



For Immediate Release:

October 7, 2014

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Students post gains on Advanced Placement exams

Black students narrow achievement gap with white peers on SAT

(HARTFORD, CT)—Connecticut public school students improved performance and increased participation on Advanced Placement (AP) exams according to AP, PSAT and SAT results published today by the [College Board](#). The report also shows that black and Hispanic students, traditionally under-represented groups, made significant increases in both student achievement and participation on AP exams.

Black students also demonstrated significant progress on the SAT with improvements in every content area—closing in on the achievement gap with their white peers.

“While we still have a long way to go to ensure that all students are achieving at high levels, these results demonstrate that we are making significant progress in reducing the achievement gap for a significant percentage of our minority students,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “Also evident in the reports and a promising indication for the future, is the fact that more Connecticut students are embarking on a pathway towards college. Closing the achievement gaps and ensuring every Connecticut student is prepared for lifelong success is not something that can be accomplished overnight. However, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Connecticut students, teachers and families, we are making clear progress.”

"We're pleased that Connecticut's students of color are making significant strides in accessing and succeeding at college-level coursework through the Advanced Placement (AP) program. In addition, we see a positive trend in the number of students of color taking the SAT, which is an important step on the pathway to college," Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor said. "As we raise academic expectations for all our students, we must continue to expand access for and support success by our traditionally under-represented student populations."

Advanced Placement (AP)

Across the board, Connecticut students improved performance and increased participation on Advanced Placement exams. AP programs provide students with the opportunity to experience college-level material and earn college credit in the process. Typically, students who score 3 or higher on an AP exam receive better grades, assume larger course loads, and graduate at higher rates from college.

Statewide, 25,704 students (a 4.1 percent increase over 2013) took 46,148 AP tests (a 3.9 percent increase over 2013). Seventy-one percent of the tests administered (32,802 tests) received a score of 3 or higher. That represents 3.8 percent more exams than the previous year.

Students of color, a traditionally under-represented student population, posted significant gains in both participation and performance: 17.3 percent more black students took an AP exam, while 21 percent more received a score of 3 or higher; 13.7 percent more Hispanic students took an AP exam with 17 percent more receiving a score of 3 or higher.

<i>AP: 2014 Results</i>	% Increase in 2014 over 2013		
	# of Test-takers	# of Exams Taken	# of Tests Scored 3-5
All Connecticut students	4.1%	3.9%	3.8%
Black students	17.3%	14.9%	21.0%
Hispanic students	13.7%	14.9%	17.0%

In an effort to improve access of opportunity and remove barriers for participation for under-represented student populations, the State Department of Education paid the remainder of fees not covered by the College Board and the U.S. Department of Education for low-income students to take AP exams in spring of 2014. Provided the funding remains intact, the Department intends to continue to cover this cost.

SAT

A total of 30,229 public school students, approximately 86 percent of the state's graduating class of 2014, took the SAT—a 0.7 percent increase over the class of 2013. Notably, black and Hispanic students outpaced the statewide participation increases at 3.6 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively.

Overall, Connecticut students continue to outperform peers around the nation in reading and writing while narrowly missing the national average by one point in math.

<i>SAT: 2014 Results</i>	Average Scores		
	Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Connecticut public schools	499	500	500
U.S. public schools	492	501	478

Mirroring national year-to-year trends, Connecticut content areas scores were flat in reading and dipped slightly in math (-3 points) and writing (-4 points) compared to average scores from the previous year. However, black students improved across the board in every content area, narrowing the achievement gap with their white peers.

<i>Black/White Gap</i>	Average Scores		
	Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Points gap closed	6	6	10
Percentage gap closed	5%	4%	8%

PSAT

The PSAT is widely considered the most accurate indicator of student potential for success on the AP. In October 2013, the State Department of Education paid the cost to administer the PSAT to nearly 25,500 Grade 10 and 11 students in 30 of the state's chronically struggling districts, also known as the Alliance Districts.

Based on the results of the fall 2013 PSAT exams, the Department sent letters to all students identified as having AP potential in order to expand access to AP courses and other opportunities for rigorous college-level coursework.

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