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CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS NAMED AP DISTRICT OF THE YEAR BY THE COLLEGE BOARD

CPS Recognized for Expanding Access to AP and Improving Performance Overall and Among Students of Color; CPS is the Only District to Ever Win AP District of the Year More than Once

Chicago Public Schools has been named the College Board Advanced Placement (AP) District of the Year among large school districts for leading the nation in expanding access to AP exams while simultaneously improving exam performance among every demographic subgroup – a statistical outlier among school districts of any size. CPS is the largest school district to ever receive this honor and the only district of any size to be named AP District of the Year more than once, having previously received the award in 2011.

“This record-breaking achievement as AP District of the Year is a testament to the hard work, progress and success of Chicago’s remarkable students, teachers, principals and families,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “CPS students make Chicago proud every day. They not only lead in the classroom, they lead the country in academic growth, and their achievements are earning well-deserved national recognition and respect.”

Chicago Public Schools was one of 447 school districts across the U.S. and Canada that achieved the rigorous growth and access qualifications for placement on the College Board’s annual AP District Honor Roll. From this list, three AP Districts of the Year — one for each category of district population size: small, medium, and large — were selected based on an analysis of three academic years of AP data.

The College Board selected CPS as District of the Year for successfully expanding access and increasing performance on AP exams. Specifically, from 2015 to 2017, Chicago Public Schools:

- Increased the number of students taking AP classes by at least four percent each year;
- Increased the percentage of students earning passing scores on AP Exams; and
- Increased the percentage of traditionally-underrepresented minority students earning a passing score.

“AP has been a lever of change for Chicago’s students by helping make the college dream more of a reality,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “Rigorous coursework provides students with the opportunity to excel in high school and earn college credit, and being named AP District of the year is a clear indicator that our students are more prepared for college than ever before.”

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In addition to meeting the College Board's award criteria, CPS was selected as District of the Year due to its performance compared to the 447 school districts on the AP Honor Roll. Among districts that passed the rigorous expansion and performance requirements to be named to the AP Honor Roll, CPS stood apart in the following ways:

- CPS is the only large district to make the AP Honor Roll for five consecutive years;
- CPS had the largest increase in the number of students earning a score of 3 or higher on at least one exam;
- CPS had the largest increase in the number of African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/Alaska Native students earning a score of 3 or higher on at least one exam; and
- CPS had the highest number of AP exams taken.

"Chicago's AP results are historic. No other school district has won AP District of the Year twice," said College Board CEO David Coleman. "CPS is leading the country by demonstrating a greater and more diverse set of students is ready for college-level work in high school. As someone who witnesses education across America, I invite my fellow citizens to look afresh at Chicago's remarkable achievement."

Student Impact

The remarkable performance on AP exams is yet another indication that CPS students are making rapid growth in levels of college readiness. In school year 2016-2017, 43.4 percent of graduating seniors earned early college and career credentials, putting CPS on course to reach Mayor Emanuel's goal of at least 50 percent of all CPS high school graduates attaining college and career credentials by 2019. Early college and career credentials can be earned by students in AP, IB, STEM, Dual Credit, Dual-Enrollment and JROTC courses, which help make college more accessible and prepare students for success in higher education.

One of the biggest benefits of AP for students is the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school. Research consistently demonstrates that students who succeed in AP are better prepared for college. They're more likely to enroll in college, stay in college, do well in their classes, and graduate in four years. This can save students time and money, and give them a head start on their college education. Illinois has a statewide Advanced Placement credit policy that ensures students who attend public colleges and universities in state will receive college credit if they earn a 3 or above on an AP exam.

Expanding Access to Underrepresented Student Groups

While CPS has encouraging rates of participation for minority and low income students compared to national averages, the district is committed to building upon that progress. As part of that commitment, CPS joined the Lead Higher Initiative, an innovative partnership with the national nonprofit Equal Opportunity Schools to close the racial and socioeconomic participation gap in rigorous college courses. The program launched earlier this year at six CPS high schools to ensure students have access to the most rigorous coursework.

The Lead Higher Initiative helps support the district's three-year vision, which outlines a commitment and strategy for fostering equitable academic outcomes for all students. By increasing

low-income and minority student participation in rigorous courses like AP, Lead Higher will help create more equitable outcomes and ensure more students graduate high school with college credit.

AP at CPS By-the-Numbers:

Today, CPS released data from school year 2016-2017 that shows the number of AP exams taken and the number of students earning a “3” or higher have significantly increased over time, resulting in more students earning early college and career credentials. Since 2011:

- The number of students taking AP exams increased by nearly 44 percent, or 6,907 students;
- The number of students receiving a “3” or higher on at least one AP exam nearly doubled;
- The number of African American students passing AP exams increased by 60 percent;
- The number of Hispanic students passing AP exams increased by 128 percent; and
- The number of exams taken has increased by 49 percent, or 12,467 exams.

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