

# SAT scores reveal students not ready for college

By Justin Doubleday, Chronicle of Higher Education

Less than half of the students who took the SAT in 2013 are ready to succeed in postsecondary education, according to a report released on Thursday by the College Board, which owns the SAT.

Only 43 percent of the test takers this year met or exceeded the benchmark score of 1,550 out of a possible 2,400, the same proportion as last year.

Those who reach that number, according to the College Board, have a greater chance of attaining a B-minus average or higher during their first year of college and persisting to graduation. The mean score for 2013 was 1,498.

In a conference call with reporters on Tuesday, College Board officials said the number of students reaching the benchmark score had remained virtually unchanged over the last five years. "We are just not moving the needle as aggressively as it needs to be moved," said Cyndie Schmeiser, chief of assessments.

For more test takers to reach a score of 1,550, rigorous coursework will have to become more widely accessible, said David Coleman, president of the College Board.

Coleman plans to better align the SAT with the Common Core State Standards, which he helped write. They prescribe what students should learn, in English and mathematics, from kindergarten through high school. His proposal to make the essay portion of the SAT more analytical has been met by a mix of applause and apprehension.

The SAT results show that more must be done in elementary and secondary schools to prepare students for college and careers, Coleman said on Tuesday: “We at the College Board consider this a call for action.”

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