

IMPROVING POSTSECONDARY ACCESS THROUGH ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAMS

Advanced Placement courses prepare students for college coursework and often provide students with college credits.

- ▶ A 2008 study found AP students had better college graduation rates than students who did not take AP courses in high school.¹
- ▶ Thirty-one percent of colleges and universities consider a student's AP experience when making scholarship decisions.¹
- ▶ Depending on the institution, students who score at least a three on an AP exam—the exams are scored on a five-point scale—are eligible to receive college credit at most postsecondary institutions.
- ▶ Supporters of AP courses say they increase the rigor of high school coursework, preparing students for college-level work.
- ▶ President Obama's "Making College a Reality" initiative calls for a 50 percent increase in the number of students participating in AP or college-level classes by 2016.



Comprehensive AP policies make rigorous courses available to more students. According to the Education Commission of the States, some elements of a comprehensive AP policy include:

- ▶ Requiring all high schools to offer a minimum number of AP courses or offering financial incentives for districts and schools to provide AP courses;
- ▶ Offering accountability incentives for districts and schools to provide AP courses, such as tying AP offerings to school accreditation;
- ▶ Including a virtual school component to assist rural and small schools;
- ▶ Establishing and providing funding for AP teacher training and professional development; and
- ▶ Subsidizing student test fees for low-income students.³

Arkansas has enacted several bills to make AP courses more widely available to students.

- ▶ A 2003 law requires all high school students have the opportunity to enroll in at least one AP course in the four core areas—English, math, science and social studies.⁴
- ▶ A 1997 law provides for a school to receive \$50 for each score of three or better by a student on an AP exam.⁶
- ▶ The law requires local school districts are required to report student AP scores to the state Board of Education each year.⁶
- ▶ A 2003 made AP courses available through distance learning.⁶
- ▶ A 2001 law increased the cap for AP and pre-AP professional development by \$200 per student.⁶

¹The College Board. "AP and the cost of college." (2009) Accessed at <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/ap-exam-promo-flyer-2009.pdf> on June 29, 2009.

²The College Board. "About AP" Accessed at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html> on June 29, 2009.

³Jennifer Dounay, Education Commission of the States, Policy Brief on Advanced Placement (2006). Accessed at <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/67/44/6744.pdf> on June 3, 2009.

⁴Arkansas Department of Education. "Arkansas and Advanced Placement: A Blueprint for Success." Accessed at arkansased.org/communications/ppt/ap_1007.ppt on June 29, 2009.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

State	# Schools offering AP courses	# Students taking AP exams	Average AP score (all subjects)
AL	223	10,813	2.70
AK	43	2,476	3.04
AZ	213	20,236	2.75
AR	295	17,729	2.03
CA	1,514	250,168	2.87
CO	258	27,756	2.87
CT	229	22,322	3.26
DE	49	4,645	2.90
D.C.	47	4,621	2.49
FL	667	130,470	2.44
GA	478	57,115	2.75
HI	69	5,338	2.99
ID	83	4,017	3.07
IL	564	60,398	3.17
IN	380	23,237	2.66
IA	220	7,798	3.14
KS	110	7,766	2.97
KY	261	16,944	2.64
LA	180	6,423	2.63
ME	134	7,505	2.78
MD	307	49,493	2.91
MA	400	36,920	3.25
MI	568	39,743	3.05
MN	292	27,605	3.06
MS	189	5,750	2.09
MO	262	14,500	3.13
MT	95	2,623	2.98
NE	82	4,251	2.75
NV	80	9,205	2.67
NH	99	5,642	3.25
NJ	472	45,359	3.14
NM	100	6,763	2.54
NY	1,149	118,645	2.97
NC	489	45,704	2.82
ND	21	1,164	3.15
OH	644	42,771	3.03
OK	322	13,429	2.58
OR	187	12,441	2.95
PA	704	45,588	3.07
RI	55	3,906	3.01
SC	234	16,454	2.88
SD	88	2,113	2.89
TN	284	18,396	2.93
TX	1,352	147,241	2.56
UT	119	15,599	3.15
VT	70	3,355	3.01
VA	411	59,762	2.82
WA	338	31,237	2.93
WV	114	4,918	2.45
WI	436	26,593	3.11
WY	26	1,073	2.50

Source: The College Board: 2008 Report