Universal SAT® Policy Boosts 4-Year College Enrollment

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Maine replaced its existing high school statewide assessment with the SAT® and administered the exam to almost all public high school juniors. A primary goal of this policy change was to increase 4-year college enrollment by public school students in Maine.

**OVERVIEW**

**4-YEAR COLLEGE-GOING RATES (SAT STATES)**

![Graph showing 4-year college-going rates (SAT states)]

**THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED ENABLES CAUSAL STATEMENTS**

Changes in 4-year college-going rates in Maine were compared to changes in three control groups: (1) all SAT-dominant states, (2) New England states, and (3) a synthetically-constructed Maine. Maine’s actual change in 4-year college-going after the policy change is statistically larger than all three control groups.
RESULTS

The mandatory SAT policy in Maine increased 4-year college-going rates among Maine public high school graduates by at least 2-3 percentage points overall, and by 10 percentage points among those students who took the SAT only because it was made universal.

SAT GROWTH IN 4-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

1 in 10 of the induced students entered the 4-year college pipeline.

MAINE’S POLICY CHANGE CAUSES 4-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLMENT TO INCREASE

GROWTH IN 4-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

DRIVEN BY STUDENTS IN MAINE’S RURAL AND SMALL-TOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BENEFITS

Maine’s SAT policy is a relatively cost effective state strategy for increasing 4-year college enrollment. To achieve a similar increase in enrollment, Maine would have needed to spend more than four times as much on increased financial aid.

UNIVERSAL SAT IS A LESS COSTLY OPTION THAN OTHER MEANS OF BOOSTING 4-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLMENT.

$3.7M AVOIED COSTS

$1M

$4.7M STATE FINANCIAL AID

STUDENTS WHO ATTEND COLLEGE EXPERIENCE HIGHER EARNINGS THAN THOSE WHO ONLY GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

POSITIVE SPILLOVERS FROM ADDITIONAL YEARS OF EDUCATION INCLUDE:

GREATER JOB SATISFACTION

BETTER HEALTH AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

IMPROVED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

SOURCE


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