

DANIEL GOHL, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
OFFICE OF ACADEMICS*Signatures on File*

DATE: May 4, 2021

TO: High School Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.
Chief School Performance and Accountability Officer

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST: A THREE-YEAR REVIEW OF DATA, 2018-2019 TO 2020-2021**

This memo, the snapshot, and the attached appendices summarize student participation and scores from the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), offered during the years 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 to tenth and eleventh grade students, and to a handful of ninth-grade students. The PSAT/NMSQT is administered by The College Board and provides essential feedback to students, educators, and parents on reading, writing, and mathematical skills essential for success in college-level coursework. Additionally, the PSAT provides students with early exposure to a college entrance-type test (similar to the SAT), and helps educators identify students to compete in the National Merit Scholarship Competition, as well as, identifies students who may benefit from advanced course opportunities. The College Board provides an “Insights” report that assists teachers in identifying specific skill gaps and where additional instruction is needed. The College Board also provides a question-by-question breakdown that shows which questions each student is struggling with and where within the test they may be losing stamina, impacting their overall score. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) covers the cost of participation for all tenth-grade students in an effort to eliminate obstacles to participation by under-represented groups. Eleventh-grade and ninth-grade students must pay to participate in the NMSQT, or have their participation paid for by the school in which they are enrolled.

- **For 10th and 11th grade students participating in the PSAT/NMSQT, participation rates fell sharply in 2020-2021, with 46.2% of 10th grade students and 22.6% of 11th grade students participating in 2020-2021, compared to 86.1% of 10th grade students and 32.2% of eleventh grade students in 2019-2020.** Eleventh grade students must pay to test or have their school pay to test, so their participation rates are always consequently lower than 10th grade students’ participation rates (see Appendix A). Participation rates were down due to the Coronavirus pandemic that had many students learning from home. The PSAT was only offered in school. In previous years the College Board offered one PSAT Day and one makeup day in October. In 2020-2021, in an effort to allow for social distancing, the College Board offered three testing dates in October, 2020, and one testing date in late January, 2021. Rates were still down sharply from the previous year, with certain students self-selecting to test, while others abstained.
- For 10th and 11th grade students there was a gap in participation between White and minority students, with White students participating at higher rates than Black or Hispanic students (see Appendices B and E). For 10th grade students the gap between White and minority students grew over the three-year-period, from a 2-point gap in 2018-2019 to an 11-point gap in 2020-2021 between White and Black students, and from a 1-point gap in 2018-2019 to an eight-point gap in 2020-2021 between White and Hispanic students.

The gap between White and minority student participation in 11th grade remained relatively constant over the three-year period (see Appendix B).

- **Broward scores on both Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and Math for 10th grade students were higher than Florida-wide scores**, but lagged behind national scores. This difference between national and Florida scores for 10th grade students taking the PSAT/NMSQT is likely attributable to the statewide initiative to fund the test for all tenth graders, thus leading to a greater range of academic success amongst participants in Florida than across the U.S. (see Appendix C).
- As with scores for 10th grade students, **scores for 11th grade students in Broward taking the PSAT/NMSQT outpaced scores Florida-wide** but lagged behind national scores in both EBRW and Math. **Scores were up from the prior year for all three groups – Broward, Florida, and nationwide** (see Appendix C). It is possible that scores are higher in 2020-2021 due to the self-selection of only the most motivated students taking the test this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic, compared to previous years when a larger pool of students with a greater range of abilities took the test.
- There was a performance gap between White and minority students in 10th and 11th grade, with White students scoring higher than minority students in both EBRW and math (see Appendix E).
- There was a performance gap between females and males for 10th and 11th grade students, with females outpacing males in EBRW, while males outpaced females in Math (see Appendix G).
- New to the 2018-2019 school year, scores of 430 or higher on the Math section of the PSAT/NMSQT earned concordance for the Algebra I test graduation requirement. A small portion (307 in 2020-2021) of 9th grade students took the PSAT/NMSQT as well as 10th and 11th grade students. In 2020-2021, two hundred and eighteen (218) 9th graders who took the PSAT/NMSQT still needed to meet the Algebra I test requirement. Of those 218, 112 (51.4%) of 9th grade students earned concordance on the Algebra I test who had not yet met the requirement. Of the 9,272 tenth graders who took the PSAT NMSQT in 2020-2021, 4,973 still needed to meet the Algebra I test requirement. Of those who still needed to meet the requirement, 1,674, or 33.7%, met concordance on PSAT Day. Of the 4,424 11th-grade students who took the PSAT in 2020-2021, 801 still needed to meet the Algebra I graduation requirement. Of those 801, 182, or 22.7%, met the requirement via concordance on PSAT Day. Thus, in all, **1,968 students who still needed to pass the Algebra I graduation test requirement earned concordance through the PSAT/NMSQT in 2020-2021.**

Please direct any questions or comments concerning this memo to **Richard Baum, Director, Student Assessment and Research, at 754-321-2500**. This memo, the snapshot, and appendices may also be accessed via the Student Assessment and Research website at <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>.

BCPS District staff can view and interact with PSAT data through the Department's SAT and PSAT dashboard available on the SharePoint link below:

<https://browardcountyschools.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/Academics/TSD/SAR/Pages/PSAT-Dashboard.aspx>

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Attachment

CC: School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
Directors, School Performance and Accountability