



# NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

For Immediate Release:

September 27, 2016

Contact: Abbe Smith 860.713.6525

## Students Post Gains on Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

(HARTFORD, CT)—Connecticut public school students increased performance and participation on Advanced Placement (AP) exams according to AP, PSAT and SAT results published today by the College Board. The report also shows that the overall participation of students of color, a traditionally under-represented group, increased on AP exams.

“With record-high graduation rates and more students than ever before taking and passing Advanced Placement exams, Connecticut is making clear progress. These results also show that we are chipping away at the opportunity gap with more students of color taking rigorous college-preparatory AP courses and earning scores that can qualify for credits in college,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “We must continue to do everything in our power to ensure more Connecticut students have access to the kinds of educational opportunities that prepare them for the advanced jobs of the future.”

“We set the bar high for Connecticut students and today’s results show that they are rising to the challenge,” said Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell. “Our commitment to equity and excellence means providing all students - regardless of race, ethnicity, or family income – with access to college-level AP classes and college-entrance exams. I commend our schools and districts for removing barriers and encouraging more students to take on the more rigorous challenges of AP classes and I congratulate our students on their hard work and dedication to this challenge.”

Under Connecticut State Department of Education’s [Next Generation Accountability System](#), launched this past spring, both AP course participation and AP and SAT exam performance contribute to a school or district’s overall accountability standing. In this accountability system, Connecticut goes even further by including ACT and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam performance to recognize the multiple ways in which students demonstrate success.

### Advanced Placement (AP)

Connecticut public school 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, 27,668 students (an 18 percent increase since the 2011-12 school year) took 50,616 AP tests in 2015-16. Sixty-nine percent of the tests administered (35,138 tests) received a score of 3 or higher, representing a 4.1 percent increase over last year.

Students of color, a traditionally under-represented student population, posted gains in participation, according to the results. However, in 2015-16 the College Board changed the way it collects race and ethnicity information, aligning with the U.S. Department of Education’s method, therefore it would not be accurate to draw further conclusions by comparing race and ethnicity data from this year to previous years.

In an effort to improve access and remove barriers for participation for under-represented student populations, for the third year in a row 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 2016. The Department will continue to cover this cost.

AP:2016 Results	% Increase from 2014-2015		
	# of test takers	# of exams taken	# of tests scored 3-5
Connecticut Students	1.7%	2.7%	4.1%

## SAT

The results released today by the College Board represent graduating seniors who took the legacy version of the SAT and does not include results from this year’s inaugural administration of the Connecticut School Day SAT.

In August, the State Department of Education released preliminary results from the first Connecticut SAT School Day, showing that of the Connecticut 11<sup>th</sup> graders who took the exam, 65 percent are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English language arts (ELA), and 39.3 percent are meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in mathematics. These results set a baseline year of data from which to measure future growth.

With the first statewide administration of the SAT, Connecticut moved closer to its goal of equity and excellence by ensuring all public school students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade take a college and career readiness exam that is often a requisite for admission to college.

Results can be accessed at the CSDE data portal, EdSight: <http://edsight.ct.gov>.

The results were released one year after Governor Dannel P. Malloy announced that Connecticut had sought and won federal approval to replace the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Smarter Balanced assessment – or SBAC exam – with the SAT. The move to the SAT eliminated duplicative testing at the high school level and was part of a broader effort by the Governor and the State Department of Education to reduce the testing burden on students in Connecticut.

## PSAT

The PSAT is widely considered the most accurate indicator of student potential for success on the AP. In October 2015, the State Department of Education paid the cost to administer the PSAT to nearly 30,267

Grade 10 and 11 students in 30 of the state's chronically struggling districts, also known as the Alliance Districts. The state will continue to cover that cost this year.

Based on the results of the fall 2015 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. This is the third year the Department has sent letters and the number of students taking AP exams has increased.

###

CONTACT: Abbe Smith, Director of Communications  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Phone: 860-713-6525  
Mobile: 860-381-7096  
Email: [Abbe.Smith@ct.gov](mailto:Abbe.Smith@ct.gov)