

Advanced Placement Report to the Nation Executive Summary

As the Advanced Placement Program® approaches its fiftieth anniversary (the 2005-06 academic year), the College Board—the not-for-profit organization that administers the AP® Program—has released the first-ever *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation*. This report uses a combination of state, national, and AP Program data in new ways to provide each state, as well as the nation as a whole, with a context for celebrating successes, understanding challenges, and setting meaningful and data-driven goals to connect more students to college success.

Findings

- I. Over the past five years, without exception, each of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, has achieved the success of broadening the student population demonstrating college-level mastery of an AP Exam. This expansion of both equity and excellence is measured by identifying the percentage of public high school students who had an AP experience at any point in their high school years resulting in an AP Exam grade of 3 or higher—the grade generally used by colleges and universities to grant college credit or advanced placement.
 - A. New York leads the nation, with more than 20 percent of its class of 2004 having demonstrated college-level mastery of at least one AP course during high school. In the states of Maryland, Utah, Florida, California, and Massachusetts, between 18 and 20 percent of the class of 2004 achieved this goal.
 - B. The states that have seen the greatest amount of positive change in the percentage of students demonstrating college-level mastery of an AP course are Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, Colorado, Connecticut, and Washington.
- II. While celebrating these successes, we should acknowledge that much work remains to be done, as many more students enter college each fall than have been fortified with the skills they will need to succeed there. Currently, gaps exist between the percentage of students that entered higher education in fall 2004 (56.8 percent) and the percentage having first mastered an AP course. Closing these gaps is a research-based solution for improving college persistence and overall success.
- III. The nation has made great strides in diversifying the pool of students participating in AP. In a significant number of states, as well as in the nation overall, Latino students are no longer underrepresented in the pool of AP examinees. African American and Native American students remain significantly underrepresented in AP, although steady growth is occurring. While performance gaps remain significant between traditionally underserved students and all others, there have been major increases in African American, Latino, and Native American students scoring 3 or higher on AP Exams.

The College Board encourages educators and state and federal policymakers to use the data contained in the *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* to celebrate the results of their efforts, and to inform the development of targeted, measurable goals for enhancing curricular rigor and preparing more students than ever before for college success.