

2016-17 College and Career Readiness: PSAT Testing

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EA17-520-4.3

At-a-Glance

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (*PSAT/NMSQT*), developed by College Board, typically is administered to Dallas Independent School District grade 10 students in October to determine if they are on track for college readiness.¹ The *PSAT/NMSQT* tests students in reading, writing, and mathematics (like the *SAT*), and its sections include: 1) evidence-based reading and writing (ERW) and 2) mathematics. A student's score for ERW is calculated by adding the reading test score to the writing and language test score and multiplying by 10. A student's scale score for mathematics is calculated by multiplying the mathematics test score by 20 (College Board, 2017).

The scale scores for each subject on the *PSAT/NMSQT* range from 160 to 760, comparable to the *SAT* scale of 200 to 800. The test not only measures whether students are on track toward college readiness, but also identifies students who may benefit from enrollment in more rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement. *PSAT/NMSQT* results also help the district determine student eligibility for dual credit classes.²

The Dallas ISD began administering the *PSAT 8/9* to all grade eight students in fall 2016. A total of 9,323 grade eight students took the test. The test measures a student's knowledge and skills that are essential for college and career readiness and success. The test includes ERW and mathematics sections. A student's scores on the reading test and the writing and language test are combined into a section score for ERW. A student's mathematics test score is reported as a mathematics section score. The scale scores in both sections of the *PSAT 8/9* range from 120 to 720. The section score for the ERW section is calculated by adding the reading test score to the writing and language test score and multiplying by 10. The section score for mathematics is calculated by multiplying the mathematics test score by 20 (College Board, 2017).

Methodology

The evaluator used the district *PSAT 8/9* data files from December 8, 2016 and December 22, 2016 and *PSAT/NMSQT* data files from December 8, 2016 and January 9, 2017 and merged with district demographic data files dated October 31, 2016 (PEIMS snapshot date).

College readiness benchmarks are the scores set by College Board that students should meet or exceed to

be considered on track for college readiness. Benchmarks for grade eight are based on the *PSAT 8/9* exam. Dallas ISD grade nine students did not take the *PSAT 8/9* exam. Benchmarks for grades 10 and 11 are based on the *PSAT/NMSQT* exam. College Board does not calculate college readiness benchmarks for grade nine students taking the *PSAT/NMSQT*. Table 1 shows the 2016-17 college readiness benchmarks for grades eight through 11.

Table 1: 2016-17 PSAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for Grades Eight to Eleven

Grade	Exam	College and Career Readiness Benchmark	
		ERW	Mathematics
8	<i>PSAT 8/9</i>	390	430
9	<i>PSAT/NMSQT</i>	N/A	N/A
10	<i>PSAT/NMSQT</i>	430	480
11	<i>PSAT/NMSQT</i>	460	510

Source: College Board, March 2017

Note: Dallas ISD grade nine students did not take the *PSAT 8/9* exam. ERW = evidence-based reading and writing. College Board does not calculate college readiness benchmarks for grade nine students taking the *PSAT/NMSQT*.

Results

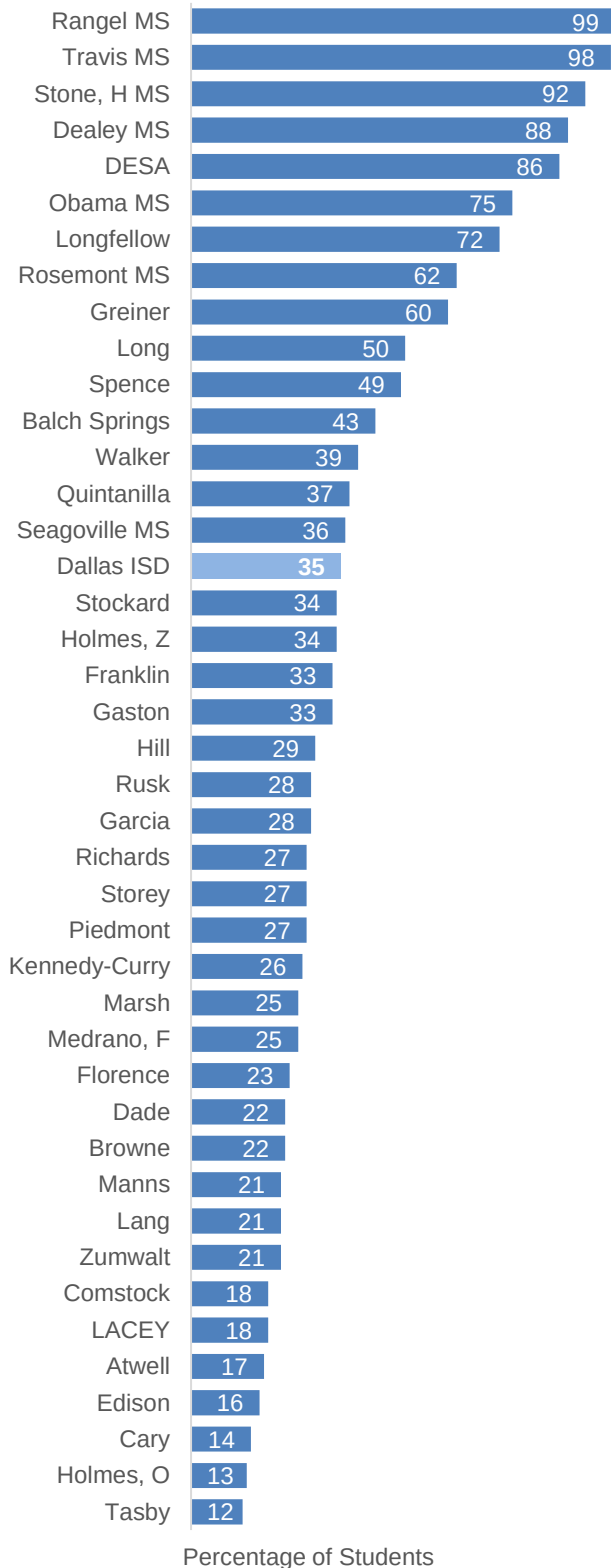
A total of 9,323 grade eight students took the *PSAT 8/9* in 2016-17. Figures 1 and 2 display the percentage of these students who met *PSAT 8/9* benchmarks for ERW and mathematics by campus.

Because College Board does not calculate grade nine college readiness benchmarks, Figures 3 and 4 show average ERW and mathematics scores (rather than percentage of students meeting the benchmarks) for the grade nine students (N=1,391) who took the *PSAT/NMSQT*.

¹ The *PSAT/NMSQT* test also is administered to a small number of students in grades nine and 11.

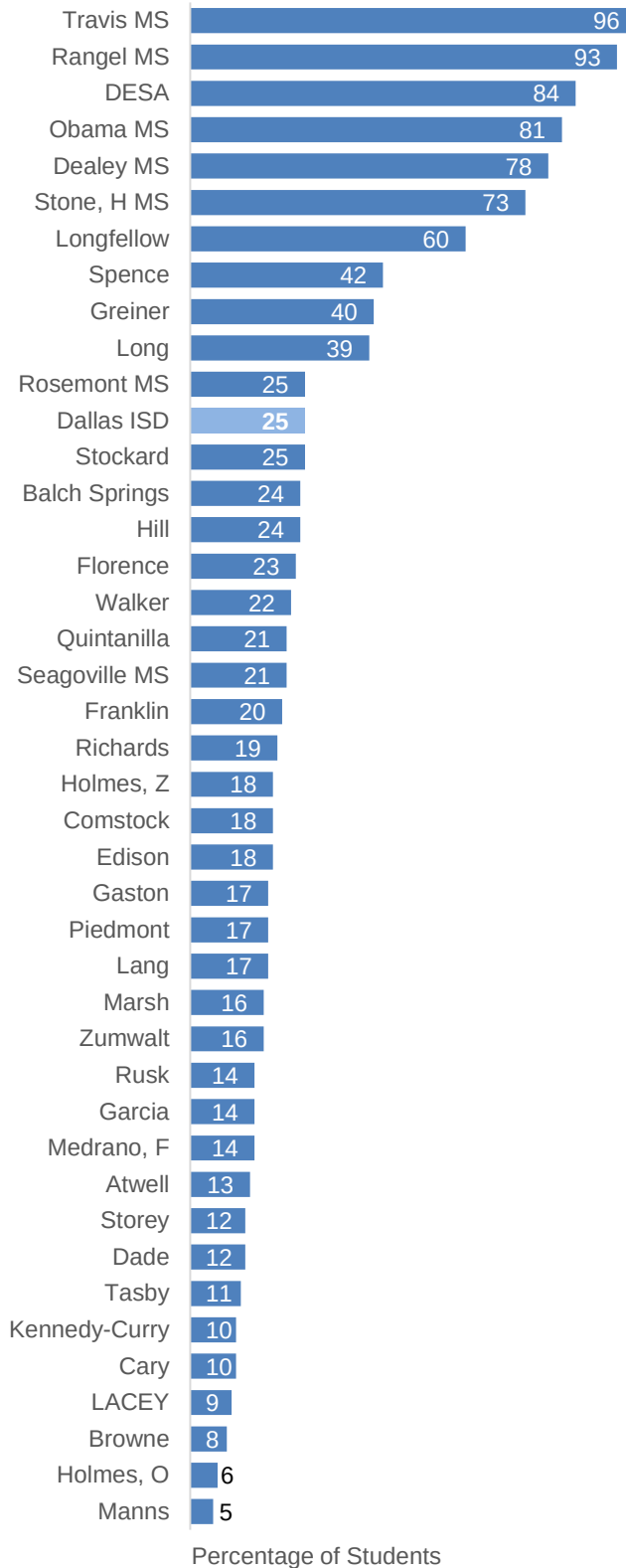
² Dual credit classes offer students an opportunity to earn both high school and college credit.

Figure 1: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade Eight Students Meeting PSAT 8/9 ERW Benchmark by Campus (N=9,323)



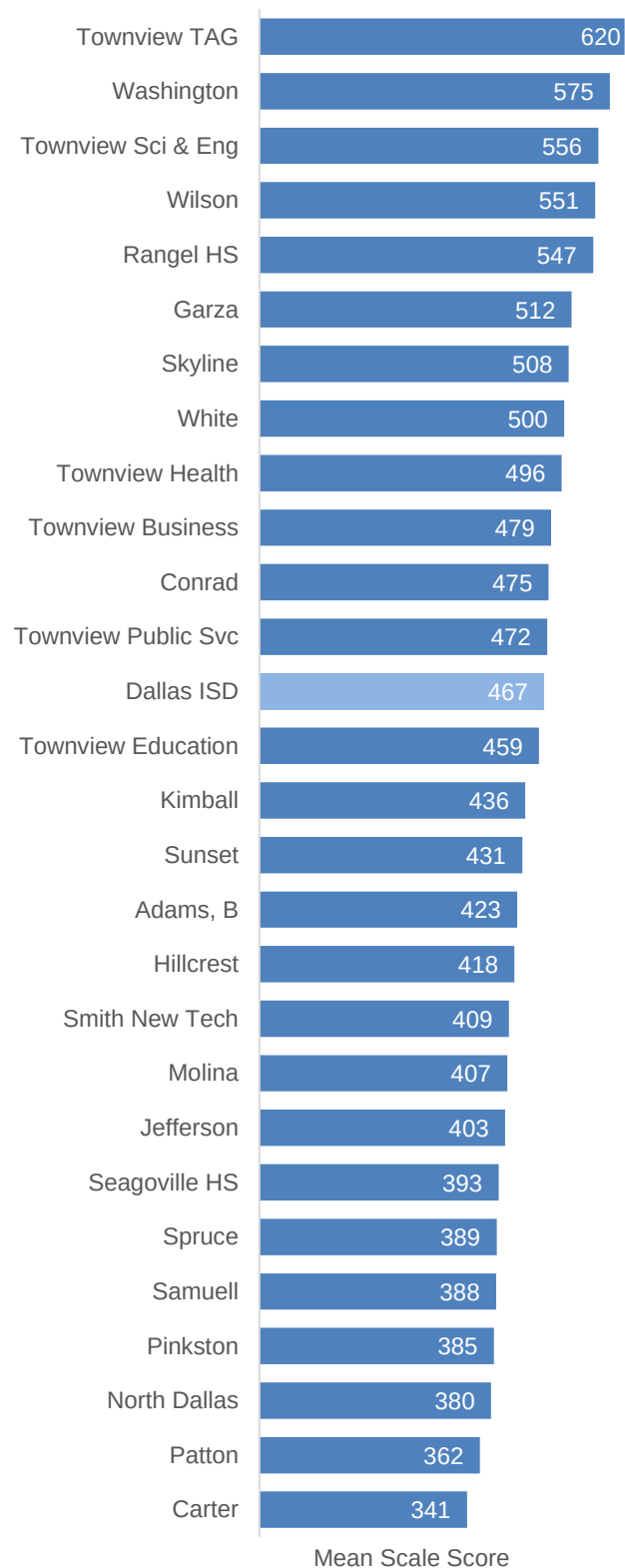
Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 12/22/2016.
District demographic data files 10/31/2016.
Note: ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

Figure 2: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade Eight Students Meeting PSAT 8/9 Mathematics Benchmark by Campus (N=9,323)



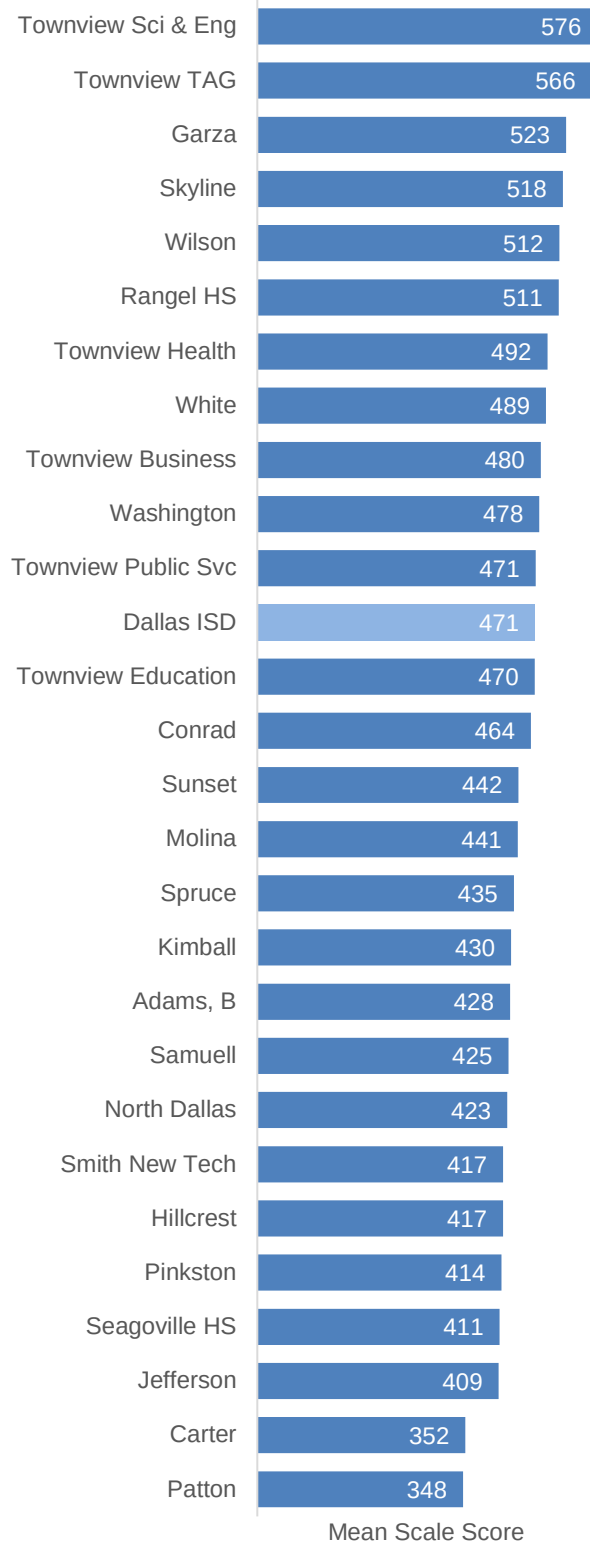
Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 12/22/2016.
District demographic data files 10/31/2016.

Figure 3: 2016-17 Grade Nine PSAT/NMSQT Mean Scale Scores for ERW by Campus (N=1,391)



Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.
Note: Schools with fewer than six test takers not included.
 ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

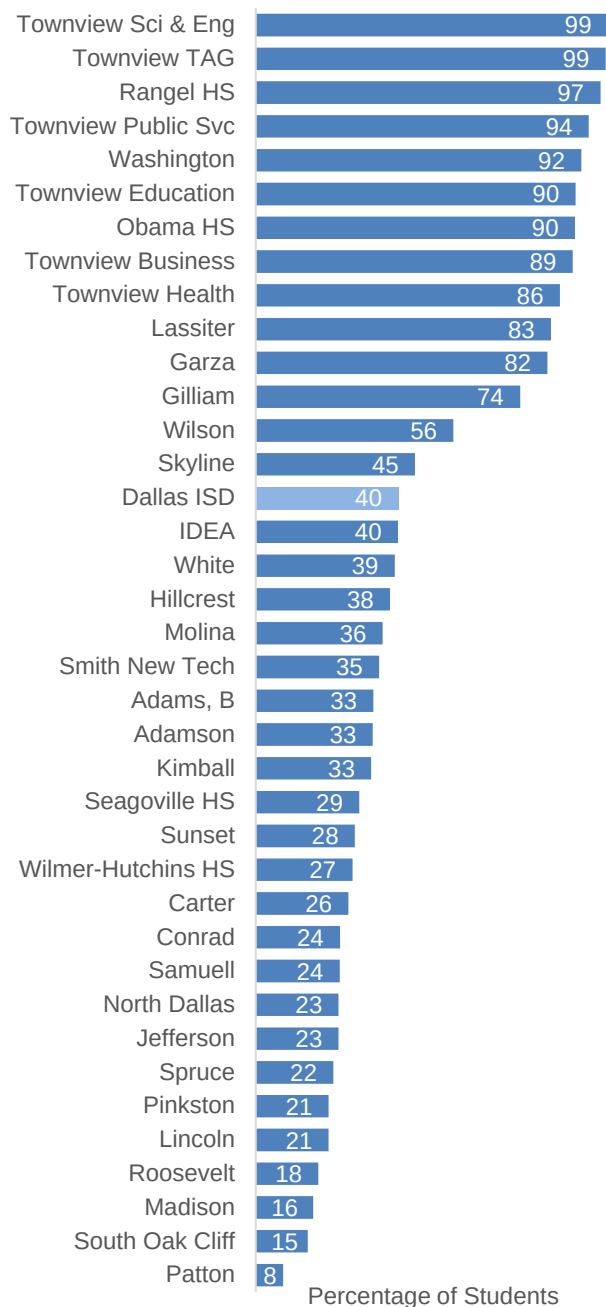
Figure 4: 2016-17 Grade Nine PSAT/NMSQT Mean Scale Scores for Mathematics by Campus (N=1,391)



Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.
Note: Schools with fewer than six test takers not included.

A total of 9,084 students in grade 10 took the *PSAT/NMSQT* test in 2016-17. Districtwide, 40 percent of students met the *PSAT/NMSQT* benchmarks for ERW (430; See Figure 5), and 27 percent of students met the *PSAT/NMSQT* benchmarks for mathematics (480; see Figure 6).

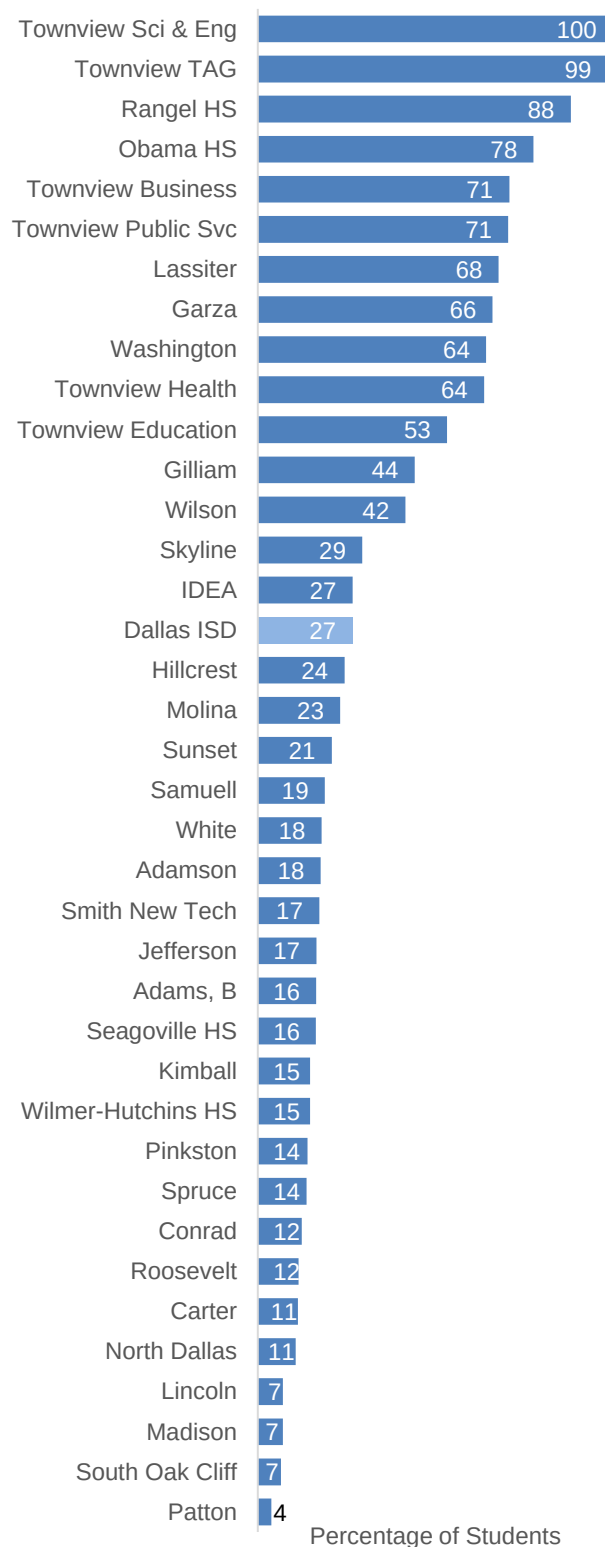
Figure 5: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 10 Students Meeting *PSAT/NMSQT* ERW Benchmark by Campus (N=9,084)



Source: District *PSAT* data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.

Note: ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

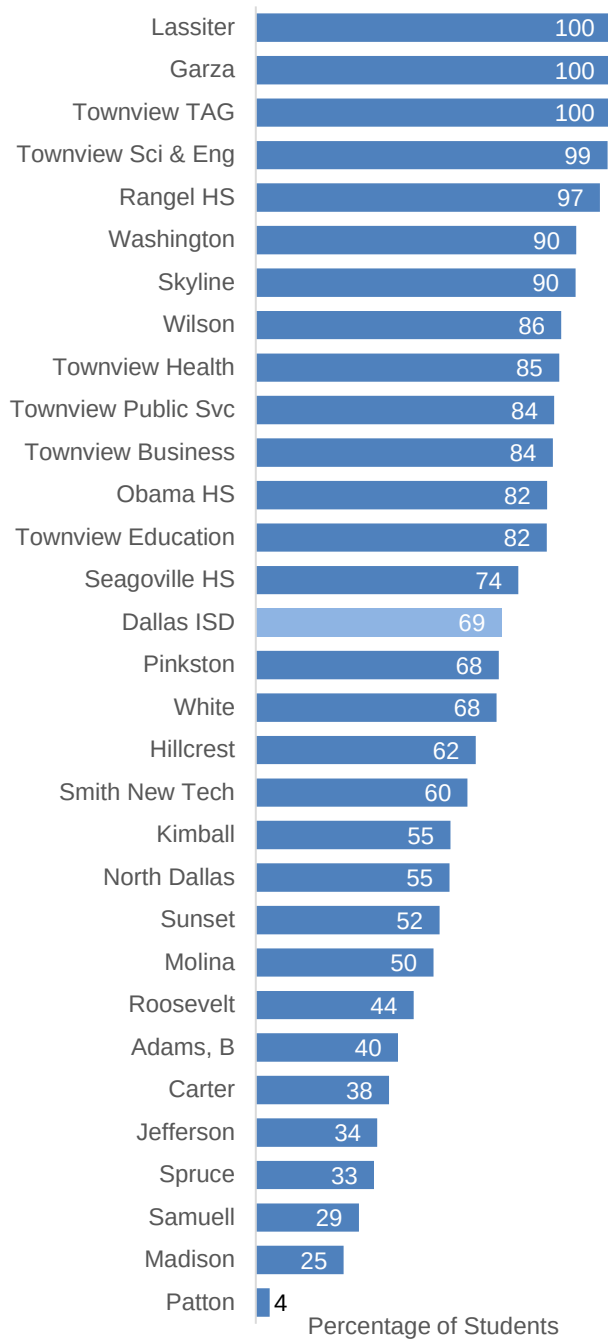
Figure 6: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 10 Students Meeting *PSAT/NMSQT* Mathematics Benchmark by Campus (N=9,084)



Source: District *PSAT* data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.

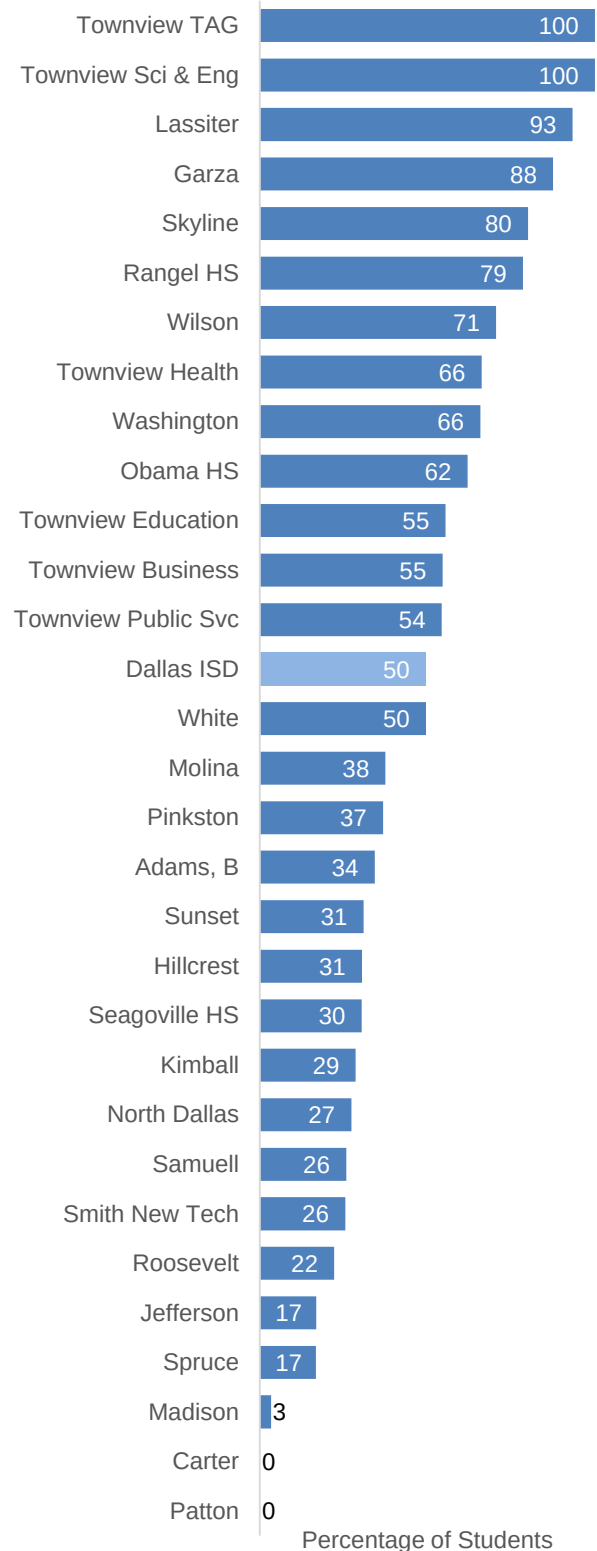
A total of 1,986 students in grade 11 took the *PSAT/NMSQT*. Districtwide, 69 percent of students met the *PSAT/NMSQT* benchmark for ERW (460; see Figure 7), and 50 percent of students met the *PSAT/NMSQT* benchmark for mathematics (510; see Figure 8).

Figure 7: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 11 Students Meeting *PSAT/NMSQT* ERW Benchmark by Campus (N=1,986)



Source: District *PSAT* data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.
Note: Schools with fewer than six test takers not included. ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

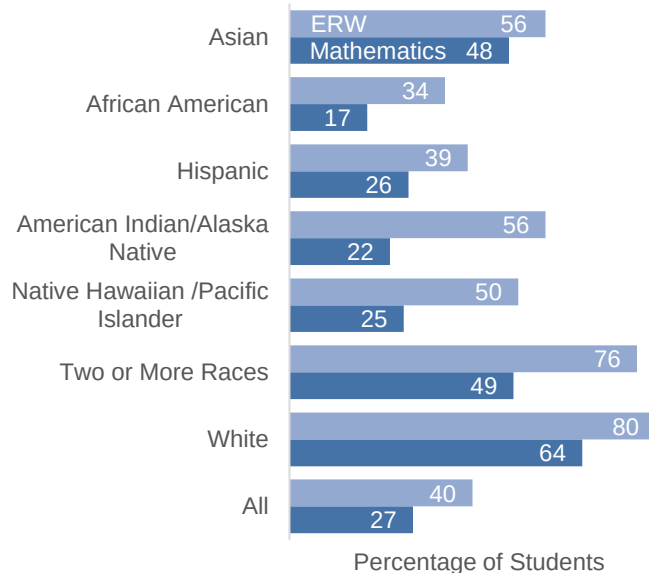
Figure 8: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 11 Students Meeting *PSAT/NMSQT* Mathematics Benchmark by Campus (N=1,986)



Source: District *PSAT* data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.
Note: Schools with fewer than six test takers not included.

Figures 9 and 10 display the percentage of grades 10 and 11 students who met or exceeded the PSAT/NMSQT benchmark by ethnicity.

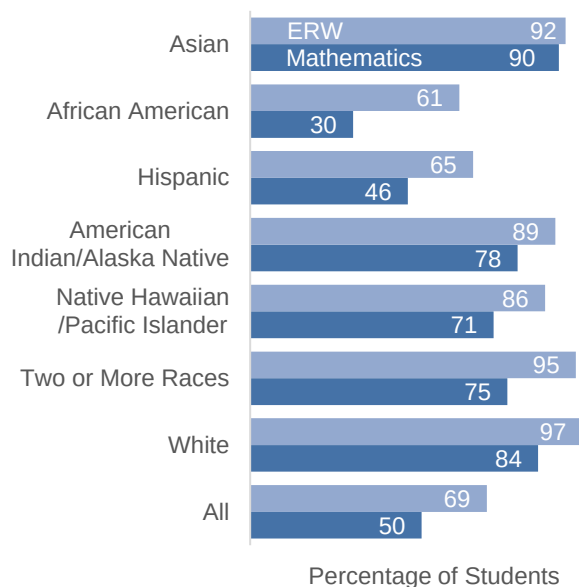
Figure 9: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 10 Students Meeting PSAT/NMSQT Benchmarks for ERW and Mathematics by Ethnicity (N=9,084)



Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.

Note: ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

Figure 10: 2016-17 Percentage of Grade 11 Students Meeting PSAT/NMSQT Benchmarks for ERW and Mathematics by Ethnicity (N=1,986)



Source: District PSAT data files 12/08/2016 and 01/09/2017. District demographic data files 10/31/2016.

Note: ERW=evidence-based reading and writing.

References

The College Board. (2017, January). *PSAT 8/9 Understanding Scores*. Retrieved March 9, 2017 from <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/psat-8-9-understanding-scores-fall-2016.pdf>

The College Board. (2017, March). *PSAT/NMSQT: Understanding Scores 2016*. Retrieved March 10, 2017 from <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/psat-nmsqt-understanding-scores-2016.pdf>

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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