that high numbers of graduates may struggle or need remediation to succeed in college or job training programs.” Student achievement remains flat with out significant statistical changes in math, reading and verbal skills.

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