



ADVANCED PLACEMENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

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Governor Martin O'Malley
Lt. Governor Anthony Brown

PRINCIPLES OF PROGRESS

With more than 68 percent of U.S. high school graduates entering college nationwide, access to higher education is becoming a reality for more students.¹ But merely entering college is not enough. Students must enter college ready for the challenges they will face. Students who are required to take developmental courses not only take longer to complete their degrees, but are also less likely to attain a degree than their peers who enter college fully prepared. In addition, the overall cost of college increases substantially as students take longer to complete a degree.

Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown are committed to ensuring that Maryland students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and complete their degrees on time.

Governor O'Malley has provided record funding for public education in each of his four budgets, culminating in \$5.7 billion for this fiscal year alone – and \$1.2 billion more than four years ago. Governor O'Malley has also supported an historic effort to build Maryland's schools – investing \$1.3 billion in public school construction over four years.

AP students have better four-year college graduation rates.

According to a 2008 study, students who take AP in high school graduate from college in four years at higher rates than their peers who did not take AP. The study reports that graduation rates for AP English Literature students were **62 percent higher** than graduation rates for those who took other English courses in high school.

Source: The College Board (2008)

These investments have produced visible results. During the 2008-2009 school year, Maryland students achieved the highest Maryland School Assessment (MSA) scores in state history. *Education Week* ranked Maryland as having the best alignment from Pre-Kindergarten to Post-Graduate study – the primary focus of Governor O'Malley's P-20 Council – and for the second year in a row, Maryland was ranked the #1 public school system in the nation.

While Governor O'Malley has worked to make college more affordable in Maryland with a four-year tuition freeze and increased tuition assistance and scholarships, reducing the time a student spends in college can help lower the costs of a higher education. Research indicates that students who score a three or higher on Advanced Placement (AP) exams are more successful in college and have higher graduation rates than their non-AP peers.²

¹ "College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2008 High School Graduates" (2008), Bureau of Labor Statistics.

² "AP and the Cost of College" (2009), College Board.

FORWARD, NOT BACK

Recognizing the strong correlation between AP participation and college success, Governor O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Brown are pledging to dedicate education funding to cover the cost of AP exams for all Maryland students.

Additionally, to ensure that students are prepared for the rigors of AP coursework, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown have pledged to cover the cost of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) for all high school sophomores, utilizing the corresponding AP Potential software to identify those students who are likely to succeed in AP.

In the 2011-2012 academic year, the State will cover the cost of key STEM-focused exams for all students and PSAT testing for all high school sophomores. In the 2012-2013 academic year the State will cover the cost of all AP exams.

Implementation of the AP Access and Success Initiative

- **Multi-year Approach.** To ensure that the State has the capacity and resources in place to accommodate the increase in AP enrollment, the AP Access and Success Initiative is designed to be implemented over a two-year period.

In the first year of implementation (Academic Year 2011-2012), the State will cover the cost of key STEM-focused AP exams for all students and PSAT testing for all high school sophomores.³ The Initiative focuses on AP exams in STEM disciplines in the first year to address the State's immediate workforce shortages. The inclusion of PSAT/NMSQT testing for sophomores will also facilitate early identification of students who will benefit from the full implementation of the AP Access and Success Initiative. In the second year, the AP Access and Success Initiative will expand to include AP exams in all disciplines.

- **Estimated Cost.** The estimated cost for the first year of implementation is approximately \$3 million. Based upon the current and projected number of AP exams taken in Maryland each year and accounting for the available fee reduction and federal grant funding, the approximate annual cost to the State to cover the cost of all AP exams and PSAT/NMSQT for all high school sophomores is approximately \$7.5 million.
- **Reducing the Cost of Developmental Education.** Initial estimates indicate that the cost to the State for developmental education at community colleges and public four-year institutions ranges between \$25 and \$30 million annually. Governor O'Malley has tasked the P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland with devising strategies to reduce the number of students requiring developmental coursework and to align the high school and college curricula. The "AP Access and Success" Plan is projected to reduce the number of students requiring developmental education, resulting in a reduction in cost to the State. As part of this proposal, the Governor will ask the P-20 Council to make recommendations for dedicating a portion of the anticipated savings to support this initiative.

³ STEM-focused Exams include: Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Computer Science, Environmental Science, and Physics.

Preparing for Success

Expanding both access and success requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on identifying those students who are likely to succeed in AP and preparing them with rigorous coursework. The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a shorter version of the SAT designed to measure reasoning and thinking skills in the areas of critical reading, mathematics, and writing.

Research indicates that PSAT/NMSQT scores are strong predictors of students' AP Exam success than the more traditional factors such as high school grades, grades in previous same-discipline course work, and the number of same-discipline courses a student has taken.⁴

In addition to preparing students for the SAT and AP, the PSAT/NMSQT can also help students prepare for college in general by identifying areas of strength and areas that need more work.

Benefits of PSAT/NMSQT

- **AP Potential.** *AP Potential* is a free, web-based tool that allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or better on a given AP Exam. *AP Potential* identifies students likely to succeed in AP courses early in their high school careers, giving them adequate time to take the coursework necessary to prepare them for an AP curriculum. As a tool, it is also useful in identifying the areas in which schools can adopt new AP course offerings based on student potential.
- **Other Benefits.** In addition to *AP Potential*, College Board provides a range of no-cost programs to accompany the PSAT/NMSQT that can help educators, students, and parents understand what it means to be college ready and steps they can take to ensure each student is college ready.
- **Cultivating Interest in College.** Through the PSAT/NMSQT, students may elect to participate in the “Student Search Service.” Those students who participate will then receive informational packages from various colleges, cultivating early interest and participation in the college admissions process.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Maryland Leads the Nation in AP Success

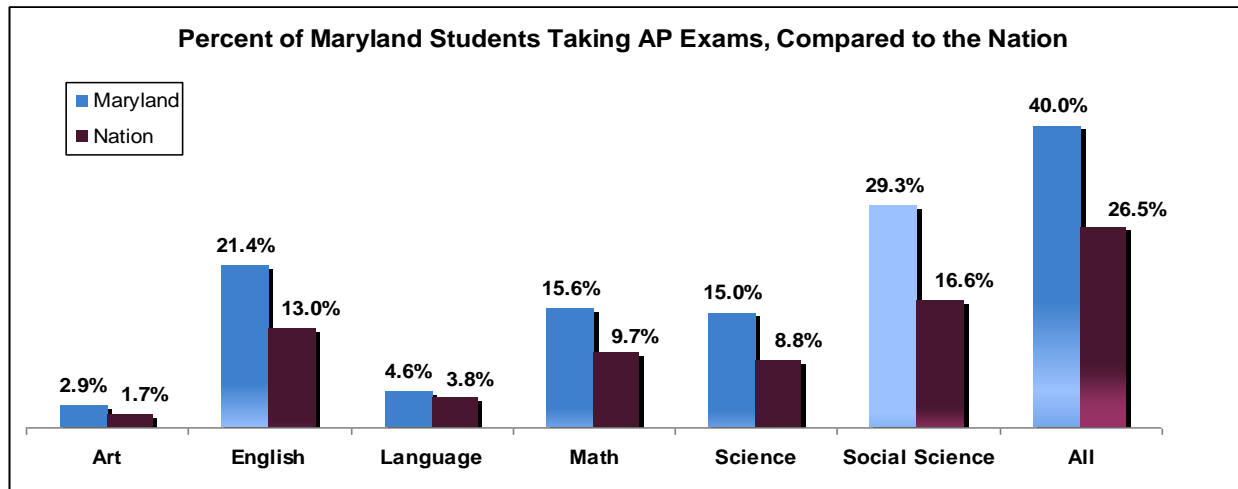
According to the 2010 *AP Report to the Nation*, Maryland leads the nation in the number of public school students achieving success in AP for the second consecutive year.⁵ Nearly 25 percent of Maryland’s class of 2009 achieved an AP Exam score of three or higher during their high school years—the highest percentage of any state in the nation and well above the national rate.

Maryland also ranked second in the nation in the five-year expansion successful AP scores (defined as a score of three or better). Consistent with our focus on STEM education, approximately 15 percent of

⁴ “Updating AP Potential Expectancy Tables Involving PSAT/NMSQT Writing,” (2007), College Board, <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/pdf/RN-35.pdf>.

⁵ Access the full report: http://www.collegeboard.com/html/aprtn/pdf/ap_report_to_the_nation.pdf.

Maryland’s public high school students took at least one AP Exam in science and math, well above the national average in both subject areas.

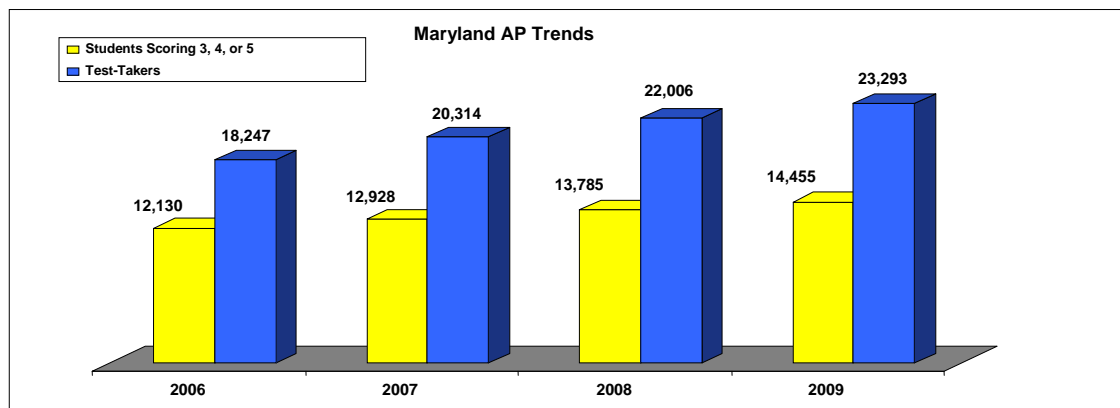


Maryland public schools also rank first in the nation in the percentage of high schools offering and students taking college-level courses.

In *Newsweek’s* 2010 “America’s Top High Schools” issue, 98 Maryland high schools were listed among the top 1,622 schools (top 6 percent) in the nation.⁶ More than half (53 percent) of Maryland’s 185 public high schools representing 15 different Maryland counties made the *Newsweek* list. Fifteen of the schools spotlighted by the magazine have 35 percent or more of their students receiving free or reduced-price meals.

Addressing Student Demand -- Maryland AP Trends

The number of Maryland students participating in AP coursework has increased by more than 25 percent since 2006.



Forty percent of the graduating class of 2009 took at least one AP Exam during high school, compared to 26.5 percent for the nation. The percentage of test-takers classified as low-income has increased from 8

⁶ Access the report: <http://www.newsweek.com/feature/americas-best-high-schools.html>.

percent in 2004 to 13 percent in 2009. Maryland is also one of 16 states in the nation to have successfully closed the equity gap for Latino students. Additionally, between 2007 and 2009 the number of students taking STEM AP exams increased by 65%.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT: THE RIGHT INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

Participation in AP can positively impact college admissions

With more than 30 courses in a wide variety of subject areas, AP provides willing and academically prepared high school students with the opportunity to study and learn at the college level.

AP students have the opportunity to:

- **Earn College Credit.** AP students have the opportunity to earn both college credit and advanced placement while still in high school. More than 90 percent of 4-year colleges in the U.S. provide credit and/or advanced placement for qualifying scores.
- **Stand out in the College Admissions Process.** AP students demonstrate maturity and readiness for college and indicate a willingness to challenge themselves. Eighty-five percent of selective colleges and universities report that a student's AP experience favorably impacts admissions decisions.⁷
- **Gain Skills to Succeed in College.** AP prepares students for college-level work by improving writing and analytical skills and developing the appropriate study habits.

Participation in AP can reduce the cost of college⁸

Research indicates that participation in AP can benefit students in several important ways after they enter college:

- **Time to Degree.** AP courses and exams help students complete their bachelor's degrees on time. Students who take AP are much more likely to graduate in four years, reducing the likelihood of paying for tuition for a fifth or sixth year. Students who take longer to graduate from a public college or university typically pay between \$8,000 and \$19,000 for each additional year.
- **Increased Scholarship Competitiveness.** AP has also emerged as an important factor in college scholarship decisions. Taking AP increases eligibility for scholarships – 31 percent of colleges and universities look at AP experience when determining scholarships.

⁷ "AP and the Cost of College" (2009), College Board.

⁸ "AP and the Cost of College," (2009), College Board.

AP Fee Assistance in Other States

Many other states have policies in place for leveraging resources to increase AP access and success.

In Arkansas, Florida, and Kentucky, the State covers the entire AP exam fee, subject to appropriations. Georgia covers a student's first AP exam in full and pays for all high school sophomores to take the PSAT/NMSQT. Since 2003, Georgia has more than doubled the number of students enrolling in AP courses from 28,920 in to 65,231 and the number of AP exams taken from 39,549 to 91,395.

Indiana covers the cost of all science and math AP exams in addition to the PSAT/NMSQT for all high school sophomores. Maine mandates that all high school sophomores take the PSAT and covers the cost of the testing.

In Maine, results have been positive. The State has seen an 11.4 percent increase in the percent of the graduating class having participated in AP since 2004.

CONCLUSION

To move Maryland forward, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Brown understand that we must improve the skills of our state's workforce and provide our students with the tools they need to be successful in the global economy. The "AP Access and Success" Plan will help our students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and complete their degrees on time to help Maryland's workforce maintain its competitive edge in today's innovative economy.

Demonstrating Results: Montgomery County Public Schools

- In 2009, the number of AP tests taken in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) represented 33.5 percent of all AP exams taken by public school students in Maryland.
- MCPS students continue to perform well on AP exams, even as participation rates increase. MCPS students scored a 3 or higher on 72.3 percent of AP exams taken in 2009, significantly higher than the national average of 57 percent.
- Both African American and Hispanic students made impressive gains between 2008 and 2009 showing a respective increase of 14.6 and 17 percent in the number of AP tests taken.
- According to the *Diplomas Count 2010* report, the MCPS graduation rate is 83.1 percent, highest among the nation's 50 largest districts.
- The 2010 MCPS graduates qualified for \$232 million in college scholarships, an increase of almost \$50 million over last year.