CollegeBoard

Success Spotlight

Turning Early Insight into Stronger Math Pathways with SAT Suite Data and AP

Our district once approached assessment results by asking, "How did students do?" Then, we realized this question was limited to data and scores, and we needed to shift our mindset. So, we began asking our schools to consider a question more useful for the district: "What do these results tell us students still need to learn, and how should instruction respond?" Guided by SAT® Suite of Assessments data, that shift is helping more students reach rigorous coursework, including AP® Precalculus, earlier.

Identifying the Opportunity

Nevada's Clark County School District (CCSD), the nation's fifth-largest district with nearly 300,000 students, serves more than 115,000 in grades 8–12.

In CCSD, we administer two PSAT-related assessments from the SAT Suite:the PSAT™ 8/9 to all 8th graders and the PSAT/NMSQT® to all 10th graders. This helps us understand student performance and identify those ready for advanced learning.

These assessments also provide an indicator of college and career readiness years before students take a college admission test, allowing time to spot student strengths and address areas for improvement while it can still make a difference. When students see their own data, they can confidently map a postsecondary path that reflects their strengths and interests.

We also recognize that college-level math is often a barrier to persistence and completion for students. In our district, among 2025 10th-grade PSAT/NMSQT test takers, 21% met math benchmarks, below the state 10th-grade average of 25% and national average of 38%. Similarly, 19% of our 2025 PSAT 8/9 test takers met math benchmarks, below the state 8th-grade average of 20% and national 8th-grade average of 32%.

As these math results suggest, many students face this challenge on their postsecondary paths, which can narrow their options, not only for four-year degrees but also for trade and technical education or military service. We saw an opportunity to use SAT Suite data to strengthen math instruction well before students reach that barrier.

Turning Opportunity into Action

Fundamentally, we aimed to build a structure that supports our students' postsecondary success. To do that, we needed to fully understand and respond to each student's demonstrated college and career readiness. Therein lies the power of the SAT Suite and the data it delivers. Here is a breakdown of the steps we took to put that data to work:

1. Use SAT Suite results to invite more students to AP courses. The SAT Suite's College and Career Readiness Benchmarks gave us a starting point. On the PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT, these benchmarks show whether a student's Reading and Writing and Math scores are on track for college and career readiness, giving

CCSD
CLARK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT
Clark County School District

LOCATION
Las Vegas, NV

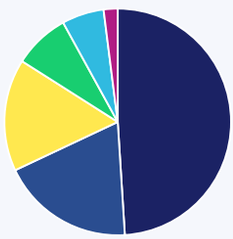
DEMOGRAPHICS (2025-26)

291,587
Total district enrollment

22,910
Grade 8 enrollment

97,339
Grades 9–12 enrollment

100%
Free/reduced-price meal–eligible
based on USDA Community Eligibility Program



49% Hispanic
19% White
16% Black
8% 2 or more races
6% Other
2% Asian/Pacific Islander

us a broad picture of where students stand. AP Potential™ gave us specifics, including students who might not have been identified through our traditional placement practices. This free online tool uses data from the SAT Suite to identify students who are likely to earn a score of 3 or higher on one or more specific AP Exams. Integrated into our student information system since 2021, it generates ready-to-use rosters from our students' PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT results and directly informs academic planning. We use those rosters to widen the pool, not narrow it: Students who aren't on a roster can still choose to enroll in AP.

2. Reimagine mathematics instruction using SAT Suite data. We shifted how we use SAT Suite results—from a summary measure to an actionable tool. We held professional learning for middle and high school leaders on using PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT reports to identify mathematical skill gaps, analyze patterns across student groups, and plan instructional responses.

3. Replace honors precalculus with AP Precalculus. We already had students raising their hands for advanced precalculus by electing an honors class. When AP Precalculus became available, we made one of our most consequential decisions: In 2023-24, we adopted AP Precalculus as our sole advanced precalculus option districtwide. After all, if students are already prepared to take advanced precalculus, why not give them the opportunity to potentially earn college credit?

Now, students no longer have to choose between honors and AP—each offered the same level of rigor, but AP Precalculus offered the chance at college credit. AP Precalculus became a natural step in the math sequence, not an extra choice students had to seek out.

This also creates value for more students, not just those preparing for calculus, by opening a wider range of postsecondary doors. Additionally, it gives students who take Algebra 1 in grade 9 a path to an AP math course within their core math sequence.

4. Invest in educators. Expanding access comes with a responsibility to support our teachers. We added AP Precalculus to our Silver State AP Summer Institute so teachers could prepare before the course was launched, and we continue offering job-embedded professional learning throughout the year. We also created a districtwide AP Precalculus professional learning community to connect teachers doing the same work across many different school communities.

5. Build master schedules around readiness. We now build master schedules more intentionally so that students identified as ready have seats in advanced courses. AP Potential is now part of our master scheduling, guiding us as we add courses and place students in the courses that are right for them.

Evaluating the Outcomes

Our AP course enrollments fell during the pandemic, reaching a low of 24,990 in 2021-22. Since then, as we've used SAT Suite results and AP Potential to broaden access, AP course enrollments have grown every year, reaching 34,135 in 2025-26. That's 37% above the low point and higher than our 2019-20 level of 31,825.

Exam participation has also grown alongside enrollment, rising 62% from 19,975 AP Exams in 2021-22 to 32,426 in 2025-26, and now nearly matches course enrollments. Scores of 3 or higher grew even faster, up 98% from 10,175 to 20,120, which raised the share of scores of 3 or higher from 51% to 62%. For us, this has shifted mindsets and shown us that when we treat readiness as something students discover rather than something they must prove, more students rise to the challenge—and succeed.

AP Precalculus results tell a similar story. Since we introduced the course in 2023-24, enrollment has grown 49% through the 2025-26 school year. Notably, during the 2025-26

AP PROGRAM (2025-26)

34,135
Total AP course enrollments

20,548
Individual students enrolled in AP

23.3%
Grades 9–12 students enrolled in AP classes in schools offering AP

2,581
Total AP Precalculus enrollment

73.8%
AP Precalculus Exam takers earning a 3 or higher

SAT SUITE (2025-26)

19,547
Total PSAT 8/9 test takers

23,292
Total PSAT/NMSQT test takers

25,354
Students with AP Potential

school year, 27.7% of our AP Precalculus students (716) were taking an AP course for the first time. The number of students earning scores of 3 or higher on the AP Precalculus Exam has also risen from 999 in 2024 to 1,826 in 2026, an increase of 83%.

We have found that when PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT assessment data are used as an early indicator of potential, they become a catalyst for continuous improvement rather than simply a report of past performance. This has created an environment where expanding access and raising achievement don't compete—they've grown together.



Practical Pointers

- **Start with the PSAT 8/9:** Results from grade 8 can inform grade 9 course planning. Use AP Potential to identify students likely to succeed in AP courses across content areas—including those who might otherwise be overlooked—and plan offerings accordingly.
- **Make AP the Advanced Option:** If you already offer honors precalculus, convert those sections to AP Precalculus. Students cover the same content and gain the opportunity to earn college credit.
- **Schedule for Readiness:** Identifying students ready for advanced coursework earlier gives you time to build master schedules with seats for them.
- **Prepare Teachers for Course Launch:** Build in time for teachers to attend an AP Summer Institute and connect with colleagues teaching the same course.
- **Build Systems Around Results:** Look beyond test administration. Plan how schools will interpret the data, connect students to resources, and use results in course placement and postsecondary planning.

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Educator Perspectives



Kenya Jackson
Coordinator of Innovative Programs
Clark County School District

"Some of our schools that have engaged most deeply in this work have asked, 'Why don't we have an opportunity to do this even earlier than grade 8?' That question speaks to the value they see in having actionable information early enough to actually change a student's trajectory. The earlier we can help students recognize their potential and understand the opportunities available to them, the more time we have to help them build a high school experience that prepares them for what comes next."



Jennifer Lile
Director, Mathematics
Clark County School District

"We are, by design, creating systems that provide opportunities for students rather than leaving students to find those opportunities themselves. By embedding AP Precalculus into the mathematics progression, we are helping ensure that a student's pathway through CCSD intentionally leads toward greater opportunity, readiness, and choice after graduation."

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