

Part VI:

Gender Issues

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★ Highlights

- ★ *Despite gains by women, in 2002–03, men held significantly greater percentages of leadership positions — superintendents, principals, and assistant principals (except in elementary schools).*
- ★ *Examination of differences in performance between males and females on the elementary- and middle-level English language arts (ELA) assessments shows substantial differences in favor of females.*
- ★ *When comparing the percentage of tested students scoring 55 or higher and 65 or higher on Regents examinations, the performance of males and females was similar on the Regents examinations in global history and geography, U.S. history and government, and foreign languages. Males performed slightly better than females on the living environment and mathematics A examinations.*
- ★ *Female graduates were more likely than males to earn Regents-endorsed diplomas, but males earned higher average SAT scores.*

1 Introduction

In the 1993 policy statement, “Equity of Women in the 1990’s,” the Board of Regents reaffirmed the following principles:

- ✦ The Regents are committed to gender equity. We must change the way we think and act in order to achieve an educational system where leadership is gender-balanced and where schools are beacons of gender equity for a diverse society.
- ✦ Individuals will be valued and rewarded because of their competence, expertise, knowledge, motivation, and personal qualities and not because of their gender.
- ✦ In education and employment opportunities, there should be no difference between the sexes, and all practices which interfere with equal opportunities for men and women must be eliminated.
- ✦ There should be statewide compliance with State and Federal Civil Rights and Equal Employment Laws and the affirmative action policies of the Federal Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.
- ✦ Based on the premise that there are as many qualified women as men, the goal is to achieve more evenly balanced representation of women and men at all levels of administration in all educational and cultural institutions and the career work sites of our State.

2 Gender Composition of School Professional Staff

Providing both male and female role models is an important objective in ensuring that young adults are aware of all available career opportunities. Table 6.1 shows the percentages of women administrators in selected district administrative fields, beginning in 1970–71. While women have made gains in the past 33 years, they continue to be underrepresented in the highest levels of administration. Between 1970–71 and 2002–03, the percentage of female school superintendents in independent districts increased from 0.4 to 19.2 percent and in dependent districts from 1.8 to 22.7 percent. The percentage of female deputy, associate, and assistant superintendents and the percentage of female school business managers have nearly quadrupled in this time period.

The percentages of female principals, assistant principals, and classroom teachers have also increased in the past 28 years (Figure 6.1). The increase in female principals and assistant principals has been particularly significant. In 2002–03, however, women continued to be better represented among principals and assistant principals of elementary than secondary schools. Even so, in elementary schools the percentage of women in leadership positions was significantly smaller than their representation among classroom teachers. To have equivalent representation of women in teaching and leadership positions, elementary schools must considerably increase, and secondary schools must more than double, the number of female principals. Conversely, another goal is to increase the number of male teachers in elementary schools. The percentage of male teachers in elementary schools has declined since 1980–81. Male role models are important to all children, but particularly those from female-headed, single-parent families.

TABLE 6.1
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS IN SELECTED PROFESSIONAL FIELDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Figure 6.1
Percentage of Women Principals, Assistant Principals, and Classroom Teachers in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools 1980–81 to 2002–03

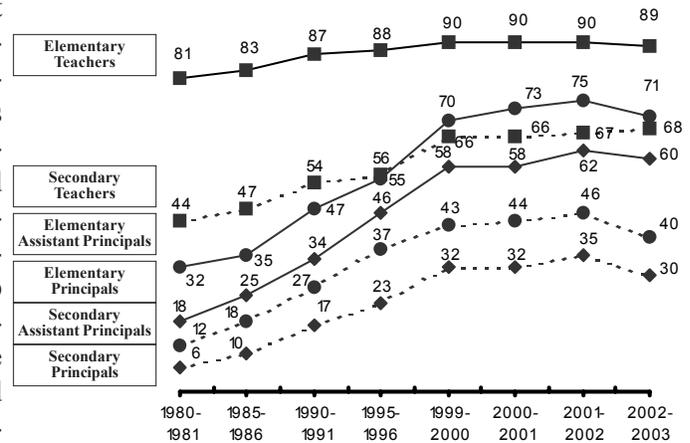


Table 6.1
Percentage of Women Administrators in
Selected Professional Fields in Public Schools
New York State
1970–71 to 2002–03

Professional Field	1970–1971	1975–1976	1980–1981	1985–1986	1990–1991	1995–1996	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003*
Superintendent Independent	0.4%	1.8%	1.8%	4.8%	6.2%	12.8%	20.3%	21.8%	19.2%
Superintendent Dependent	1.8	0.6	3.4	4.9	8.9	14.4	19.9	19.7	22.7
Deputy/Associate/ Assistant Superintendent	11.9	9.1	10.3	14.6	23.9	32.2	45.4	47.6	46.5
Business Manager	10.3	10.6	14.1	19.6	24.8	29.3	31.9	39.0	41.2
Director/Coordinator	31.6	28.5	35.2	39.0	46.1	51.7	56.5	56.4	55.0
Assistant Director/ Coordinator	50.7	37.6	43.9	44.4	58.0	60.4	69.7	64.7	74.4
Supervisor	52.0	42.1	40.2	45.7	52.3	58.4	65.1	64.5	61.0

*Data for 2002–03 do not include New York City.

3 Performance Trends

This section examines differences in performance between males and females on the English language arts tests in the New York State Assessment Program (NYSAP) and on Regents examinations. Information about these assessment programs can be found in *Part I: Overview*.

New York State Assessment Program

Examination of differences in performance between males and females on the elementary- and middle-level English language arts (ELA) assessments shows substantial differences in favor of females (Table 6.2). Statewide, considering the percentages of students scoring at or above Level 2 (partial proficiency in the standards), the difference at the elementary level was 2.6 percentage points; the difference at the middle level was 5.1 percentage points. Considering the percentages of students scoring at Level 3 or above (proficiency in the standards), the differences between males and females were greater: 6.7 percentage points on the elementary-level assessment and 10.4 percentage points on the middle-level assessment.

TABLE 6.2

**NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TESTED AND PERCENT SCORING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 2 AND AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 3 ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) ASSESSMENT BY GENDER
NEW YORK STATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

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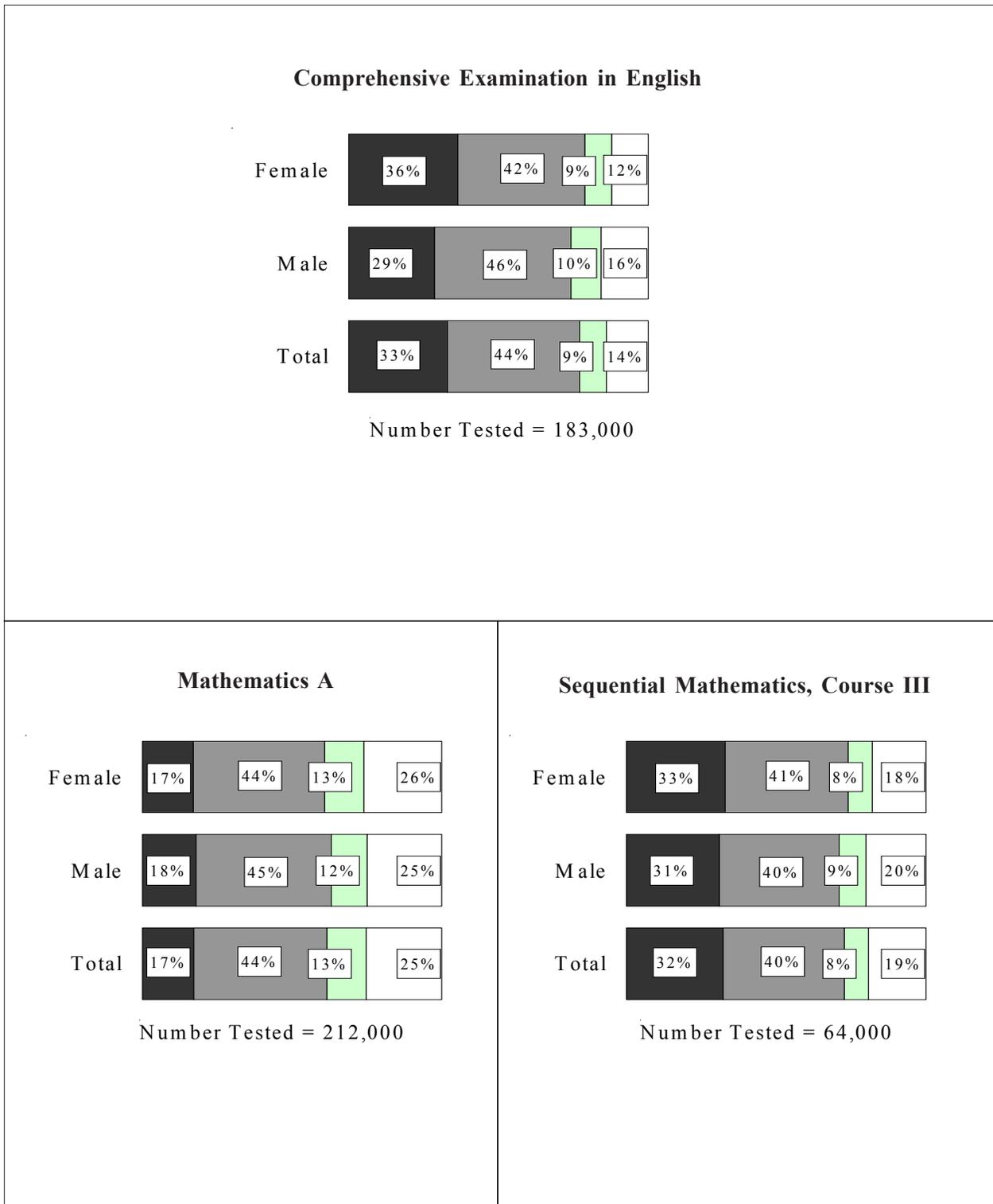
Regents Examinations

Figure 6.2 presents statistics for males and females on selected Regents examinations administered in 2002–03. For each examination, the following data are presented in stacked bar charts: the percentage of tested students scoring 85 to 100; the percentage of tested students scoring 65 to 84; the percentage of tested students scoring 55 to 64; and the percentage of tested students scoring below 55. (See the description of high school graduation requirements in *Part I: Overview*.)

Statewide, tested females were more likely than males (87 percent compared with 85 percent) to score 55 or higher on the Regents English examination, the first examination required under the new graduation requirements. The percentage of tested females passing the Regents English examination with an 85 or better exceeded the male percentage by seven points (Figure 6.2).

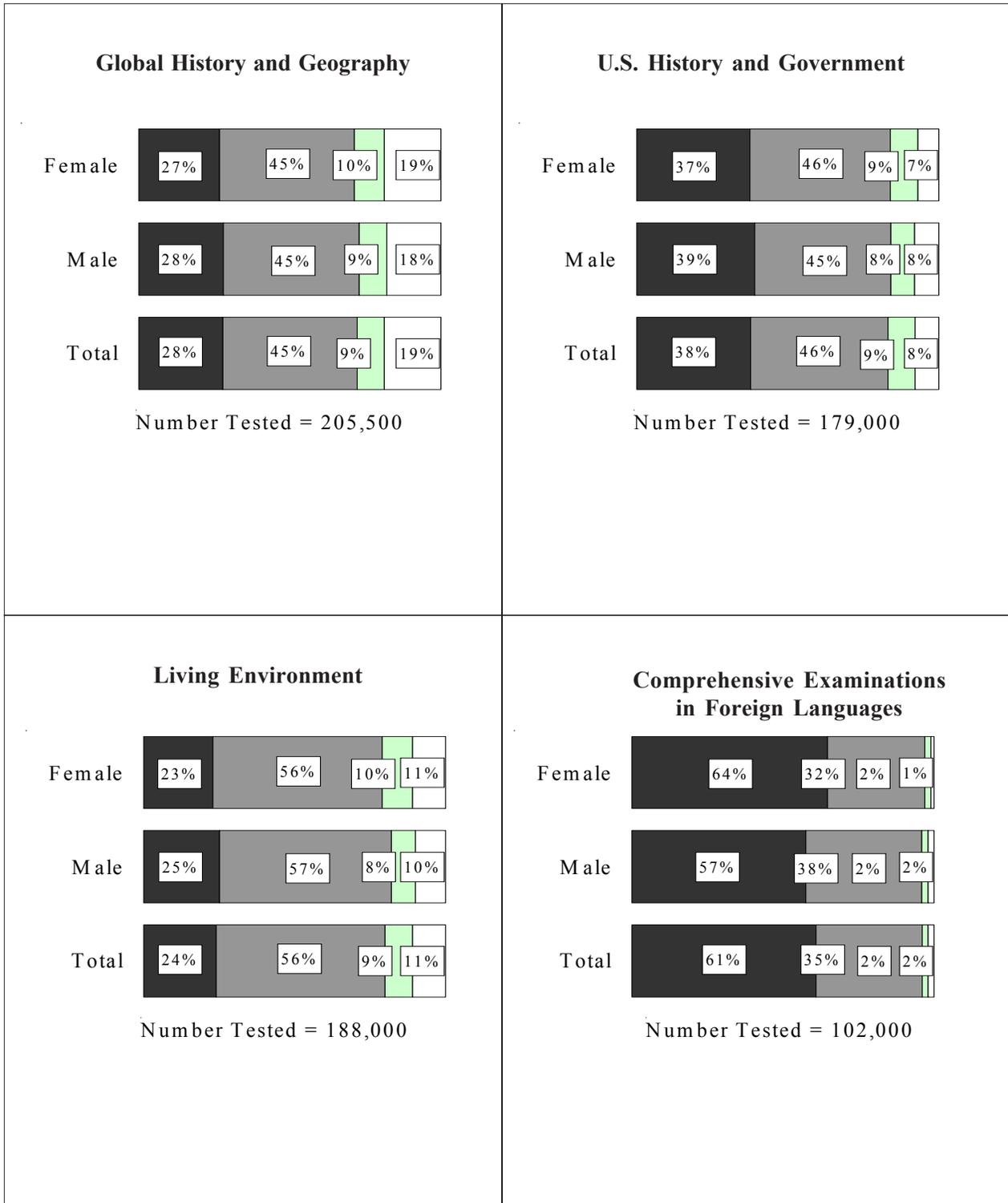
When comparing the percentage of tested students scoring 55 or higher and 65 or higher, the performance of males and females was similar on the Regents examinations in global history and geography, U.S. history and government, and foreign languages. Males performed slightly better than females on the living environment examination (82 percent of males compared with 79 percent of females scored 65 or higher) and the mathematics A examination (63 percent of males compared with 61 percent of females).

Figure 6.2
Public School Performance as a Percentage of Students Tested by Gender
Regents Examinations
August 2002, January 2003, and June 2003



■ Percent Scoring 85-100	■ Percent Scoring 65-84
■ Percent Scoring 55-64	□ Percent Scoring Below 55

Figure 6.2 (continued)
Public School Performance as a Percentage of Students Tested by Gender
Regents Examinations
August 2002, January 2003, and June 2003



Percent Scoring 85-100
 Percent Scoring 65-84
 Percent Scoring 55-64
 Percent Scoring Below 55

These results were significantly affected by the number of male and female students taking these examinations. More females than males took each of the examinations (Table 6.3). Generally, the smaller the percentage of a student group tested, the more likely that students tested will represent the highest performing students. For example, 79 percent of tested females statewide, compared with 82 percent of males, scored 65–100 on the Regents living environment examination. To put these percentages in perspective, consider that 97,133 females, as compared with 90,927 males, were tested. Therefore, about 2,175 more female than male students met this standard despite the smaller percentage of female students scoring 65–100 (Table 6.3).

TABLE 6.3

**NUMBERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
TOTAL STATE STUDENTS TESTED ON
SELECTED REGENTS EXAMINATIONS
BY GENDER**

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Table 6.2
Number of Public School Students Tested and Percent Scoring at or Above Level 2
and at or Above Level 3 on the English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment by Gender
New York State Assessment Program
2003

Sector/Location and Gender	Elementary-Level ELA			Middle-Level ELA		
	Number Tested	Percent at or above Level 2	Percent at or above Level 3	Number Tested	Percent at or above Level 2	Percent at or above Level 3
Public						
New York City						
Male	38,517	88.8%	48.4%	36,553	81.0%	27.1%
Female	36,996	93.3	56.5	35,422	89.1	37.7
Large City Districts						
Male	4,709	86.0	41.0	4,576	75.5	18.6
Female	4,402	90.7	48.8	4,247	84.7	26.4
Districts Excluding the Big 5						
Male	64,119	95.7	70.4	67,510	92.5	48.8
Female	60,130	97.3	76.2	63,916	96.1	59.0
Total Public*						
Male	107,867	92.7	61.1	108,872	87.9	40.2
Female	102,038	95.5	67.7	103,834	93.3	50.4
Total State						
Male	120,944	93.2	61.7	119,290	88.6	41.1
Female	116,426	95.8	68.4	115,899	93.7	51.5

*Total Public includes data for charter schools, which are not included in the N/RC categories.

Table 6.3
Numbers of Public Schools and Total State Students
Tested on Selected Regents Examinations by Gender
2002–03

Subject	Public School		Total State	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Comprehensive Examination in English	89,803	93,282	99,871	104,701
Comprehensive Examination in Foreign Languages	44,060	57,829	51,568	68,441
Mathematics A	102,256	109,631	114,101	123,186
Sequential Mathematics, Course III	30,476	33,740	36,794	42,159
Living Environment	90,927	97,133	101,135	109,633
Global History and Geography	100,737	104,813	111,449	117,446
U.S. History and Government	86,960	92,125	96,503	103,652

4 Other Performance Measures

Diplomas Awarded

Fifty-one percent of public high school completers in 2002–03 were female (Table 6.4). Most of the gender disparity was accounted for by the Big 5 cities, where 54 percent of completers were female; outside the Big 5, slightly more than 50 percent of completers were female.

TABLE 6.4

CREDENTIALS EARNED
BY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
COMPLETERS BY GENDER

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More females earned Regents diplomas. In public schools statewide, 56.3 percent of females and 52.3 percent of male graduates earned Regents diplomas (with or without honors). A larger percentage of females than males earned honors recognition. Concomitantly, higher percentages of males than females were awarded local certificates and IEP diplomas.

Scholastic Assessment Test I

In the class of 2003, more females than males took the SAT I: 54 percent of those tested were female. Males scored 43 points higher on the combined tests than females (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). Approximately 77 percent of the difference in the combined scores (33 points) was accounted for by the difference in scores for the mathematics component. The pattern of gender differences in class of 2003 SAT scores is consistent with the patterns seen in prior years; males scored slightly higher on the verbal test and substantially higher on the mathematics test.

Between 1995 and 2003, the mean verbal score of males increased from 497 to 502, while the mean score of females decreased by one point to 492. Both males and females improved their performance on the mathematics test: males by 13 points; females by 12 points.

The lower SAT performance of females may be partially accounted for by differences between the male and female populations of test-takers. Women from families of lower socioeconomic status as indicated by income and parental education are more likely than men from similar families to take the SAT. In New York State's 2003 senior class, 67 percent of test-takers reporting that their families were in the lowest income bracket (under \$10,000) were female. In contrast, only 49 percent of test-takers reporting the highest family income bracket (\$100,000 or more) were female. In addition, of those test-takers who reported that their parents had not earned a high school diploma, 63 percent were female. Since SAT performance correlates highly with parental income and education, the fact that more female test-takers reported coming from families with low incomes and less education may explain some of the gap in mean performance between males and females. The greater number of female test-takers from lower-income, less-educated families does not explain, however, the small number of female test-takers (2,855) relative to male test-takers (5,035) who earned scores above 700 on the mathematics section.

Figure 6.3
Mean Verbal SAT I Scores by Gender
New York State
Senior Classes of 1995 to 2003

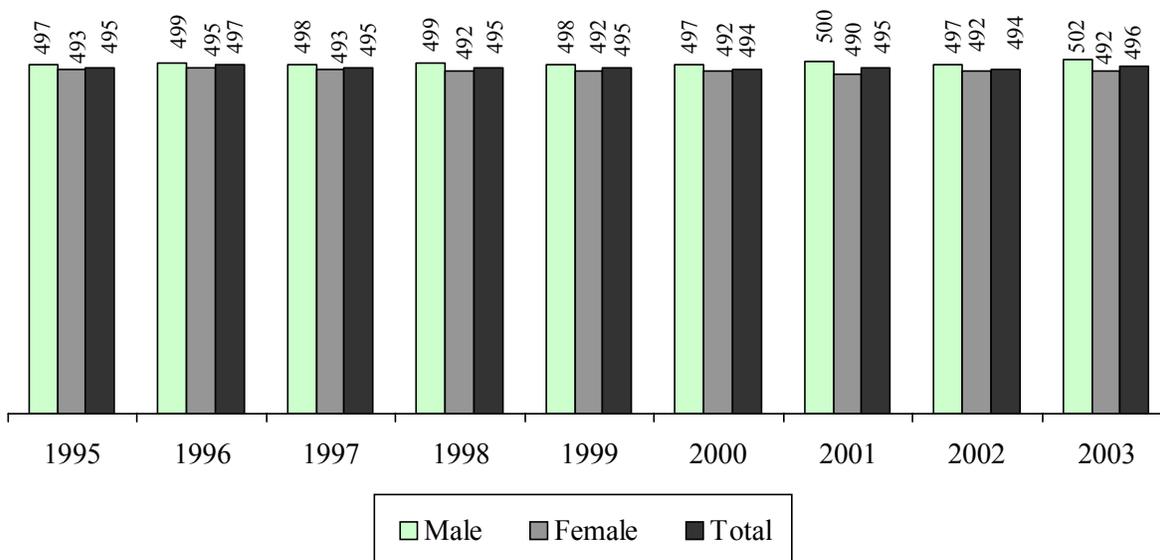


Figure 6.4
Mean Mathematics SAT I Scores by Gender
New York State
Senior Classes of 1995 to 2003

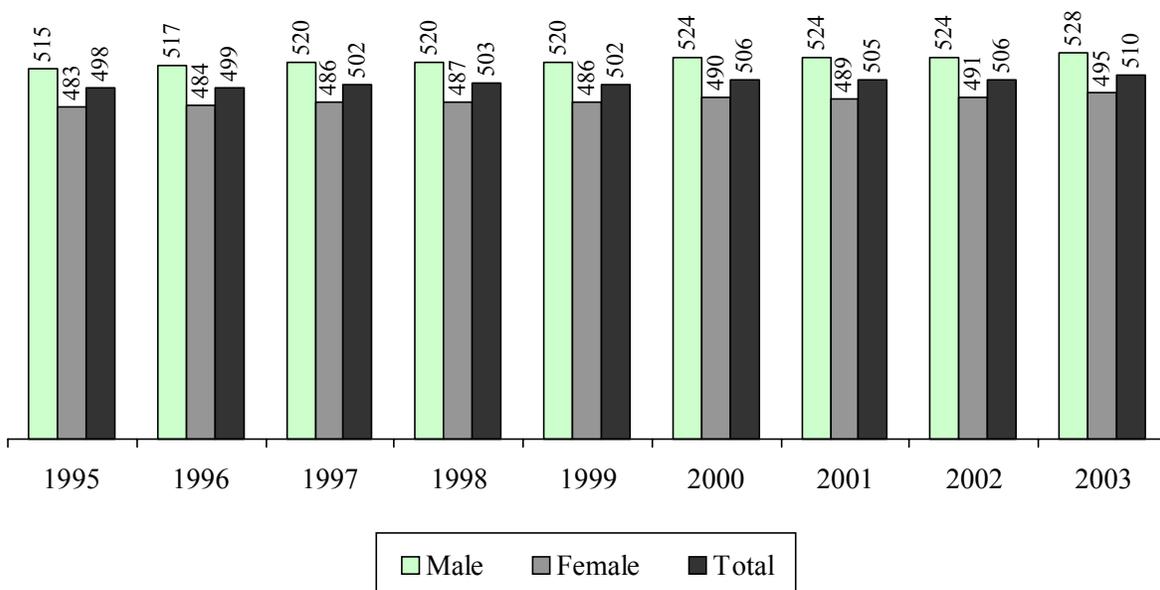


Table 6.4
Credentials Earned by Public High School Completers by Gender
New York State
2002–03

Sector/Location and Diplomas/Certificates	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
New York City			
Total Completers	17,858	20,944	38,802
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas With Honors	6.1%	8.0%	7.1%
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas (Without Honors)	23.3	24.2	23.8
Other Local Diplomas	63.7	64.0	63.8
IEP Diplomas	6.8	3.8	5.2
Certificates	0.2	0.0	0.1
Large City Districts			
Total Completers	2,222	2,697	4,919
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas With Honors	1.1%	1.7%	1.5%
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas (Without Honors)	26.1	28.8	27.6
Other Local Diplomas	64.5	64.1	64.3
IEP Diplomas	8.1	5.2	6.5
Certificates	0.2	0.1	0.1
Districts Excluding the Big 5			
Total Completers	52,293	52,743	105,036
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas With Honors	12.6%	15.7%	14.2%
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas (Without Honors)	48.6	51.5	50.1
Other Local Diplomas	35.6	30.9	33.2
IEP Diplomas	3.1	1.8	2.5
Certificates	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Public			
Total Completers	72,418	76,438	148,856
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas With Honors	10.6%	13.1%	11.9%
Regents-Endorsed Local Diplomas (Without Honors)	41.7	43.2	42.5
Other Local Diplomas	43.4	41.1	42.3
IEP Diplomas	4.1	2.5	3.3
Certificates	0.1	0.1	0.1

? Policy Questions

- ? What steps are necessary to enable more women to assume leadership positions districtwide and in elementary, middle, and secondary schools?
- ? What steps are necessary to encourage more men to aspire to elementary school teaching positions?
- ? What changes can be made in educational programs, particularly those in the Big 5 city districts, to better enable male students to meet the higher performance standards?
- ? What kinds of training would assist female students in achieving higher scores on the SAT I?

