

For immediate release...

Media Contact: Laretta Hannon 770-426-3345

Cobb County School District Outperforms the State and the Nation on the New PSAT

On October 14, 2015, more than 13,000 Cobb students took the new PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). The test was redesigned by the CollegeBoard to align the PSAT with the new SAT exam that will be given for the first time in March 2016. The new design of the PSAT takes 165 minutes and consists of a total of 139 questions and tasks. The reading component has 47 questions. The writing and language component has 44 questions, and the math component has 48 questions.

The results of the new PSAT are reported using three scores: an evidence-based reading and writing score, a math score, and a total score. The total score is the sum of the reading and writing and math scores. In contrast to the old PSAT, scores on the new PSAT are on the same scale as the SAT. For example, a 10th grade student with a 950 total score on the PSAT would be expected to score 950 on the SAT had they taken the SAT on that day instead.

PSAT Results for Cobb 10th Graders

More than 6,800 Cobb 10th graders or 80% of the 10th grade took the PSAT. Cobb scores exceeded the state and national averages. The average total score for Cobb 10th graders was 965. Cobb's total score exceeds the state average by 64 points and the national average by 33 points. Cobb's average reading and writing score was 487 compared to the state average of 452 and national average of 468. Cobb's average math score was 477 compared to the state average of 448 and the national average of 464. The national averages are based on 52% of 10th graders nationwide.

Cobb County School District Superintendent Chris Ragsdale praises local schools. "We are proud that our students exceeded the state and national averages on the PSAT. A benefit of the PSAT is that teachers and administrators will use these results to help guide our students toward taking challenging academic courses for the remainder of their high school career. We always encourage students to set high academic goals and have implemented a strong curriculum so they can achieve them."

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Walton High School had the highest total score in the district of 1124. Principal Judy McNeill reports, “At Walton, we prepare students for national assessments with rich rigorous study in the classroom and high expectations each day. Walton teachers, students, and parents work together to prepare students for success.” Lassiter’s total score of 1064 was second highest in the district. Lassiter Principal Chris Richie states, “This is a huge step for Lassiter students since we use the data as a benchmark to gauge which students are ready for college and careers.” Three other schools, Kennesaw Mountain, Pope, and Wheeler, also had total scores higher than 1000. Table 1 lists the results for 10th graders at each Cobb high school.

The PSAT results for South Cobb High School are not incorporated in the tables due to a disruption in the testing environment. This year’s PSAT results for students at South Cobb will be used for guidance purposes only. South Cobb staff members are working directly with students who may have demonstrated eligibility for national merit recognition.

NMSQT Results for Cobb 11th Graders

Some 11th grade students elect to take the PSAT to participate in the National Merit Scholarship Program. The National Merit Scholarship Program is a highly competitive scholarship program that provides over 8,000 students nationwide with scholarships worth a combined total of more than \$43 million. Table 2 lists the results for 11th graders at each Cobb County high school. Approximately 47% of Cobb 11th graders took the PSAT. Statewide, only 28% of 11th graders took the test, and nationally 51% of 11th graders took the test. Cobb students received an average total score of 1113 exceeding the state and national averages of 1018 and 1009, respectively. The average Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) score was 562, and the average math score was 551.

To compare the performance of potential National Merit Scholars, Table 3 lists the average of the top 100 scores for 11th graders at each school. In this comparison, Walton had the highest total average score of 1453 followed by Wheeler with an average total of 1378.

What Is Next?

Cobb students who took the PSAT can access their score reports online now. Students will also receive a paper-score report. Students can use these reports to prepare for taking



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the SAT in March or later. The test results are used by school administrators and counselors to recommend Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement courses in scheduling students.

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Table 1. Tenth grade PSAT scores for Cobb County School District high schools including district, state, and national averages.

	Number Test Takers	Participation Rate	Mean Scores		
			Total	ERW	Math
Cobb	6,871	80%	965	487	477
Georgia	102,436	81%	901	452	448
National Tested	1,858,984	52%	932	468	464
Allatoona	411	88%	965	496	469
Campbell	531	88%	900	456	443
Harrison	467	89%	988	503	485
Hillgrove	552	97%	976	499	477
Kell	283	80%	934	475	459
Kennesaw Mountain	525	100%	1005	506	498
Lassiter	567	100%	1061	526	536
McEachern	410	67%	842	424	418
North Cobb	617	82%	913	468	445
Osborne	348	76%	814	406	409
Pebblebrook	403	70%	853	430	423
Pope	430	90%	1048	529	519
Sprayberry	389	86%	917	469	448
Walton	646	97%	1124	556	568
Wheeler	292	56%	1004	505	498

Notes

- Scores in this press release are based on data released by the CollegeBoard on January 5, 2016.
- ERW is the Evidence-based Reading and Writing section of the PSAT.
- Score ranges are total 320–1520, ERW 160–760, and Math 160–760.
- ERW and math scores do not necessarily add to the total score due to rounding.
- State and national participation rates based on estimates of enrollment from the National Center for Education Statistics.
- *Data Source:* CollegeBoard, January 5, 2016

Table 2. Eleventh grade PSAT scores for Cobb County School District high schools including district, state, and national averages.

	Number Test Takers	Participation Rate	Mean Scores		
			Total	ERW	Math
Cobb	3,223	47%	1113	562	551
Georgia	30,970	28%	1018	512	505
National Tested	1,724,416	51%	1009	507	502
Allatoona	233	57%	1030	525	504
Campbell	123	28%	1151	586	566
Harrison	426	98%	1063	542	521
Hillgrove	207	43%	1080	552	528
Kell	47	12%	1076	555	521
Kennesaw Mountain	135	28%	1177	586	591
Lassiter	423	89%	1143	571	572
McEachern	34	9%	1061	541	520
North Cobb	194	34%	1039	541	499
Osborne	130	40%	877	444	433
Pebblebrook	58	18%	1025	539	486
Pope	361	86%	1114	561	554
Sprayberry	106	29%	1055	541	514
Walton	601	98%	1207	599	608
Wheeler	145	37%	1285	637	648

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Table 3. Mean PSAT scores for the top 100 scores for 11th graders at each school.

	Mean Scores		
	Total	ERW	Math
Allatoona	1156	596	560
Campbell	1223	621	602
Harrison	1259	640	619
Hillgrove	1195	614	581
Kell	1076	555	521
Kennesaw Mountain	1266	631	635
Lassiter	1338	663	675
McEachern	1061	541	520
North Cobb	1173	611	562
Osborne	917	466	451
Pebblebrook	1025	539	486
Pope	1318	661	657
Sprayberry	1074	550	524
Walton	1453	713	740
Wheeler	1378	678	700

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