



The Power of PSAT/NMSQT®:

Increasing AP® Achievement

The PSAT/NMSQT® has been an essential catalyst for academic achievement in Hillsborough County Public Schools. The College Board applauds the many innovative, dedicated school districts across the United States that are using the PSAT/NMSQT strategically to inspire college-bound commitment in the hearts and minds of students, parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials and communities.

Hillsborough County Public Schools

Winner: The College Board's 2011 Beacon Award

As the eighth largest school district in the United States, Hillsborough County Schools, incorporating Tampa, Fla. and the surrounding area, educate 197,500 students annually through 217 schools in urban, suburban and rural environments. The sprawling district includes several federally designated Title I schools, which serve students and families faced with financial hardship.



Student Demographics

Students: 197,500

Ethnicity:

22%

30%

40%

African American

Hispanic

White

School:

144

46

27

Elementary

Middle

High School

Socio-Economic:

16%

26%

58%

English as a Second Language

Exceptional Education

Free and Reduced Lunch

Expanding AP® Access and Participation with AP Potential™

In 2000, Florida passed 1007.35: Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement, stipulating that all tenth grade students would take a pre-college entrance exam for free. This landmark legislation was part of Florida's visionary commitment to improve college attendance rates statewide—especially for under-represented populations by initiating the conversation about college preparation and attendance early in the high school experience.

With the success of the tenth grade program, the district stepped in to subsidize the ninth grade PSAT/NMSQT, as well. And the results were notable. After all ninth grade students had free access to the test, AP enrollment increased significantly—as schools were able to identify AP-qualified students more systematically, earlier in the process, and with greater precision. Then, in 2008-2009, the district also began paying for the PSAT/NMSQT for eleventh grade students to address waning junior year participation—critical to National Merit® Scholarship awards, National Achievement® Scholarship awards, and the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

In addition to increasing number of students participating, this state-mandated testing has helped enhance the value of the College Board's AP Potential™ tool in Hillsborough County. A free, Web-based resource, AP Potential uses PSAT/NMSQT results to identify students capable of succeeding in rigorous AP courses. The wealth of statistically significant data accumulated by Hillsborough has helped make the tool even more powerful, broadening access to the AP experience and providing expanded opportunities for every student to shine.

From 2008 to 2010, Hillsborough achieved the largest increase in the number of students earning AP scores of 3 or better of any school district in the nation, an increase of 1,814 students. No



other school district even approached this level of increase in the number of individual students who earned scores of 3 or better—qualifying them for college cost savings. In the same time period, Hillsborough increased student participation in AP courses and exams by an annual rate of 19 percent.

In 2010-11, some 17,288 Hillsborough County students took a total of 32,437 AP exams covering 32 subject areas. Across the region, the actual number of AP courses offered at each high school varied from 14 to about 30 subject areas—depending on the size of the institution. Equipping counselors, principals, and assistant principals for curriculum with AP Potential has helped qualify student interest and identify students with academic aptitude who may have been overlooked for a variety of reasons.

As a result of casting this wider net, the average number of AP subject areas offered at 27 Hillsborough high schools has increased to 21 over the past few years. Using a customized college readiness strategy, Hillsborough County has effectively engaged students, parents and teachers in ways that have dramatically accelerated student achievement.

Maximizing AP Potential™

AP Potential can help expand access to AP courses and ensure that no student with potential to succeed is overlooked.

Use AP Potential to:

- Leverage PSAT/NMSQT data to systematically identify students likely to score 3+ on a given AP exam
- Integrate AP scheduling seamlessly into your existing process
- Offer the AP courses that align with student interests
- Strengthen college-going culture by expanding participation in rigorous, college-level courses

Visit <http://www.collegeboard.org/psattools> for more information.

"At every grade level, the PSAT/NMSQT has become an expected part of the overall college readiness process."
 Patricia Smith, counselor consultant, Hillsborough County Public Schools

Students

Hillsborough County Schools successfully used PSAT/NMSQT data in conjunction with AP Potential to identify students who could be successful in AP courses. As a result, Hillsborough achieved a 60% increase in the total number of students taking AP exams and a 54% increase in the number of students scoring a 3 or higher.

Other key tactics Hillsborough County implemented included:

- Administering tests during the school week—not Saturday
- Integrating PSAT/NMSQT in automatic scheduling process
- Introducing college-planning tools early (My College QuickStart™ and MyRoad™)
- Providing support and resources early for first-generation-in college students



Parents

Parents throughout Hillsborough County receive education and coaching in regularly scheduled parent meetings and open houses—providing clarity and information regarding the PSAT/NMSQT's impact on college readiness. Parent attendance is steadily increasing as they learn more about the meaning and impact of the PSAT/NMSQT.

Other key tactics include:

- Sending congratulatory letters to report PSAT/NMSQT scores to parents and students
- Delivering multimedia messaging about the power of the PSAT/NMSQT
- Providing parent volunteers to help mentor students before and after school hours



Teachers

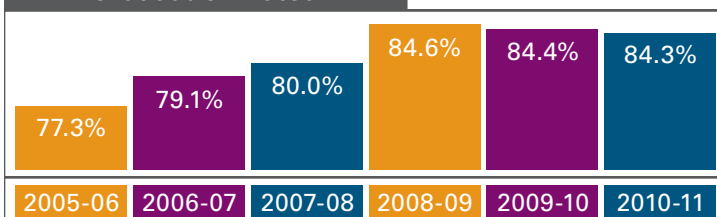
An essential component of college readiness is teacher engagement—optimizing curriculum, lesson plans and higher-order thinking. In addition, the AVID tutoring program enriches the skills of those students in the academic middle. This targeted, personalized academic support gives Hillsborough County's students the extra support they need to accelerate into more challenging, college-preparatory classes.

Other key tactics include:

- Sending teachers to workshops in AP strategies
- Offering SpringBoard® workshops
- Delivering SAT® online training
- Sending teachers to workshops emphasizing PSAT/NMSQT's value as a diagnostic tool



**Hillsborough County Schools
Graduation Rates**



**AP Achievement:
Increasing Participation**

	1+ AP exam	All AP exams	AP scores 3+
2007-08	11,222	20,293	7,973
2008-09	14,114	26,523	9,674
2009-10	15,877	29,571	10,970
2010-11	17,170	32,404	12,262
% increase	53%	60%	54%

Source: Florida Department of Education



"The average number of AP subject areas offered at our high schools is 21 subject areas. We have been able to increase our course offerings using AP Potential to identify student interest, thus expanding the course offerings."

Eric Bergholm, general director, Advanced Academic Access, Hillsborough County Public Schools

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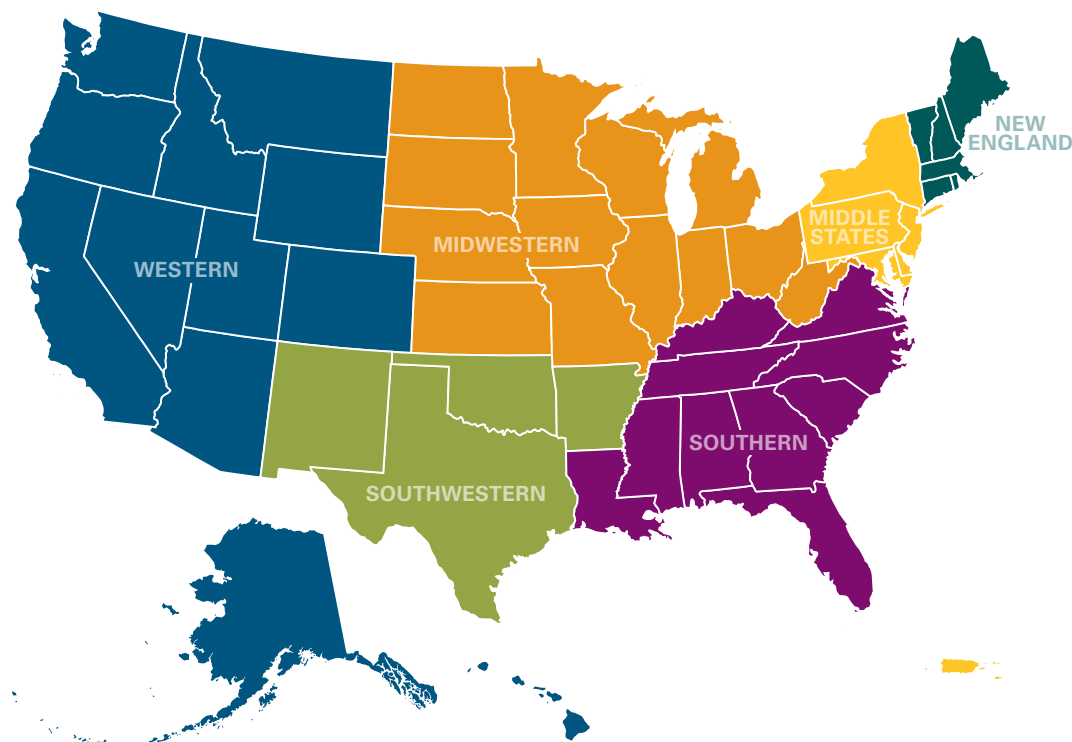
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