

Press Release



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LRHSD Responds to NJ School Performance Reports

Shamong, NJ - Administrators in the Lenape Regional High School District (LRHSD) have received the New Jersey (NJ) School Performance Reports (SPR) for the 2017-2018 school year for the district's four high schools: Lenape, Shawnee, Cherokee and Seneca. The district is pleased to share the highlights and provide context to aid in understanding what the reported figures mean in terms of the LRHSD's performance.

“Once again, the report validates the reputation we have built as a high-achieving district,” said LRHSD Superintendent Carol Birnbohm, Ed.D. “The graduation rate, test scores and low rate of absenteeism at each of our high schools are exceptional and exceed state averages. Rather than rest on our laurels, the School Performance Reports are motivation to continue striving for excellence and developing innovative ways to support our students and staff.”

2017-2018 Highlights:

- LRHSD graduation rate of 96 percent exceeds the state average
- LRHSD average SAT score of 1144 exceeds the state average
- LRHSD average PSAT score of 999 exceeds the state average
- LRHSD percent of students enrolled in AP courses (41%) exceeds the state average (35%)
- LRHSD percent of students still enrolled in post-secondary education 16 months after graduation (89%) exceeds the state average (78%)
- LRHSD chronic absenteeism rate (8.8%) is well below the state average (14.9%) for high schools
- LRHSD percent of students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course (25%) exceeds the state average (13%)
- LRHSD percent of students participating in at least one Career and Technical Education (CTE) course (18%) exceeds the state average (7%)

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School Narrative

This year, for the second time, each school’s narrative was included in the SPR, thus enabling the school to share its unique “personality”. Also for the first time, the narratives were organized around clear themes, including highlights and accomplishments, courses and curriculum, sports and clubs, and much more.

“I commend the NJ Department of Education for including school narratives and allowing our schools to tell their respective stories,” said Birnbohm. “Yes, the figures in the report verify that each of our schools are high-achieving, but the narratives tell how each school uniquely supports students in attaining excellence. Lenape, Shawnee, Cherokee and Seneca are places where students find their voices, where they discover, develop, and maximize their potential and, by capitalizing on countless opportunities, are prepared for success in college and careers.”

Graduation Rates

LRHSD’s four-year graduation rate of 96 percent is one of the highest in the county, and far exceeds the state-wide rate of 90.9 percent. The district’s dropout rate of 0.3 percent also is lower than the state average of 1.2 percent.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data in the NJ School Performance Report, the district’s full-time, post-secondary enrollment rate, measured 16 months after high school graduation, is 89 percent, which exceeds the state average of 78 percent. The LRHSD also participates in the NSC Student Tracker program, which enables the district to monitor the success of its graduates while they pursue their post-secondary education, which further supports the district’s “Two Graduations” initiative.

According to Birnbohm, the “Two Graduations” initiative encourages LRHSD students to think beyond high school graduation to plan to complete post-secondary degrees, career certifications or military service, the foundation for success in many careers and life.

PSAT/SAT

LRHSD’s graduates’ success in college can be projected in part through SAT and PSAT scores. All LRHSD students who plan to attend college take the PSAT, at no additional cost to parents, in ninth, tenth and eleventh grades. With a nearly 100 percent PSAT participation rate and average PSAT score

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of 999, the district surpassed not only the state’s PSAT participation rate of 85 percent, but also the state’s average PSAT score by 43 points.

“Our high-level PSAT participation and performance help lay the foundation for our SAT performance, as our district SAT average of 1144 exceeds the state average by 59 points. Higher than average SAT scores are one indicator of our graduates’ potential success in college,” emphasized Birnbohm.

AP Courses

Additionally, the LRHSD offers 24 AP courses; a score of 3 or greater on the AP assessments makes students eligible to receive college credit. According to Birnbohm, 79 percent of all LRHSD AP test scores were 3 or higher. And, because LRHSD has 41 percent of students enrolled in AP courses, which exceeds the state average of 35 percent, the district boasts more students with AP scores of 3 or higher than most other districts in the state.

CAP Program

The district offers a popular dual enrollment College Acceleration Program (CAP) in partnership with Rowan College at Burlington County and Rowan University, which enables students to earn college credits via 66 LRHSD courses. The district-wide percent of students enrolled in one or more dual enrollment courses is nearly double the state-wide percentage: 25 percent district-wide compared to 13 percent for the state. Out of the LRHSD’s entire student population in 2017-2018, 1,373 students earned more than 10,061 college credits through the district’s CAP.

PARCC

The district met its annual targets for both the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math PARCC. However, the district realizes that PARCC scores are not an accurate measure of its students’ success and not reflective of its students’ achievement for a variety of reasons.

For instance, the scores of students who take Algebra 1 and Geometry PARCC assessments in seventh and eighth grade are not calculated as part of LRHSD Math performance and thus not included in the LRHSD NJ School Performance Reports. Because many LRHSD students take Algebra 1 and Geometry prior to high school, the scores of the most accelerated math students are not included in the LRHSD average of scores for those assessments. The one-page summary coversheet of the SPR

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does not provide this important context for its “Math” graphic. As a result, only the district’s Algebra 2 performance is representative of all its students. The percent of LRHSD students meeting standards (defined as earning a performance level of 4 or 5) in Algebra 2 exceeded the state average.

Because regional high school districts’ most advanced math students’ scores are not averaged into the Algebra 1 and Geometry school and district performance calculations, those calculations understate the number of students in regional districts who met or exceeded standards. When math performances are calculated by grade-level, LRHSD performance averages exceed state averages.

Additionally, the PARCC ELA 11 is not representative of how well LRHSD students are on track for success. This is due to the fact that students who participated in the AP English Language and Composition test can be exempted from the PARCC ELA grade 11 test. Students in all four of the district’s high schools who took the AP English Language and Composition test averaged a score of 3.4, allowing many students to be exempted from taking the PARCC.

Lastly, the state assessment system and whether or not the assessments meet a graduation requirement has been changing yearly and remains under transition. “The majority of LRHSD students meet their testing graduation requirement through their success on alternate assessments, such as the PSAT or SAT,” commented Birnbohm, “With that in mind, many high school students take the PARCC with less enthusiasm than they would for an assessment that has meaningful applications to their future post-secondary plans. We encourage the NJDOE to explore an assessment system for high school students that would satisfy the federal requirement to test, but is more relevant to students’ needs.”

Chronic Absenteeism

The state-wide average chronic absenteeism for high schools is 14.9 percent. The 2017-2018 chronic absenteeism rates of all four LRHSD high schools are well below this state average for high schools, and the district-wide average chronic absenteeism rate is 8.8 percent. Regional high school districts have higher chronic absenteeism on average than do districts of all types, in part because NJ’s Compulsory Education Law applies to the age range of 6 to 16. Approximately half of a regional high school district’s student population, ages 17 to 18, is not subject to truancy law. Although truancy law does not apply to many LRHSD students in grades 11 and 12, they continue to come to school on time and more often than most high school students in the state.

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“We believe that our students’ efforts, our supportive parents, and our teachers and other staff who make school a place where kids want to be, all combined with an established attendance policy and regulation which are consistently applied, contribute to our Chronic Absenteeism being well below the state average,” said Birnbohm.

About LRHSD - The Lenape Regional High School District’s four high schools – Lenape, Shawnee, Cherokee and Seneca – as well as the Sequoia Alternative Program, educate approximately 6,800 students from eight communities in Burlington County, NJ. The communities served include Evesham, Medford, Medford Lakes, Mount Laurel, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle, and Woodland. The Lenape Regional District is among the highest-achieving districts in the state, with an average graduation rate of 96 percent and an average combined SAT score of 1144. A leader in progressive education, the LRHSD’s mission is to develop physically and emotionally healthy students who excel in an ever-changing world.

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