

For Immediate Release: Feb. 11, 2014

10 Years of Advanced Placement[®] Exam Data Show Significant Gains in Access and Success; Areas for Improvement

College Board encourages access for students who have potential to succeed in AP[®]

NEW YORK — Research shows that students who succeed in rigorous course work such as Advanced Placement[®] are developing college-level knowledge and skills while still in high school. These students are more likely than their peers to earn college degrees on time, providing an opportunity to save significant amounts of money. The College Board's *10th Annual AP Report to the Nation*, released today, shows that state leaders and educators are making significant progress in expanding both access to and success in AP.

Over the past decade, the number of students who graduate from high school having taken rigorous AP courses has nearly doubled, and the number of low-income students taking AP has more than quadrupled. Impressively, educators' work to bring more students into Advanced Placement courses has resulted in a larger increase in the number of qualifying AP Exam scores (the scores typically required for college credit) than in the number of low AP scores.

“At the heart of the College Board's mission is a commitment to ensuring that students have access to the opportunities they have earned,” said College Board President David Coleman. “While great strides have been made over the last decade to expand access to AP, we remain as committed as ever to ensuring that every student with the potential to succeed in an AP course has the opportunity to take one.”

A Decade of Increased AP Participation and Performance

Over the last decade, a broader, more diverse group of students has benefited from expanded access to Advanced Placement. In addition, more students than ever before are succeeding on AP Exams. Comparing the class of 2013 to the class of 2003 revealed the following:

- The class of 2013 achieved 1,000,135 more AP scores of 3, 4, or 5 (the scores typically accepted by colleges for credit and placement) and had an increase of 824,368 AP scores of 1 or 2. In other words, there was a greater increase from 2003 to 2013 in the scores of 3 or higher than in the scores of 1 or 2.

- 33.2 percent of public high school graduates in the class of 2013 took an AP Exam, compared to 18.9 percent of graduates in the class of 2003.
- 20.1 percent of public high school graduates in the class of 2013 earned a 3 or higher on an AP Exam, compared to 12.2 percent of graduates in the class of 2003.
- Low-income graduates accounted for 27.5 percent of those who took at least one AP Exam in the class of 2013, compared to 11.4 percent in the class of 2003. A total of 275,864 low-income graduates in the class of 2013 took at least one AP Exam during high school, which is more than four times the number of low-income graduates who took an AP Exam in the class of 2003.

Since 2003, there has been a 7.9 point increase in the percentage of U.S. public high school graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP Exam, with 17 states exceeding the national average for this percentage change. Once again, Maryland led all other states in the percentage of its public high school graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP Exam.

Top 10 States in Percentage of 2013 Public High School Graduates Succeeding on AP Exams:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Maryland (29.6%) | 6. California (26.9%) |
| 2. Connecticut (28.8%) | 7. New York (25.4 %) |
| 3. Virginia (28.3%) | 8. Utah (25.4 %) |
| 4. Massachusetts (27.9%) | 9. Colorado (24.4 %) |
| 5. Florida (27.3%) | 10. New Jersey (23.6%) |

Though challenges remain, progress is being made to close equity gaps in AP participation and success among underrepresented minority students. Over the past year:

- 30 states made progress in black/African American representation among AP Exam takers and those scoring 3 or higher (see Figure 9a).
- 28 states made progress in Hispanic/Latino representation among AP Exam takers and those scoring 3 or higher (see Figure 9b).

“Because each AP Exam consists of questions developed by top-tier college professors, AP teachers use such questions to inspire students to work hard in developing the skills fundamental to college majors and careers — the ability to explain key concepts clearly and precisely, to solve real-world problems, and to use evidence from primary source documents to build an argument,” said Trevor Packer, the College Board’s senior vice president who leads the Advanced Placement Program. “Given the very high standards college professors set for AP students, American educators deserve great credit: first for encouraging many more students to challenge themselves in high school, and second for achieving a greater increase in high AP scores than low scores.”

A unique collaboration between high school teachers and college faculty ensures that AP courses and exams reflect rigorous college-level work. During the 2012-2013 school year:

- Approximately 132,500 teachers taught AP classes in nearly 14,000 public high schools.
- Working to ensure that AP courses and exams meet college-level standards, nearly 5,300 college faculty members reviewed AP teachers' course syllabi and developed and validated AP curricula.
- Approximately 11,500 AP teachers and college professors scored 3.9 million AP Exams.

A Continued Commitment to Responsible Expansion

Data from *The 10th Annual AP Report to the Nation* show that nearly 300,000 academically prepared students in this country either did not take a course in an available AP subject for which they had potential, or attended a school that did not offer an AP course in that subject.

AP Potential™ and PSAT/NMSQT® Expansion: The College Board is committed to helping students gain access to AP courses for which they are academically qualified. A cornerstone of this work is utilizing PSAT/NMSQT data — to date the [strongest predictor](#) of success in specific AP courses — to reach out, inform, and encourage students to seize the AP opportunities revealed by the data. From this exam, educators can evaluate a student's AP potential — or likelihood to be successful in a given exam. By offering more students the opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT, educators can identify more students with AP potential and encourage them to enroll in AP course work.

New data from today's *Report* also show that 6 in 10 Asian students with a 60 percent or higher likelihood of succeeding on an AP science course took any such AP science course, compared to 4 in 10 white students, 4 in 10 Hispanic/Latino students, 3 in 10 black/African American and 3 in 10 American Indian/Alaska Native students.

“All In” Campaign: Despite significant progress, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students who show AP potential through the PSAT/NMSQT still typically enrolled in AP classes at lower rates than white and Asian students.

In order to help academically prepared but underserved students access the AP course work for which they are ready, the College Board is currently developing an “All In” campaign, a coordinated effort among College Board members to ensure that 100 percent of underserved students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in AP take at least one AP course.

AP STEM Access Program: In fall 2013, the College Board implemented the [AP STEM Access program](#) in 335 public high schools across the country. With the support of a \$5 million Google Global Impact Award to

DonorsChoose.org, these schools started offering new AP math and science courses with the goal of enabling underrepresented minority and female students who have demonstrated strong academic potential to enroll in and explore these areas of study and related careers. Over the next three years, the AP STEM Access program will give an estimated 36,000 students the opportunity to study college-level STEM course work in these newly offered AP classes.

AP Districts of the Year: Each year, the College Board honors three districts with an AP District of the Year award — one for each category of district population size (small, medium, and large) — for achieving the most significant increases in AP Exam scores while simultaneously expanding access to AP for a greater diversity of students. These three winning districts have shown that by offering a broader, more diverse population of students access to the rigor of AP courses, more minority and low-income students have achieved advanced learning that prepares them for college enrollment and completion. The recipients of the 2013 AP District of the Year awards are:

- [Miami-Dade County Public Schools](#), Florida (large district)
- [El Monte Union High School District](#), California (medium-sized district); and
- [Leyden High School District 212](#), Illinois (small district).

For more information on *The 10th Annual AP Report to the Nation*, including state-specific data, please visit

<http://apreport.collegeboard.org/>

Follow Trevor Packer on Twitter: @AP_Trevor

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About the Advanced Placement Program®

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both — while still in high school. Through AP courses in 34 subjects, each culminating in a rigorous exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments and see many sides of an issue — skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most rigorous curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students. Each AP teacher's syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation's leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores — more than 3,300 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores. In the last decade AP participation and performance rates have nearly doubled. In May 2013, 2.2 million students representing more than 18,000 schools around the world, both public and nonpublic, took approximately 4 million AP Exams.

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement

Program[®]. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

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