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Pickens students excel at SAT

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Pickens County seniors topped the national average on the SAT by 32 points, while the state's public schools as a whole slipped six points and the national average fell two points, according to test results released Tuesday.

South Carolina's public school average on the 2400-point test was 1445, while Pickens' average was 1525.

The national average was 1493.

"We are extremely proud of our high school students' performance on the SAT," said Barbara Turner, Pickens' assistant superintendent of instructional services.

The number of students earning college credit through the Advanced Placement program statewide rose by 11.4 percent, to 14,970, according to the state Department of Education.

State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex was at a loss to explain the contradictory trends.

"This reinforces that we have some wonderful schools in South Carolina that are helping all of their students ... but we still have schools that are dragging down our overall scores," Rex said in a conference call with reporters.

Pickens County ranked third among the state's 86 schools districts, with 45 percent of its seniors taking the test.