Using EPS to Build Data-Informed Travel Plans

Enrollment Planning Service™, a data and analysis tool powered by SAT score send patterns and advanced psychographics, helps enrollment managers understand the student market, efficiently allocate resources, and design more strategic recruitment activities.

Travel in the Primary Market

First, analyze where your competitors get their score sends.

EPS Summary Reports, accessible in the Higher Education Reporting Tool, provide information about your top geomarkets and those of your top competitors.

1. Look at the Summary Report, “Top Competitors in Top Geomarkets.” This will show where you rank in each of your top geomarkets compared to your closest competitors. Year-over-year data show who’s gaining and shrinking in each geomarket.

2. Evaluate this report to find the relevant competitors who are getting more score sends or are growing faster than you. Pay close attention to those who are like you in size, mission, price, and/or selectivity.

Run a list of high schools by your score sends and competitor score sends.

Once you’ve noted these competitors, go to the Competitive Analysis tab in College Board Search.

1. Start a new analysis, then click on “Create a custom list of up to 12 competitors.”

2. Add your selected competitors then choose student attributes, limiting to only essential criteria that describe your primary market, (i.e., geography).

3. Finally, customize results, selecting “High school name” from the first dropdown. Create your report.

Your output is a list of schools in your primary market showing how many students sent scores to you and each of your selected competitors. Click a school’s AI code to learn more about it. Use this list to allocate resources to protect and grow your market share relative to your closest competitors.

This type of data shows you where to spend additional dollars in advertising presence, communication, and more.

Travel in Developing Markets

When you ask your staff to spend resources recruiting in places where your brand is less known (or even unknown), EPS focuses your team on the highest-value schools and communities.

If you’re looking for data to direct you to the right new markets to develop, Summary Report data again is helpful.

1. From the Higher Education Reporting Tool, look at the Summary Report “Largest Geomarkets of Your Top Competitors.” This shows the geomarkets where your closest competitors are succeeding most.

2. Compare their score send volume to your own. Note competitor geomarkets that appear shaded. These aren’t ranked in your top 10 and may be opportunities for expansion.
3. Run a custom competitor report for these geomarkets to see exactly which high schools account for the success.

If you have specific new markets in mind, but need to know where to concentrate your time, make use of a custom Competitive Analysis report.

1. Open a new custom Competitive Analysis report based on institutional attributes to find similar institutions getting score sends in markets that are valuable but less familiar to you.
2. Set attributes to find similar institutions based on college type, admission rate, control, setting, gender, price, and institution size.
3. Run the report by high school to identify where a similar value proposition to your own is already resonating.

Finally, use the Plan Travel tab to find schools with high counts of students likely to respond to your messaging. Use filters such as major, test score, or Segment Analysis Cluster.

When your own internal data isn’t robust enough in new markets to where you’re likely to find right-fit students, these tactics in EPS allow you to make a data-informed argument for where to focus your resources.

Additional Market Research Tools

The Summary Reports tab provides access to comprehensive external data to inform your travel strategies.

In the Summary tab, use “High School Projections” to understand if the three-year forecast of public high school graduates in your territory is increasing, decreasing, or remaining flat.

Admission leadership can use this information to understand which geomarkets are becoming more competitive. Use shrinking geomarkets in your primary market as the basis for custom Competitive Analyses within EPS. Look for growing geomarkets to analyze as potential new markets.

Taking EPS Data to the Next Level

Combine EPS with Segment Analysis Service™ and Student Search Service®. The power of College Board Search is truly realized when you combine its three tools.

Segment Analysis Service (SAS) is an educationally relevant geodemography tool that helps you understand your student population and their college decisions. It uses College Board, US census, American Community Survey (ACS), and high school/college data to describe students’ college decisions based on where they live and where they go to high school.

As an SAS Subscriber, you’ll upload three years of historic data. Each student will be placed into one educational neighborhood and one high school cluster. Then, we’ll look at your data together to help you determine trends, opportunities, and inefficiencies from the suspect (search) stage through to enrollment.

Once you have geodemographic data on your student population, leverage it for better, targeted travel.

1. After defining your highest priority Educational Neighborhood and High School clusters, include them as criteria in your custom EPS reports. Now your reports will show only high schools that enroll these segments of targeted students.
2. Carry your geographic and SAS cluster selections into Student Search Service, to license the names of students who meet these same criteria.
3. Send targeted messages to these students to build affinity before you arrive at their schools.

As you double down on your primary market and develop unfamiliar new markets, this data-informed method concentrates your resources in the right places for maximum impact.

Request a consultation at cbsearch.collegeboard.org, collegeboardsearch@collegeboard.org or 866-499-5357.