

RCPEP SPOTLIGHT, Issue #3

School Board meetings are important sources of information. However, sometimes additional data and context is useful to understand the topics discussed at any one meeting. Below RCPEP has drafted a summary and provided additional data and analysis regarding the most substantial items discussed at the school board meeting on December 10, 2019 at Burnside Elementary School. For the full video of that meeting, click [here](#). The complete minutes of that meeting will be posted [here](#).

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DEC. 10 BOARD MEETING

- W.A. Perry Principal Robin Coltraine was named by the South Carolina Administrators Association as the State Middle Level Principal of the Year
- The Board voted on its officers. By a vote of 5-1, with Commissioner King the nay vote, Jamie Devine was reappointed the chair, Aaron Bishop the vice-chair, and Lila Anna Sauls the treasurer.
- Commissioner King again asked for a conversation about committee structures.
- Three new courses were approved for the course catalogue: Current Events/Foreign Policy, Fundamentals of Computing, Student Essentials for Success.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHT: 2018-2019 ACT/SAT/AP/IB Scores

Dr. Coleman, Chief of Accountability & Dr. Brossard, Chief of Teaching and Learning, presented summary data from the high school 2018-2019 ACT, SAT, AP, and IB scores. You can find the documents supporting the presentation [here](#) (click on Meetings and then select the Agenda for the Dec. 10, 2019 meeting).

Now, let's dig into the numbers.

ACT & SAT

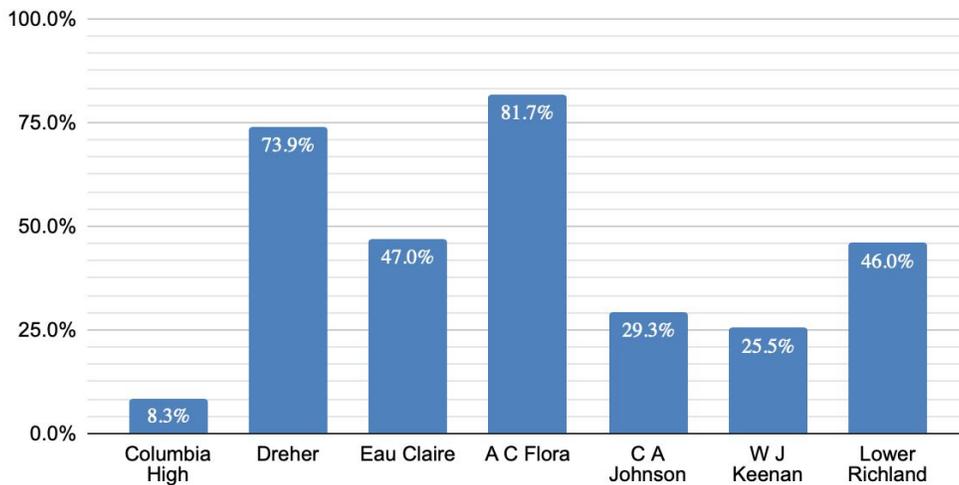
In 2015, students could only take ACT and SAT on the weekends, so fewer students took them. In 2016-2018, the ACT was given in schools so nearly every student in the district took it. In 2019, students were given the chance to choose between the ACT, SAT, or neither, and to take the tests during the school day. For this reason it is more difficult to compare the results of these tests over the last few years. Therefore, we focus on last year's results below.

Our ACT composite average is 17.2, and our SAT average is 1019. These scores are close to the state average, but not quite at the state average. Breaking down the number by high school tells us more of a story.

Two schools—A.C. Flora and Dreher—averaged over 1000 on the SAT. The other five schools averaged between approximately 850 and 940. The biggest discrepancy seems to be in the percentage of seniors actually taking the SAT. Two schools—A.C. Flora and Dreher—were around 75% while the remaining five schools were below 50%, with Columbia High at below 10%.

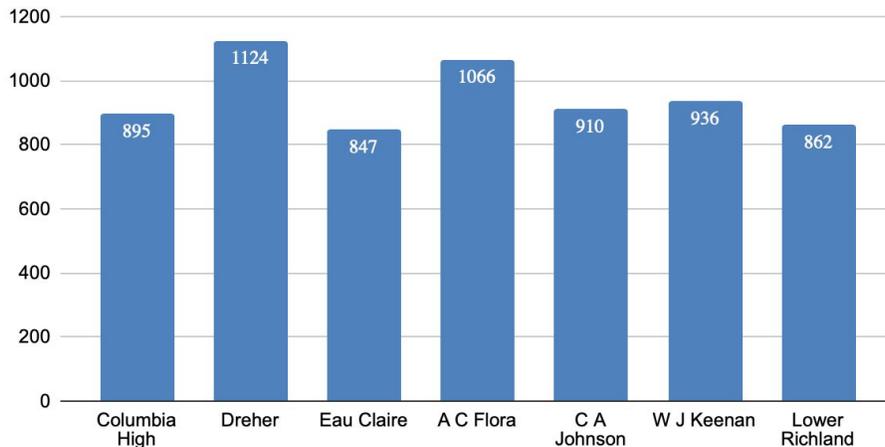
Percent of Seniors Tested by School

SAT 2019



Total Score by School

SAT 2019

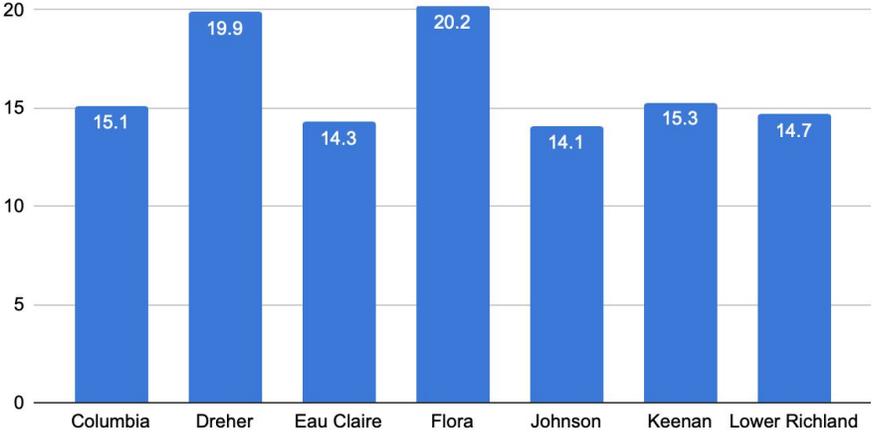


The ACT does not have the same discrepancies regarding the percentage of test takers; however, there is a bigger difference between schools in the scores. Dreher and A.C. Flora averaged near a composite score of 20, while the remaining schools averaged around 15. This means that Dreher and A.C. Flora averaged near the 52nd percentile while the remaining schools averaged near the 20th percentile.

Percent of Seniors Tested by School ACT 2019



Average Score by School ACT 2019

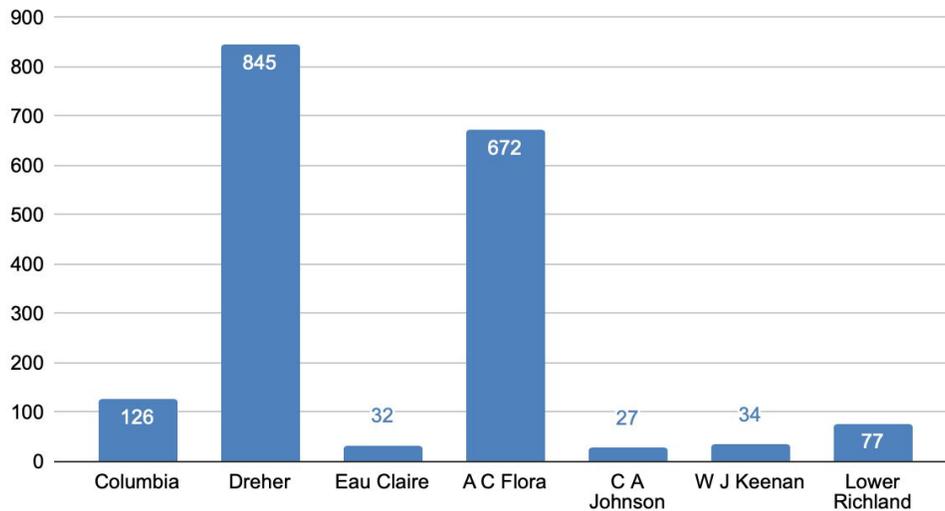


AP & IB

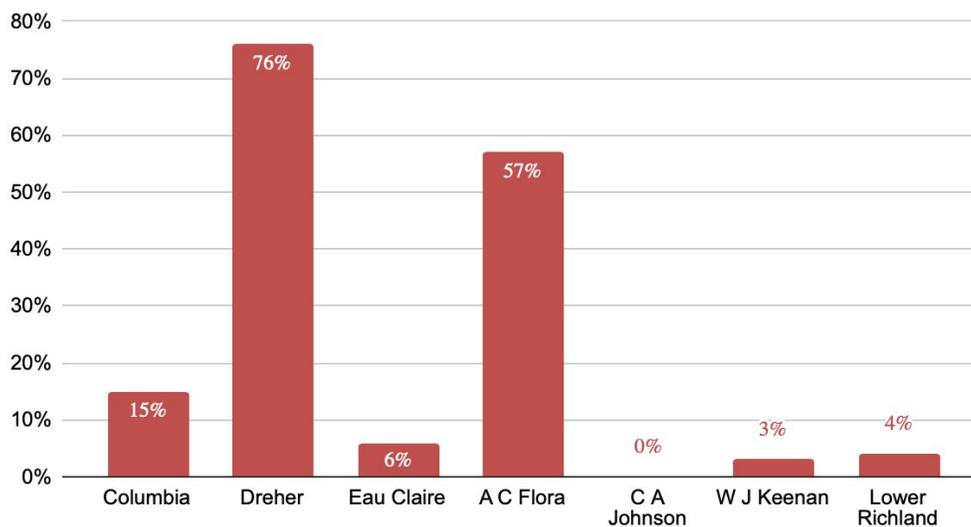
AP tests are offered at all 7 high schools. Each test is based on a college-level class that the student takes. Our pass rate increased from 55.4% in 2018 to 58.1% in 2019. Further, we had 23 students receive a capstone diploma at Dreher.

Below are the 2019 AP test scores by school: number of exams taken and passing percentage.

Number of AP Exams by High School



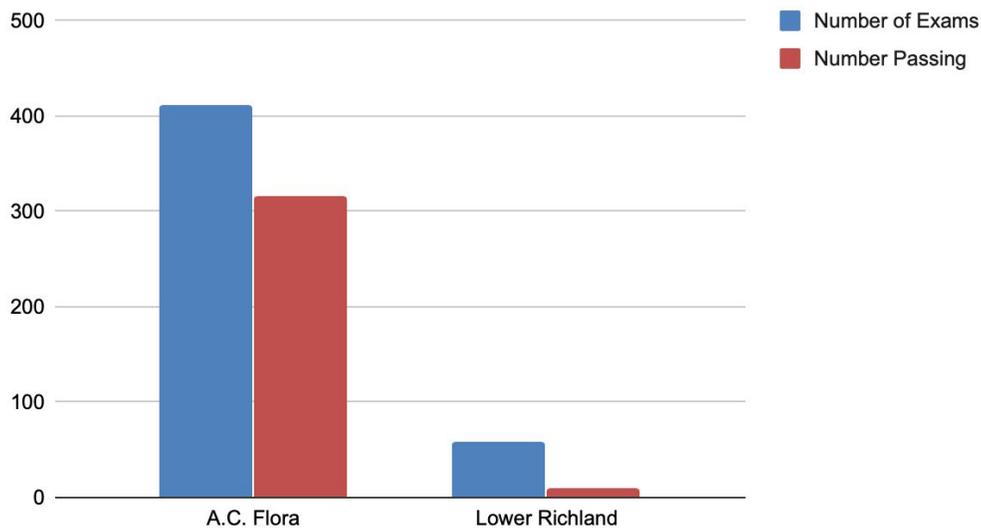
Percent Passing AP Exams



IB tests are offered at A.C. Flora and Lower Richland. 108 students took 470 IB exams last year. Below is the breakdown of the passage rate. Last year, 58 students attempted

to receive an IB diploma at A.C. Flora and 49 of those students were successful. At Lower Richland two students attempted to receive an IB diploma and neither was successful.

IB Exams 2019



Some Follow Up Questions

Students can now decide whether to take ACT or SAT, or take neither. How do schools help students choose between these? What is the District doing to address the massive gaps in AP and IB scores between schools? What is the District's hypothesis about why this is and where is the urgency in addressing it?

Chairman Devine indicated that the district is on an excellent academic trajectory. That opinion does not seem consistent with the data. Where is the data suggesting that the district's academic progress is excellent?

Finally, Chairman Devine lamented that students should not be defined by a number and that they are more than a score. With that, we agree. No student should be defined by a single test score. And every student is more than any single score. Indeed, the scores shouldn't define the kids. The scores should define the adults. We are the folks responsible for these numbers. The EOC, ACT, SAT and other test scores reflect whether or not we are succeeding in educating every student. We'd love to know how the Board does want to use these numbers and what they see as the areas of growth coming from these numbers.