

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PSAT/NMSQT 1999–2000

Program Description

The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is the multiple choice national examination, which is administered during the month of October of each year by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). This examination serves as a qualifying examination for a number of scholarship programs, and as a practice for the Scholastic Assessment Test I (SAT I) college entrance examination. The PSAT/NMSQT also allows the participants entry into the College Search Service. The College Search Service is a direct selection and recruitment service for colleges who have targeted parameters, such as geographic location, area of interest, ethnic identification, and/or score range. This test was administered on 30 HISD campuses.

The PSAT/NMSQT consists of verbal, math, and writing items measuring the abilities which are important skills needed for academic success in college. The verbal section of the PSAT/NMSQT includes three types of questions: sentence completion, analogy, and critical reading. The mathematics questions are presented using three formats: multiple choice, quantitative comparison, and student-produced response. The math questions are designed for students who have had one year of high school algebra and geometry. The writing skills section is designed to measure the ability to express ideas effectively in standard written English, recognize faults in usage and sentence structure, and use language with sensitivity meaning.

This report provides information on participation in and performance on the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT by HISD students, both districtwide and by school. Specific questions addressed in this report were:

1. What were the participation rates of HISD stu-

dents in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT?

2. What were the mean scores of HISD students on the verbal, math, and writing subtests of the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT?
3. How many HISD students qualified as National Merit finalists?
4. How has participation and performance on the PSAT/NMSQT progressed from 1992–93 to 1999–2000?

Findings

Districtwide

- A total of 5,918 college bound HISD students participated in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT testing program. This represents an increase of 4.1% over the previous year.
- Since 1992–93, overall participation in the PSAT has increased. Female participation rates have been at least six percentage points higher than male and Asians have consistently participated, at least 5% more than any other ethnic group.
- The overall mean scores for 1999–2000 were 44.6 in verbal, 45.8 in math, and 47.2 in writing.
- The overall mean score for the verbal section has remained steady at approximately 44.4, after increasing in 1994–1995. Math mean scores have also remained steady at approximately 45.5 since 1994–1995.
- As of 1992–1993, males have averaged higher scores (39.0–47.1) than females (38.2–46.0) on the verbal section. In the math section, males

have also consistently scored higher (46.3–48.6) than females (42.4–44.5).

- When examining ethnicity, verbal and math scores increased from 1998–99 to 1999–2000 for African-Americans, Asians, Native Americans, and Whites. In the writing section, African-Americans, Asians, and Native Americans improved their PSAT scores.
- In 1999–2000, Asians scored the highest on the math section, then Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics with averages of 55.1, 53.0, 42.0, and 41.2, respectively. In the verbal section, Whites averaged 53.5, followed by Asians, 50.4; African-Americans, 41.1; and Hispanics, 40.2. The writing section showed that Whites again had the highest average with a 53.9, then Asians, 54.1; African-Americans, 44.9; and Hispanics, 44.0.
- From 1992–93 to 1999–2000, Asian students' scores were the highest (51.9–55.1) in the math section, followed by Whites (48.8–53.0), Hispanics (39.9–41.8), and African-Americans (38.7–42.0). In the verbal section, Whites continually score the best (44.0–53.5), followed by Asians (40.4–50.4), African-Americans (34.5–42.4), and Hispanics (33.9–41.4). In both sections, there is a disparity with Asians and Whites scoring much higher than African-Americans and Hispanics.

Juniors

- The participation rate for HISD juniors remained at 37% compared to 1998–99.
- The overall participation was highest for two magnet schools, DeBakey High School (94.1%) and HSPVA (89.9%). Among the comprehensive high schools, the percentage was highest for Bellaire (63.2%) and Lamar (62.2%). In the alternative district, H.P. Carter (83.3%) and Middle College (82.4%) had the highest participation.
- HISD's juniors achieved scores averaging 45.4 on the verbal section, 46.5 on the math section, and 47.9 on the writing section of the PSAT/NMSQT.
- The mean verbal score ranged from 55.5 for Bellaire to 33.0 for H.P. Carter. Math scores ranged from 56.0 for DeBakey High School to 31.1

for Contemporary Learning Center (CLC). In the writing section, the mean scores ranged from 58.6 for Bellaire to 33.0 for Wheatley.

- Four high schools, Bellaire, Debakey, HSPVA, and Lamar, had a mean score above 50 on all three sections.
- Changes from 1998–99 to 1999–2000 in the PSAT verbal score ranged from +4.9 for Kashmere to -4.1 for Sterling. For the math section, changes in the scores ranged from +6.4 for Kashmere to -3.7 for CLC. In the writing section, scores changes ranged from +4.6 for Kashmere and -3.0 for HSLECJ.

Sophomores

- Participation for HISD sophomores increased from 16% to 20%.
- HSPVA had the highest participation rate with 61.3%.
- The following scores were identified with sophomores: math, 45.7; verbal, 44.5; and writing, 46.7.

National Merit Finalists

- The schools with the most National Merit Finalist were Bellaire (40), Lamar (19), and HSPVA (4).
- DeBakey, Lamar, Law Enforcement, Washington and Westbury increased their number of finalists. Lee and Washington showed an increase in the number of students who were National Achievement Finalists. In addition, an increase in finalists for the National Hispanic Recognition was found at Austin, Davis, DeBakey, Jones, and Lamar.

Recommendations

Districtwide

- Identify successful efforts to promote participation and performance among minorities. Share these approaches with other high schools.

Principals

- Incorporate into school planning a systematic effort to increase participation and performance of students taking the PSAT.
- Leverage adoption of new diploma seal require-

ments and programs such as the Texas Scholars Program to provide students with preparation to help them improve performance on the PSAT.

- Utilize existing district funds and resources from the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) to provide students with computers and software to assist them in preparation for the PSAT.

School Staff

- Promote awareness and encourage participation in the PSAT. Provide information to students and

their parents about the benefits of the PSAT, including eligibility for scholarships and placement for college.

- Incorporate college preparation materials and activities in the high school curriculum to help students prepare for the PSAT and other college qualifying examinations.
- Schedule time for students to take practice versions of the PSAT during school hours.

PSAT/NMSQT 1999–2000

Purpose: *To present the results of the October, 1999 administration of the PSAT/NMSQT for HISD students.*

Design: *Descriptive.*

Population: *5,918 juniors and seniors in HISD who took the PSAT/NMSQT during the October, 1999 administration.*

Methods: *Descriptive analyses.*

Findings: *Overall participation increased 4.1% compared to 1998–99. The percentage of juniors who took the test remained the same, 37%, and sophomores increased, 20%. Juniors averaged 45.4 on the verbal section, 46.5 on the math section, and 47.9 on the writing section. Junior participation rates for individual schools ranged from 5.7% to 94.1%. Scores by ethnicity show that in all three sections, Whites ranged from 53.0 to 53.9, Asians from 50.4 to 55.1, African-Americans from 41.1 to 44.9, and Hispanics from 40.2 to 44.0.*

Conclusions: *HISD is continually improving participation and performance in the PSAT. Aggressive efforts on the districtwide level to identify successful efforts that promote participation and performance will inform other high schools of strategies to take. Principals need to incorporate systematic efforts into school planning, leverage the adoption of new diploma seals requirements, and provide students with computers and PSAT software in order to increase participation and performance within their high school. Promotion of the benefits of the PSAT, incorporation of college preparation materials into high school curriculum, and scheduled practice test time on the school staff level will promote awareness and encourage participation in the PSAT.*

Introduction

Program Description

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a national examination administered in the fall of each year by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). One function of the PSAT/NMSQT is to serve as preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), a college admissions examination generally taken later in the junior year or early in the senior year of high school. The PSAT is typically taken in a student's junior year, although some first take the exam in their sophomore year.

The PSAT/NMSQT is also a qualifying examination for many of the scholarship programs sponsored

by corporations, colleges, and universities, and other organizations, including National Merit scholarships. The top 15,000 scorers nationwide are identified as semifinalists for the National Merit Scholarship. To qualify as a finalist for the award, a student must be endorsed and recommended by the school principal, must confirm the NMSQT performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) during the junior year in high school, and must submit an application that gives detailed information about the accomplishments, personal interests and educational goals.

In addition to the National Merit Scholarship winners, other specific recognition is given to high-scoring Hispanic students through the National Hispanic Scholar Program, and to high scoring African-Ameri-

can students through the National Achievement Program for Outstanding Negro Students. All of the achievement scholarship winners are considered to have the greatest potential for future academic success.

Another important benefit for students of the PSAT/NMSQT is the College Search Service, which is operated by the Educational Testing Service. Approximately, 90% of the students taking the PSAT/NMSQT register to participate in this search service. Colleges and universities obtain the names and addresses of the tested students who meet specific parameters set by the colleges, such as geographic location, areas of major interest, and test score range. The colleges then directly contact the students with recruitment information and materials. As a result, the test has come to serve as a selection process for obtaining and bringing the prospective students to the attention of colleges and universities.

The PSAT/NMSQT consists of 52 verbal, 40 math and 39 writing items. The verbal sections of the PSAT/NMSQT includes three types of questions: sentence completion, analogy, and critical reading. The sentence completion questions measure the ability to recognize logical relationships between a pair of words and to recognize logical relationships between parts of a sentence. The analogy questions test the ability of a student to see the relationship between a pair of words and to recognize the similar or parallel relationship in another pair of words. The critical reading questions include reading selections from social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities. The mathematics questions are presented in three formats: multiple choice, quantitative comparison, and student-produced response. The questions are designed for students who have had one year of high school algebra and geometry. The writing section questions are designed to measure the ability to express ideas effectively in standard written English, to recognize faults in usage and structure, and to use language with sensitivity meaning.

Administration

The PSAT/NMSQT is a 2 1/2 hour test. The verbal questions are presented in two 30 minute sections. The mathematics questions are also presented in two 30 minute sections for a total of two hours. Then, the students are allowed 30 minutes for the completion of the writing section. The students are permitted to bring and to use calculators. The high schools administer

the PSAT/NMSQT on their individual campuses. Each school selects one of two alternative test dates, such as a weekday or a Saturday, on which to test their students. A student who is unable to be tested on the day his or her school selects may be tested on the alternative date at another test site.

Although the two testing dates use different versions of the examination, the tests have been equated by the CEEB so that the two versions of the test are equivalent.

Scoring

Three scaled scores are computed for each student: a verbal score, a math score, and a writing score. Each score ranges from 20 to 80; these numbers are analogous to the scaled scores of 200 to 800 generated by the SAT–1. Nationally, the average verbal, math, and writing scores are nearing the midpoint (50) of the 20 to 80 scale. Beginning with the 1994–95 administration, the verbal and math scales were recentered to make the two scores comparable.

An additional score is calculated for determining eligibility for National Merit recognition: the Selection Index (SI), computed by adding the verbal, the math, and the writing scores. The selection index scores are not represented in this report.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to describe the performance and participation of HISD students on the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT compared to previous years. The following research questions were answered:

1. What were the participation rates of HISD students in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT?
2. What were the mean scores of HISD students on the verbal, math, and writing subtests of the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT?
3. How many HISD students qualified as National Merit Scholarship finalists?
4. How has participation and performance in the PSAT/NMSQT progressed from 1992–1993 to 1999–2000?

Methods

Participants

A total of 5,918 college bound students - 3,492 juniors, 2,051 sophomores, and 319 freshmen in HISD participated in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT testing

program. All of these students were selected and recruited at their high schools. A total of 30 HISD high schools had students participating in the testing program.

Data Analysis

Test performance, along with demographic information supplied by the students, was reported to HISD electronically by the CEEB via diskettes. These data, together with enrollment data from the Schools Administrative Student Information (SASI) System, were compiled for analysis. Participation rates were calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the PEIMS fall enrollment for the same group. Participation rates for sophomores and juniors were calculated across the district and by school. The gender and ethnic composition of the junior class 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT participation group were calculated, and were compared with the composition of the 1998–99 HISD junior class as a whole.

Current mean verbal, math, and writing scores for juniors were calculated by school, as well as by gender and ethnicity district wide. Longitudinal analysis was performed on previously reported PSAT/NMSQT data from 1992–93 to 1999–2000. Information was analyzed by graphing participation rates and mean scores overall, by gender, and by ethnicity from 1992–93 to 1999–2000.

Results

What were the participation rates of HISD students in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT?

Districtwide Participation

The junior year is the year when participation qualifies a student for the National Merit Scholarship and for other recognition. Many students take the exam in their sophomore or even freshman year to prepare for the junior year testing. A total of 5,918 HISD students participated in the 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT. These students included 3,492 juniors, 2,051 sophomores, 319 freshmen and 56 other students. This represents an overall increase of 237 students from the 1998–99 school year.

Table 1 shows the numbers and rates of participation for HISD juniors and sophomores in 1996–97 through 1999–2000. The participation rate for juniors stayed the same at 37%. Participation for HISD

Table 1: PSAT Participation by Juniors and Sophomores

		99–00	98–99	97–98	96–97
Juniors	n	3,492	3,534	3,327	3,109
	%	37	37	35	34
Sophomores	n	2,051	2,147	2,179	2,255
	%	20	16	16	20

sophomores increased to 20% from 16%.

Participation and Gender/Ethnicity

Table 2 presents the gender and ethnic composition of the HISD 1998–99 and 1999–2000 junior class PSAT/NMSQT participation group. The number of juniors taking the test decreased slightly from 3,524 to 3,492. The percentage of test-takers by gender remained constant from the previous year. The percentage of test-takers who were Native-American, Asian, and African-American remained constant. However from 1998–99 to 1999–2000, Hispanic participation increased from 35.7% to 36.5% and White participation increased from 21.5% to 22.5%.

For the 1999–2000 administration, the females who took the PSAT/NMSQT represented 41.7% of the females eligible to take the test in the junior class. Likewise, the males represented 31.6% of those junior males eligible to test. Participation among the ethnic groups ranged from 69.3% for Asian students to 27.9% for Hispanic students.

Participation by Schools

A total of 30 HISD high schools had students taking the 1999–2000 PSAT. **Table 3** presents the percentages of the junior and sophomore classes from each participating HISD high school who took part in the PSAT/NMSQT.

There was considerable variation among HISD schools in the percentage of college-bound juniors who took the PSAT. The percentage was highest for two magnet schools, DeBaKey High School (94.1%) and HSPVA (89.9%). Among the comprehensive high schools, the percentage was highest for Bellaire (63.2%) and Lamar (62.2%). For alternative high schools, H.P.Carter (83.3%) and Middle College (82.4%) had the highest percentage. In regards to sophomores, HSPVA (61.3%) and Middle College

Table 2: Gender and Ethnic Composition of HISD Juniors PSAT/NMSQT

Junior Class	Total	Female	Male	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	White
1999	3,492							
Percent of Test-Takers	—	58.5	41.5	31.6	7.8	36.5	<1.0	22.5
Percent of Eligibles	—	41.7	31.6	33.2	69.3	27.9	-	59.6
1998	3,534							
Percent of Test-Takers	—	60.1	39.9	32.6	8.1	35.7	<1.0	21.5

(83.3%) had the highest participation rate.

What were the mean scores of HISD students on the verbal, math and writing subjects of the PSAT?

PSAT Scores by School

Every HISD high school participating in the SAT program also entered students in the PSAT/NMSQT testing program. **Table 4** presents the junior 1999–2000 PSAT/NMSQT mean verbal, math and writing scores by school.

For the 1999–2000 test administration, the mean verbal score ranged from 55.5 for Bellaire High School to 33.0 for Carter Career Center. Math scores ranged from 57.3 for Bellaire High School to 31.1 for Contemporary Learning Center. Writing scores ranged from 58.6 for Bellaire High School to 37.2 for Contemporary Learning Center and Carter Career Center.

Each subtest has a midpoint score of 50.0. Four high schools, Bellaire, DeBakey, HSPVA, and Lamar, had mean scores above 50 on all three subtests. Additionally, Washington High School had a mean math score of 53.7.

When compared to the previous school year, 13 schools witnessed an increase in their mean verbal scores, 17 schools increased their mean math scores, and 15 schools increased their mean writing scores. Bellaire, Furr, HSPVA, Jones, Kashmere, Lee, Scarborough, Washington, and Wheatley all experienced an increase in all three sections. Most notably, Kashmere had a large increase in verbal, math and writing with increases of 4.9, 6.4, and 4.6 respectively. Finally, 13 schools increased their number of students who participated on the PSAT.

Performance and Gender/Ethnicity

PSAT scores by gender and for each ethnic group comprising the HISD junior student population are

Table 3: Participation of Junior and Sophomores in the PSAT: 1999–2000

School	% of Juniors	% of Sophomores
Austin	21.3	17.0
Bellaire	63.2	53.4
H.P. Carter	83.3	-
CLC	5.7	4.2
Davis	35.9	16.0
DeBakey	94.1	31.2
Foley's	-	-
Furr	30.5	22.0
Sam Houston	43.7	17.7
HSPVA	89.9	61.3
Jones	57.7	13.9
Jordan	27.0	6.5
Kashmere	45.2	23.0
Lamar	62.2	21.3
HSLECJ	55.8	42.8
Lee	20.9	8.4
Madison	29.6	14.8
Middle College	82.4	83.3
Milby	22.1	11.6
Reagan	18.5	12.3
Scarborough	41.8	19.8
Sharpstown	24.9	9.1
Sterling	27.6	7.4
Waltrip	27.7	21.2
Washington	36.7	29.0
Westbury	38.0	13.5
Wheatley	26.0	20.2
Worthing	31.6	18.2
Yates	28.2	21.4

Table 4: PSAT Mean Verbal, Math and Writing Scores by School of HISD Juniors

School	1999–2000 Scores				1998–99 Scores				Difference			
	n	Verbal	Math	Writing	n	Verbal	Math	Writing	n	Verbal	Math	Writing
Austin	108	36.1	40.3	38.8	96	38.4	39.2	39.8	12	-2.3	1.1	-1.0
Bellaire	431	55.5	57.3	58.6	460	52.9	55.7	58.5	-29	2.6	1.6	.1
H.P. Carter	20	33.0	34.1	37.2	13	34.4	32.2	36.4	7	-1.4	1.9	.8
CLC	9	34.1	31.1	37.2	11	37.8	34.8	38.2	-2	-3.7	-3.7	-1.0
Davis	123	36.9	42.9	40.6	84	39.7	42.2	41.8	39	-2.8	.7	-1.2
DeBakey	207	54.5	56.0	56.4	125	53.5	55.9	58.8	82	1.0	.1	-2.4
Foley's	1	*	*	*	6	56.0	47.3	49.0	-5	-	-	-
Furr	81	37.7	38.0	42.1	121	37.4	37.3	38.7	-40	.3	.7	3.4
Sam Houston	237	37.1	38.6	40.5	212	37.4	37.9	40.0	25	-.3	.7	.5
HSPVA	152	54.7	52.5	57.3	113	52.7	51.4	56.6	39	2.0	1.1	.7
Jones	158	44.5	44.2	45.5	116	44.2	42.6	44.6	42	.3	1.6	.9
Jordan	73	38.3	41.2	41.2	106	40.6	41.7	42.7	-33	-2.3	-.5	-1.5
Kashmere	75	41.6	43.4	43.7	79	36.7	37.0	39.1	-4	4.9	6.4	4.6
Lamar	386	52.4	51.3	54.4	369	52.2	52.6	56.3	17	.2	-1.3	-1.9
HSLECJ	125	45.1	43.1	47.3	122	46.8	44.4	50.3	3	-1.7	-1.3	-3.0
Lee	141	45.6	44.9	48.3	130	44.1	44.2	47.5	11	1.5	.7	.8
Madison	82	40.0	42.5	41.3	110	41.0	40.9	40.8	-28	-1.0	1.6	.5
Milby	140	40.6	43.3	44.1	184	40.8	44.2	46.2	-44	-.2	-.9	-2.1
Middle College	14	36.6	37.5	38.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reagan	79	38.7	39.7	42.9	90	39.7	41.8	45.8	-11	-1.0	-2.1	-2.9
Scarborough	77	44.6	45.1	45.8	90	44.0	42.0	44.8	-13	.6	3.1	1.0
Sharpstown	88	42.1	43.2	45.1	87	42.7	43.3	46.3	1	-.6	-.1	-1.2
Sterling	102	39.3	41.4	41.0	75	43.4	44.5	43.2	27	-4.1	-3.1	-2.2
Waltrip	92	44.4	43.3	48.2	97	43.9	43.9	47.8	-5	.5	-.6	.4
Washington	113	48.9	53.7	49.5	105	48.3	51.7	49.0	8	.6	2.0	.5
Westbury	144	41.7	41.8	44.3	252	40.4	42.4	46.2	-108	1.3	-.6	-1.9
Wheatley	34	33.8	40.4	37.5	43	33.6	34.9	36.8	-9	.2	5.5	.7
Worthing	111	39.7	42.6	42.6	125	40.6	41.7	42.1	-14	-.9	.9	.5
Yates	89	38.9	40.8	40.3	113	39.3	35.7	39.7	-24	-.4	5.1	.6

* Scores not reported for fewer than five students

shown in **Table 5**.

The scores for females and males on the PSAT showed an increase in both verbal and math, while writing stayed the same. The disparity of scores between males and females in the math section continued to increase in 1999–2000. Both genders also had an increase in participation.

When looking at ethnicity, African-Americans, Asians, and Native Americans, all increased their

scores in every section. However, Hispanics and the category of “other” showed a decline in every section for 1999–2000 compared to 1998–99. Whites improved in the verbal and math sections but declined in the writing section. Finally, the overall participation in the PSAT shows an increase for Hispanics, Native Americans, and Whites, but a decline in participation is evident for African-Americans and Asians.

Table 5: 1998–99 and 1999–2000 PSAT Verbal, Math, and Writing Scores by Ethnicity and Gender of HISD Juniors

Ethnicity	1999–2000				1998–99			
	n	Verbal	Math	Writing	n	Verbal	Math	Writing
African-American	1,089	42.5	43.3	44.9	1,132	41.8	41.6	44.2
Asian	269	51.9	56.5	54.1	281	48.9	54.4	53.8
Hispanic	1,258	40.7	42.5	44.0	1,237	44.4	44.4	46.5
Native American	10	48.8	46.8	46.1	9	41.8	41.8	44.8
White	774	54.3	53.9	56.3	747	53.0	53.2	56.5
Other	47	48.1	47.8	48.7	62	50.0	49.8	52.8
No Response	45	48.3	48.5	48.7	66	43.6	43.3	46.5
Gender								
Female	2,039	44.5	45.1	48.1	2,097	44.2	44.1	48.1
Male	1,448	46.6	48.5	47.8	1,391	45.3	47.4	47.8
No Response	5	32.8	38.8	37.6	46	44.0	45.5	47.6

How many HISD students qualified as National Merit Scholarship finalists?

Table 6 presents the number of HISD seniors for the past two years who were National Merit Scholarship finalists based on the PSAT results from their junior year. The number of National Merit and National Achievement Finalists decreased compared to 1998–99. However, the number of National Hispanic

Recognition Finalists increased compared to 1998–99.

For the National Merit Scholarship, Debakey, Lamar, Washington, and Westbury showed an increase in finalists compared to 1998–1999. Lamar had the largest increase in National Merit finalist (from 12 to 19). Lee and Washington showed an increase in their number of National Achievement Scholarships. Both high schools increased by one. Finally, for the National Hispanic Recognition Scholarship, Davis,

Table 6: National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test Finalists for HISD Seniors by Graduating Class

School	National Merit Finalist		National Achievement		National Hispanic Recognition	
	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
Austin	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bellaire	40	44	1	4	4	12
Davis	0	0	0	0	2	0
DeBakey	3	1	3	4	11	6
Sam Houston	0	0	0	0	0	1
HSPVA	4	6	0	1	2	3
Jones	2	2	0	0	1	0
Lamar	19	12	2	6	13	0
Law Enforcement	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lee	0	1	1	0	0	0
Madison	0	0	0	1	0	0
Milby	0	0	0	0	3	3
Waltrip	0	0	0	1	0	2
Washington	2	1	2	1	0	2
Westbury	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	73	67	9	18	37	30

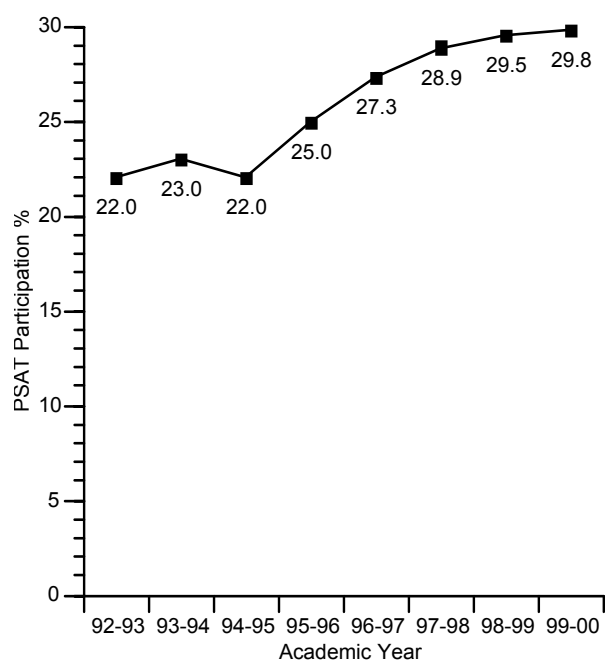


Figure 1: Overall HISD Participation in the PSAT/NMSQT from 1992–93 to 1999–2000.

Debakey, Jones, and Lamar increased in the number of students awarded this honor. Most notably, Lamar increased from zero recipients in 1998–99 to 13 recipients in 1999–2000.

How has participation and performance in the PSAT/NMSQT progressed from 1992–93 to 1999–2000?

Participation

When looking at the overall participation and performance of HISD in the PSAT/NMSQT, many trends are apparent. **Figure 1** shows how participation overall has changed from 1992–93 to 1999–2000. In 1992, participation in the PSAT within HISD was 22 percent. Over the past seven years, participation has slowly increased every year, except for 1994–95. In 1999–2000, the overall participation rate was 30 percent.

Figure 2 shows PSAT/NMSQT participation by gender. From 1992–93 to 1999–2000, a higher percentage of females have participated in the PSAT than males. Participation for both genders has increased steadily over the past seven years as well, except for 1994–95.

Trends in participation can also be seen when looking at ethnicity. **Figure 3** shows that Asians throughout the years have participated the most in the PSAT, followed by Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. For Asians, participation has steadily increased until this year where it declined from 65.2% in

1998–99 to 62.3%. Whites, on the other hand, have not increased participation by much.

Mean Scores

Since 1992–93, the mean scores overall have also steadily increased. **Table 7** exhibits that after the test was recentered in 1994–95, verbal scores took a large jump from 38.5 to 46.4. From that time on, the verbal mean scores declined slightly but have remained steady since 1996–97. This figure also shows that the math mean scores have remained steady since 1994–95, with an average score of 45. In 1992–93, participation was at 45.2%. For 1999–2000, participation for Whites only increased to 50.1%. African-Americans have also participated more in the PSAT over the past seven years. However, their participation overall is much lower than Asians and Whites, with 26.1% taking part in the 1999–2000 testing period. Hispanics have a lower participation rate, 21.7%, than African-Americans. However, Hispanics have slowly increased their participation over the past 7 years.

When examining gender in **Table 7**, the PSAT mean verbal scores for males have always been higher than females. However, the difference is usually not more than a point. In addition, fluctuations in scores have remained similar for both genders from 1992–93 to 1999–2000. The PSAT mean math scores exhibit a greater difference between males

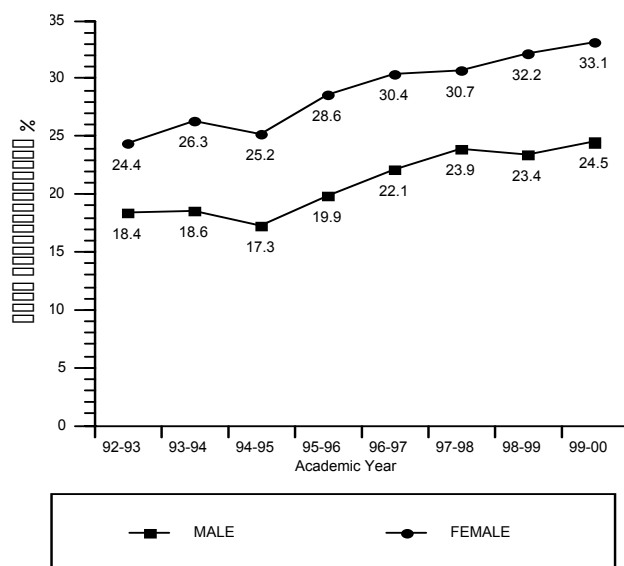


Figure 2: Overall HISD Participation by Gender in the PSAT/NMSQT from 1992–93 to 1999–2000.

also shows that there is a great disparity in mean math scores between the higher scoring Asians and Whites and the lower scoring African-Americans and Hispanics. However, between African-Americans and Hispanics, mean scores tend to crisscross with very close scores. Asians continue to perform higher than every other ethnicity, but the difference between Asians and Whites seems to be declining, with the exception of 1999–2000. The PSAT Verbal mean scores by ethnicity show more of a variation between groups than any of the other scores. Whites tend to perform the highest, followed by Asians, African-Americans and Hispanics. Between Whites and Asians, the average difference is 2.5%. African-Americans compared to Hispanics tend to score about the same, but African-Americans usually perform a little better.

Figure 3: Overall HISD Participation by Ethnicity in the PSAT/NMSQT for 1992–93 to 1999–2000.

and females performance. Males have continually scored higher on the math section by an average of 1.5. The change in scores year to year have also been consistently similar between genders. Writing scores were not examined since this section was not implemented until 1997–98.

The comparison of ethnicity shows that differences between scores are not consistent. **Table 7**

Discussion

The results of this year's PSAT scores show that overall participation and scores are improving. However, by examining the longitudinal data, it becomes apparent that disparities between schools and students have not improved enough. Some schools consistently perform well and have a high participation rate. Other schools, however, consistently perform low and/or participate in low numbers. In addition, African-Americans and Hispanics through the years have performed lower and in lower numbers than Whites and Asians.

Table 7: 1992–93 to 1999–2000 PSAT Math and Verbal Mean Scores

Math Mean Scores: 1992–93 to 1999–2000							
<u>Year</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>White</u>
92–93	44.3	42.4	46.7	51.9	40.1	39.0	48.8
93–94	44.0	42.3	46.6	52.5	39.9	38.7	49.7
94–95	46.1	44.4	48.6	54.3	41.8	41.1	52.1
95–96	45.8	44.0	48.4	54.4	41.3	41.3	52.3
96–97	45.3	44.1	46.9	53.7	41.1	41.7	52.1
97–98	44.8	43.7	46.3	53.4	41.2	40.6	52.5
98–99	44.9	43.6	46.8	52.4	41.5	41.1	52.0
99–00	45.8	44.5	47.7	55.1	41.2	42.0	53.0
Verbal Math Scores: 1992–93 to 1999–2000							
<u>Year</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>White</u>
92–93	38.5	38.2	39.0	40.4	33.9	34.8	44.0
93–94	38.5	38.3	39.0	41.7	34.4	34.5	44.7
94–95	46.4	46.0	47.1	49.6	42.0	42.4	53.1
95–96	45.3	44.6	46.3	49.3	40.8	42.0	52.1
96–97	44.4	44.2	44.8	48.5	39.8	41.4	52.6
97–98	44.8	44.5	45.2	48.7	41.4	41.2	53.1
98–99	43.9	43.5	44.5	46.9	40.2	41.4	51.5
99–00	44.6	44.0	45.6	50.4	40.2	41.1	53.5

When examining the schools separately, the connection is easily made that the lower participating schools are the one's where the majority of the population is Hispanic and/or African-American. A possible solution to this problem would be to emphasize participation in the PSAT at these schools. A possible outcome of this participation would be a greater familiarity with college entrance exams for the students and the school as a whole. As a result, the disparity in scores and participation between ethnicity could be reduced.

Participation should also be promoted because the PSAT gives each student an individual profile of his or her strengths and weaknesses in each subject. These profiles can then help students improve their academic performance overall. Schools should also be made aware that overall profiles are given to each school that participates in the PSAT. This profile can be an indicator to the school of what areas need improvement.

Recommendations

Districtwide

- Identify successful efforts to promote participation and performance among minorities. Share these approaches with other high schools.

Principals

- Incorporate into school planning a systematic effort to increase participation and performance of students taking the PSAT.
- Leverage adoption of new diploma seal requirements and programs such as Texas scholars to provide students with preparation to help them improve performance on the PSAT.
- Utilize existing district funds and resources from the CEEB to provide students with computers and software.

School Staff

- Promote awareness and encourage participation in the PSAT. Provide information to students and their parents about the benefits of the PSAT, including eligibility for scholarships and placement for college.
- Incorporate college preparation materials and activities in the high school curriculum to help students prepare for the PSAT and other college qualifying examinations.
- Schedule time for students to take practice versions of the PSAT during school hours.

