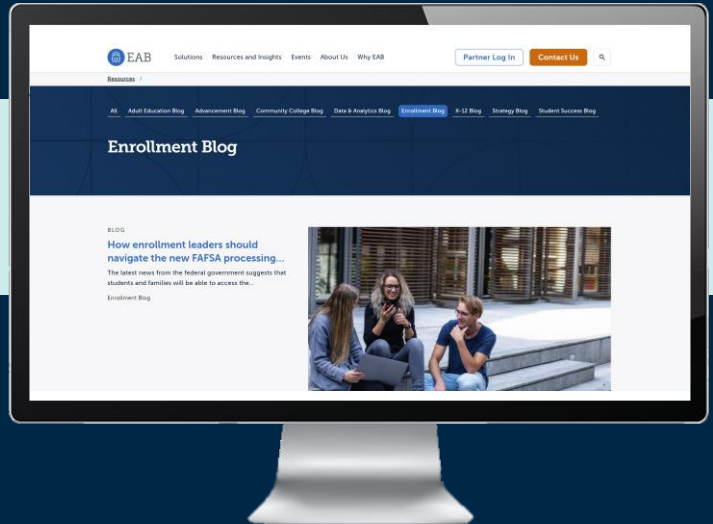


# Our Webinar Will Begin Shortly

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And don't forget to  
check out our latest  
podcast episodes!

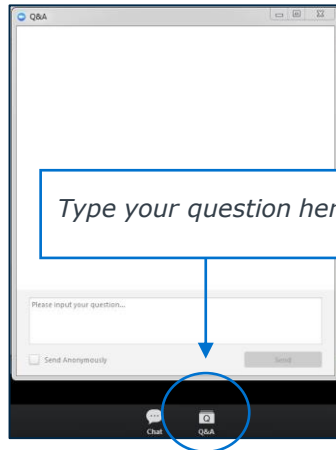


## Connecting to Audio



Refer to the **webinar confirmation email** you received in your inbox.

## Asking a Question



## Brief Exit Survey



We'd appreciate your **feedback** on today's presentation.



# Making the Most of College Board Connections

Practical Guidance for Enrollment Teams

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# Today's Presenter



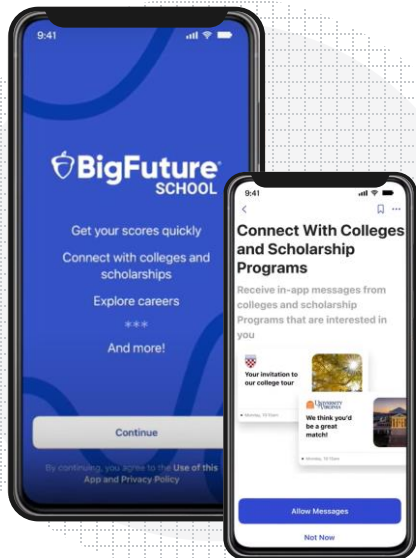
**Brandy Palmer**

*Senior Director,  
Demographic Analytics*



# College Board Connections

A New Channel with Important Implications for Search Availability



A new app-based platform from College Board



Launched last November



An expansion of your existing student communications



EAB is supporting Connections within our Enroll360 Solutions

# Poll Questions

## How would you describe your current use of College Board Connections?

- We have not started using Connections
- We are using it sparingly and/or struggling to execute effective comm plans
- We are using it extensively and/or seeing promising student engagement



- 1 Connections 101
- 2 Our Work with EAB Partners and Observations
- 3 Key Considerations for the Months Ahead

# Why the Move to Connections?



## Focus on a Student-Centric Approach



**Student Privacy  
Updates Across  
the Country**



**Changes to  
Classroom Opt-  
In Collection**



**Domestic Digital  
Testing Started  
Fall 2023**

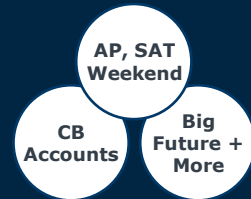


# Now, Two College Board Student Groups



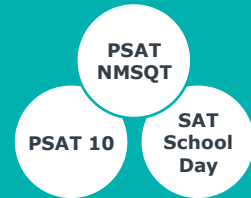
## Student Search

- **Current system** for searching students
- Focuses on **individual** student records



## Connections

- Students receive an invite to download the BigFuture App – **NEW!**
- Relies on groups of students divided into **Audiences**



# How Did This Change Impact Student Search?



Students Are Still Entering Search Through Many Avenues

## Assessment-Based

PSAT

*Largest percentage of students test during fall of 10<sup>th</sup> grade*

SAT

*Largest percentage of students test during spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade*

AP

*Largest percentage of students test during spring of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade*

## Other

Non-Assessment

- BigFuture
- Khan Academy
- College list
- College Board account creation
- Email/SMS/social media
- Referral marketing



# How Did This Change Impact Student Search?

But We Did See a Decline in Availability for EC26 (Current 10<sup>th</sup> Graders)

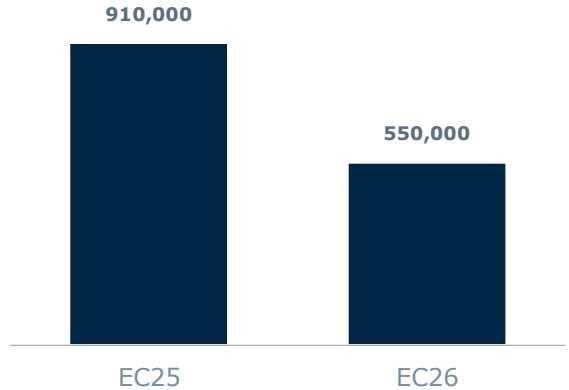
## Total Availability

*25% decline vs. similar point in time<sup>1</sup>*



## PSAT Availability

*40% decline vs. similar point in time<sup>1</sup>*



1) PSAT Release December 2023



# What About the Connections Audience?

Many Students Downloaded the App and Opted In

Initial PSAT Digital Testing Occurred

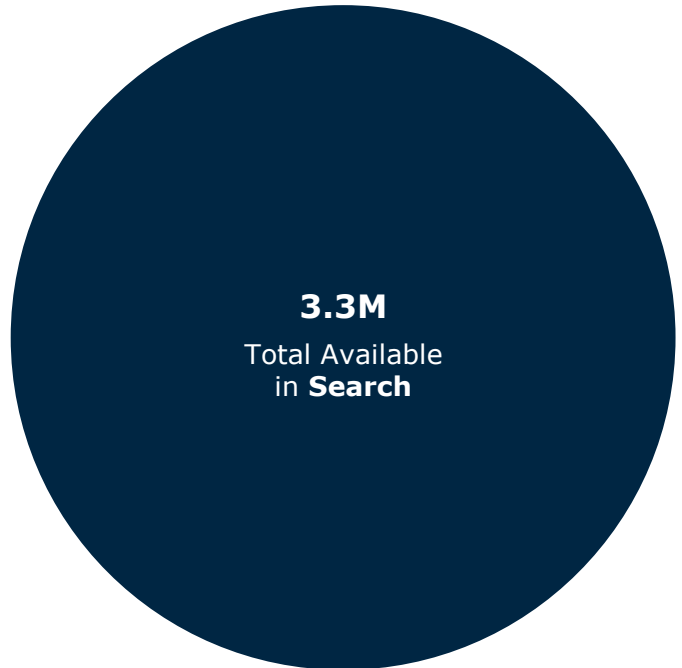
**Over 1.7M Students** Have Opted In

Students Are Engaging in the BigFuture App

# Let's Look at the Bigger Picture



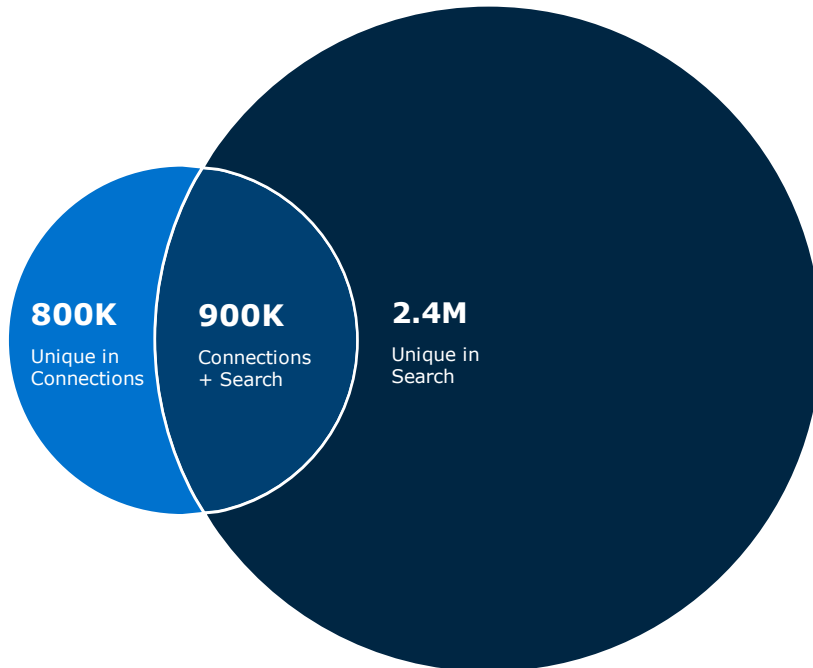
Total Current Availability for EC25, EC26, and EC27



# Total Student Availability Has Actually Increased



But You Need to Understand How to Effectively Access Each Group



# Student Outreach Opportunities Have Increased

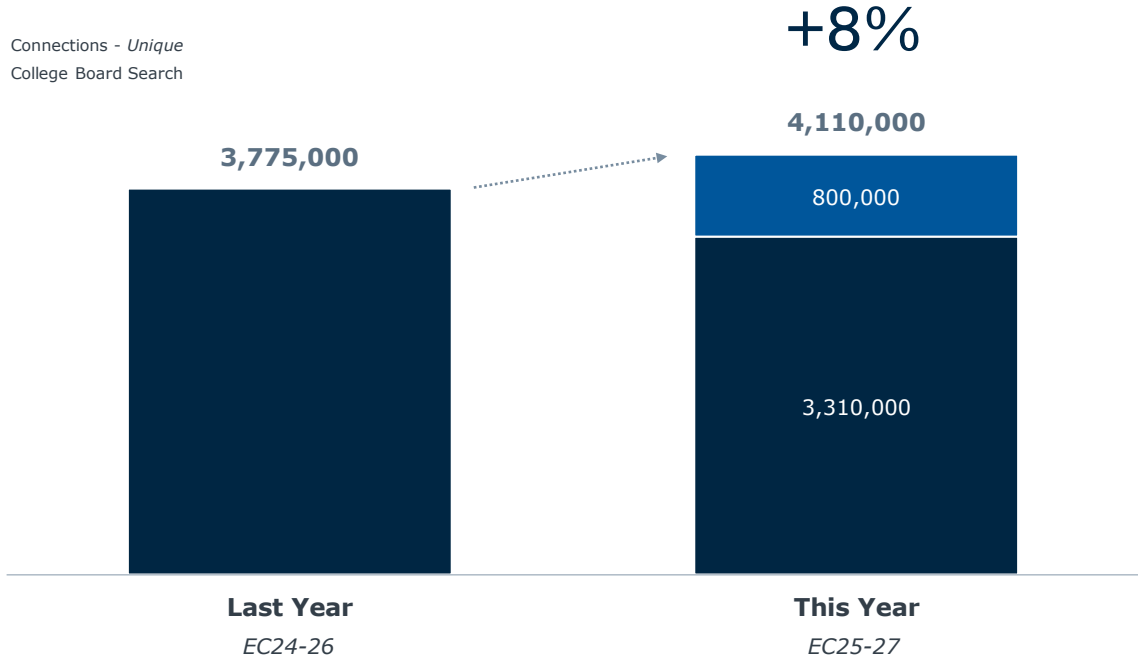


Total Student Availability Is Up Year Over Year

## Total Student Availability YTD<sup>1</sup>

9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Graders

- Connections - *Unique*
- College Board Search



1) As of April 15, 2024

## Misconceptions

NO students will be available  
in College Board Search ❌

Connections is replacing  
College Board Search ❌

School day testers can NOT opt  
into College Board Search ❌

Students are NOT using the BigFuture  
App/engaging with institutions ❌

## The Facts

✓ There are currently over 6M students  
available through Search

✓ Connections serves as a companion  
tool alongside College Board Search

✓ School day testing students can still  
opt into College Board Search

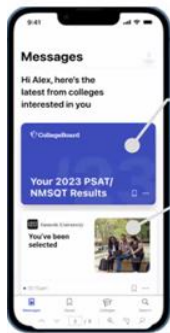
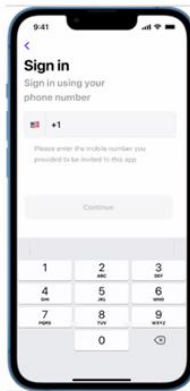
✓ Over 1.7M students have  
downloaded the BigFuture app



# The Student Experience



**MESSAGES**  
(646) 555-6698  
College Board here, Alex—you did it! Congrats for taking the PSAT/NMSQT today! Be ready for score release by downloading the College Board app...



Scores alert

Message card



Message detail view

Profile view



# The Enrollment Team Experience



## Profile

Provide key information about your institution.

[Manage Profile](#)



## Audiences

Select and save student audiences.

[Manage Audiences](#)



## Communication Plans

Manage communication plans and messages.

[Manage Comm Plans](#)



## Analytics

View results from your outreach.

[View Results](#)

# A Closer Look at Audiences



Choosing Audiences Is the Foundation of Your Connections Strategy

## 1 Grad Class



**Entering Class  
2025**

- Initial year: EC25 and EC26/27 combined



## 1 Territory



**Pacific  
Northwest**

- 29 different recruitment territories
- Domestic only
- Based on old EPS markets (300 total)



## 1 Score Band



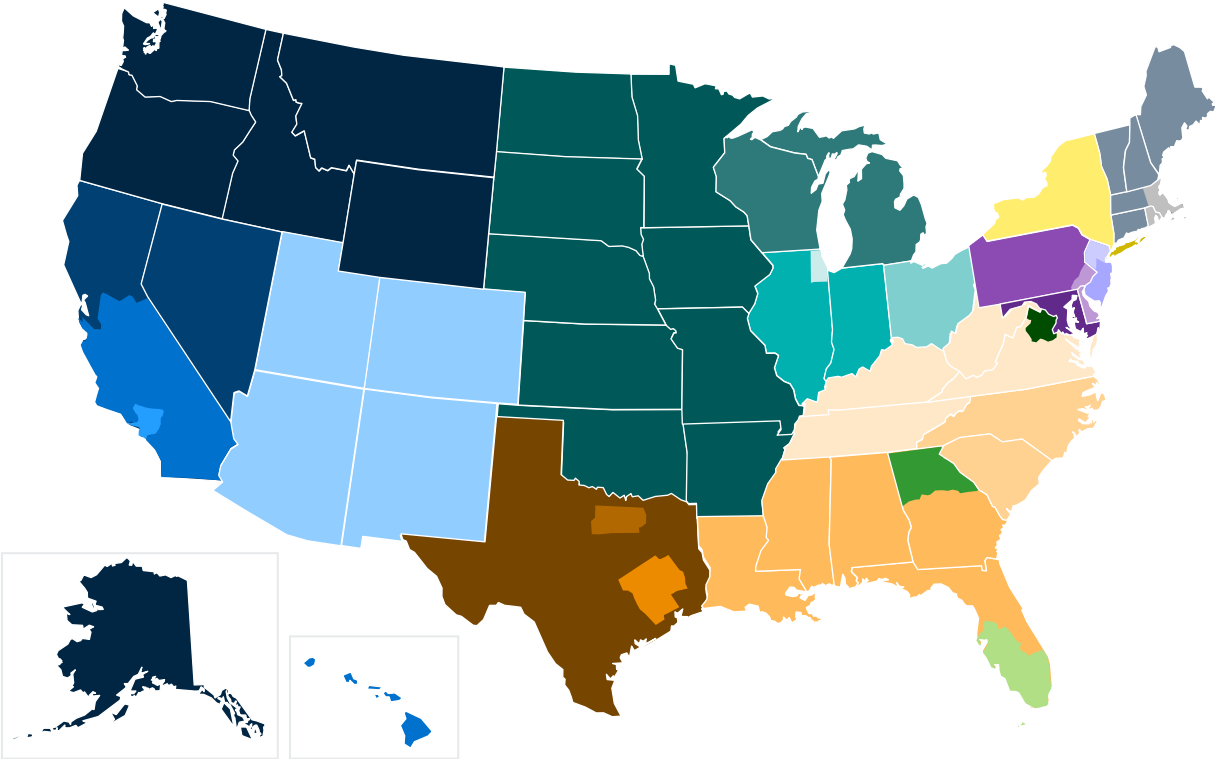
**1100 – 1210  
SAT**

- SAT score bands<sup>1</sup>
  - 900 or Lower
  - 910-1090
  - 1100-1210
  - 1220-1350
  - 1360 or Higher

Note: Once you create your audiences, they are “locked” for the year and will reset Sept 1.

1) PSAT scores get converted to SAT

# College Board Connections: Audience Territories





# Communication Plans and Messages

## You Have Many Ways to Segment Communication

### Select fields for filtering your Communication Plans

- GPA
- Grad Class
- Score Minimum
- ZIP
- Race/Ethnicity
- Major
- Gender
- High-Challenge Environment

### Communication Plan maximums during each subscription cycle

Up to  
**12**  
Communication Plans

Up to  
**12**  
Messages per plan

Note: Students can live in only one Communication Plan, so sequence matters when setting them up.

- 1 Connections 101
- 2 **Our Work with EAB Partners and Observations**
- 3 Key Considerations for the Months Ahead

# Providing Strategy Insights to Our Partners

We Have Defined and Created Over 11K Audiences

#	Territory	States	Class of 2025 (Juniors)					Classes of 2026/27 (Sophomore/Freshmen)					Entire Row	
			Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5		
			<910	910-1090	1100-1210	1220-1350	1360+	<910	910-1090	1100-1210	1220-1350	1360+		
1	NE, NH, VT, CT, and MA (excluding Boston)	ME, NH, VT, CT, MA				X	X			X	X	X	X	
2	RI and Greater Boston	MA, RI				X	X			X	X	X	X	
6	NJ (North)	NJ			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
7	NJ (South)	NJ			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
8	DE and Greater Philadelphia	PA, DE				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
9	PA (excluding Philadelphia)	PA			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
10	MD	MD			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
11	DC and Northern VA	VA, DC												
12	KY, TN, WV, and VA (excluding Northern VA)	KY, TN, WV, VA												
13	NC and SC	NC, SC			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
14	North GA (including Atlanta)	GA				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
15	LA, MS, AL, GA (South), FL (North)	LA, MS, AL, GA, FL		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
16	Southern FL	FL		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
17	OH	OH							X	X	X	X	X	
18	MI and WI	MI, WI												
19	Greater Chicago	IL			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
20	IL and IN (excluding Chicago)	IL, IN												
21	ND, SD, MN, IA, NE, KS, MO, AR, and OK	ND, SD, MN, IA, NE, KS, MO, AR, OK												
22	TX (excluding Dallas-Ft. Worth and Houston)	TX												
23	Greater Dallas-Ft. Worth	TX			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
24	Greater Houston	TX			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
25	AZ, NM, CO, UT	AZ, NM, CO, UT												
26	MI and Southern CA (excluding Los Angeles)	CA, HI												
27	Greater Los Angeles	CA			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
28	NV and Northern CA	CA, NV												
29	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, and AK	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, AK												



### Strategy Outline For Audiences

- Territories** - selected based on Cultivate Markets
- Grade Levels** - selected all grade levels available (may depend on territory)
- Score Bands** - selected based on purchase history across grade levels

Audiences	#
Audiences Available	120
Audiences Recommended	109
Audiences Remaining	11

Criteria	Selections
Territories	15
Classes	EC25 EC26/27
Score Bands	Select: 910+ Others: 1100+

### Proposed Audience Territories

### Top Territories for Connections:

1. Chicago
2. Midwest (ND, SD, MN, IA, NE, KS, MO, AR, OK)
3. Northern NJ
4. Philadelphia/DE
5. New England (Excluding Boston)

# Early Awareness Stats from EAB Partners



## Aggregate Engagement Across All EAB-Run Connections Launches<sup>1</sup>

80K<sup>+</sup>

Message Saves

“Across all messages sent by your org, count that have saved by students. **Each student can save a unique message once.**”

47K<sup>+</sup>

College Saves

“Count of times your org has been saved by students. **Each student can save an org once.**”

435K<sup>+</sup>

Profile Views

“Count of unique users who have viewed your profile. **Students can view your profile unlimited times.**”

- 55% of Profile Views were from 10th Graders (EC26)
- 16% of Profile Views were from 9th Graders (EC27)

1) N=200 EAB partners



## Current Observations



- Yes, students are in the app! Yes, some continue to use the app after score release!
- Schools with bigger brand and audiences tend to have higher engagement
- 10<sup>th</sup> graders (EC26) are engaging at higher rates than 11<sup>th</sup> graders (EC25)
- Increased activity observed when new messages go live
- Students are most engaged when they first become available (which is true for both Search and Connections)

## Current Testing



- We are now testing:
  - Longer Communication Plans
  - A variety of communication cadences
  - New copy and creative

# Common Mistakes to Avoid

You Need to Understand the Nuances of Timing and Execution

## Audience Audit

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- ✗ Not submitting your Audiences
- ✗ Overlooking high-impact states

## Filtering

---

- ✗ Over-exuberance in using segmenting
- ✗ Not using filters for key messages



## Comm Plans

---

- ✗ Not publishing your Comm Plan(s)
- ✗ Letting Comm Plan(s) expire

## General

---

- ✗ Not ensuring RFI link goes to active page
- ✗ Not understanding the event-based nature of Connections

- 1 Connections 101
- 2 Our Work With EAB Partners + Observations
- 3 **Key Considerations for the Months Ahead**

# Where Do You Stand? Where Do You Need to Be?



## Ahead of the Pack



### Audiences

Appropriate coverage across **all relevant territories** that match your markets and goals.



### Comm Plans

- Multiple Comm Plans created and published
- 6+ messages set to send with major test dates through end of year
- Segmentation created for important student groups and special messaging



## Keeping Pace



### Audiences

Appropriate coverage across **most relevant territories** that match your markets and goals.



### Comm Plans

- Multiple Comm Plans created and published
- 3-4 messages set to send with major test dates
- Little to no segmentation for important student groups



## Not in the Race



### Audiences

Appropriate coverage across **one or no territories** that match your markets and goals.



### Comm Plans

- Comm Plans created, but NOT published
- Messages set to expire before major test dates
- No messages ready for spring test dates



# Questions to Consider

Answering These Will Help You Determine the Best Path Forward

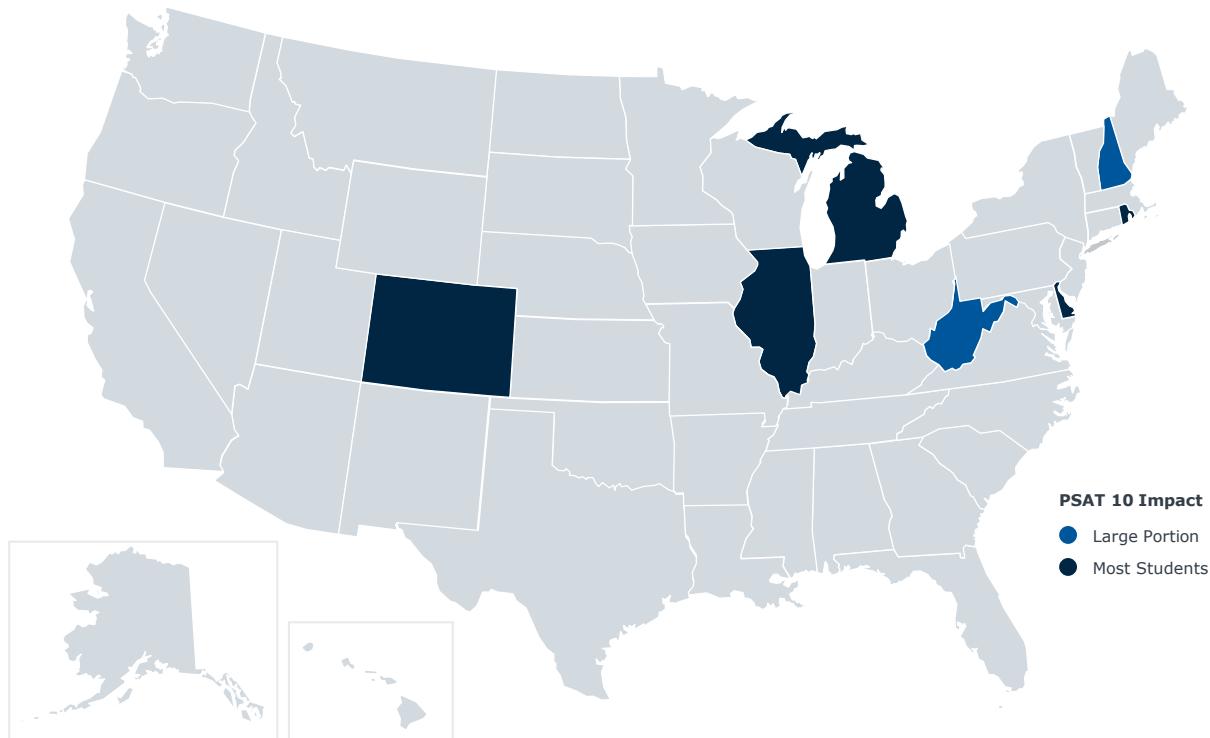
**How deeply were your markets affected by changes in Search availability?** Are you now looking to fill gaps? Or is this an opportunity to grow your audience?

**It it likely that your competitors are using the Connections platform?** If so, can you afford not to have a presence there? If not, is this an opportunity to get ahead of competitors?

**Have you been struggling to convert students down funnel?** Would it be beneficial to engage students as soon as they become available as a freshman or sophomore?

# Can You Take Advantage of Geographic ‘Hot Spots’?

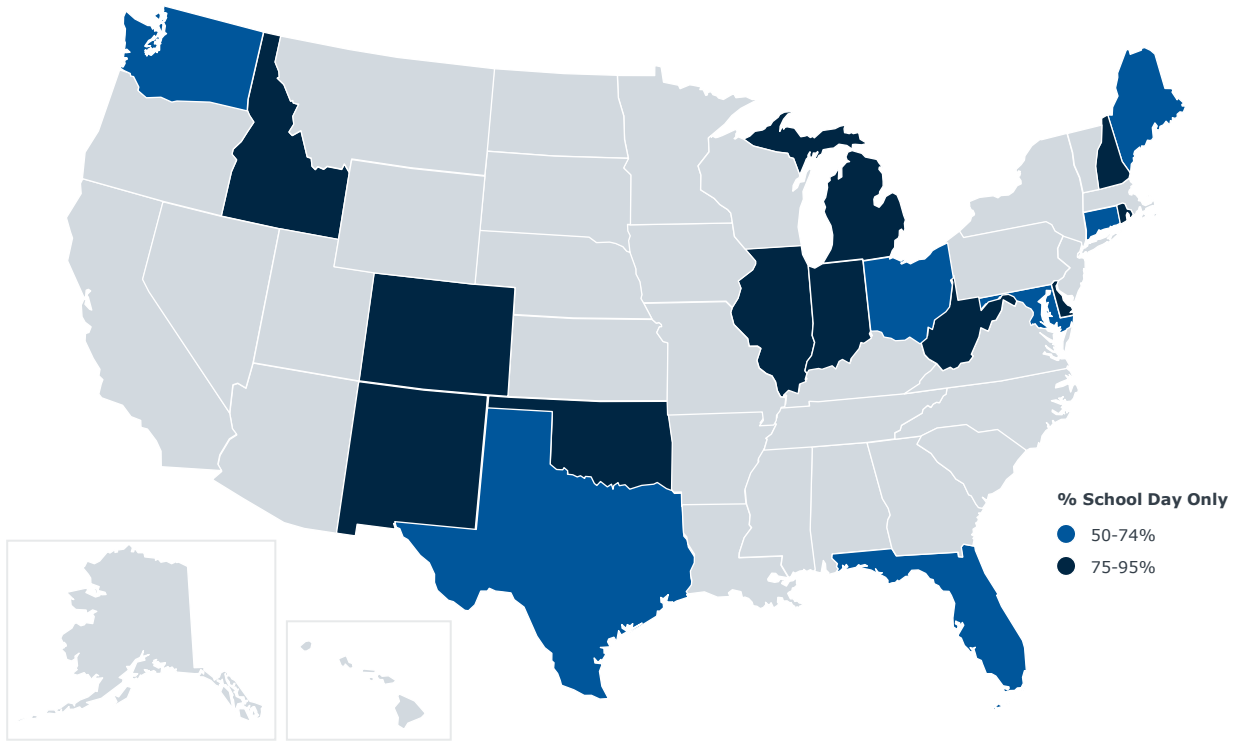
PSAT10 Spring Testing Impact States (April and May 2024)





# Can You Take Advantage of Geographic ‘Hot Spots’?

## SAT School Day Spring Testing Impact States (April and May 2024)



# Do You Have the Right People and Systems In Place?

## Leaning Into Connections Means Accounting for Various Responsibilities



### **Geography**

Understand your defined markets and what you are trying to accomplish with Connections



### **Demographics**

Understand who you are trying to reach and how the different filtering options may affect each Audience



### **Creative**

Understand what you need to communicate and what works well in the app to garner student engagement (compelling copy and images)



### **Technical Support**

Understand the College Board Search platform and the mechanics of Comm Plans/Messages, RFI forms, and returning leads to College Board



### **Analytics**

Monitor and analyze student engagement, report on trends relating to inquiries, and make recommendations for future Connections strategy



# Future Enhancements Coming Soon!

1 Seniors added to Connections (New cohort split will be 2025/2026 & 2027/2028) *Available Starting Sept 1*

---

2 Deeper analytics, including Message Opens & Clicks

---

3 Copy function for Communication Plans

---

4 Connections Print

# A Closer Look at Print



## The Basics

### What is Connections "Print"?



- Variety of printed products to mail to students

### When will it become available?



- Fall 2024 (TBD on exact date)

### How much will it cost?



- Pricing will vary by product, type and quantity
- Initial estimates provided by College Board

### Mailing Populations & Volumes



- Select unique student criteria
- Estimated volumes to be provided (rounded up to the nearest 500)
- Define max & min volumes

### What products will be available?



- 6 x 9 Flat Mailer
- 6 x 11 Flat Mailer
- 6 x 9 Bifold
- 8½ x 11 Letter with #10 Window Envelope

Note: All print names will be deduplicated from Search names.

Assess your larger audience strategy to determine the role that Connection should play.

---

It's not too late to late to join the Connections party! Don't miss out on this large group of engaged students.

---

Start small and learn as you go. The platform is changing and evolving by the day.

---

Provide feedback to College Board. They want to hear about your experience.

---

Take advantage of every resource at your disposal.

College Board  
Support Team

Connections  
Online Toolkit

EAB Audience  
Team

# Before We Close, Two Quick Poll Questions

**1**

**Please let us know the topics you would like to speak further about**

---

**2**

**Please rate the overall value of this session**

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