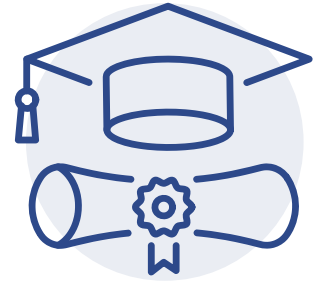




# Using PVAAS to Inform Post-Secondary Discussions and Supports



PVAAS student projections can play an important role in discussions about supporting students for post-secondary preparedness and planning. PVAAS projections to PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP exams within schools across Pennsylvania can be effective in efforts to:

- **Set a school-wide goal** to improve college readiness scores on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT;
- **Schedule time in the school day** for test preparation, or offer as an elective;
- **Review standards-based results** from the PSAT and/or SAT to reflect on current curriculum and personalize student learning based on strengths and needs;
- **Offer a test preparation program** during after-school or Saturday hours;
- **Integrate evidence-based instructional strategies** into existing courses;
- **Explore expansion opportunities** for AP course offerings; and
- **Incorporate discussion of AP course opportunities** into school counselors' meetings with students, including PVAAS Student Projections and ACT/SAT benchmarks for colleges/universities on the [College Navigator](#).

## College Readiness

*How many students in your school or LEA/district are on a good trajectory for reaching or exceeding benchmarks on college readiness exams? Which are not currently on track? Who are those students who need support?*

The **PVAAS Projection Summary** is a tool that can assist you in determining the proportion of students who are already on a path to success, as seen by the green portion of the pie chart at right. You can drill-down into the report to find who those students are, and ask questions such as:

- Is there an appropriate sequence of courses available for these students?
- Do we have a sufficient number of sections of college-prep courses for these students?
- Do we have “test prep” types of programs available to assist students with any needed refresh of the content to ensure they stay on track?
- Have counselors discussed this with students and their families? Do these students consider themselves candidates for college?
- Are these students being encouraged to participate in the SAT and/or ACT?

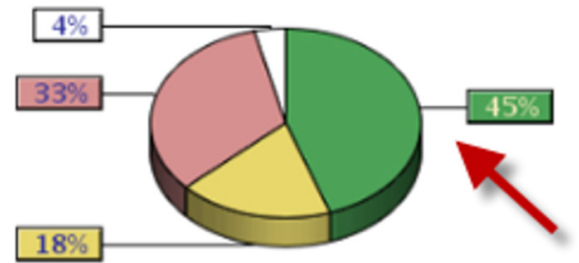




You can also use this same PVAAS Projection Summary report to help you in determining the proportion of students who are currently underprepared for meeting the college readiness benchmarks set by the College Board and ACT, Inc.

In other words, what portion of the pie chart is yellow and/or pink? You may think about these students as being in moderate or significant need of support to meet those benchmarks. Again, you can drill into the report to discover who those students are, and ask the following questions:

- What courses do we have available to meet the needs of these students?
- What support is available to increase their likelihood of being prepared?
- Do we have the number of staff and content area resources that would provide the necessary support and intensive review of the material?
- Have we analyzed available student-level data to determine specific skills and areas where improvement is needed?



## PVAAS in Use in Real Pennsylvania Districts

In one PA district, they would like to create a culture that encourages students to apply to and attend college and other post-secondary opportunities. They began using PVAAS student projections to the PSAT as one of the data points to change the existing culture. They also now pay for students to take the PSAT, and the PVAAS projection is one data point used to market this opportunity and recruit students.

In another PA district, the PSAT is scheduled during the school day for 10th graders. Using both PSAT data and PVAAS student projections to the SAT, the school can determine areas for students to receive support. Teachers use the PSAT test administration data for skills to be reinforced; counselors use PVAAS student projections to encourage students who may not have been considering taking the SAT or ACT. They determine barriers students are facing and help address them.

## Post-Secondary Decision Making

*Are we, as a school and as teachers, providing sufficient challenging instruction to meet the student's needs? What resources or supports can be offered to increase the student's likelihood of success? Is the student taking advantage of and using those resources? Are there any barriers to the student accessing those resources and supports?*

PVAAS Projections to AP exams and college readiness assessments like the PSAT, SAT, and ACT are important data to add to other existing student learning data to inform discussions with students and families about post-secondary opportunities. Specifically, individual PVAAS projection data can be useful



in helping educators and counselors in determining the need for support for students in meeting college readiness benchmarks. Is the student likely to reach benchmarks set by ACT, Inc., the College Board, or PA universities to which the student is seeking admission? Or, is the student at a level of risk for meeting those benchmarks? What does this indicate in terms of the student possibly needing remediation in college? Knowing this information can help inform courses or course sequences the student should consider now or in the future during their high school years.

Student projections are available for many assessments beyond our state assessments. These individual student projection data should be used to *enhance* the student planning process — they should not be the sole indicator! Other data sources to include might be longitudinal state assessment scores, benchmark assessment data, diagnostic assessment data, current and prior grades, and teacher recommendations.

Additional suggestions on how you can use these types of student projections include:

- **Encouraging students** to consider post-secondary opportunities they may not be considering otherwise;
- **Talking with individual students and/or families** about test preparation opportunities;
- **Making course recommendations** (i.e., remediation, college-prep, Honors, AP) that are academically appropriate and challenging for the student; and
- **Discussing the projections** during career planning, IEP, GIEP, and transition planning meetings.

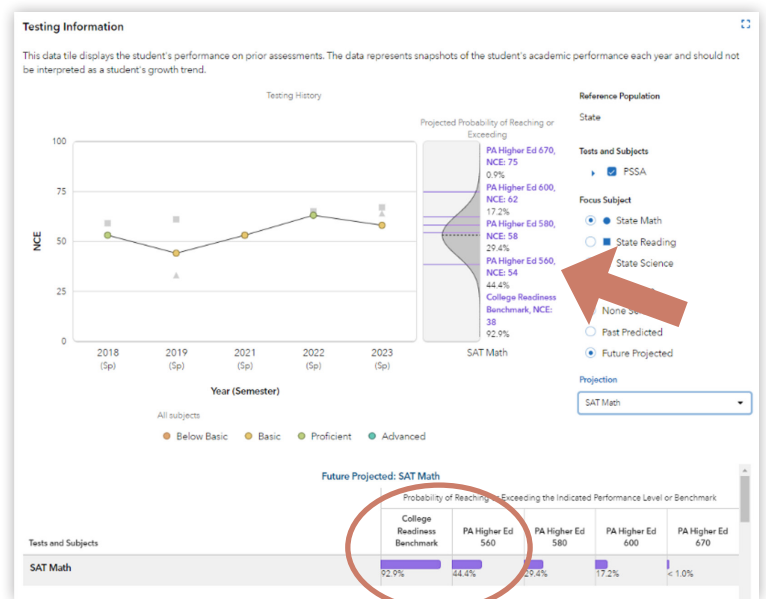
At right is an example of a PVAAS Student Report displaying a student's:

- State testing history in Math,
- Projection to a future SAT Math assessment, and
- Projection probabilities for reaching the college readiness benchmark set by the SAT as well as PA Higher Education benchmarks.

This report indicates this student has a 93% probability of reaching the college benchmark in Math of 530 on an SAT exam. We also know that this student wishes to pursue a degree in a STEM-related field.

This student does look to be on a pretty good path to reaching or exceeding the Math benchmark of 530. However, you may also want to investigate and discuss:

- *What are the average Math SAT scores for the universities to which this student wishes to apply? Are they greater than a benchmark of 560, for example?*
- *What courses has this student taken, and are they considering taking in the upcoming years?*
- *Is the student being appropriately challenged to keep him/her on this path?*
- *What additional resources for SAT prep are available for this student to enhance their learning and Math skills?*
- *Has someone worked with the student to review prior assessment results so that they can work on targeted needs?*





Let's consider the use of this data at the individual student level through several additional examples.

## The Individual Student Level

**EXAMPLE 1:** Consider an example of how this can inform individual student level decisions and discussions. The following excerpt from the PVAAS Child Success Summary displays data for a sample student, Ernesto, who with his family is beginning his college search and application process. In order to narrow down the options for which Ernesto is prepared and where he has a good likelihood of being accepted, the PVAAS projections are one data point being considered. There are many requirements and one of the areas still considered often is performance on the ACT or SAT. Although Ernesto hasn't yet taken the SAT, he and his family want him to get a head start.

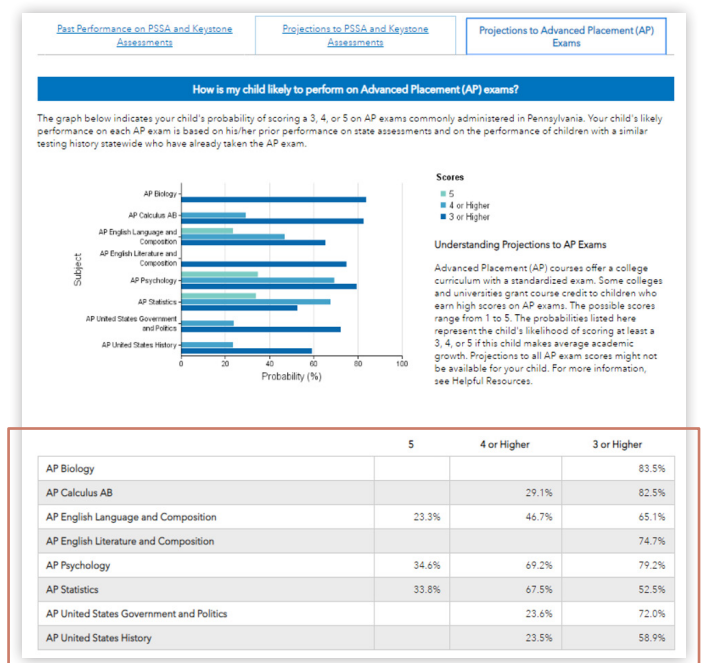
|                                                               | Benchmark |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ACT English (Benchmark 18)                                    | 71.0%     |
| ACT Math (Benchmark 22)                                       | 44.7%     |
| ACT Reading (Benchmark 22)                                    | 43.4%     |
| ACT Science (Benchmark 23)                                    | 31.6%     |
| PSAT NMSQT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (Benchmark 460) | 69.8%     |
| PSAT NMSQT Mathematics (Benchmark 510)                        | 27.2%     |
| SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (Benchmark 480)        | 84.7%     |
| SAT Mathematics (Benchmark 530)                               | 47.8%     |

Looking at Ernesto's projections to the college readiness benchmarks, we see that his probability of reaching the Reading and Writing benchmarks set by the College Board and ACT, Inc. are pretty good — 84% on the SAT and 71% on the ACT English. His probability of reaching the ACT Reading benchmark, however, is much lower (43%). We also see that his probability of reaching the Math benchmarks are low — 47% on the SAT and 44% on the ACT. So what does that indicate for Ernesto and his family? What does this indicate for his teacher(s)?

**EXAMPLE 2:** Consider an example where a student would like to take one or two AP courses during their senior year, as they want to earn college credit. This student was also awarded a scholarship for which taking an AP course is recommended. To the right is this student's Child Success Summary, showing the tab for *Projections to AP Exams*.

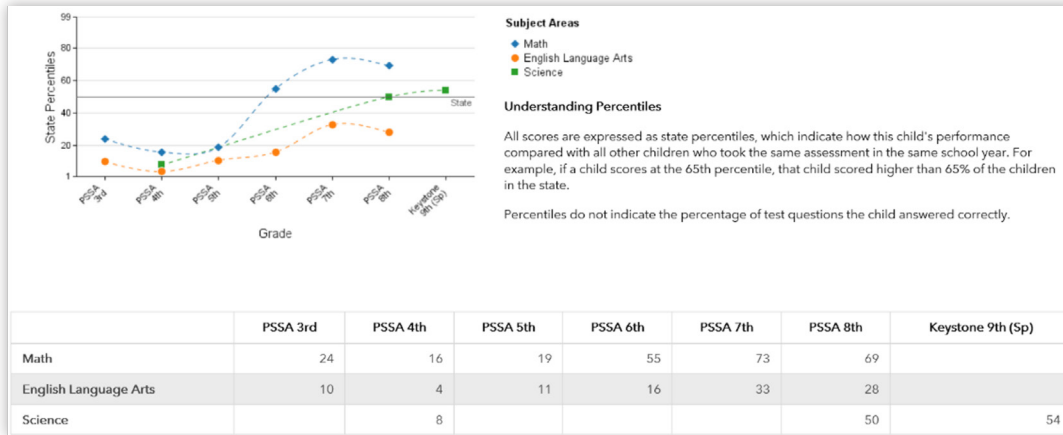
Focusing on the probabilities in the table of the report indicated with the red box, we see there are two classes, or two exams, that seem to have higher probabilities of reaching a 4 or higher — AP Psychology and AP Statistics. There's also another higher probability with AP English Language. Are these courses the student has considered — courses where scoring a 3 or 4 or higher has a greater likelihood? Do these courses fit into the student's goal or interest for a college major?

These would all be things to consider, knowing the PVAAS projection probabilities are good indicators to add to the discussion. No matter which course(s) the student decides, this is good information for the student and for the teacher(s) of the courses. It allows the teacher and the student to be proactive with any support that might be needed during the school year.

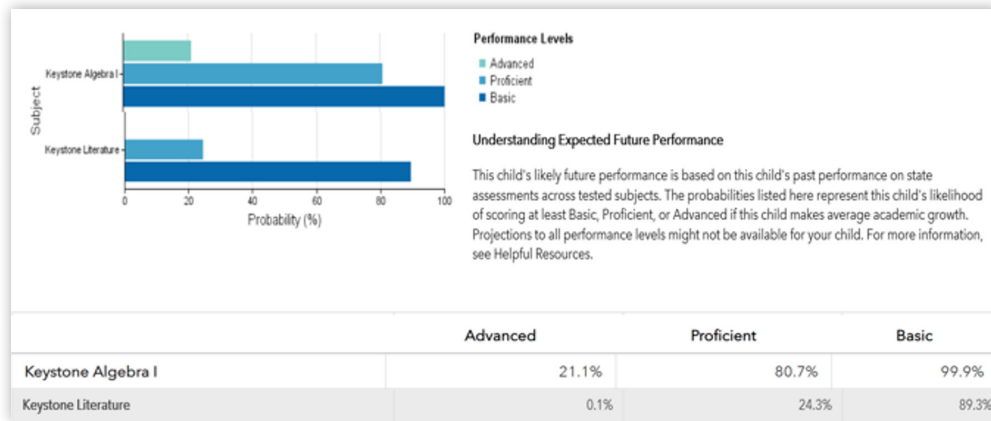




**EXAMPLE 3:** Ali is seeking an internship to help with his post-secondary opportunities and career choices, but is not really sure of a focus area. Viewing Ali’s Child Success Summary (below), we see that there are a lot of data points indicating Ali’s history on state assessments. We will want to also include other data, like his interests, his past and current grades, transportation options, and so on, but you can see that Ali’s performance in the areas of Math (blue diamonds) and Science (green squares) have increased over time. He has already taken the Biology Keystone exam, where he scored in the 54th percentile in the state. This gives us an idea of his strength – he seems a bit more Math and Science oriented.



Next, let’s look at the probability of Ali scoring at each performance level on other upcoming Keystone exams (below). Keystones are probably not an indicator of career options, understandably – but they can help Ali in a few ways. Ali can see what content areas may be a strength, and where he might want some additional support. Maybe he wants to think about some tutoring options, or making a greater commitment to studying. It also helps the adults working with Ali, because they can help to facilitate that support or enrichment.

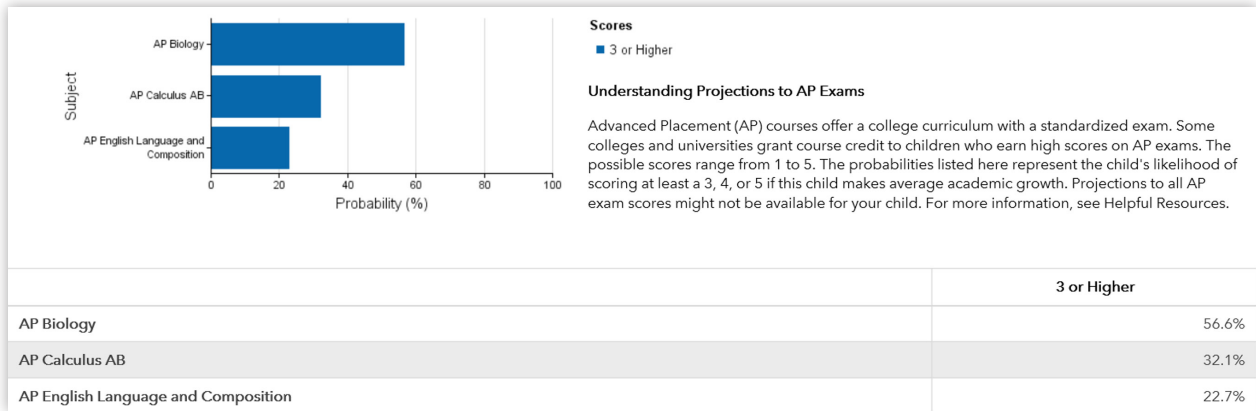


In Ali’s situation, we know he already completed the Biology Keystone, and we can tell that he passed, because it’s not listed as a projection. You can only see Algebra and Literature. In this report, we see that he has an 80% chance of reaching proficiency in Algebra. That information reinforces that he may have a strength and interest in Math, which can help him strive to make sure he really does reach proficiency. It may even help him to strive to reach Advanced, if he sets that goal.

We also see that his likelihood of scoring Proficient on the Keystone is considerably lower in Literature. Does this mean that he shouldn’t rely on, or look for, an internship that relies on his reading skills? No, but it does help him to see that his strengths are more in the areas of Math and Science. He might want to move forward with those areas as an interest. It may also help him think about what he might want to do to increase his likelihood of reaching proficiency in Literature and increasing his reading skills.

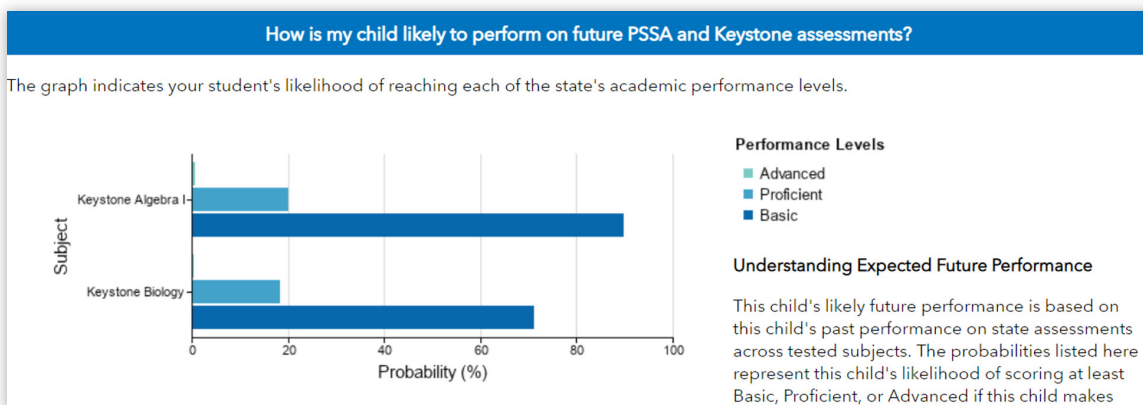
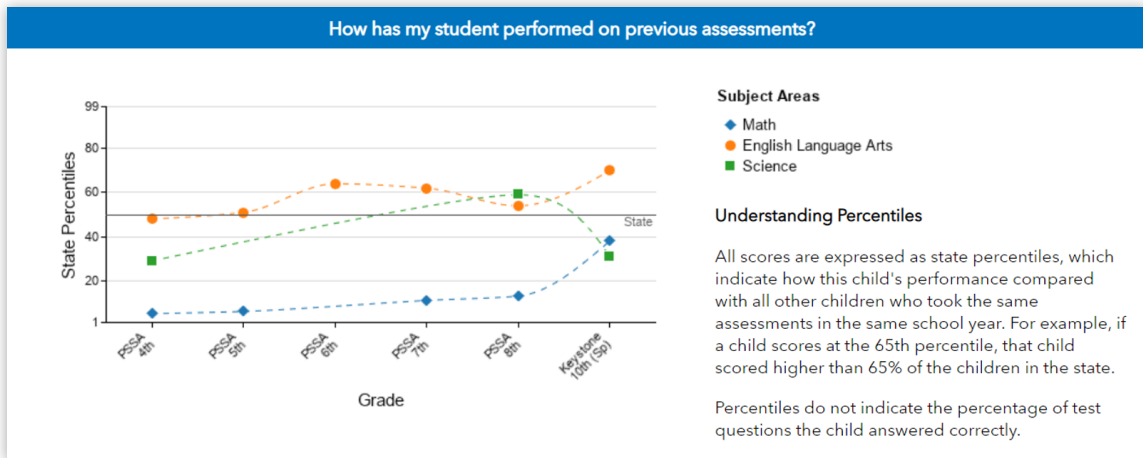


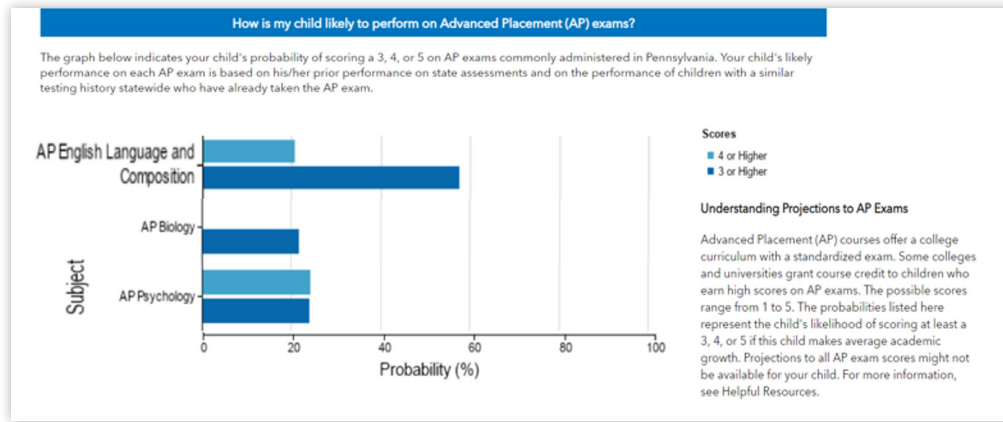
Finally, we look to Ali's projections to AP exams as well (below). He might not have thought about taking an AP Biology course, but now, seeing that he has 56% chance of scoring a three or higher on that exam, he may consider taking that course. Whether he takes the test or not, this data point might help set Ali on a path to develop and strengthen his Biology and scientific knowledge overall.



Knowing this information also helps you have a conversation. The adults working with Ali can identify strengths, help encourage them, and also help Ali to see where he might want a little bit more support, or spend time working to develop his skills.

**EXAMPLE 3:** Ashlynn would like to pursue dual enrollment, but is unsure of the right courses to take. Ultimately, we would want to think about her interests, as well as her academic areas of success. Let's start by looking at her Child Success Summary to explore past history as well as projections to future exams like Keystones and AP exams. Below are all three sections of Ashlynn's Child Success Summary showing this data:





We see that Ashlynn performed higher on ELA in the past than she has on Math or Science. Her 8th grade Science performance was definitely higher than her Keystone Biology performance. We also see that she took the Literature and Algebra Keystone in the spring of her 10th grade year. It does appear that she did not pass the Algebra and Biology Keystones, as she does have projections to those again in the future, with her probability of reaching proficiency on either of those at about 20%. She has a much higher probability of at least reaching Basic. This is helpful information in that she likely needs additional support to pass these exams. That's a good conversation to have with Ashlynn and possibly Ashlynn's teachers.

When it comes to making scheduling decisions for Ashlynn, her team of educators and counselors will want to take some things into consideration:

- *What does Ashlynn have time for in her schedule, in terms of her workload?*
- *Is there a time of day where Ashlynn is more "on her game"? Is there a section of a key course subject available at that time, and could we schedule her for that class?*
- *If Ashlynn is a student athlete leaving early multiple days for a sport, let's not schedule her Algebra or Biology course at the end of the day when she may miss those critical instructional periods.*

Before we help Ashlynn make a choice for her dual enrollment, let's look at her projections to AP exams. Remember, they're only going to be on the Child Success Summary if she has at least a 20% likelihood of reaching at least a 3 on any particular exam. It looks like she has a projection for AP English Language and Composition, AP Biology, and AP Psychology. This might help us now make a recommendation to Ashlynn for her dual enrollment course – not just what courses to consider, but also what supports for success she might need. If she was signing up for dual enrollment, what might you suggest? Would Psychology or Journalism be possibilities to consider, for example?

## Next Steps

Assess the status of your school in these areas and determine opportunities for PVAAS Student Projections to strengthen the following:

- Compare actual and projected school-wide performance on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT;
- Assess opportunities, communication, and participation in test preparation forums for students;
- Explore opportunities to expand AP course offerings; and
- Integrate PVAAS Student Projections into school counselors' meetings with students and families, alongside the [College Navigator](#).

Visit [the PDE PVAAS website](#) for additional resources on this topic.