

College and Career Readiness: PSAT Testing, 2015-16

Jin H Zhang, Ph.D.

EA16-520-4.3

At-a-Glance

The PSAT, developed by College Board, is typically given to Dallas Independent School District grade 10 students to determine if they are on track toward college readiness. The PSAT tests students in reading, mathematics, and writing, the same subjects tested by the SAT. In 2015 the College Board redesigned the PSAT test which included Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math. According to the College Board, a student's section score for the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section is calculated by adding the Reading test score to the Writing and Language test score and multiplying by 10. A student's section score for the Math section is calculated by multiplying the Math test score by 20 (College Board, 2016).

The scale scores in each subject on the PSAT range from 160 to 760, comparable to the SAT scale of 200 to 800. In addition to grade 10 students, some Dallas ISD grade nine and 11 students took the PSAT as well. The test, administered in October of each year, not only measures whether students are on track toward college readiness, but also helps identify students who could enroll in more rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement. PSAT results also help the district determine student eligibility for Dual Credit classes, which carry both high school and college credit.

Methodology

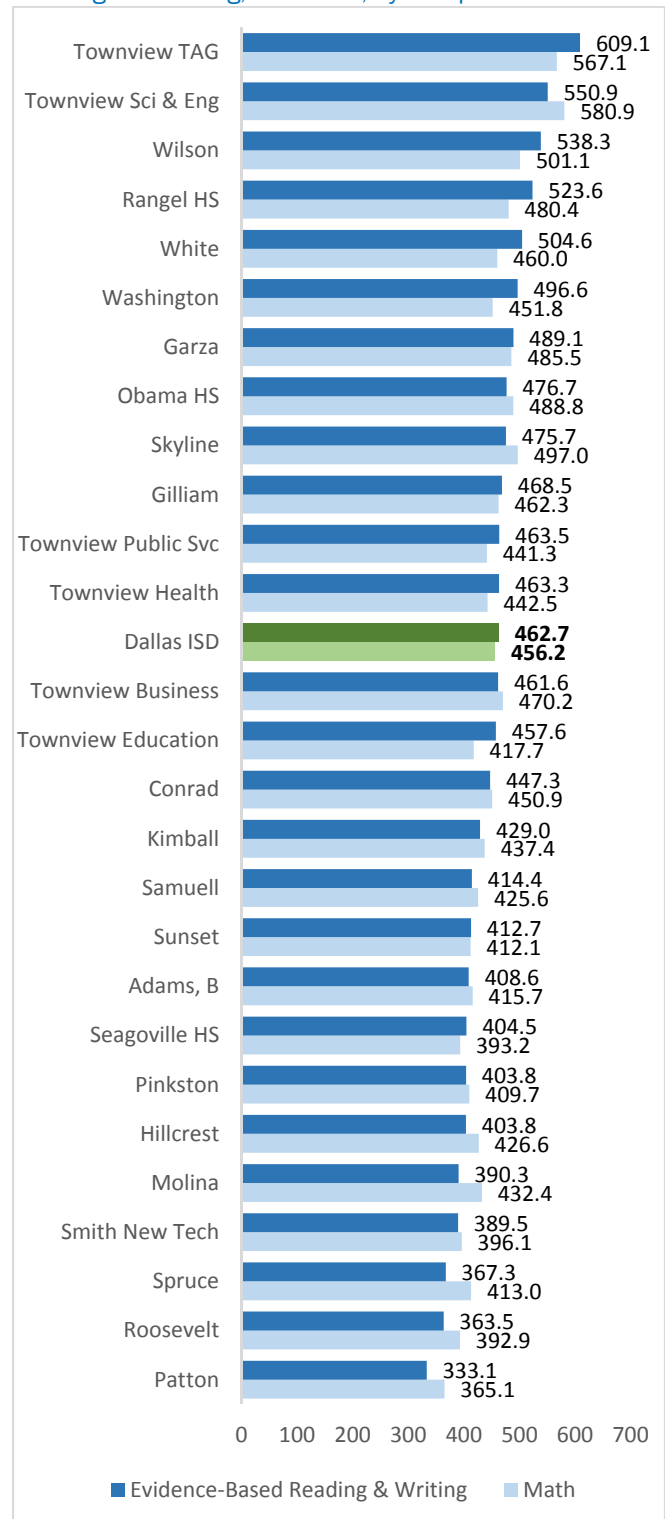
PSAT scores were extracted from district databases. Student performance was based on the PSAT College Readiness Benchmarks, which are the scores set by College Board that students should meet or exceed to be considered on track for college readiness.

College Board established PSAT benchmarks for grades 10 and 11 in each subject tested. In 2015-16, the grade 10 benchmarks were 360 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and 470 for Mathematics. Grade 11 benchmarks were 390 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and 500 for Math (College Board, 2016).

Results

Figure 1 displays grade nine PSAT results for the 1,520 students who took the test. Because College Board does not calculate grade nine benchmarks, Figure 1 shows average scores for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Mathematics by campus.

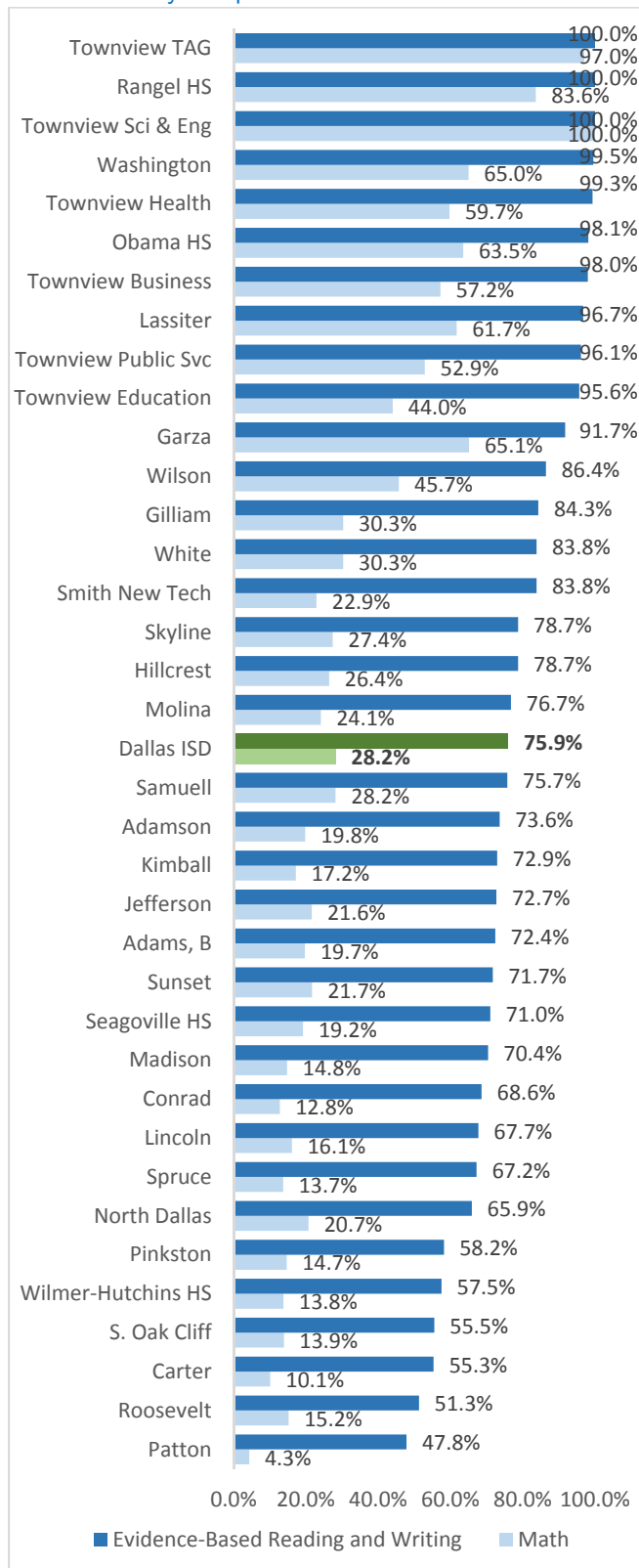
Figure 1. Grade Nine PSAT Mean Scores of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math, by Campus



Note. Schools with fewer than six test takers are not included.

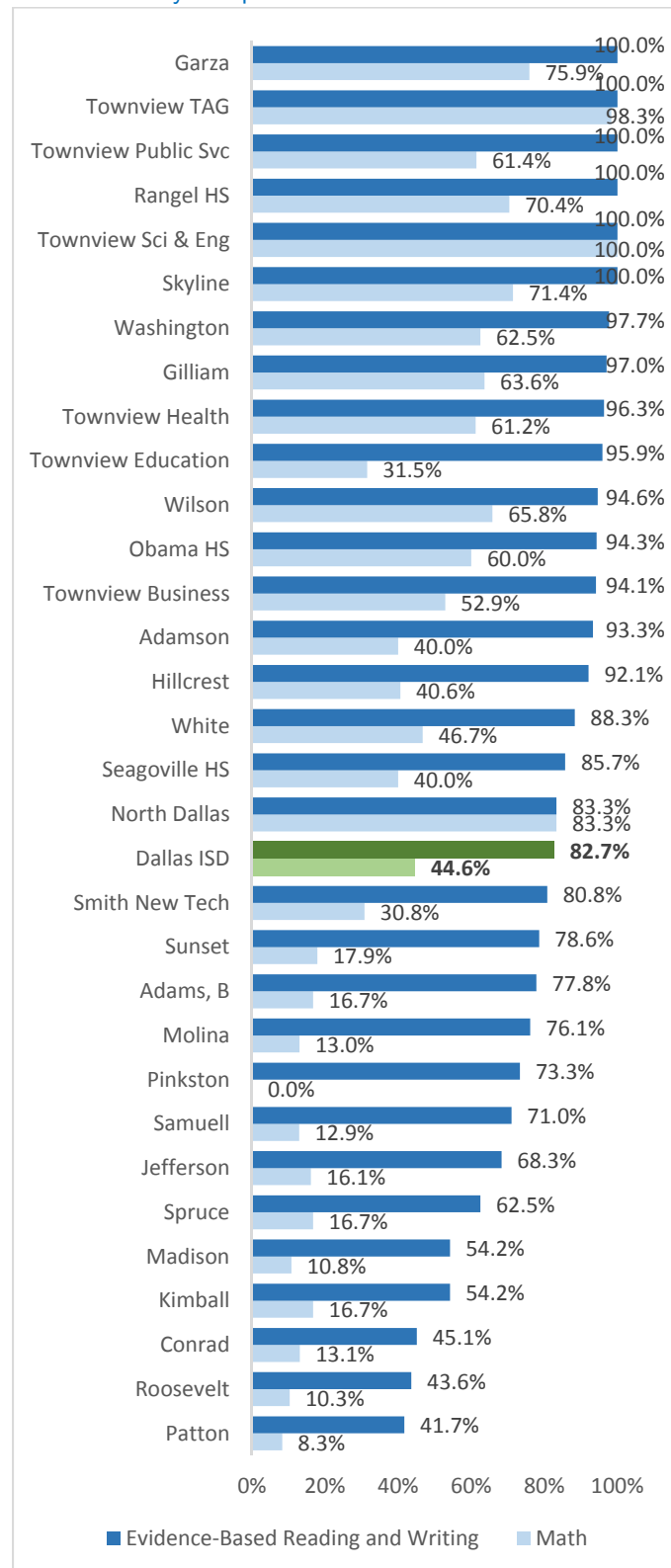
In grade 10, 8,949 students took the *PSAT*. Districtwide, 75.9 percent and 28.2 percent of the students met the *PSAT* benchmarks of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (360) and Math (470), respectively (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Grade 10 Students Meeting *PSAT* Benchmarks by Campus



In grade 11, 2,290 students took the *PSAT*. Districtwide, 82.7 percent and 44.6 percent of the students met the *PSAT* benchmarks of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (390) and Math (500), respectively (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Grade 11 Students Meeting *PSAT* Benchmarks by Campus



Note. Schools with fewer than six test takers are not included.

Figures 4 and 5 display the proportion of grade 10 and 11 students, by ethnicity, who met or exceeded the PSAT benchmark.

Figure 4. Proportion of Grade 10 Students Meeting PSAT Benchmarks of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math, by Ethnicity

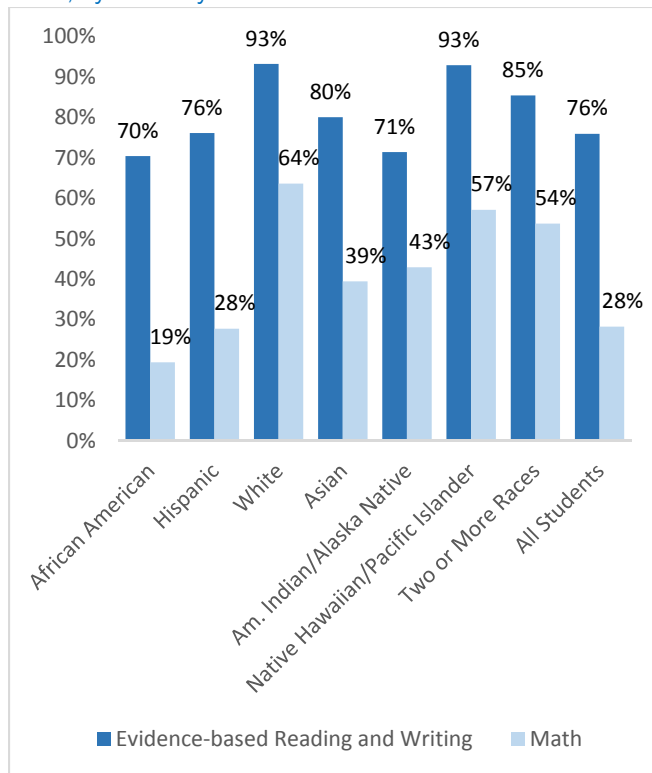
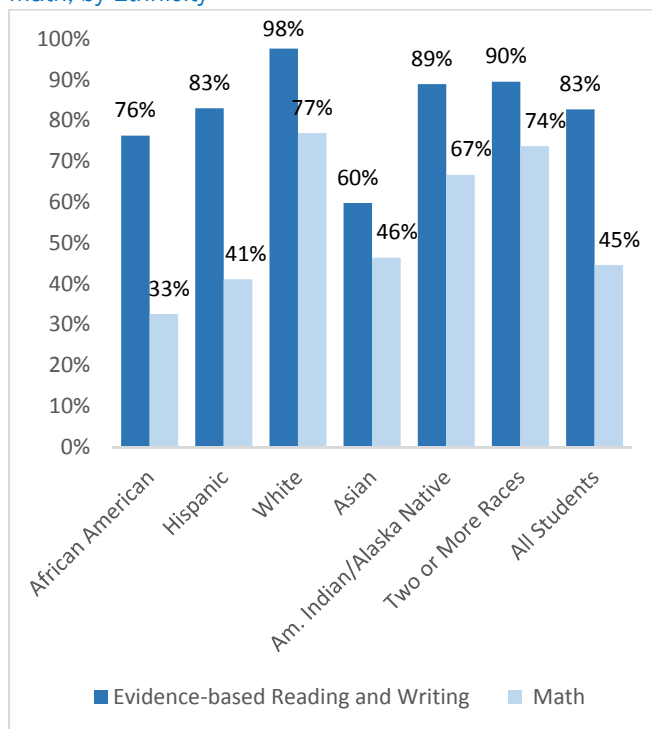


Figure 5. Proportion of Grade 11 Students Meeting PSAT Benchmarks of Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math, by Ethnicity



Reference

The College Board (2016). *PSAT/NMSQT: Understanding Scores 2015*. Available at <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/2015-psat-nmsqt-understanding-scores.pdf>

For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.