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## Connecticut Students Stand Out Among Peers in Advanced Placement National Report

State ranks first nationally for gains in students scoring 3 or higher on at least one exam

(HARTFORD, CT)—Connecticut leads the nation in growth on participation and student performance on Advanced Placement (AP) exams during the last decade. The state is ranked second nationwide both for the largest percentage of 2013 high school graduates succeeding on at least one AP exam and for the highest percentage of exams receiving a top score.

That's according to the College Board's *10th Annual AP Report to the Nation*, released today, which shows the percentage of Connecticut's graduating classes scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam increased 13.2 points from 2003 to 2013, the largest increase in the nation. In other words, Connecticut ranks first for improvement in the country.

Regarding the percentage of students succeeding on at least one AP exam, the state ranked second only to Maryland in 2013, with 28.8 percent of students scoring 3 or better—up from sixth-place in last year's report. Connecticut also comes in second only to New Jersey with 22.1 percent of exams receiving the top score of 5 in 2013.

The College Board also reported that Connecticut is the only state in the nation to achieve high standings in each of three key metrics, which collectively describe AP growth, access, and performance. Connecticut is the only state to rank within the top three positions in each of these three metrics that collectively provide a picture of the health, quality, and availability of rigorous academic courses in a state.

"Connecticut ranks first in the nation for the largest increase in the percentage of its graduating classes scoring 3 or higher over the last decade. The state's leaders and educators are obviously deeply committed to broadening AP access while increasing AP exam performance," said Trevor Packer, the College Board's senior vice president, who leads the Advanced Placement Program. "Connecticut ranks second in the nation in the percentage of graduates scoring 3 or higher on their AP exams. We congratulate them on their successes and encourage them as they move forward to ensure that all students have the same opportunity to reach their full potential."

AP courses give high school students the opportunity to develop college-level knowledge and skills and earn college credit in the process. Students who score 3 or higher on an AP exam typically earn better grades, take greater course loads, and graduate from college at higher rates.

"On yet another indicator, Connecticut is No. 1 in the nation. We are enormously proud of the talented and hard-working teachers and students who have made such remarkable progress in recent years. Congratulations to Connecticut's extraordinary educators and young scholars," Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor said. "We plan to build upon this success and take it to the next level. Working with school districts, we will enable

more of our students to recognize that they have college potential and, among other steps, will help them access AP in greater numbers. I am grateful to the College Board for their partnership with Connecticut, and we look forward to working together for many more years to come.”

Commissioner Pryor announced state-supported efforts to increase college access and AP success by supporting college readiness initiatives.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) paid the costs of all Grade 10 and 11 students in Alliance Districts, the 30 lowest performing school districts, to take the PSAT in October 2013. The PSAT is widely considered the most accurate indicator of a student’s potential for success on the AP. The Department will collaborate with school districts to send letters to all students identified as having AP potential based on the fall PSAT exam in order to expand access to AP courses and other opportunities for rigorous college-level coursework.

The CSDE is also paying the remainder of fees not covered by the College Board and the US Department of Education for low-income students to take AP exams this spring.

The Department plans to hold workshops this month to assist Alliance District staff with interpretation and use of data from College Board assessments, such as PSAT and AP.

Commissioner Pryor was joined by officials from the College Board and New Haven Public Schools at the Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School, which boasts the largest number of exam takers in New Haven.

“More students in New Haven are participating in AP classes than ever before, and more are earning scores that qualify them for college credit. That is fantastic news, and we know we have work to do to improve both access and performance. The AP program is one strategy in the district’s broader efforts to prepare our students for the rigorous coursework they will undertake in college,” said New Haven Public Schools Superintendent Garth Harries. “I applaud Commissioner Pryor and the State Department of Education for working to increase access to high-level AP classes for all students and to support students willing to take on challenges in the classroom.”

Over the past several years, New Haven students have made significant gains in increased participation and success on AP exams. The College Board has recognized the district for its increased enrollment of underrepresented and low-income students in AP courses.

This year, Connecticut had 18 districts that made the AP Honor Roll, which recognizes and honors those outstanding school districts that simultaneously increase access to AP coursework while increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP exams. The districts are Berlin, Brookfield, Cheshire, Clinton, Diocese of Bridgeport, East Hampton, Ellington, Enfield, Fairfield, Greenwich, Killingly, Monroe, Newtown, Region 8, Region 14, Region 18, Southington, and Wallingford.

More information is available at <http://apreport.collegeboard.org/>.

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