

FACT SHEET

The College Board: Advanced Placement in New Mexico

Introduction

Advanced Placement (AP) takes its roots in the post-World War II era, when the Ford Foundation created the Fund for the Advancement of Education. In two studies supported by the fund, educators recommended that secondary schools and postsecondary institutions work together to avoid repetition in course work at their respective levels and to allow students to advance as quickly as possible.

According to The College Board, in 1952 a pilot program was launched introducing advanced courses in 11 initial subjects. By school year 1955-1956, The College Board took over administration of the program, which was named the College Board Advanced Placement Program. Data for AP in New Mexico, which dates back to 1976, indicate that 28 students in five secondary schools took 33 AP exams at the time and that their scores were reported to six postsecondary institutions.

Each year, The College Board publishes its *AP Report to the Nation*, which, among other items, identifies key strategies to improve AP success. Rather than requiring enrollment in AP for graduation, these strategies tend to focus on:

- alignment of curriculum and instruction;
- removal of financial barriers in taking the AP exam;
- support for teacher professional development; and
- identification and recruitment of students with potential to succeed in AP courses.

These initiatives focus on improving the AP experience for students, increasing outreach, earlier identification of AP candidates, and financial aid for students seeking to take the AP test. More specifically, the initiatives include:

- enhanced communication and outreach to students, parents, and counselors in English, Spanish, and Diné;
- Preliminary SAT (commonly known as PSAT) and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test fee subsidies;
- the AP start-up program;
- expanded professional development for both teachers and academic advisors, including online professional development for rural teachers;
- the AP course start-up program specific to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, including online AP courses;
- AP exam fee subsidies; and
- a full-time, in-state initiative manager from The College Board.

According to a College Board report to the LESC during the 2014 interim:

- New Mexico ranks 37th in the nation in AP access and achievement;
- approximately 12 percent of New Mexico public school students (2,173 students) earn a score of 3 points or more on an AP exam before leaving high school;
- the first state in the nation to serve a Hispanic-majority student population; and
- has the third largest percentage of American Indian students.

Other testimony during the meeting noted that:

- Los Alamos Public Schools is one of 477 school districts in the United States and Canada that has increased access to AP Programs while simultaneously maintaining scores of 3 or higher in AP exams;
- in 2013, PSAT results in New Mexico identified more than 5,500 students in grades 10 and 11 with strong academic readiness to succeed in one or more AP courses before they complete high school, yet Dr. Michelle Cruz Arnold, Senior Director, Government Relations, The College Board, observed that some of these students attend schools that do not provide AP courses; and
- Albuquerque and Rio Rancho school districts showed the most progress in terms of AP access and achievement in New Mexico.

Associated Initiatives

New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU)

NMHU administers an AP New Mexico program, which includes an AP Fee Reduction Program and AP summer institutes. These two programs are discussed below.

The AP Fee Reduction Program

The AP Fee Reduction Program subsidizes testing fees for qualified low-income New Mexico students through three funding sources:

- the College Board fee reduction per exam for students with financial need;
- the US Department of Education (USDE) Advanced Placement Test Fee Program; and
- legislative appropriations to NMHU.

According to the NMHU website, the cost to the student per AP exam is \$89, for which the school receives an \$8.00 rebate. For those economically disadvantaged students who qualify for the NMHU AP Fee Reduction Program:

- the College Board waives a certain amount of the testing fee;
- the school forgoes the \$8.00 rebate;

- state funding subsidizes \$25 of the exam fee; and
- depending on funding, a federal fee subsidy (referenced above) may be available from the USDE; however, for 2013 NMHU lists the federal fee subsidy as zero.¹

According to NMHU, for those who qualified for the 2013 AP Fee Reduction Program, the total cost per AP exam in school year 2012-2013 was \$30, after factoring the cost savings listed above. According to the Public Education Department (PED), 38.8 percent of New Mexico students who take an AP exam receive a test fee reduction.

AP Summer Institutes

NMHU indicates that the university collaborates with PED on AP summer institutes. According to the university, these AP summer institutes:

- provide professional development for AP teachers;
- are typically five days in duration;
- consist of no less than 30 instructional hours;
- are delivered in conjunction with PED; and
- bring together teachers to discuss course-specific content, instructional strategies, course organization, and methods for increasing student participation in courses that help them acquire skills and habits they will need to be successful in college.

Background

School Year 2012-2013

According to most up-to-date data from the College Board website, in school year 2012-2013, 13,365 exams were administered to New Mexico students in 110 schools throughout the state. PED data indicate that courses for these AP students were taught by 684 AP teachers.

Also, according to PED, Advanced Placement tests are scored on a 1 to 5 scale as follows:

- **5** – Extremely well qualified;
- **4** – Well qualified;
- **3** – Qualified;
- **2** – Possibly qualified; and
- **1** – No recommendation.

¹ According to USDE, New Mexico received \$144,500 for FY 13. This funding is allocated from USDE to PED. Although NMHU indicates that the funding was made available to the university for the NMHU AP Fee Reduction Program in previous years, it appears that this funding was not allocated to NMHU in FY 13.

Among students who took the exam, the score distribution is as follows:

Score	Number of New Mexico Students at Score	Percent of New Mexico Students at Score	Number of Students Nationwide at Score	Percent of Students Nationwide at Score
5	1,220	9.13%	563,805	14.3%
4	1,858	13.9%	785,114	19.9%
3	2,858	21.38%	974,238	24.7%
2	3,604	26.97%	872,724	22.2%
1	3,825	28.61%	742,219	18.8%
TOTAL	13,365	100%	3,938,100	100%

SOURCE: College Board website

The most frequently tested subject areas for AP in New Mexico are:

Subject Area	Number of Tests Administered in New Mexico
English Language and Composition	2,360
English Literature and Composition	1,850
US History	1,490
World History	1,168
Calculus AB	846

SOURCE: College Board website

AP test scores can result in college placement and credit. The following New Mexico institutions received the greatest number of AP scores for New Mexico students who took one or more AP exam in school year 2012-2013:

Postsecondary Institution	Total Number of Candidates	Total Number of Scores
University of New Mexico	1,729	2,639
New Mexico State University	602	921
New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology	168	338
Eastern New Mexico University	95	169
Santa Fe Community College	50	70

SOURCE: College Board website

Outside of New Mexico, the following postsecondary institutions received the greatest number of AP scores for New Mexico students for school year 2012-2013:

Postsecondary Institution	Total Number of Candidates	Total Number of Scores
Texas Tech University	96	195
Arizona State University	54	84
Brigham Young University	52	57
Fort Lewis College	47	76
Colorado State University	37	56

SOURCE: College Board website