

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DANIEL GOHL
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

Signatures on File

DATE: June 14, 2018

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

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

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST AND PRELIMINARY SAT 8/9: A THREE-YEAR REVIEW OF DATA, 2015-2016 TO 2017-2018**

This memo and the attached appendices summarize student participation and scores¹ from two types of Preliminary SAT tests offered during the years 2015-2016 through 2017-2018: the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), offered to tenth and eleventh grade students, and the Preliminary SAT 8/9 (PSAT 8/9), offered to eighth and ninth grade students. Both PSAT administrations provide 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-like exam (similar to the SAT), and helps educators identify students to compete in the National Merit Scholarship Competition, as well as, identify students who may benefit from advanced course opportunities. 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. Beginning in 2016-2017, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) offered a PSAT 8/9 administration to ninth grade students at traditional schools, free of charge. In 2017-2018, BCPS piloted a free-of-charge PSAT 8/9 administration to eighth grade students at ten middle schools.

- **Among 10th and 11th grade students participating in the PSAT/NMSQT, participation rates were stable** over the 3-year-period, with 86.8% of 10th grade students and 28.4% of 11th grade students participating in 2017-2018. Eleventh grade students must pay to test so their participation rates are consequently lower than 10th grade students' participation rates (see Appendix A).
- Among those students enrolled in schools participating in the PSAT 8/9 contract, **92.0% of eighth grade students (at 10 pilot schools) and 83.2% of 9th grade students (at traditional schools) participated.** Participation among 9th grade students rose from 61.7% in the previous year (see Appendix A).
- Among 8th, 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. **Among 9th grade students participating in the PSAT 8/9, there was no racial gap** (see Appendix B).
- Among 10th grade students Broward scores in both Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) and Math were on par with 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

¹ This memo, the snapshot, and the supporting appendices reflect data available from College Board as of 03-16-18.

attributable to the statewide initiative to fund the test for all students in those grades, thus leading to a greater range of academic success amongst participants in Florida (see Appendix C).

- Among 9th grade students taking the PSAT 8/9, Broward scores were equivalent to Florida scores for Math and slightly lower than Florida scores for EBRW (see Appendix C). Both Broward scores and Florida-wide scores were slightly lower than national scores. This lag behind the national average for Broward participants is again likely attributable to the county initiative that funded the test for all students in 9th grade traditional schools, thus accompanying a greater variability in test-taking abilities amongst Broward participants (see Appendix C).
- **Scores for 11th grade students in Broward taking the PSAT/NMSQT and for 8th grade students in Broward taking the PSAT 8/9 outpaced scores Florida-wide and nationally in both EBRW and Math** (see Appendix C).
- As of June 7, 2018, **23 BCPS high school seniors have been awarded National Merit Scholarships** sponsored by U.S. Colleges and Universities. Scholars were chosen by sponsoring institutions from the group of finalists in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program. Awards provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually at the sponsoring institution for up to 4 years of undergraduate study. An additional group of scholars will be announced in July 2018.

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 <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/Releases.htm>. BCPS District staff can view and interact with PSAT data through the Department's PSAT dashboard available on the SharePoint link below:

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

VSW/DG/RGB/RAA:rs
Attachment

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