

News Release

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Steady growth for Advanced Placement in Wisconsin

2011 graduates are 'Best in the Midwest' for AP performance

MADISON — Advanced Placement (AP) continues steady growth in Wisconsin public high schools and student performance both beats the nation and places Wisconsin as the best in the 13-state Midwest region, according to data in the *Eighth Annual AP Report to the Nation*.

Wisconsin had 17,280 graduates from the class of 2011 who took an AP exam while in high school. The number represents a 3.7 percent increase from the previous graduating class. Of the 2011 graduates taking an AP exam, 12,058 (69.8 percent) earned a score of three or higher, which allows students to receive credit in that subject

at most colleges and universities. With 19.4 percent of all state graduates earning scores of three or higher on their AP exams, Wisconsin topped the Midwest region for successful completion of AP exams. Nationally, 903,630 graduates took an AP exam in high school and 18.1 percent were successful on their exams.

“Congratulations to our 2011 graduates, their parents, teachers, and the school boards that supported the rigorous coursework that leads to AP success,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “I am happy for our AP growth and success. However, several states have invested state funding to improve and expand their AP programs at a faster rate than Wisconsin. We must prioritize education and not cut it.”

Wisconsin does have some important outreach activities to support Advanced Placement. The state received an Advanced Placement Incentive program grant in 2008 to expand AP participation, especially for low-income and under-represented students. The grant supports professional development opportunities for teachers and student support initiatives in partner schools, including the Beloit, Green Bay, and Madison school districts. The state experienced a 1.7 percentage point increase from last year in the number of graduates requesting a fee waiver

AP Report to the Nation

Public School Students

Wisconsin	2011
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	17,280
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	19.4
Nation	
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	903,630
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	18.1

(more)

for AP exams because of family economic circumstances. Wisconsin had 9.8 percent of 2011 graduates who requested an AP exam fee waiver, double the percentage five years ago.

The *AP Report to the Nation* singled out the University of Wisconsin-Madison for its work with AP. The university's 2009 research study showed that students who took AP credits were able to move into more advanced classes and graduate from college sooner than other students. UW-Madison reports that 80 percent of all new freshmen from Wisconsin high schools entered the university having taken one or more AP tests and 74 percent of new freshmen had scored a three or higher on one or more of those exams.

“Research shows that experience with advanced coursework through the AP program translates to improved college success,” Evers stated. “Opportunities to take AP classes are not equally distributed across Wisconsin. Collaboration will be critical in providing these college experiences for our high school students. I encourage school districts to contact each other and share AP opportunities across school boundaries. Every student who wants an AP opportunity should have access to this accelerated coursework.”

Local districts can start their own AP courses or enable students to access AP through a partnership between the Department of Public Instruction and Cooperative Educational Service Agency 9 (CESA 9). The Wisconsin Web Academy offers 19 AP courses to students throughout the state via CESA 9's Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS). During the 2010-11 school year, 274 students from 83 school districts took AP coursework through the Wisconsin Web Academy. AP course enrollments have increased by 29 percent for the fall 2011 term. Enrollments are available year round in AP courses offered through WVS. Any public, private, or charter school student can access these courses through their local schools.

Wisconsin's growth in the percentage of graduates taking AP exams is accompanied by improved results. Ten years ago, 10.8 percent of high school graduates earned a score of three or higher on an AP exam. For the class of 2010, 18.3 percent earned a score of three to five on an AP exam. For 2011 graduates, 19.4 percent earned scores that qualify them for credit or advanced standing at most colleges and universities.

About 35 percent of AP exams taken in the 2010-11 school year were in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Five of those classes, biology, calculus AB and calculus BC, chemistry, and statistics are among the 10 most popular AP exams for Wisconsin students. State public school students took 16,147 STEM exams during the 2010-11 school year, a 9 percent increase from the number taken the previous year and a nearly 49 percent increase from five years ago.

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“Innovation grows economies and the STEM fields are on the cutting edge of innovation,” Evers said. “We need more of our students to be ready for and have access to AP coursework in STEM subjects.”

Advanced Placement is a high school academic program with courses in more than 30 subject areas that culminate in college-level assessments. Exams are graded on a scale of one to five, with a score of three or higher considered successful and eligible for credit or advanced standing at most colleges and universities. According to the College Board, earning a score of three or higher on an AP exam is a good predictor of a student’s ability to succeed in college academic studies and graduate.

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NOTE: Tables that follow provide additional background on the Advanced Placement Report to the Nation. Maps from the College Board, showing Advanced Placement participation and performance for 2011 Wisconsin graduates by school district, are available on the Department of Public Instruction newsroom website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/newsroom.html>. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_27.pdf.

Eighth Annual AP Report to the Nation

Advanced Placement Participation Public School Students

	Class of			
	2001	2006	2010	2011
Wisconsin				
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	9,592	13,415	16,665	17,280
Percent Taking an AP Exam	16.2	21.1	26.3	27.8
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	10.8	14.7	18.3	19.4
Nation				
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	431,573	645,277	852,475	903,630
Percent Taking an AP Exam	16.8	22.3	28.2	30.2
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	10.8	13.9	16.8	18.1

Advanced Placement Participation by Low-Income Students*

	Wisconsin Public School Students			
	Year	Low-income Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Percent of AP Examinee Population	Percent Scoring 3 or Higher
2006	13,415	661	4.9	3.4
2010	16,665	1,349	8.1	5.7
2011	17,280	1,688	9.8	7.1

*Low-income students are identified as those students who request an exam fee waiver for financial reasons.

Midwest Region Public Schools Percent of 2011 Graduates

State	Taking an AP Exam in High School	Percent Scoring 3 or Higher
Illinois	28.5	18.5
Indiana	31.9	14.0
Iowa	15.3	9.7
Kansas	17.0	10.3
Michigan	24.7	16.0
Minnesota	28.2	18.3
Missouri	14.1	8.2
Nebraska	13.5	8.1
North Dakota	13.1	8.2
Ohio	20.3	12.8
South Dakota	19.0	12.3
West Virginia	20.5	8.8
Wisconsin	27.8	19.4
Nation	30.2	18.1

10 Most Popular Advanced Placement Exams Wisconsin Public School Class of 2011

Subject	Number of Exams	Percent Scoring 3 or Higher
Psychology	6,398	78.9
English Literature and Composition	5,180	66.8
U.S. History	4,815	61.0
Calculus AB	4,254	62.8
English Language and Composition	3,524	74.9
Biology	2,865	57.4
Statistics	2,317	70.4
Government and Politics: U.S.	2,058	62.4
Chemistry	1,946	59.6
Calculus BC	1,413	81.2

Advanced Placement STEM Participation Public School Students

Science	Number of Exams Taken			% Scoring 3 or Higher (2010-11)
	2006	2010	2011	
Biology	2,327	2,862	2,987	55.7
Chemistry	1,429	1,953	2,150	56.9
Environmental Science	249	693	905	63.9
Physics B	725	1,045	1,157	69.1
Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism	67	66	100	78.0
Physics C: Mechanics	246	304	359	78.6
Mathematics				
Calculus AB	3,355	4,039	4,495	62.7
Calculus BC	1,006	1,429	1,393	80.8
Computer Science A	184	243	174	60.3
Statistics	1,204	2,180	2,427	70.3

NOTE: Results in this table are for students who took an AP exam during a specific school year.