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for use with annual SAT scores release – 11:00am, Wednesday, September 14, 2011
**LARGE SAT SCORE DECLINE SHOWS FAILURE OF “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND”
AND STATE HIGH-STAKES TESTING STRATEGY;
FAIRTEST ASKS: “HOW MANY WAKE-UP CALLS DO POLICY-MAKERS NEED?”**

Plunging SAT results released today show that, “‘No Child Left Behind’ (NCLB) and state high-stakes testing programs are undermining school quality, even when measured by other standardized exams,” according to Bob Schaeffer, Public Education Director of FairTest, the National Center for Fair & Open Testing. Schaeffer continued, “With exploding cheating scandals and declines in college readiness scores, how many wake-up calls do policy-makers need before they admit that their test-and-punish strategy is a failure?”

A FairTest analysis shows that overall SAT averages dropped significantly under the NCLB federal testing mandate. At the same time, gaps between Whites, Asians, and historically disadvantaged African-Americans and Hispanics have been growing larger. ACT scores, made public last month, demonstrated similar patterns. Scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) also indicate that educational progress slowed in the NCLB era. Under NCLB, every public school student must be tested annually in grades three through eight and at least once in high school in both reading and math.

“Proponents of NCLB and similar state-level testing programs promised that overall achievement would improve while score gaps would narrow,” Schaeffer continued. “Precisely the opposite has taken place. Policymakers need to embrace very different policies if they are committed to real education reform.”

Schaeffer added, “Fortunately, many colleges have recognized the folly of fixating on the narrow, often inaccurate, information provided by standardized tests and moved toward test-optional admissions.” According to a free web database maintained by FairTest (<http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>), more than 860 accredited, bachelor-degree granting institutions make admissions decisions about all or many applicants without regard to SAT or ACT scores. The list includes 35 of the nation’s 100 top-ranked liberal arts colleges.

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2011 COLLEGE BOUND SENIORS AVERAGE SAT SCORES

with score changes from 2006*

	READING	MATH	WRITING	TOTAL
ALL TEST-TAKERS	497 (- 6)	514 (- 4)	489 (- 8)	1500 (-18)
Female	495 (- 7)	500 (- 2)	496 (- 6)	1491 (- 15)
Male	500 (- 5)	531 (- 5)	482 (- 9)	1513 (- 19)
Asian, Asian Amer. or Pacific Islander	517 (+7)	595 (+17)	528 (+16)	1640 (+40)
White	528 (+1)	535 (- 1)	516 (- 3)	1579 (- 3)
African American or Black	428 (- 6)	427 (- 2)	417 (- 11)	1272 (- 19)
Amer. Indian or Alaskan Native	484 (- 3)	488 (- 6)	465 (- 9)	1437 (- 18)
Mexican or Mexican American	451 (- 3)	466 (+ 1)	445 (- 7)	1362 (- 9)
Puerto Rican	452 (- 7)	452 (- 4)	442 (- 6)	1346 (- 17)
Other Hispanic or Latino	451 (- 7)	462 (- 1)	444 (- 6)	1357 (- 14)

* The “No Child Left Behind” requirement to test every child annually in grades three through eight and at least once in high school went into effect in the 2005-2006 academic year. High school graduates in the class of 2006 were the first to take the SAT “Writing” Test.

calculated by FairTest from: College Board, *College-Bound Seniors 2011: Total Group Profile Report* and *College-Bound Seniors 2006: Total Group Profile Report*