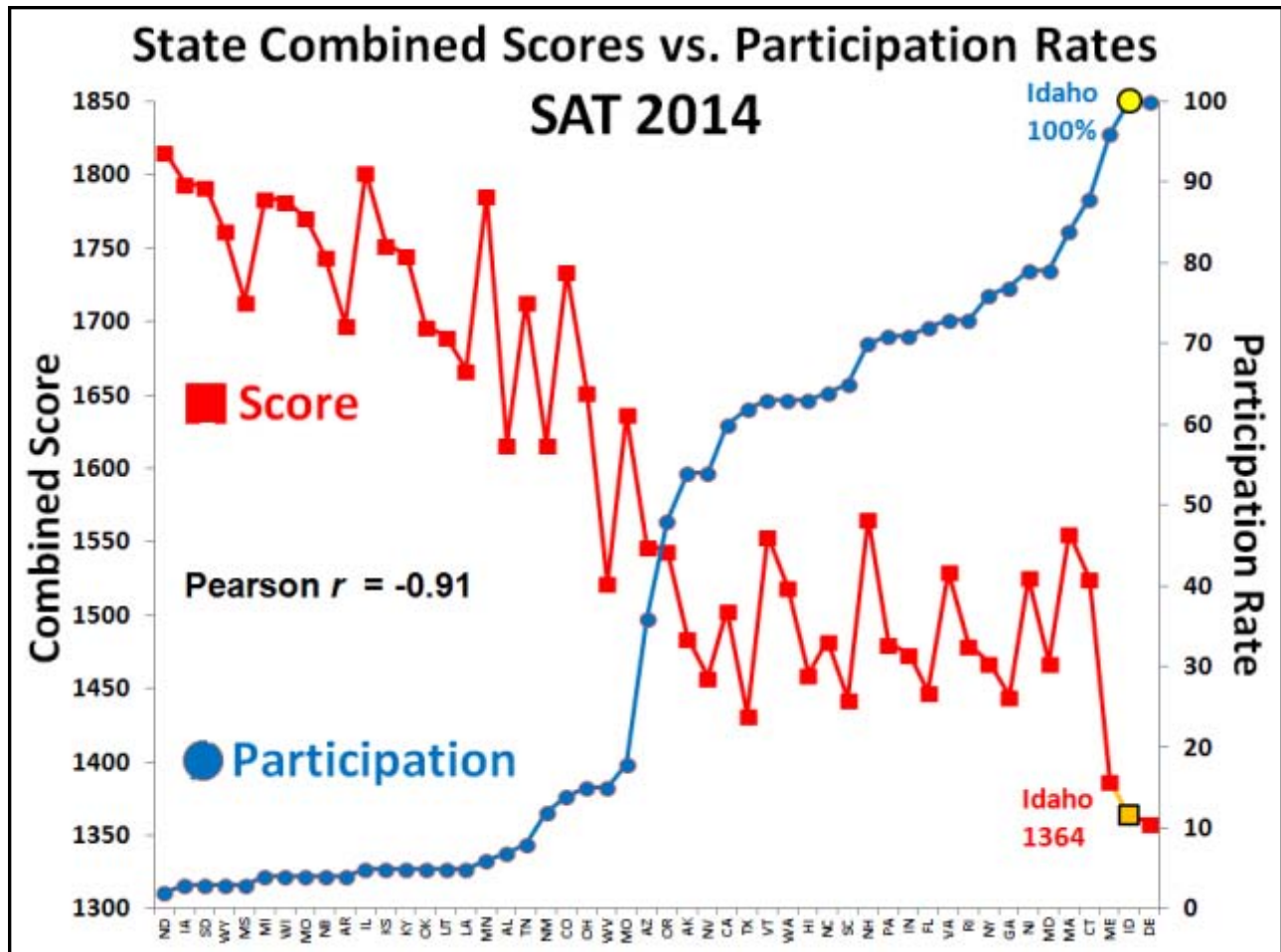




SAT 2014 Scores Are Statistically Unsuited For Cross-State Comparisons



The College Board reported that on SAT 2014, Idaho had a combined score of 1364 and a participation rate of 100 percent.

The Pearson correlation between the state combined scores and state participation rates was $r = -0.91$. This illustrated the general rule of thumb for national tests like SAT that the higher a state’s participation rate the lower the state’s combined score. On SAT 2014, the states with lower participation rates generally had higher combined score. States with higher participation rates generally had lower combined scores.

An individual student’s SAT score really has meaning only for college officials who weigh SAT scores and other student information while processing applications for admission.

Idaho’s combined score of 1364 has no value for making cross-state comparisons. In 2014, Idaho’s 1364 was 49th among the 50 states. A terrible showing? There is no way to tell. In Idaho, all students were required to take the SAT; in all but two states only college bound students elected (i.e., self-selected) to take the SAT.

When all students or a statistically representative sample are tested, Massachusetts (MA) typically ranks at or near the top. On SAT 2014, MA with a combined score of 1556 and a participation rate of 84 percent placed 25th among the states. A “poor performance!” Not by MA’s students, however, but by those who insist on using SAT scores for making cross-state comparisons, which comparisons are statistically inappropriate.