



Press Release

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Traverse City Area Public Schools Announces:

Traverse City Area Public Schools Named to AP Achievement List by the College Board for Significant Gains in Advanced Placement Access and Student Performance

Traverse City Area Public Schools is one of fewer than 400 school districts in the nation and one of only 29 school districts in Michigan being honored by the College Board with a place on its Advanced Placement (AP) Achievement List for opening AP classroom doors to a significantly broader pool of students, while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher. From 2008 to 2010, Traverse City Area Public Schools has increased the number of students participating in AP from 476 to 685, while improving the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher, the score typically needed to earn college credit, from 77% in 2008 to 78% in 2010. In 2009-2010, 685 TCAPS high school students enrolled in more than 20 Advanced Placement courses and completed 1119 AP exams.

“Today’s news is tremendously important for TCAPS’ students and parents, as it confirms more students are taking advantage of rigorous learning opportunities and performing at levels that allow them to earn college credit while still in high school. Students’ participation and achievement on Advanced Placement tests can save college tuition costs as many colleges, including NMC, award credits based on successful AP test completion,” remarked TCAPS’ Superintendent Steve Cousins. “TCAPS’ recognition is a direct result of teaching excellence that inspires students to engage and excel in college-level studies. It’s also a reflection of a focused commitment by our high school instructional leaders who continue to provide support for students to not only lead them to successful graduation, but to help them become ready for learning beyond high school,” Cousins emphasized.

“Participation in college-level AP courses can level the playing field for underserved students, give them the confidence needed to succeed in college, and raise standards and performance in key subjects like science and math,” said College Board President Gaston Caperton. “The AP Achievement List districts are defying expectations by expanding access while enabling their students to maintain or improve their AP Exam scores.”

“TCAPS’ high schools have made significant changes over the last few years to improve the learning success of every student. Schools have distributed leadership to change our instructional delivery systems and improve teaching and learning,” explained Dr. Jayne Mohr, TCAPS’ Associate Superintendent. “Teachers are working in teams as well as engaging students in the change process to implement smaller learning communities. Changes have included moving to trimesters, and restructuring our large schools to bring teams of teachers and students together around grade levels and content areas through neighborhoods and academies. Schools are also providing advisory programs, peer mentoring, and counseling to help personalize each student’s learning. Collectively all these efforts are helping to boost students’ high school success and ensure they are prepared for college and careers in the 21st Century.”

Many school districts in the United States have focused on expanding access to AP courses as part of a strategy for fostering college readiness. While these efforts have resulted in more students earning scores of 3 or better — the score typically cited as a “qualifying” or “successful” score because the majority of U.S. colleges and universities provide college credit or advanced placement for this score — these efforts have also resulted in more students now earning scores of 1 or 2. Accordingly, there has been a slight decline since 2001 in the percentage of AP students scoring a 3 or better, a decline that is to be expected in any program attracting a broader cross-section of students.

That said, helping more students learn at a higher level *and* earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators to college professors. Many are experimenting with a variety of initiatives and strategies to determine how to expand access and improve student performance simultaneously.

“These districts are living proof that when access to AP is provided for the range and breadth of prepared and motivated students, districts can achieve even higher learning outcomes for their students — and the opportunity for so many more to earn college credit and placement — than when AP opportunities were restricted to a smaller segment of the high school population,” said Trevor Packer, Vice President of the College Board’s Advanced Placement Program.® The complete AP Achievement List can be found at www.collegeboard.org.

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Additional Information About the Advanced Placement Program

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Through more than 30 college-level courses, each culminating in a rigorous exam, AP provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both. Taking AP courses also demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most rigorous curriculum available to them. Each AP teacher's syllabus is evaluated and approved by college faculty from some of the nation's leading institutions, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. AP is accepted by more than 3,800 colleges and universities worldwide for college credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores. This includes over 90 percent of four-year institutions in the United States. In 2010, 1.8 million students representing more than 17,000 schools around the world, both public and nonpublic, took 3.2 million AP Exams.