



RESULTS AMERICA

Student Test Scores

Idaho top in overall SAT & ACT test scores, Iowa the lowest



Results America’s goal is to provide practical measures of performance in a variety of areas. One of the most important to study is education. A prosperous economy relies on a quality education for as many citizens as possible. Not only should policy makers measure the quantity of education (i.e., number of Bachelor degrees attained), but also the quality of the student’s education.

This measure focuses on the average performance of state SAT and ACT scores. In some states one test is more common than another, which is often a product of history and sometimes mandatory testing. As a result, average test scores have been weighted based on the rate of participation for graduating seniors. Additionally, the ACT and SAT are scored with very different totals. SAT is out of 2,400

(previously 1,600) and ACT has a maximum score of 36. To allow for comparison between the two, state score averages are calculated as a percentage of the total possible points.

This creates an equation that looks like this:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\textit{State Test Score Index} \\
 &= \left[\left(\frac{\textit{Average SAT Score}}{2400 \textit{ Points Possible}} \right) \times \% \textit{SAT Participation} \right] \\
 &+ \left[\left(\frac{\textit{Average ACT Score}}{36 \textit{ Points Possible}} \right) \times \% \textit{ACT Participation} \right]
 \end{aligned}$$

This equation controls for states with mandated testing as well as those where a privileged few take the test and excel. In this equation, if a state has average score of 100% on SAT, but only 10% of students take the test, they are scored the same as a state in which 100% of the students are tested and the average is only 10%.

HIGHLIGHTS

A composite calculation was created to determine highest scores for both SAT and ACT.

Idaho, Georgia, and Florida top the list of highest testing states.

Iowa, Arizona, and Wisconsin have the lowest average scores.

In 2013, Idaho, Florida and Georgia were the top testing states for college bound seniors. While many states traditionally considered high performers in education, such as Massachusetts and Connecticut populate the top 10 as well, it's the presence of Idaho that may surprise some. The bottom 10 states are just as fascinating. Iowa, Arizona, and Missouri are the lowest testing states.

Top 10 States for SAT & ACT Scores

1. Idaho	6. Massachusetts
2. Florida	7. Colorado
3. Georgia	8. New York
4. Connecticut	9. Delaware
5. South Carolina	10. Indiana

public education including licensure for private schools, homeschooling and curriculum notices. Additionally, Idaho has no mandated student testing, where Iowa has annual testing requirements. However, this data may be a result of confounding factors and should be further explored.

With Idaho and Iowa on opposing sides of our ranking, it begs comparison of these states' economies, demographics, cultures, and of course education policies. Demographically, Idaho and Iowa are predominately non-Hispanic white (83.5% and 88.5% respectively) as well as similar in prosperity and educational attainment. Median income for Idaho is \$47,015 and Iowa is \$51,000. The fact that the state with a less affluent population tests higher in college preparatory testing is counterintuitive. Both Idaho and Iowa are right to work states, indicating that teacher unionization is also not a factor.

Bottom 10 States for SAT & ACT Scores

41. Nebraska	46. West Virginia
42. North Carolina	47. Missouri
43. New Mexico	48. Wisconsin
44. Oklahoma	49. Arizona
45. Nevada	50. Iowa

Education is a field of policy that should be constantly studied and evaluated to ensure the best quality education for children and adults alike. Further study is needed on these results measures before a state could take any definite policy action. However, these kinds of measures should not be set aside just because the answers are not what we expected. Instead, it should insight curiosity and excitement into discovering why measures change, and how a state can improve their own.

References & Data Sources

US Census Bureau
The College Board

Results America is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that exists to inspire and enable the spread of results-driven government. Its sole purpose is to demonstrate how focusing government on results is key to fulfilling the promise of America.

It is also not a matter of school funding. An examination of per capita education spending for state and local government shows the top 10 states average \$2,780.37 annually in 2012. The bottom 10 states were nearly identical, at \$2,764.37. However, it should be noted that in 2012, Idaho spent the least per capita in this category.

The only other potential factors relating to this are difference could be regulation on education. Iowa boasts robust regulations on alternatives to

More information and measures data available at www.resultsamerica.org