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Idaho students' SAT scores are out; show small decline

(BOISE) – For the first time in two years, Idaho has results from the spring SAT college entrance exam, which was postponed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We expected there would be learning loss because of pandemic disruptions in the school year and in the previous spring, so it isn’t surprising that the percentage of students meeting benchmarks went down from 2019 – the last time Idaho 11th graders took the SAT,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said Friday.

“Many of our high school students weren’t back in the classroom full-time until spring, a few weeks before they took the test,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “That’s why I brought forward legislation this year to change Idaho code to make sure students will have the option of in-person education whenever local safety concerns can be addressed.”

The SAT was taken by 19,713 Idaho 11th graders this spring, down slightly from the 2019 cohort. Statewide results show:

- 53.2 percent of 11th graders met the Evidence-based Reading and Writing (ERW) benchmark in spring 2021, down 3 percentage points from spring 2019.
- 31.2 percent of students met the math benchmark this past spring, down 1.3 percentage points from 2019.
- 29.1 percent of students met both benchmarks, a decline of 1.7 percentage points.

Among all Idaho districts and charter schools with at least 20 participating students, nine had 50 percent or more of their students meeting both benchmarks. The highest rate in the state was at Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy, where more than 90 percent of students met both benchmarks.

Idaho requires all students to take a college entrance exam to graduate from high school. Most juniors take the SAT because a state contract provides the test at no cost to the student. SAT results also give schools and districts a tool for monitoring annual progress toward college and career readiness in local Continuous Improvement Plans.

The College Board, which administers the SAT, considers students college- and career-ready when they meet both benchmarks (Math and Evidence-based Reading and Writing), but notes that “college readiness is a continuum — students scoring below the SAT benchmarks can still be successful in college, especially with additional preparation and perseverance.”

Results of this spring’s testing at the state, district and school levels can be viewed on the [State Department of Education website](#).

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Attached: State, district and school-level SAT results