

September 14, 2011

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM ANNOUNCES 2011 SAT RESULTS

According to data released by the College Board, Newton County School System (NCSS) students like their statewide peers, saw a decrease across the board in scores on the 2011 SAT. The school system's 2011 average scores decreased nine points in reading, eleven points in math and eleven points in writing compared to 2010 test takers. Likewise, Georgia's average scores decreased as follows: three points in reading, two points in math, and one point in writing. Nationwide, reading scores decreased by three points in reading; math and writing scores decreased by one and two points respectively. Newton County's district scores were below the state and nation in all categories on the 2011 SAT.

SAT RESULTS FOR THE SENIOR CLASS OF 2011

Group	# Test Takers	Reading	Math	Writing
Alcovy	182 (+6)	455 (-5)	440 (-16)	432 (-17)
Eastside	164 (+40)	481 (-7)	458 (-19)	466 (-6)
Newton	225 (+39)	428 (-16)	426 (-5)	422 (-11)
NCSS	571 (+85)	452 (-9)	440 (-11)	438 (-11)
Georgia	75,510 (+2,395)	485 (-3)	487 (-2)	473 (-1)
Nation	1,647,123 (+49,794)	497 (-3)	514 (-1)	489 (-2)

**Number in parenthesis indicates change over preceding year.*

“Compared to ACT results for last year’s graduating class, the same group’s SAT results are not improved with the release of today’s figures,” said Gary Mathews, Newton County School Superintendent. “The fact is no matter how we choose to slice and dice these results, we simply must do better at preparing our students for a post-secondary education. Indeed a recent study reported in The Wall Street Journal points out the fact that over the next decade, nearly two-thirds of job openings will require some post-secondary education. The study insists that schools must do a better job of preparing students to graduate from college. Do I believe this and other studies are generally correct? Yes. However, imagine what schools could do if each and every parent insisted on their children being post-secondary or ‘college ready.’ While our schools can control what they do during the school day, we need parents to help us insist on homework, academic rigor, classroom discipline, and an overarching recognition of what schools are for—a preparation for the future. While we will accept no excuses on the part of educators, we are seeking parent support of the educational process at home. Kids need a place at home to do homework and insistence each evening that it be completed before all else; kids need to be challenged at school, even as we build their background knowledge; kids need to know that they do not have the right to disrupt the learning of others and that attention to the teacher is vital; and kids need to know that what they get out of school will foretell what they will get out of life. If the school and home work together, we will dramatically increase the odds that students will be post-secondary or college ready.”

The SAT is a national college entrance exam some colleges and universities utilize to measure critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems. It is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors.

Each section of the SAT is scored on a scale of 200—800, with two Writing sub-scores for multiple-choice and the essay. It is administered seven times a year in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories, and six times a year overseas. Students may take the test multiple times over multiple years. Colleges and universities will use for admission purposes the highest score from a testing category; regardless of how many times the student has taken the test. The College Board, however, only reports collectively the most recent scores achieved by students.

At the school level, Alcovy High School (AHS) scores dropped in all three categories in 2011. Reading scores dropped 5 points while math and writing scores saw a 16 and 17 point decrease respectively. Alcovy's reading score is 30 points below the state average. Math and writing scores are 47 and 41 points below Georgia average scores respectively.

Eastside High School also saw a decrease in scores in all three content areas in 2011. The reading score dipped seven points in 2011 while math and writing saw nineteen and six point decreases respectively. This year, Eastside average scores were below the state on each test. The school's reading score was four points below the state average. Math and writing scores were 29 and seven points below the state average respectively.

As with Alcovy and Eastside, Newton High School also saw SAT scores drop in all three categories in 2011. Reading scores dropped 16 points and math scores fell 5 points in 2011. The school's writing score also fell by eleven points in 2011. All Newton High School average SAT scores were below the state in 2011, with reading 57 points below Georgia's average score and math and writing 61 and 51 points below the state respectively.

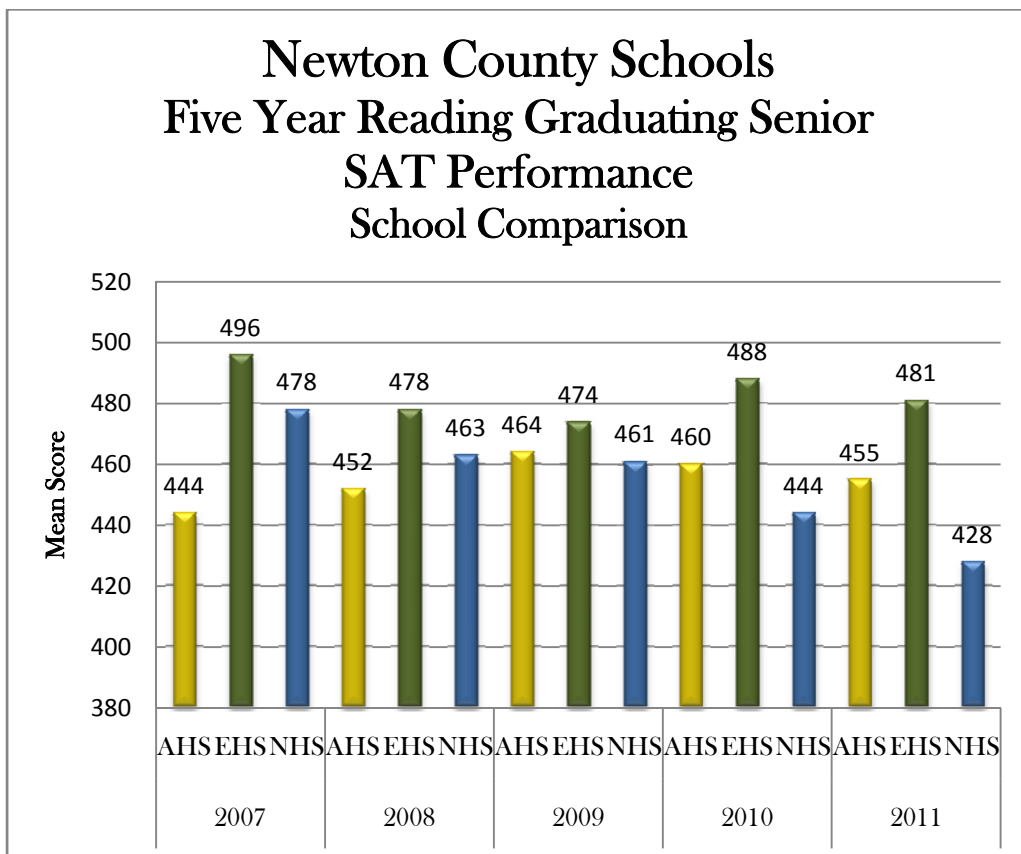
When all school data are calculated, the district's 2011 SAT scores are 33 points below the State in reading; 47 points below the state average in math; and 35 points below the state average in writing.

Recently, NCSS has taken the following steps to increase student achievement and college readiness among district students:

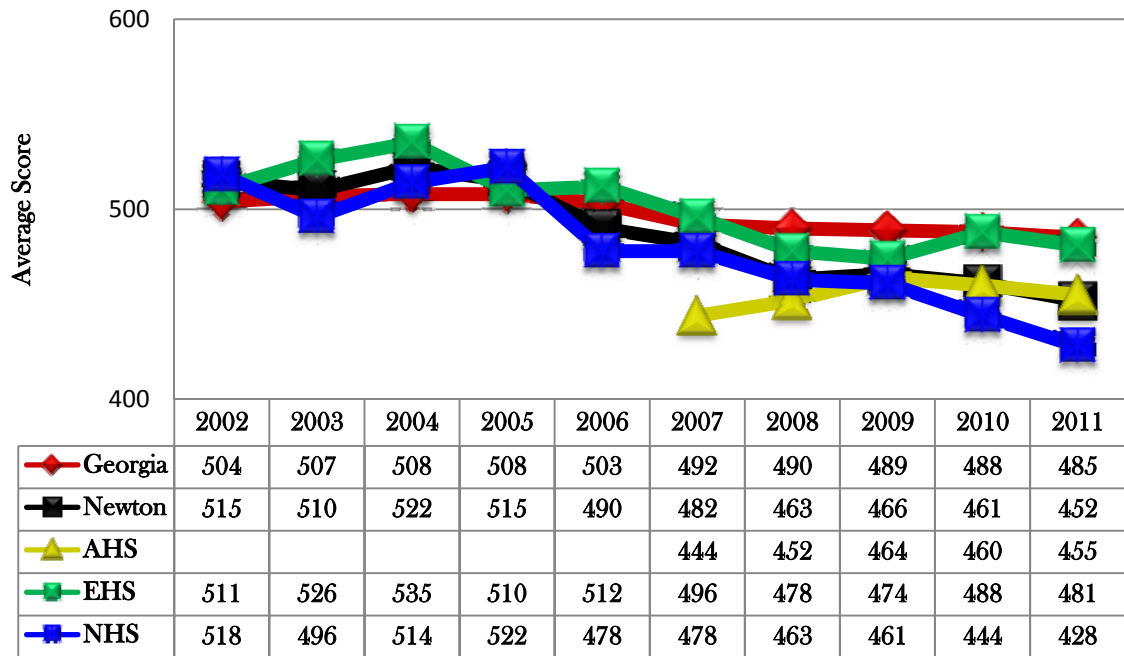
- For the first time in several years, each high school now offers courses directly related to college preparedness: SAT Prep and Tools for College Success.
- For the first time, NCSS Counselors have developed brochures that articulate—by grade level—how to prepare for college and/or careers beginning as early as the 6th grade. Each of the brochures, 6th through 10th grades, identify the most commonly used SAT words and were distributed to each student for the first time this school year (20 words per each grade level, i.e., 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th).
- For this 2011-12 school year, NCSS has developed common course syllabi (for the first time) and updated curriculum maps which will help ensure all classroom teachers are teaching the state's curriculum. Monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum by administrators is simplified as they can easily access the curriculum on their desktops for the first time.
- As part of the new NCSS curriculum maps, non-fiction reading and writing is a *required* emphasis. Students will be required to read specific text and respond to an associated writing prompt in all core content areas beginning in the 6th grade.

- For only the second year, all 10th grade students in NCSS will take the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) which will enable the school system to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses and provide students with a norm-referenced standardized testing experience. Additionally, NCSS will use AP Potential, a part of the reporting mechanism of the PSAT, to identify students who have the potential to perform well in more Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Through the restructuring of the high school day, an “Instructional Focus” period was added. This high school period serves as a “safety-net” for struggling students, but also offers the opportunity for students to participate in enrichment activities. During the Instructional Focus period, NCSS high schools plan to add “advisement” as an integral tool to connect with small groups of students while encouraging them to take courses necessary to assist with their post-secondary plans.

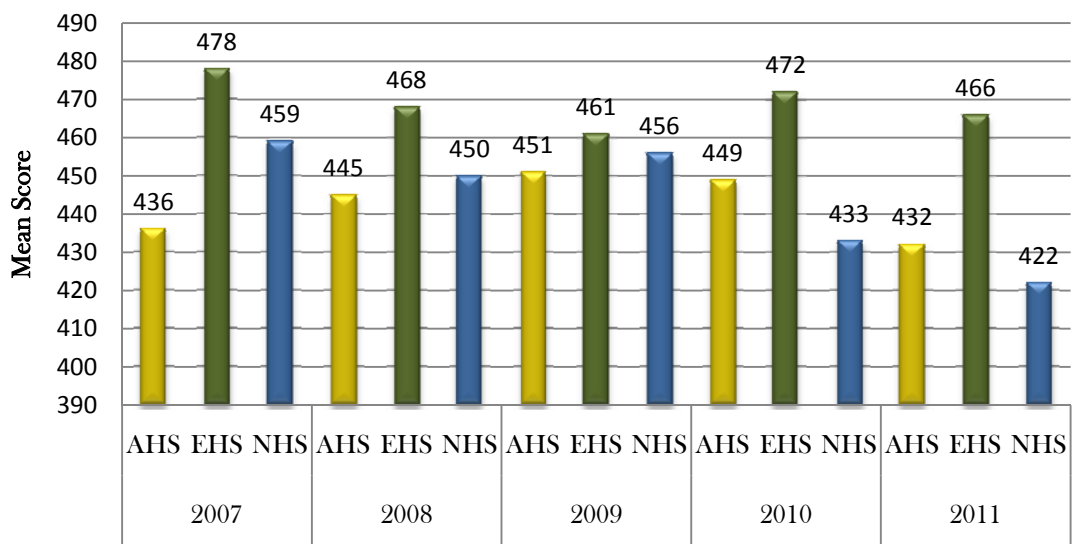
HISTORICAL DATA



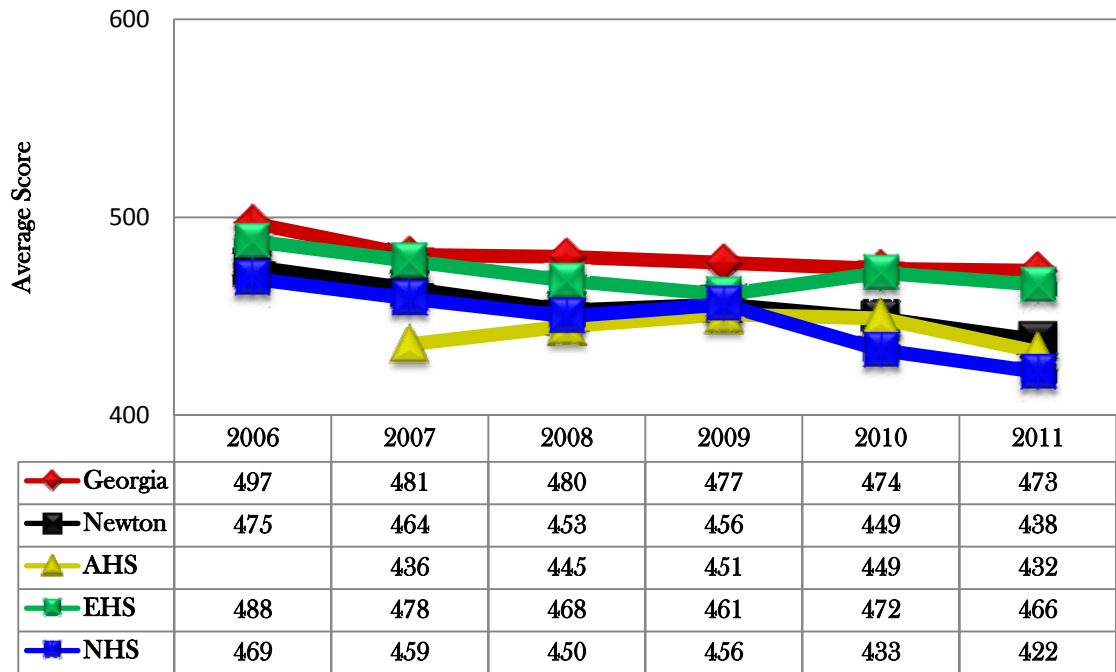
Newton County Schools Average Reading Graduating Senior SAT Performance Ten Year Trend



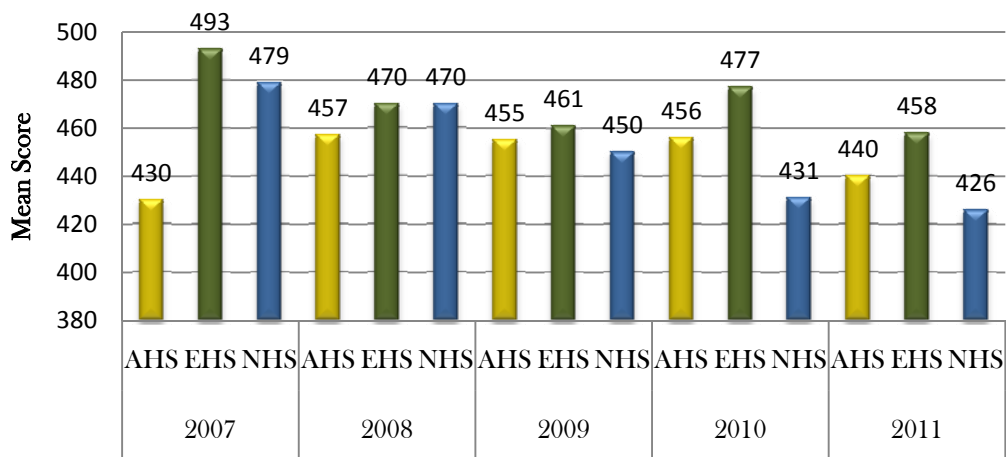
Newton County Schools Five Year Writing Graduating Senior SAT Performance School Comparison



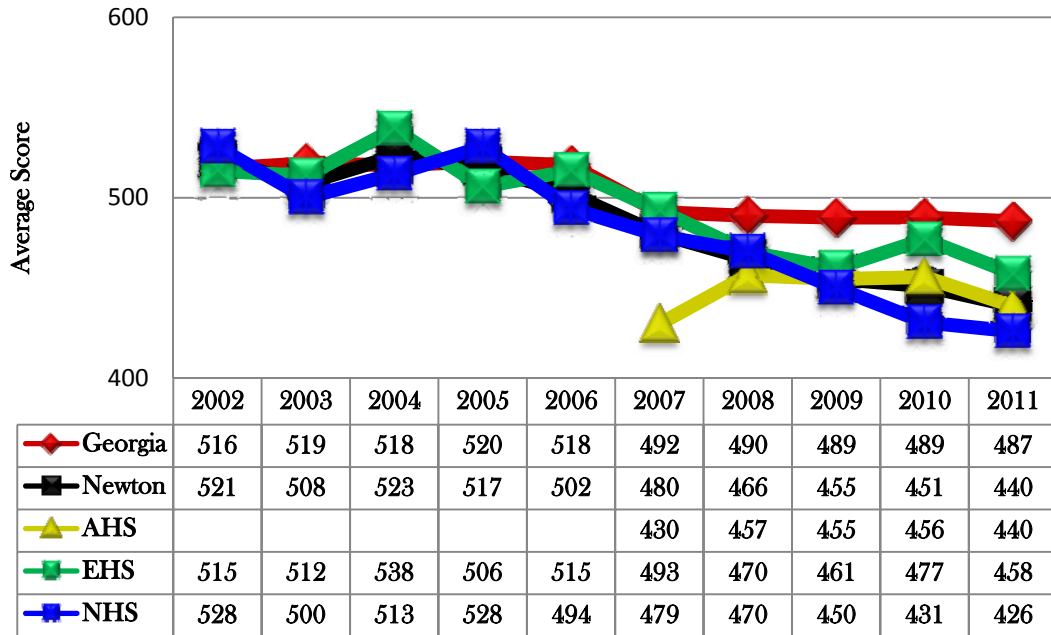
Newton County Schools Average Writing Graduating Senior SAT Performance Six Year Trend



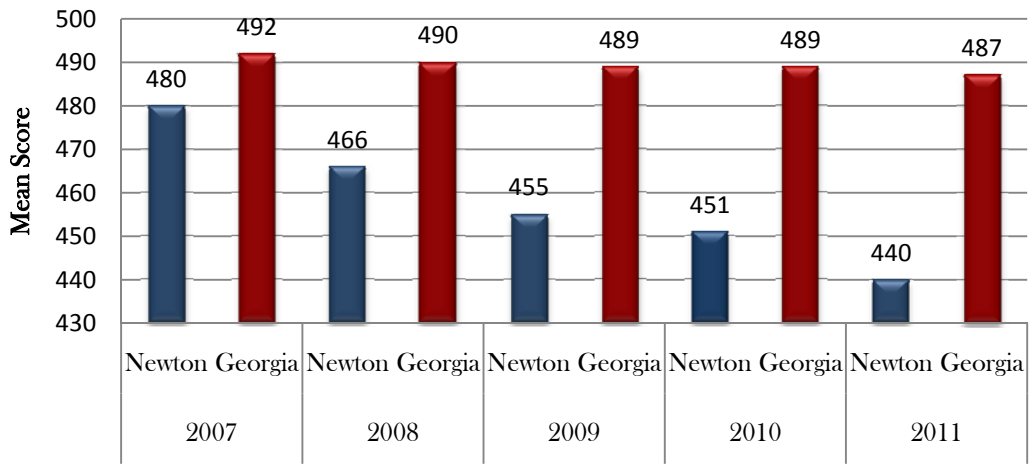
Newton County Schools Five Year Math Graduating Senior SAT Performance School Comparison



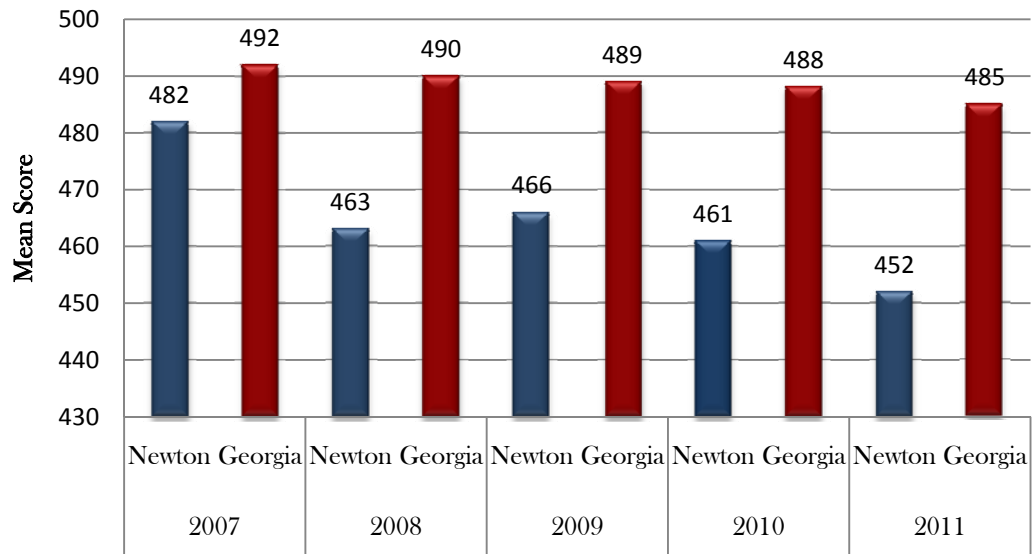
Newton County Schools Average Math Graduating Senior SAT Performance Ten Year Trend



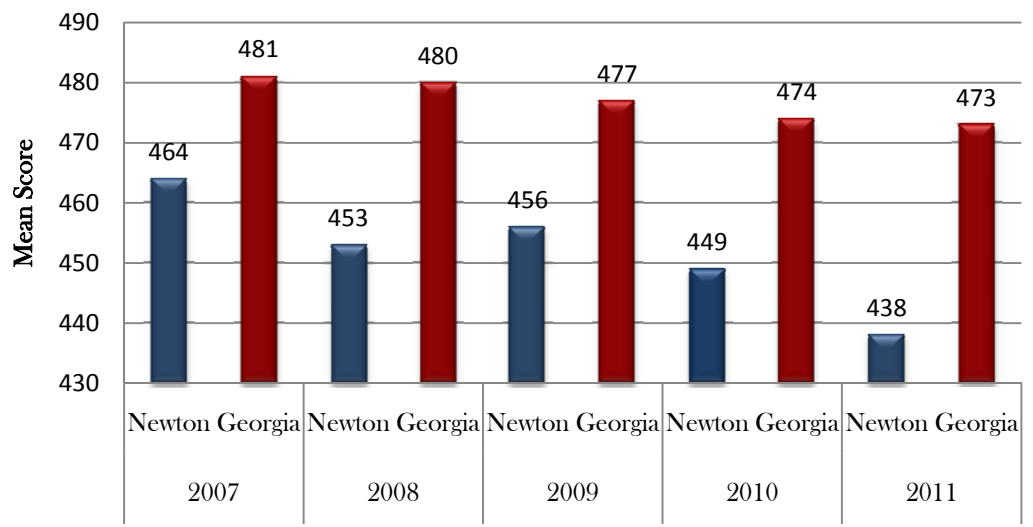
Newton County Schools Five Year Math Graduating Senior SAT Performance *District & State Comparison*



Newton County Schools Five Year Reading Graduating Senior SAT Performance *District & State Comparison*



Newton County Schools Five Year Writing SAT Graduating Senior Performance *District & State Comparison*



For more information on the NCSS SAT scores, please contact Dr. Carl Skinner, Director of Testing, Research, and Evaluation at skinner.carl@newton.k12.ga.us.
