

Predicting College Success: How Do Different High School Assessments Measure Up?

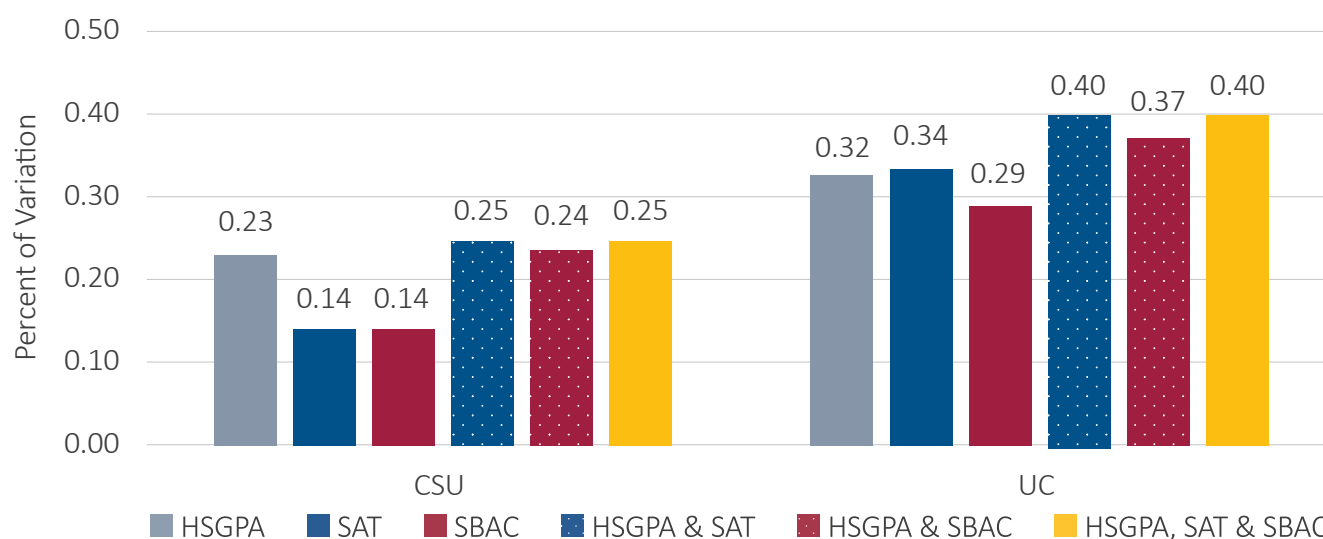
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The Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC), implemented in California in 2014–15 as part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, is designed to evaluate students' levels of college and career readiness. Student performance on the SBAC may also predict success in college in a manner similar to other commonly used assessments, including high school grade point average (HSGPA) and SAT. A recent PACE report shared the following findings relevant to the current policy discussions on the use of assessments for college admissions decisions:

- SBAC does as well as the SAT in predicting college outcomes, specifically first-year college GPA and second-year persistence rates, for students enrolled in CSU or UC.
- HSGPA is a stronger predictor of first-year college GPA and second-year persistence than either SBAC or SAT at CSU.
- None of the three assessments (HSGPA, SBAC, or SAT) are strong predictors of second-year persistence at CSU or UC campuses, and even less predictive for socioeconomically disadvantaged students compared to more advantaged students.
- Patterns for predicting early college outcomes with HSGPA, SAT, and SBAC persist across all racial/ethnic groups.
- HSGPA as a predictor of college outcomes results in a higher representation of low income and underrepresented minority students in the top of the UC applicant pool, than do SAT or SBAC test scores. Using HSGPA with SBAC versus HSGPA with SAT also results in a more socioeconomically and racial/ethnically diverse applicant pool.

The figure below presents the percent of the variation in first-year college GPA explained by the three different assessments, and their respective combinations. Our study finds that SAT and SBAC are exactly the same in their predictive power of first-year college performance at CSU and substantively the same at UC, when controlling for student socioeconomic disadvantage, high school quality, and campus differences.

Percent of Variation in First-Year GPA Explained by Different High School Assessments



To read the full report, visit:

<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/predicting-college-success-how-do-different-high-school-assessments-measure-2019>

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