For Immediate Release:

New Canaan High School 2018 Assessment Review

New Canaan, CT (October 10, 2018). In its **2018 New Canaan High School Assessment Review** presented to the Board of Education on October 8, 2018, in the Wagner Room of New Canaan High School (NCHS), school administrators and faculty reported consistent growth in the educational assessment of its high school students.

**NCHS Principal Bill Egan** detailed the 2018 Assessment Review through data points that covered ACT Test averages, college attendance statistics, college and AP course assessments, AP Honors and Scholars analysis, AP test participation, and SAT test results and analysis. The presentation also included commentary from other administrators and department chairs from a variety of disciplines who discussed ways they identify and help students who may have skill gaps and also support and encourage those doing well to continue to excel.

The **2018 ACT Test Averages** show a consistent increase in participation and improved test scores overall according to its reported results. NCHS had 264 seniors taking the test this year, an increase from 216 in 2017, with a composite average of 27.7, the highest ever. Test results in three of the four categories are also at their highest: English at 28.8 (27.7 in 2017); Reading at 29.0 (27.4 in 2017); and Science at 27.1 (26.7 in 2017). New Canaan High School has recently become an ACT test site, which has helped to encourage participation.

**NCHS College Statistics** for the Class of 2019 indicate that 91% of the senior class will be attending a 4-year college next year. 83% of those will go to schools considered competitive: (33% very competitive; 27% highly competitive; 23% competitive). Five students will be going to international schools; seven will attend 2-year colleges. “One of the things our counselors pride themselves on is that they know every child,” said Mr. Egan. “All of our students have a plan in their careers here at the high school and beyond.”

**NCHS College Level Course** options has been another area of significant growth. 80% of seniors have taken at least one college level class. These classes include UCONN, Norwalk Community College, Project Lead the Way, and Advanced Placement (AP) designated courses. 281 students in grades 9-12 (up from 259 in 2017) are enrolled in courses that are being offered for college credit. Not including AP, they include subjects ranging from Anatomy and Physiology to Macro Economics to Intro to Engineering.
The **NCHS Advanced Placement (AP) Program** has a total enrollment of 1171 in AP classes in 2019 in grades 10-12, nearly double from five years ago. (NCHS student total in grades 10-12 is 991). AP courses include Statistics, Psychology, Chemistry, Music Theory, Studio Art Drawing, Macro Economics, Spanish, English Literature, World History, and over fifteen others.

In the Class of 2019’s **NCHS AP/Honors Program**, 30 students have taken Honors Level classes and 225 have taken one or more AP classes. Of the 319 total senior student body, 79.9% have participated in these programs.

In assessing **AP Testing Totals** school-wide, the percentage of total enrollment in AP classes equaled 97.4% taking the AP test. One thousand sixty-six AP Tests were taken, and the percentage of students Grades 10-12 who took AP tests is the highest to date at 48.03%. The total number of test-takers was 453. Those earning a 3% grade or better on the test equaled 93.2%.

In the Class of 2019, the number of those taking one or more AP exams was 204, representing 65.2% of the class, the highest percentage to date. The percentage of seniors earning 3% or better was 63.9%, also the highest to date and continuing an increasing percentage trend (46.7% in 2014; 54.5% in 2015; 56.5% in 2016; and 57.2% in 2017).

The number of **NCHS AP Scholars**, which has been constantly increasing over the past several years, is at its highest number this year at 206. (This compares to 127 total scholars in 2014; 144 in 2015; 180 in 2016; and 200 in 2017). This total consists of AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honor, AP Scholars with Distinction, and National AP Scholars.

To be recognized as **AP Scholars**, students need to score 3 or higher on 3 or more AP exams. **AP Scholars with Honor** need a minimum of 3.25 on all exams or 3 or higher on 4 or more exams. **AP Scholars with Distinction** need a minimum of 3.5 on all exams or 3 or higher on 5 or more exams. **National AP Scholars** need a 4 average on all exams or 4 or more on 8 or more exams.

In 2018, NCHS had 62 **AP Scholars** (with an average score of 3.50); 53 **AP Scholars with Honor** (averaging 3.99); 91 **AP Scholars with Distinction** (averaging 4.28); 18 **National AP Scholars** (averaging 4.59); and 1 student earning an **AP International Diploma** with a 4.60 average.

In the **CT SAT testing**, NCHS had a 97% participation rate in 2018. A 95% participation rate in one of the requirements needed to remain a top-tier school in the CT accountability index, which is a ranking system regarded as one of the best nationally. This percentage includes sub-groups, such as Special Education. NCHS had a 97% participation rate in SAT Special Education tests. In that category, it had the top average SAT score in Math (501) and second best average SAT score in Language Arts (510) in the New Canaan’s District Reference Group DRG.

This year, the district is dividing its K-12 student assessment presentations to the BOE into two separate reports, grades K-8 and grades 9-12, to give department chairs an opportunity to share information about the initiatives in the different disciplines within the district.

Closing out the NCHS Student Assessment presentation, several **Department Chairs**, including those from **English, Social Science, Science, Special Education**, and a **Math** representative, spoke about how current practices are designed to give students the skills needed for taking standardized tests:

- Students receive meaningful instruction, evidenced in rubrics, that teaches beyond the test. Command of evidence and structure analysis, for example, is developed through reading, research, document based questions, and writing rubrics.
- The Reading/Write and Math departments are looking to develop common assessment language and scoring across courses and levels throughout the curriculum. The Math department is also giving additional supports to students who did not meet benchmarks for the SAT.
The Science department continues to offer and works on improving courses to accommodate student interests and to challenge all learners with lessons that use higher level thinking skills.

Special Education continues to maximize the inclusion of all students and strengthen the alignment between special education and general education curriculum.

"We pride ourselves in trying to meet the needs of all our students," said Principal Egan. "The purpose of assessments is to support and enhance our student learning. But it's important to note that these are snapshots, and not necessarily sole indicators of success. We have many other factors of achievement, as well."

The district's K-8 Student Assessment presentation is scheduled for the next BOE meeting, Monday, October 22, 2018.

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