



WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Westport Board of Education Members
From: Dr. Anthony Buono, Assistant Superintendent, Stafford Thomas, Staples High School Principal
Re: Staples High School Grade 9 Performance Indicators
Date June 1, 2023

The current grade 9 cohort experienced the combined middle schools at Bedford for their 6th grade year, and half of their 7th grade year. They also experienced the Covid shutdown in the spring of 6th grade and the hybrid model in 7th grade. In order to assess their progress and the subsequent impact of these experiences, the Staples administration has worked with Dr. Anthony Buono to develop a composite of informative indicators.

This composite of indicators is intended to help inform the district of the progress of this cohort. It is not designed to be definitive as no one measure, or composite of measures, can definitively tell the story. Yet, there is value in reviewing these indicators.

The list for review for grade 9 performance includes: First Semester Unweighted GPA, PSAT, Attendance, Crisis Forms (i.e. mental health crisis referrals), Referrals to Special Education, and Faculty Recommendations for Honors/AP courses. Where possible, these numbers are contextualized by comparing to previous years.

Dr. Buono and Staples Principal, Stafford Thomas, will provide a brief overview and be available for questions from the Board.

First Semester Unweighted GPA	Class of 26: 3.6025 Class of 25: 3.6007 Class of 24: 3.4951 Class of 23: 3.5357
PSAT 9	2019: 536ERW/524 Math 2020: 554 ERW/549 Math 2021: 544 ERW/536 Math 2022: 544 ERW/540 Math 2023: 537 ERW/534 Math
Attendance	2022- 96% daily avg. 2023- 95% daily avg.

Crisis Forms	2020-21=2	2021-22=14	2022-23=6
Referrals to Special Education	2020-21=16 (6 determined eligible)	2021-22=23 (9 determined eligible)	2022-23=36 (4 determined eligible, 7 pending, as of 5/26/23)
Faculty Recommendation for Honors/AP	2022=257	2023=232	

Based on the performance data gathered above, the numbers tell us that macro level performance metrics of our 9th grade class appear to be on par with prior cohorts of 9th graders. While this data does not tell the entire story or stories of specific students, it does provide a snapshot of the overall 9th grade performance. That said, we acknowledge and are aware that subgroups of students and individual students continue to require additional support, and our staff works collaboratively and creatively to meet these needs.

The PSAT example shows that 9th grade student scores were higher during the pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic numbers. The number of honors/AP recommendations for the class of 2026 heading into 10th grade was down a bit from the class of 2025 heading into 10th grade, but well within the year-to-year fluctuations of this data set.

Mean PSAT 8/9 scores for the class of 2026 taken this March reflect a slight decrease from the previous three years, yet an increase from 2019 when the test was taken pre-pandemic. We typically see this kind of variation year to year on the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP due to a variety of factors, most notably the academic strength of a particular cohort. In line with recent years, approximately 85% of students in the class of 2026 met standards in both Evidence-Based Reading & Writing and Math.

The average first semester unweighted GPA for the class of 2026 is actually higher than GPAs for 9th graders in previous years. Despite stresses and challenges they may face, our 9th grade students continue to perform at a high level academically. Overall, we are not seeing so dramatic of a change that would stand out beyond what we typically see in fluctuations year to year, cohort to cohort.

Crisis forms are completed for students who experience a mental health crisis in school or outside of school when the school becomes aware. These situations typically involve self-harm, suicidal ideation, or threats to self or others. Of course, the school takes these situations seriously, addressing them through established and research based protocols, collaboration with students and families, and working closely with community providers. The current 9th grade class has had fewer crisis forms completed than the prior year.

Special education referrals are higher this year than in previous years. This appears to be largely due to an increase in parent requests. Although we experienced an increase in referrals, the number of students that qualified for special education services appears to align with historical numbers. However, this still remains to be seen as we have a handful of referrals that remain pending.