



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

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CONTACT: Lora Rakowski, Lora.Rakowski@maryland.gov

Continued High Marks for Maryland Students on Advanced Placement Success

BALTIMORE – (February 24, 2021) – Maryland student success in the Advanced Placement (AP) program remains steady, and high participation rates on the rigorous tests continue.

According to a report released by the College Board, 31.5 percent of the Maryland Class of 2020 earned a score of 3 or higher on at least one AP exam while in high school. This rate is well above the nationwide number of 24.4 percent and, identical to Maryland’s Class of 2019. Maryland’s rate also places it sixth in the nation on this measure.

A score of 3 or better is the threshold at which many higher education institutions award college credit to high school students on an AP assessment.

The percentage of Maryland graduates taking an AP test while in high school was strong at 45.8, with 26,595 members of the Class of 2020 in the State taking at least one exam. Maryland’s participation rate was well above the national rate of 38.3 percent and was also tied for sixth in the nation.

“Our administration remains committed to providing every Maryland student access to a high quality education and challenging curriculum that ensures success in today’s 21st century workplace,” said Governor Larry Hogan. “Even during the ongoing public health emergency, Maryland continues to lead the nation in Advanced Placement assessment achievement. Congratulations to our dedicated students, educators and administrators.”

Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, said the AP program is one key pathway to preparing a brighter future for students after high school.

“Maryland is committed to preparing all graduates for success in post-secondary education. The Advanced Placement program continues to provide rigorous academic options for our students during a challenging year,” said Dr. Salmon, “and we believe our students will continue to rise to new levels of advanced achievement.”

Maryland in 2017 launched the Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) initiative, designed to close equity gaps for lower income students and students of color in AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. The goal of this program is to increase the participation of under-represented, academically prepared students. Over the last three years, ten Maryland school systems with fifty-one schools have participated in this initiative. The AP course participation rate of underrepresented students in EOS schools was on average 7 percentage points higher than the rate in similar schools, and underrepresented students’ success on AP exams was similar to that of their peers in other schools.

The College Board's new report of the college-level assessment program provides a variety of information about the Class of 2020. For example:

- The percentage of Maryland graduating seniors scoring a 3 or better on an AP test has increased from 25.6 percent in 2010 to 31.5 in 2020—an increase of 5.9 percentage points.
- Nearly 46% percent of all 2020 Maryland high school graduates took at least one AP exam while in high school compared to 41.7 percent of the Maryland Class of 2010.
- The number of Maryland high school graduates who scored a 3 or better on an AP exam increased from 15,099 in 2010 to 18,286 in 2020.
- Maryland's rate of the Class of 2020 scoring a 5 on at least one AP exam—the highest possible score—was 18.7 percent, fourth in the nation.

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program, which began in 1955, allows students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Students of different interests and backgrounds can choose from more than 30 courses to demonstrate their knowledge of rigorous academic curriculum. More information about the AP program is available at <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/home>.