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OUR MISSION

is to educate members and all South Carolinians about state and local public policy based on the traditional South Carolina values of individual liberty and responsibility, free enterprise and limited government.

2008 SAT Scores Show Declines for SC Public Education; Achievement Gap Widening

South Carolina's public schools showed a sharp drop in 2008 average SAT scores, according to a S.C. Policy Council analysis of the 2008 College Board report released today. While independent high schools showed a gain of 41 points, the average SAT scores for public high schools dropped five points this year from 1456 to 1451.

South Carolina's composite SAT score of 1461 remains the lowest in the South, and is 50 points below the national average. The number of public school districts and schools that failed to exceed the national average also increased in 2008. Just eight districts had average test scores that exceeded the national average this year. That is down from 10 districts in 2007. The number of schools exceeding the national average also dropped from 42 to 40.

The achievement gap between African-American and white students increased by 11 points. African-American test scores dropped by five points - from 1255 to 1250 - while white students improved by six points to 1541. The resulting gap leaves a 291 point margin between test scores for the state's two largest ethnic categories.

"This year's numbers clearly show the need for fundamental education reform in South Carolina's education system," said Policy Council President Ashley Landess. "Despite more than \$900 million in new K-12 education funding over the past decade, South Carolina's public school students have shown just a one percent improvement in average SAT scores since 2001 and are not competitive with their regional and national peers. Considering South Carolina has the lowest graduation rate in the nation - just 58 percent of ninth graders graduate four years later - students remaining in school by the time the SAT is given should be the state's best and brightest. Yet South Carolina continues to rank at the bottom, and the gap is increasing in several key categories."

Among the key findings of the College Board's 2008 SAT results for South Carolina:

- **Public school SAT scores dropped**
Public school SAT averages dropped five points to 1451. Independent schools improved 41 points to 1546. Overall, South Carolina private schools averaged 106 points higher than their public school peers. South Carolina's two point overall gain is entirely the result of private school SAT improvement
- **More districts and schools failed to exceed the national average in 2008**
Eight school districts had average test scores that exceeded the national average this year. That is down from 10 districts in 2007. The number of schools exceeding the national average also dropped from 42 to 40.



- **The performance gap between African-American and white students widened** African-American test scores dropped by five points – from 1255 to 1250 – while white students improved by six points to 1541. That leaves a 291 point gap. In 2007 it was 280.

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