

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

# Turning Data Into Action: A Blueprint for Success Using the SAT Suite and AP Potential

In Yonkers Public Schools (YPS), every student's future matters. Over the past decade, YPS has raised its graduation rate from 78% to more than 90%—outpacing state averages and proving that success is within reach for all. But we're not stopping there. Our focus now is ensuring graduates are not just walking across the stage but stepping confidently into college and beyond. That's why we've doubled down on using the SAT® Suite of Assessments and AP Potential™ to open doors, remove barriers, and expand opportunity for every student.

### IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITY

In our district, we educate approximately 24,000 preK–12 students and offer nine secondary and high school experiences distributed among traditional programs, specialty academies, and early college studies.

Many factors are currently at play in YPS, including Yonkers 2030, our ambitious strategic plan guiding our district's work over the next five years. In the plan, we identified “academic programs and support” as an area for improvement, with a specific goal to “support teachers with data-driven instruction and provide real-time insights to help students succeed.”

We are also aligning our efforts with the New York State Education Department's Portrait of a Graduate, with the collective goal to “ensure every student graduates, not only academically prepared, but equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.”

College Board programs are integral to all this work.

### TURNING OPPORTUNITY INTO ACTION

As the first district in New York State to adopt the entire SAT Suite of Assessments, including the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9, we pride ourselves on consistently high graduation rates and a college-going culture. In parallel, we recognize the importance of strengthening our graduates' ability to persist in their college journey, bringing greater significance to our use of the SAT Suite and Advanced Placement® (AP®).

Parents are a critical part of our “success team.” Since many of our families experience both time and financial challenges—73% of our students are economically disadvantaged—we pay for all assessments and offer them during the school day.

Offering the SAT and PSAT-related assessments for free on a school day removes potential hurdles such as cost or transportation and has resulted in strong participation with more than 80% of our students tested on average each year, with some schools exceeding 90%.



#### DISTRICT

Yonkers Public Schools

#### LOCATION

Yonkers, NY

#### DEMOGRAPHICS (2024-25)

**23,941**

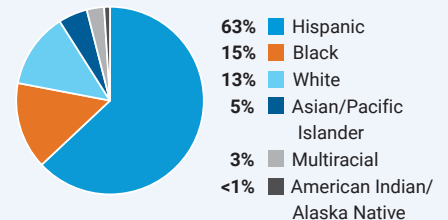
Total enrollment

**7,291**

Grade 9-12 enrollment

**73%**

Economically disadvantaged



#### SAT SUITE PROGRAM

**1,452**

PSAT 8/9 Test Takers

**1,424**

PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT Test Takers

**1,551**

SAT School Day Test Takers

## OUR BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

We've identified three factors essential for reaching our college readiness and attainment goals:

- **Monitor progress:** By administering the PSAT 8/9 to our 9th graders, we're able to receive an early benchmark for our students. The PSAT 10 provides the next performance snapshot and further familiarizes them with the test. Our 11th graders take the PSAT/NMSQT, giving them a chance to vie for a National Merit Scholarship and providing continued preparation for the SAT. The data gathered from each assessment allow us to assess areas of student and instructional strengths and opportunities. This directly supports our commitment to support teachers with data-driven instruction.
- **Provide rigor for college readiness:** To continually strengthen our Evidence-Based Reading and Writing college readiness benchmarks, we're layering in advanced learning. Through Advanced Placement courses, our students gain exposure to rigorous content, learn to navigate unfamiliar academic environments, and can visualize themselves succeeding in spaces that may have felt out of reach.
- **Expand advanced learning:** Our strategic plan commits us to grow AP participation from 15% to 25% by 2030. We're in the process of converting our 10th grade English courses to English 10: AP Seminar to provide our students with exposure to more rigorous coursework earlier in high school. In addition, we're working to change the narrative for both students and administrators. By using AP Potential, we now have data to proactively identify students likely to succeed but may not have seen themselves as "AP students." This helps inform our school counselors' conversations with students and supports teachers and administrative leaders in course planning, allowing us to design a master schedule that aligns course offerings with data-informed student readiness.

YPS is committed to equipping students with critical thinking, time management, and study skills needed for postsecondary and life skills achievements. As senior Isaiah M. shared, "I'm grateful that Yonkers Public Schools supported my testing journey by offering free test dates and access to College Board programs. These exams have made me more disciplined, and they've made me realize how much I truly care about my future."

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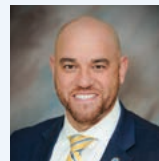
## PRACTICAL POINTERS

- **Empower Principals:** Encourage principals to develop robust and creative communication and outreach plans to parents so they can be sure their student is present and prepared for test day.
- **Partner with Higher Education:** Create alliances with colleges to ensure your district provides the best possible preparation, enabling graduates to start strong and persist.
- **Let the Data Speak:** When trying to change the narrative, rely on metrics to help tell the story. It's not uncommon for results to surprise educators, students, and parents alike.

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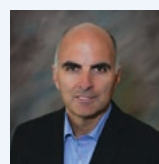
Explore more success spotlights at:  
[cb.org/spotlight](https://cb.org/spotlight)

## EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES



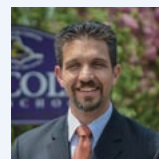
**Anibal Soler, Jr.**  
Superintendent  
Yonkers Public Schools

"Expanding access to the SAT Suite and AP courses gives our students opportunities to challenge themselves, earn college credit, and strengthen their readiness for life after graduation. These programs also provide us with valuable data that helps guide instruction and supports our mission to ensure every student in Yonkers Public Schools is equipped to achieve at the highest levels. Investing in these pathways directly supports our Yonkers 2030 vision of advancement, engagement, and empowerment for all."



**Don DeMatteo**  
Principal  
Yonkers Montessori  
Academy

"College Board testing and college preparation are infused in everything we do. Practice and awareness of the SAT as a part of postsecondary planning begin as early as grade 9. Teachers review College Board data with students and connect the data to subject topics."



**Ian Sherman**  
Principal  
Lincoln High School

"We begin the year with grade-level assemblies where we emphasize the importance of SAT School Day and its role in our students' academic journey. We also communicate with families through multiple emails and phone calls to ensure they understand the significance of the day."