

# Measures of Schools and Students in SAU 50 and Portsmouth School District

## February 2024

Inequitable education funding in New Hampshire affects far more than the property taxpayer. Students' educational experiences can be drastically different all over the state. Below is some helpful information about the schools in the Portsmouth School District and how they compare to the rest of the state.

### Students and Student Characteristics

Students in SAU 50 attend Portsmouth for High School. SAU 50 Schools have grades from pre-school through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The students attend Portsmouth High School which belongs to its own SAU and District. Table 1 shows enrollment in the October 2022- 2023 school year by grade.

**Table 1**

SAU 50 Schools	Pre	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 PG	Totals	
Portsmouth High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	246	248	251	284	2	1031
Maude H. Trefethen School	0	6	4	3	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
Newington Public School	0	8	7	11	5	8	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51
Rye Elementary School	11	28	41	32	39	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
Rye Junior High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	43	49	52	0	0	0	0	0	199
Greenland Central School	0	35	41	26	50	36	47	50	41	45	0	0	0	0	0	371

**Table 2**

District	American Indian or Alaskan	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black Non-Hispanic	White Non-Hispanic	Multi-Race	Total
Number of Students							
Portsmouth	6	152	160	41	1,959	174	2,492
State Total	360	5,271	13,557	3,494	138,647	5,949	167,278
Percent of Students							
Portsmouth	0.24%	6.09%	6.42%	1.64%	78.60%	6.98%	100%
State Total	0.20%	3.20%	8.10%	2.10%	82.90%	3.60%	100%

Table 2 displays racial enrollments for all students in Portsmouth Schools as of October 1, 2022.

White non-Hispanic students constituted 78%, a bit less than the average. Though, Portsmouth's population has similar diversity to the New Hampshire State Average.

In the 2022-23 school year, 2,079 public school students attended Portsmouth Schools. Of these, 362 (17%) were eligible for free/reduced-price school meals, meaning their family's income was below 185% of the Federal Poverty Line<sup>1</sup>. The state average was 23%, more than Portsmouth.

Also in the 2021-22 school year, 399 students were receiving special education services with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This was 19% of the students, the same as the statewide average of 19%. 64 students (3%) were not native English speakers in 2022-23.

- Coed Unified Soccer
- Girls Volleyball
- Boys Volleyball
- Girls Ice Hockey
- Boys & Girls Nordic Skiing
- Ski Jumping
- Girls Gymnastics
- Boys Wrestling
- Ten-Pin Bowling
- Unified Track
- Boys Ice Hockey
- Bass Fishing
- Boys & Girls Cross Country
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Boys & Girls Golf
- Boys Soccer
- Girls Soccer
- Spirit
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Boys & Girls Indoor Track
- Boys & Girls Alpine Skiing
- Swimming & Diving
- Unified Basketball
- Baseball
- Softball
- Boys Lacrosse
- Girls Lacrosse
- Outdoor Track
- Girls Tennis
- Boys Tennis
- Unified Volleyball

## What Sports Have Been Available to Portsmouth High School Students?

The New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) organizes high school sports competitions in New Hampshire.

Of the 33 sports listed by NHIAA for the school year 2019-20, only 8 were NOT available to students at Portsmouth High School. Those sports were: Bass Fishing, Girls Gymnastics, Boys Volleyball, Nordic Skiing, 10 Pin Bowling, Unified Track, and Unified Volleyball.

On average, schools with enrollments above 1,000 have at least 26 sports available to students.

Interscholastic sports available at any high school in any particular year will depend, of course, on the availability of coaches and whether enough students sign up.

*List of NHIAA Sports 2021*

<sup>1</sup> In 2023, 185% of the Federal Poverty Line for a family of four was \$50,500 annually.

## How Many Credits are Required to Graduate from Portsmouth High School?

The State of New Hampshire sets 20 credits as the minimum that each student must accumulate before they are allowed to graduate. In 2021 those credits were distributed across multiple subjects as shown in Table 5.

Most school districts in New Hampshire have higher graduation requirements than the 20-unit minimum set by the state. A few require as many as 28 units to graduate. Portsmouth requires that students successfully complete 24 credits to obtain their diploma. On average, New Hampshire public high schools require 24 credits to graduate with a high school diploma.

## What Has Been the High School Graduation Rate?

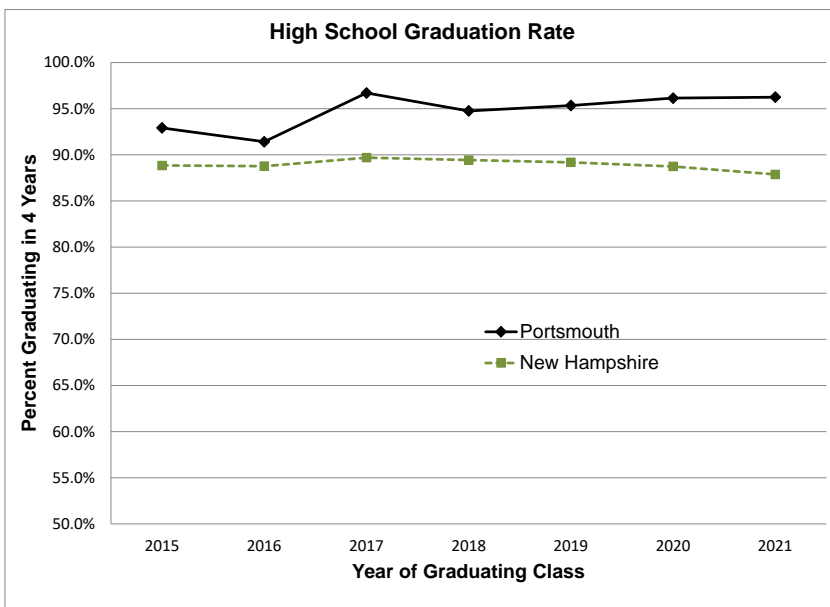
Portsmouth graduated 1,715 students in graduating classes from 2015 through 2021. The graduation rate over those seven years averaged 94.7%. This was more than the state average of 88.9%.

Ranking the 81 public high schools in New Hampshire with the highest graduation rate at (1) and the high school with the lowest graduation rate at (81), Portsmouth ranked 16.

Table 3

State Requirement	Units
Arts	0.5
Information & Communications	0.5
English	4.0
Mathematics	3.0
Physical Science	1.0
Biological Science	1.0
Other Science	
US/NH History	1.0
US/NH Government & Civics	0.5
Other Social Studies	
Economics	0.5
World History, Global Studies, Geography	0.5
Health	0.5
Physical Education	1.0
Electives	6.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20.0</b>

Figure 1



## How Well Have High School Students Done on the Annual SAT Exam?

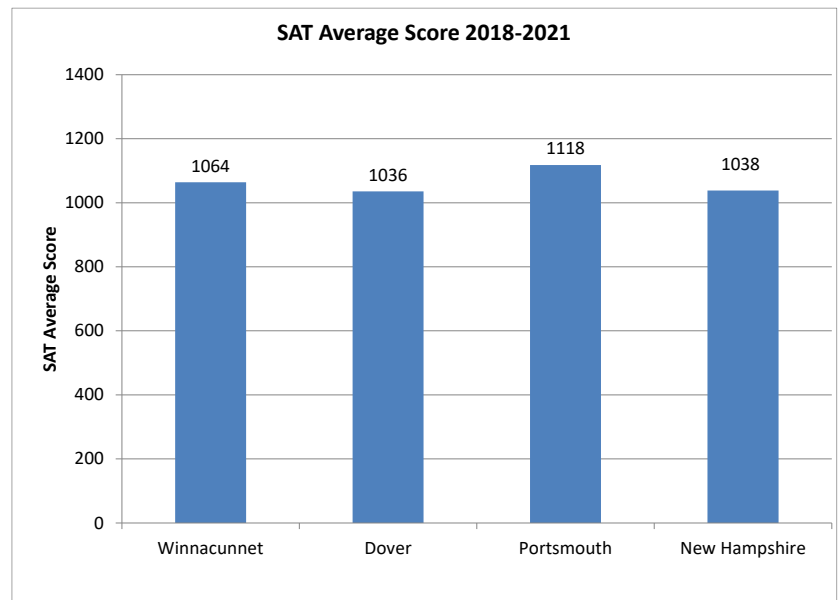
One of the standardized exams used by New Hampshire to measure student achievement in high school is the SAT of the College Board. There are two parts: Mathematics and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing. The possible range of combined scores is 400 to 1600.

Over the four years from 2018 through 2021, 927 Portsmouth High School students took the SAT exams in the spring of their junior year. The average score of those students was 1118 while the New Hampshire average was 1038.

Figure 2

Ranking the 79 public high schools for which data were available, the school with the highest average score was (1) and the lowest was (79), Portsmouth ranked 7th, Dover ranked 30<sup>th</sup>, and Winnacunnet ranked 16th.

The total October enrollment of juniors in Portsmouth High School over the 4 years totaled 1,118. As a percentage of enrollment, 12.2% of juniors were not tested. The percentage of untested juniors statewide was also 12.2%.



## What Courses are Available for High School Students in Portsmouth?

Course availability is an important measure of a student's educational opportunity. The Course of Studies documents for 2021-22 were collected from NH's public high schools. Counts of courses available in each subject area were compiled. Table 4 shows that Portsmouth High School offers similar or more courses in all subject areas as compared to the state average, except for career technologies.

Table 4

	World Languages	Advanced Placement	English Electives	Math courses	Social Study Electives	Computer Technologies	Career Tech	Arts / Performing Arts	Science Elective
Portsmouth	24	9	23	17	10	18	18	28	15
State Average	14	9	11	17	10	6	26	23	13

The availability of courses is tied to several factors. The size of a school plays a large role. Larger schools have economies of scale, more teachers, and a student population with more diverse interests. Other factors include transportation and teacher licensure.

## What Have Advanced Placement Results Been in Portsmouth?

The College Board offers Advanced Placement (AP) exams in 38 subjects every May. The exams are the culmination of students' participation in Advanced Placement courses in their high school. Those courses follow a standard syllabus and use nationally standard materials. There is no requirement for New Hampshire high schools to offer any AP courses, for students to take an AP course, or for those who do to take the associated exam at the end of the year.

One purpose of the courses and the exams is to allow students to get college credit in advance of entering college, thus potentially skipping certain introductory college courses. Among students who desire to attend a four-year college after graduation, there is considerable incentive to take AP courses and their associated exams.

The College Board grades each test on a scale from 1 to 5. Most colleges grant advanced credit to students whose score is a 3, 4, or 5. A few highly selective colleges may not accept scores of 3 or 4.

Table 5 lists the results of AP tests over the three years 2018-2021.

Table 5

	3 Year Exam Takers	3 Year Exams	3 Year Scores of 3,4, or 5	Takers as % of Enrollment	Exams per Taker	Scored 3+ as % of Exams	Scored 3+ per 100 enrollment
Portsmouth	387	593	481	11.5%	1.53	81.10%	14.30
State	22,966	36,355	25,108	10.62%	1.58	69.06%	11.61

Participation in Advanced Placement tests by the College Board is higher among students at Portsmouth than the state average.

## How Likely Have Students from Portsmouth Been to Apply, Earn Admittance, and Enroll at The University of New Hampshire?

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) is one of New Hampshire's public higher education institutions. The school is often popular with many NH students graduating from public high schools.

The UNH Admissions Office provided counts of applications, admissions, and enrollments from each New Hampshire public high school for freshman years 2017 through 2021. By aggregating data over five years, the need to suppress small numbers was greatly reduced, and year-to-year variations were smoothed, especially for smaller high schools. For comparisons among high schools of greatly varying sizes, senior year enrollments are used as the base for calculating what percentage of a school's students have applied, been admitted, and finally enrolled at UNH.

Students who plan to attend college after graduating from high school often apply to as many as 8 to 10 colleges. Thus, even when accepted to UNH, a vast majority of students will choose to go elsewhere, and a much smaller number will enroll. Understanding this, UNH (and other colleges and universities) offer admission to many more applicants than they could accept.

On average, based on the years 2017-2021, 27% of New Hampshire’s public school senior class applied to UNH. At Portsmouth High School, 45% applied. Statewide, of the 18,455 who applied, UNH admitted 83.9%. Among the 608 Portsmouth students who applied, 90% were admitted. Eventually enrolling for freshman year at UNH were 7.5% of all New Hampshire high school seniors and 14.7% of Portsmouth seniors.

Table 6

	2017-2021 UNH Applications	2017-2021 UNH Admissions	2017-2021 UNH Enrollment	Applications as % of Enrollment	Admissions as % of Applications	Enrollment as % of 5 Year Senior Enrollment
Portsmouth	608	549	198	45.0%	90.3%	14.7%
State	18,455	15,653	5,101	27.1%	83.9%	7.5%