

OFFICIAL SAT PRACTICE STRATEGIES:

Tips for Success from Denver Public Schools

The College Board and Khan Academy® have teamed up to revolutionize the way millions of students get ready for the SAT®. To help more students get free world-class test practice and equip them with their own personalized study plan, the College Board, Khan Academy, and the Council of Great City Schools launched the [Official SAT Practice All In Challenge](#) for large urban districts in the fall of 2016.

Over a six-month period, the 28 participating districts encouraged 279,000 students to use Official SAT Practice. Of those students, 168,000 created new accounts. Students also used the tool: 61,000 practiced for at least 10 hours. Of those 28 districts, Colorado's Denver Public Schools (DPS) received the "Time: Proof of Practice" award. Students logged the most minutes—an average of 52—on Official SAT Practice per week.

Denver Public Schools by the Numbers

- Over 51,830 students linked College Board and Khan Academy accounts.
- Juniors completed 1.8 million practice problems.
- Juniors logged over 42,000 hours of practice.

What Made Denver Public Schools a Winning District?

Schools could choose how to implement Official SAT Practice; but DPS provided trainings, materials, and data. Strategies included getting student buy-in and using instruction time.

1. Train Trainers

DPS and the College Board trained school administrators, counselors, and teachers and then:

- Shared all materials
- Organized school trainings
- Provided case-by-case support

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Create School-Based Plans.**
Schools built implementation plans which were reinforced by districtwide trainings, materials, and regular status updates.
- Robust Communications.**
District leaders maintained strong communication with schools and the community.
- Get Students On Board.**
Present the value to students to get their buy-in.
- Integrate with Classrooms.**
Make Official SAT Practice a part of the learning process.

"The idea, truly, is equity."

JOANNA LILLEY,
COLLEGE ACCESS INITIATIVES
COORDINATOR, DPS

STRATEGIES BY AUDIENCE:

-  Teachers
-  School Leaders
-  District Leaders

2. Emphasize Data and Communications

DPS provided progress updates to their schools and the larger community.

- The DPS Communications Team shared usage reports with the entire team, including instructional superintendents and administrators.
- Educators used Official SAT Practice, PSAT/NMSQT®, and SAT data to target and support schools and students.
- DPS used dual-language communications. Joanna Lilley, College Access Initiatives Coordinator at DPS, promoted practice and student and family resources on a Spanish radio program.

3. Get Students On Board

At the school level, educators highlighted the value of the new resource to students.

Educators at High Tech Early College and Kunsmiller High School presented to students about:

- The Khan Academy and College Board partnership
- The PSAT/NMSQT and SAT connection
- Setting SAT practice goals
- Growth mindset
- Fee waivers and free practice

4. Incorporate Practice in the Classroom

Kunsmiller held a weekly SAT Prep Class. High Tech Early College initiated 40-minute practice in 9th- and 10th-grade advisories.

Here's a look at High Tech Early College's rollout strategy:

- Modified College Board and Khan Academy resources and reviewed with advisory teachers ([an overview video](#), [linking process screenshots](#))
- Communicated important dates for teacher planning
- Provided sample [lesson plan](#) templates

For more information about Official SAT Practice for educators go to satpractice.org/k12.

“I’m excited because for the first time, we can track a cohort of students. We can say ‘John Smith, you’re coming to our school. Here’s what your data says and we have four years to get you to this benchmark!’ It’s a game changer.”

DIANE ULMER, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, HIGH TECH EARLY COLLEGE

“The training at the beginning of the year was super helpful. Then, we turned it around and made sure staff could understand it.”

JENNIFER HOCHMILLER, SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, ASST. PRINCIPAL INTERN, HIGH TECH EARLY COLLEGE

“Once the kids found out how important the SAT was, they started pushing for SAT practice too.”

“We did tons of practice, practice tests. Then students saw their scores going up! They would come to me saying, ‘I wish I had more time to practice because my scores would have been even higher!’”

MADIHA SHAHEEN, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, KUNSMILLER HIGH SCHOOL