

College Board Program Results

Our progress report on expanding access, challenging students to demonstrate readiness for college, and equipping educators for key decisions ahead

Despite growing concerns about testing, assessments linked to opportunity are reaching more students. The following results show that a larger and more diverse group of students than ever is participating in challenging course work and taking advantage of the opportunities associated with College Board programs and assessments.

An overarching priority of national, state, and district-level educators is to ensure that as many students as possible graduate from high school ready for college and career. The College Board shares this goal, as it has for more than 110 years. We believe that by providing opportunities to all students, especially those who need them most, we can achieve this goal together.

Our programs enable students to take on challenges and demonstrate their hard work and achievements, help educators get students ready for college, and yield valuable information to help students succeed. Equally important, these programs provide tangible benefits such as access to scholarships or college credit.

There is a lot of focus on testing right now. Many parents and education leaders believe that students are being tested too much. We understand that thinking and strongly believe that every assessment must open doors of opportunity, and every student has the right to know that what's on the test truly matters.

In March 2014, the College Board announced it would redesign the SAT[®] and PSAT/NMSQT[®], and introduce the PSAT[™] 10 and PSAT[™] 8/9 to focus on the things that recent data show matter most for success in college and career. A similar focus on depth

over breadth is informing the redesign of Advanced Placement® (AP®) course frameworks and exams so that teachers and students can take more time to practice the reasoning skills required for college-level work. The SAT Suite of Assessments and AP courses share a foundational emphasis on evidence-based reading and writing and real-world context and application.

These redesigned courses and assessments will launch on a rolling basis, with the first administration of the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 8/9 coming in October 2015 and the PSAT 10 and the SAT in March 2016. Redesigned courses and exams in AP Art History and AP European History, along with a new course, AP Research, part of the AP Capstone™ Program, will launch for the 2015-16 school year.

The following report presents outcomes from the College Board's foundational programs for propelling students toward college and career. By focusing on these — the PSAT/NMSQT, the SAT, and AP — the 2015 College Board Program Results highlight student and state accomplishments and indicate areas for attention and improvement.

PROGRAMS THAT CHALLENGE, ASSESS, AND INFORM

PSAT/NMSQT®

The PSAT/NMSQT measures a similar domain of knowledge as the SAT, while featuring content that is appropriate to grades 10 and 11.

The PSAT/NMSQT plays a critical, unifying role among College Board programs. In measuring the skills that research shows are critical for college success, it is designed to ensure students' successful transition to college. It opens doors for improved instruction, identifies students who are ready for college-level course work, and provides access to over \$180 million in scholarships.

PSAT/NMSQT results are the best predictor of a student's potential to succeed in certain AP courses.¹ From these results, educators can identify students with a 60% or higher likelihood of succeeding in particular AP subjects. Using such data, schools, districts, and states can support access to AP for all academically prepared students.

SAT

The SAT is a proven and trusted indicator of college readiness and success for students from all backgrounds. It provides students and K–12 educators with a consistent, standard measure for assessing college readiness and a fair and valid indicator of likely college success. Nearly all four-year colleges and universities use the SAT to evaluate their applicants.

The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark indicates a student's readiness to enter college or career-training programs and to succeed in credit-bearing, entry-level college courses. In fact, high school graduates who reach the benchmark are both more likely to enroll in a four-year college and graduate on time than those who do not meet the benchmark.²

AP

The Advanced Placement Program® (AP), offers students the opportunity to pursue college-level course work while still in high school. In AP classrooms, students examine texts, data, and evidence; learn to analyze source material; develop and test hypotheses; and craft effective arguments. They engage in intense discussions, solve problems together, and learn to write and speak clearly and persuasively.

AP Exams are a combination of multiple-choice and free-response questions that assess student learning across a range of learning objectives. The questions are developed, reviewed,

1. Ewing, Camara, and Millsap (2006). *The Relationship Between PSAT/NMSQT Scores and AP Examination Grades: A Follow-Up Study*. (<http://research.collegeboard.org>)

2. <https://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2012/7/researchreport-2011-5-sat-college-readiness-benchmark-secondary-performance.pdf>
<http://research.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/publications/2014/1/research-note-2013-9-college-readiness-college-completion.pdf>

and approved by committees of subject-matter experts, including college faculty and AP teachers.

Students who do well on AP Exams are more likely to graduate from college on time and have the potential to save time and money through placement and credit-granting policies.³

By looking at the 2014-15 results from these three programs individually and collectively, policymakers, educators, and the College Board can work together to identify and dismantle the obstacles that prevent students from realizing their full potential.

UNDERSTANDING THE DATA

Administration Data

This refers to the results from a single administration of an assessment or exam. This report includes three sets of administration data for the PSAT/NMSQT, which includes all of the test-takers in October 2010, 2013, and 2014. It also includes administration data for AP from May 2011, 2014, and 2015.

AP Potential™

This free, Web-based tool allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or higher on a given AP Exam. Based on research that shows moderate to strong correlations between PSAT/NMSQT scores and AP Exam results, AP Potential™ is designed to help schools increase access to AP and to ensure that no student who has the chance of succeeding in AP is overlooked.

Cohort Data

This report also includes SAT results from the classes of 2011, 2014, and 2015, reflecting the most recent results those graduating students took over the course of their high school career.

Calculating Rates

In order to calculate participation rates for the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT, a denominator had to be established. These are based on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) grade-level enrollment and graduate projections, respectively.⁴ WICHE has been producing high school graduate forecasts for over 30 years, for use by a wide and diverse audience of policymakers, enrollment managers, college counselors, schools and school districts, researchers, and the media.

The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark

The SAT Benchmark score of 1550 is associated with a 65% probability of obtaining a first-year GPA of B- or higher at a four-year college. It indicates a student's readiness to enter college or career-training programs and to succeed in credit-bearing, entry-level college courses.

PSAT/NMSQT Benchmark

On the PSAT/NMSQT, benchmarks are section scores that students should meet or exceed to be considered on track to be college ready. These section scores in 10th or 11th grade predict, with a 65% probability, a first-year college GPA of 2.67 (B-) or higher. PSAT/NMSQT score reports are sent to schools and can help students and educators to understand how the students are doing relative to their path to college.

Next Year

With the introduction of the redesigned SAT Suite of Assessments, we will have new and different ways to track and monitor student progress. We will be able to report these data beginning with the 2016 College Board Program Results. It is important to note that all scores from the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9 will be reported on

4. <http://www.wiche.edu/knocking-8th>

a common scale so that students, families, and educators can easily track year-by-year progress of individuals, cohorts, and groups. We will also be updating the AP Potential tool to incorporate AP Potential data based on students' PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, and SAT results.

ACCESS & PARTICIPATION

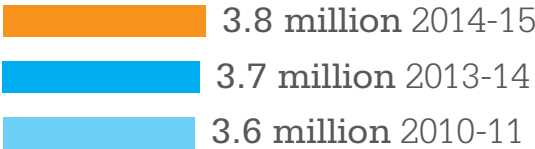
Without access to challenging courses and assessments that measure their progress, students will not be able to get the most out of their opportunities to prepare for college and careers.

But access is not a given. It requires that policymakers at all levels take steps to make sure that challenging courses are available, that tests are administered when students can take them, and that credit is granted when earned. Furthermore, fees must be waived or reduced for all students with financial need.

Results from all three programs show that progress is being made in expanding access. Today, a larger, more diverse group of students than ever before is participating in challenging course work and taking actionable assessments.

PSAT/NMSQT®

The largest percentage of underrepresented minorities

- In 2014-15, a record 3.8 million students benefited from taking the PSAT/NMSQT, up from 3,654,158 in 2013-14 and 3,558,270 in 2010-11.


Year	Number of Students
2014-15	3.8 million
2013-14	3.7 million
2010-11	3.6 million
- **35.1%** were underrepresented minority students, compared to 34.0% in 2013-14 and 33.0% in 2010-11.
- In October 2014, **43.6%** of the nation's 10th-graders and **41.5%** of the nation's 11th-graders took the PSAT/NMSQT.

SAT

Growing participation across all demographics

- A record 1.70 million students from the class of 2015 took the SAT, compared to 1.67 million students from the graduating class of 2014 and 1.65 million in the class of 2011.

	1.70 million Class of 2015
	1.67 million Class of 2014
	1.65 million Class of 2011

- **32.5%** were underrepresented minority students, compared to 31.3% in the class of 2014 and 29.0% in the class of 2011.

- **25.1%** of SAT takers in the class of 2015 took the exam using a fee waiver, compared to 23.6% from the class of 2014 and 21.3% from the class of 2011.

AP

Record number of students gain access; record number of exams

- 2.5 million students took an AP Exam in 2015, compared to 2.3 million in 2014 and just under 2.0 million in 2011.

	2.5 million 2015
	2.3 million 2014
	2.0 million 2011

- **26.2%** were underrepresented minority students, compared to 26.0% in 2014 and 23.9% in 2011.

- **22.1%** were low-income students, compared to 21.7% in 2014 and 18.7% in 2011.

- Schools administered a record 4.5 million AP Exams in 2015, an increase from 4.2 million in 2014 and 3.5 million in 2011.

	4.5 million 2015
	4.2 million 2014
	3.5 million 2011

PERFORMANCE & SUCCESS

By monitoring student progress in high school, our assessments can help educators to identify an individual student’s potential as well as students in need of additional support. By making the benefits clear to students and families, we can ensure that they are taking advantage of the opportunities they have earned through their hard work.

Just as important, our assessments serve to alert state and local policymakers to trouble spots — including communities or groups in need of attention or course work in need of improvement. This information can serve as a powerful leverage for school administrators and policymakers to gain and deploy educational resources.

PSAT/NMSQT®

10TH-GRADERS

Over 712,000 (39.3%) 10th-grade PSAT/NMSQT takers met the grade-level benchmark, indicative of being on track for college and career readiness.

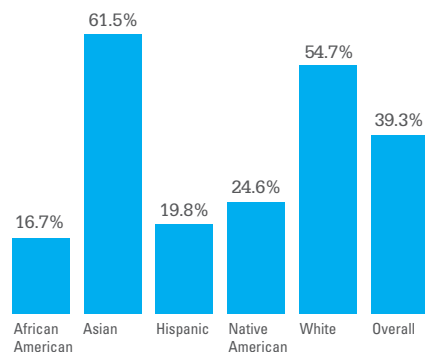
→ **16.7%** of 10th-grade African American PSAT NMSQT takers met the benchmark.

→ **61.5%** of 10th-grade Asian PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.

→ **19.8%** of 10th-grade Hispanic PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.

→ **24.6%** of 10th-grade Native American PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.

→ **54.7%** of 10th-grade white PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.



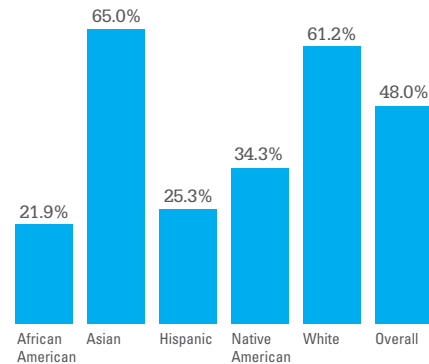
AP POTENTIAL IDENTIFIED IN THE 10TH GRADE

- Roughly 520,000 10th-grade PSAT/NMSQT takers overall showed high potential to succeed in at least one AP course.
- Over 76,000 underrepresented minority 10th-grade test-takers showed high potential for AP success.

11TH-GRADERS

Nearly 766,000 (48.0%) 11th-grade PSAT/NMSQT takers met the grade-level benchmark, indicating that they are on track for college and career readiness.

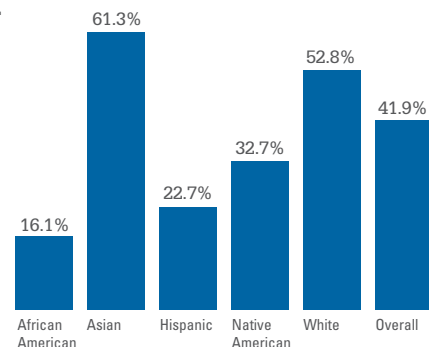
- **21.9%** of 11th-grade African American PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.
- **65.0%** of 11th-grade Asian PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.
- **25.3%** of 11th-grade Hispanic PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.
- **34.3%** of 11th-grade Native American PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.
- **61.2%** of 11th-grade white PSAT/NMSQT takers met the benchmark.



SAT

More than 712,000 students (41.9% of SAT takers in the class of 2015) met the SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmark.

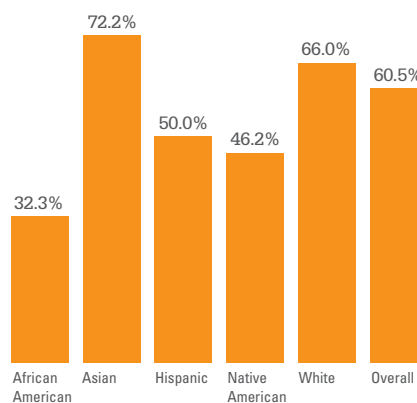
- **16.1%** of African American SAT takers met the benchmark.
- **61.3%** of Asian SAT takers met the benchmark.
- **22.7%** of Hispanic SAT takers met the benchmark.
- **32.7%** of Native American SAT takers met the benchmark.
- **52.8%** of white SAT takers met the benchmark.



AP

More than 1.5 million students (60.5%) scored 3 or higher on an AP Exam in 2015, compared to 1.4 million in 2014 and 1.2 million in 2011.

- **32.3%** of African American examinees scored 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.
- **72.2%** of Asian examinees scored 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.
- **50.0%** of Hispanic examinees scored 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.
- **46.2%** of Native American examinees scored 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.
- **66.0%** of white examinees scored 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam.



These data points are more than just numbers. They represent the hard work of high school students — and indicate their level of readiness for college and future careers. Our students' efforts are worth celebrating, and their challenges must be recognized and systematically addressed and overcome.

Three Areas of Strategic Challenge

How policymakers and the College Board can make a difference together to ensure that growth in access and performance continues to be benefit-driven for students

The College Board's commitment and strategic initiatives are making a positive difference in these areas of urgent national importance:

- 1 Encouraging more students to think about higher education by providing them with appropriate access to take critical assessments to strengthen their readiness for college.
- 2 Helping students to make the most of their college experience and to graduate in four years.
- 3 Inspiring and preparing more students to become the science, technology, engineering, and math professionals our nation needs.

1 **SAT SCHOOL DAY:** Improving access, participation, and performance.

Innovation

It's a simple concept with profound implications: Let students take the SAT in their own school during normal school hours.

That's what the College Board's SAT School Day program does. It enables states and districts to engender a college-going culture in their schools by allowing their juniors and seniors to take the SAT in their school on a regular school day. Doing so eliminates many common complications of Saturday testing — such as part-time jobs, family responsibilities, or finding transportation — and thereby encourages more students to pursue a college education.

Benefits

The SAT School Day program provides tangible benefits for students and their families. Taking tests at school on a weekday enables students to attend to their weekend needs, events, and obligations. The program eliminates the obstacle of securing transportation or locating an out-of-school site for testing and therefore increases the likelihood that a student will take this important step toward college and career. SAT School Day also offers the benefit to all students of providing a credential to apply to any type of college. Additionally, taking the SAT in a familiar surrounding around familiar staff eliminates test-day stress and could improve students' overall performance.

Impact

Statistics would suggest that when a state administers the SAT to all its students, we would witness a fall in performance as participation increased. However, after establishing a new baseline with the initial introduction of SAT School Day, all

who made this commitment to access are showing growth in their results.

As the data from Maine, Idaho, Washington, D.C., and Delaware show, SAT School Day is broadening opportunities for all students and particularly for Hispanic/Latino and African American students. These results show significant increases in performance with expanded access.

Maine

Since its commitment in 2007 to providing college access to all juniors, Maine has continued its drive to support all students, as is evident with 98.3% of Maine public school students from the class of 2015 taking the SAT, up from 97.4% the prior year. In that same time period, performance ticked up 0.1% as well.

Idaho

In 2013, 1,740 students met the benchmark. In 2015 that number of successful students more than doubled, with 4,250 meeting the benchmark.

Washington, D.C.

The percentage of African American public school students in the class of 2015 meeting the SAT Benchmark has held steady even as the number of students taking the SAT has increased by 25%.

Delaware

Hispanic/Latino performance has increased significantly since implementing SAT School Day, starting from 8.1% in 2013 and improving to 9.9% and 10.7% for 2014 and 2015, respectively. All while participation among this group steadily increased.

Conclusion

As policymakers and administrators seek additional ways to help students move toward college, scheduling the SAT on a school day clearly works. It relieves students of a number of the conflicts and inconveniences of weekend testing. Even better, this approach seems to benefit groups of traditionally underrepresented students. They are responding well to the encouragement of their own schools and the efforts to make assessments more convenient and less daunting. That's a strong incentive for policymakers and administrators to make SAT School Day available in their districts.

2 AP CREDIT POLICY: Granting college credit for AP enhances the college experience and improves four-year graduation rates.

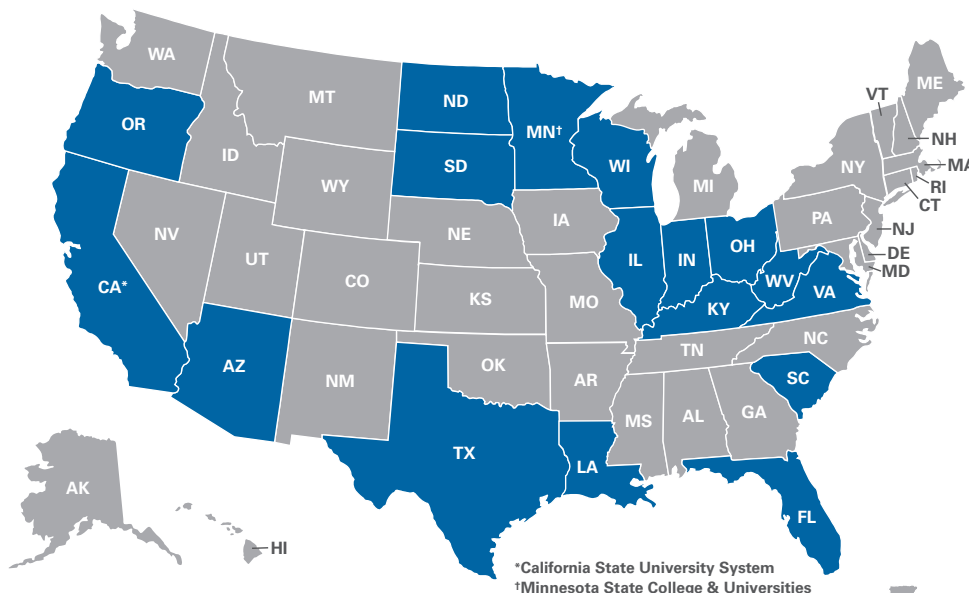
Innovation

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) is a collaboration among college faculty and secondary school teachers, which provides exciting, in-depth classroom experiences and gives students the opportunity to engage in challenging subject matter.

Research shows that having a successful experience with AP courses and exams can give students an important edge toward getting into college, staying in college, and graduating on time.

Increasingly, states and state university and college systems are recognizing the importance of clear, consistent AP credit policies, which encourage high school students to pursue this rigorous course work. When colleges grant credit, placement, or both for a successful AP Exam, it gives students greater flexibility in directing their college experience.

Recently Virginia, Texas, and Illinois joined 14 other states that award college credit statewide or systemwide to students earning scores of 3 and higher on AP Exams.



Benefits

First and foremost, AP credit policies benefit students.

Gaining credit for AP creates new opportunities and options for college students, ranging from double majoring, earning additional minors, spending a semester abroad, or working during college.

Using AP credit allows students to advance more quickly into advanced course work. Research shows that AP students who took at least one AP Exam take more — not fewer — college classes in their chosen discipline. In a time when the majority of students are taking six or more years to graduate, students who earn a 3 or higher on an AP Exam are more likely to earn their college degree on time in four years. This can save students and their families a significant amount of time and money.

There are also benefits to high schools, colleges, and universities. A strong AP credit and placement policy ensures that universities and colleges recognize AP students' academic achievement and simultaneously provides these institutions with an innovative solution to improve retention and ensure on-time degree completion. Such policies also encourage participation across diverse groups. This gives high schools and districts a powerful tool to close the access and achievement gap.

Impact

Here's a look at some of the AP participation and performance data in states that have AP credit policies in place. Credit policy is not the only contributing factor to these outcomes, but what's important to consider are the benefits of helping this growing group of students.

Arizona

Arizona has increased the number of successful AP Exam takers by almost 7,000 students since 2010.

Indiana

Nearly 24,000 AP examinees in Indiana scored a 3 or higher in 2015 — an increase of 5% since 2014 (up 57% since 2010).

Kentucky

Almost 30,000 AP Exams taken in Kentucky in 2015 earned a qualifying score of 3 or higher, an increase of 59% since 2010 when the legislation passed.

Conclusion

Research consistently shows that students who earn scores of 3 or higher are more likely to earn higher GPAs in college, are more likely to earn their college degree on time in four years,⁵ and have higher graduation rates. Statewide AP credit policies allow students to capitalize on their efforts in high school and earn the flexibility to make the most of their time in college.

3 AP STEM: How improvements in our high school courses can help the United States develop professional talent for vitally needed STEM careers.

Innovation

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math is expected to increase by 13% between 2012 and 2022 (vs. 11% growth for all occupations).⁶ As a nation, we are not graduating nearly enough STEM majors to meet this need.

The shortages are noticeable beginning in high school: Not enough of our high school students are taking advanced classes in the STEM disciplines. This is especially true of qualified female and underrepresented minority students. In fact, national studies show that among students with comparable levels of readiness for AP STEM course work, participation rates vary significantly across race and gender.

AP courses in STEM subjects are a promising lever for improving the nation's readiness for competition in critical professions.

Benefits

Research⁷ shows that students who do take AP math and science are more likely than non-AP students to earn degrees in physical science, engineering, and life science disciplines — fields leading to careers essential for the nation's competitive success and future prosperity. That's why getting more students into AP STEM courses is one immediate way to produce more candidates for college majors in the STEM fields.

6. <http://www.stemedcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/BLS-STEM-Jobs-report-spring-2014.pdf>

7. Mattern, K. D., Shaw, E. J., Ewing, M. (2011). *Is AP exam participation and performance related to choice of college major?* (College Board Research Report 2011-6). New York: The College Board. <http://research.collegeboard.org/publications/content/2012/05/info-go-summary-ap-exam-participation-and-performance-related-choice>

Impact

In the 2014-15 school year, several new programs contributed to this effort. AP Physics B was split into two separate, full-year courses to give teachers the time they need to help students develop a deep understanding of foundational physics principles through an inquiry-based instructional approach. Sustained attention on the importance of access to computer science education, and the support of programs and partners like AP STEM Access and Code.org, have also shown results.

In their inaugural year, AP Physics 1 and 2 showed the largest growth of any courses in the history of AP. The diversity of the class is also worth noting. Female, African American, Hispanic, and Native American students made significant participation gains with the introduction of the redesigned AP Physics 1 and 2 Exams, but remain underrepresented:

- The number of female students taking AP Physics 1 or 2 in 2015 (70,994) more than doubled compared to the number who took AP Physics B in 2014 (32,497).
- 39.5% of AP Physics 1 or 2 examinees were female in 2015, up from 34.7% of AP Physics B examinees in 2014.
- The number of underrepresented minority students taking AP Physics 1 or 2 in 2015 (36,953) more than doubled compared to the number who took AP Physics B in 2014 (15,920).
- 20.5% of AP Physics 1 or 2 examinees were underrepresented minority students in 2015, up from 17.0% of AP Physics B examinees in 2014.

Another STEM course showing the benefits of increased attention is AP Computer Science A. It grew 18% from 2011 to 2012, 19% from 2012 to 2013, 26% from 2013 to 2014, and 25% from 2014 to 2015. Female students made noticeable participation gains in AP Computer Science A, but remain underrepresented.

- 22.0% of AP Computer Science A examinees were female in 2015, up from 20.0% in 2014.
- 10,778 female students took Computer Science A in 2015, up from 7,846 in 2014.

The AP STEM Access program was the result of a collaboration among Google, DonorsChoose.org, and the College Board. Using a \$5 million grant from Google, 320 high schools offered 527 AP STEM courses for the first time.

- The most popular course adopted was Environmental Science, followed by Computer Science A.
- In the first year of the program, almost 10,000 students took an AP STEM Exam — for 47% of these, it was their first AP STEM experience.
- More than half of these exam takers were females and/or traditionally underrepresented minorities.
- The AP STEM Access program helped drive an 11.3% growth in the number of female students taking AP STEM exams.

Conclusion

The College Board recognizes that further action should be taken to adequately prepare students for STEM careers. Accordingly, the AP Program has expanded its offerings in this subject area. The AP Computer Science Principles course was designed with the goal of creating leaders in computer science fields and attracting students who are traditionally underrepresented with real-world applications and multidisciplinary opportunities. Schools and districts can do their part by ensuring these classes are available, and that they are using resources like AP Potential to identify and encourage qualified students to try these fields.

Looking Forward

As this report demonstrates, access to challenging courses and assessments is increasing — and that’s a clear and hopeful sign. However, assessments can no longer stand alone in American education. They must also create opportunities for all students.

In the coming years, student results reflected in this report will evolve as data, information, and opportunities build on the foundation of our redesigned courses and assessments. We will work to examine additional facets of the educational landscape, including a closer look at students attending rural schools.

Practice will become an integral tool for all students through Khan Academy® and other resources. Since its launch in June 2015, 70,000 visitors went onto the site on the first day alone, with more than 2 million hits and 750,000 questions similar to those on the SAT completed by 150,000 students.

This is only the beginning. Together with our partners and engaged policymakers, we will also offer students career exploration opportunities through partnerships with Project Lead The Way, Code.org, the National Math and Science Initiative, and more.

We will connect students to institutional aid, scholarships, and free resources to help them plan for college and careers.

Most important, we will continue to ensure that students leverage their hard work and earn the opportunities they deserve.