

High School–to–College Advisory Committee

A Policy Study of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate & Dual Credit Programs in Indiana

Advanced Placement Subcommittee Policy Barriers Identified

August, 2009

Policy Issue: Equity, Student Recruitment and Eligibility
Policy Statement: High school students throughout Indiana should have access to and be encouraged to take college level classes regardless of school location, school size, demographics, or family income.

Summary of Policy Environment

- The Advanced Placement statute (IC 20-36-3-5) has required since 1994 that all school corporations provide AP science and math classes for qualifying students.
- The Indiana Department of Education included in its Action Plans (released in April, 2009) a goal of at least 25% of all high school graduates receiving a score of at least 3 on an AP exam, at least 4 on an IB exam, or receiving the equivalent of 3 semester hours of college credit during their high school years.
- The College Preparation Curriculum Act (IC 20-30-10-4) mandates that all high schools provide at least two courses of Advanced Placement for qualifying students. Approximately 10% of public high schools in Indiana do not currently offer an AP course, others offer very few.
- School corporations are required to publish the percentage of students taking AP tests and the percent receiving high scores (3 or above) in their Annual Performance Reports (IC 20-20-8).
- BioCrossroads and University of Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) have recently organized an Indiana AP Advisory Board in order to strengthen access to AP courses throughout the state, and to prepare an application for funding from the National Math and Science Initiative's AP Strategies program. These partners, with the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Academy at Ball State, submitted a grant application to the federal AP Incentive Program in the summer of 2008 to support professional development and increase student participation in AP programs in 17 schools with high numbers of low-income students.
- The College Board has adopted the following Equity Policy Statement for the Advanced Placement Program:

The College Board and the Advanced Placement Program® encourage teachers, AP Coordinators, and school administrators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs. The College Board is committed to the principle that all students deserve an opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically challenging courses and programs. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.

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Policy Barriers at the State and Institutional Level

- There is a perception by some teachers and parents that only certain students can take and succeed in AP classes. Many schools have strict prerequisites for enrollment in AP classes. Efforts to increase enrollment in AP classes continually need to combat the concern that classes will be watered down.
- Limited state and local support for regional programs hinders the development of AP programs in smaller schools and districts, particularly in rural areas.

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Policy Issue: Costs

Policy Statement: Costs should be shared by school corporations, post-secondary institutions and the State of Indiana in a way that promotes participation and provides adequate funding for quality programs and professional development.

Summary of Policy Environment

- In 1994 the General Assembly began providing funding to cover the cost of AP math and science exams taken by Indiana students in public and accredited non-public schools (IC 20-36-3-8). Through fiscal year 2005 appropriations were sufficient to cover the cost of English exams, as well as professional development for teachers through fiscal year 2004. Since 2005, The General Assembly has not provided enough funding to cover the cost of all AP math and science exams.
- The statute also permits excess funds to be used for program development, including instructional materials, and lab equipment (IC 20-36-3-8).
- The 2007-09 state budget included approximately \$950,000 in AP funding per year for the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years. That amount was flat-lined in the budget passed in June of 2009. Since 2002 appropriations for AP have remained fairly constant despite considerable enrollment growth, ranging from slightly below \$900,000 to \$1 million.
- The state of Indiana has negotiated a discount of \$10 per exam from the College Board for tests paid for from state funds, one of the best discounts that the College Board provides to states.
- Over the last few years Indiana has successfully received federal funds through the Advanced Placement Test Fee Program, which are used to cover the cost of AP exam fees for low-income students in subjects for which the state does not provide funding. In 2008 the state received approximately \$114,000 to pay for AP exam fees for low-income students.
- Students' families typically pay for other AP exam fees, which are \$86 per exam.
- Schools corporations receive approximately \$900 per student (amount varies each year) for successful completion of a Core 40 with Advanced Honors Diploma (IC 20-43-10-2). Honors Diploma Awards may be used for Honors Diploma Awards may be used for "any:
 - (A) staff training;
 - (B) program development;
 - (C) equipment and supply expenditures; or
 - (D) other expenses;directly related to the school corporation's academic honors diploma program; and
(2) the school corporation's program for high ability students."
- Indiana provides school corporations with Gifted and Talented grants, which schools can use for developing AP programs and professional development. These funds ranged from \$25,000 to \$190,000 in school year 2006-07.
- Since FY2003 the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has administered a competitive Math and Science Partnership grant program using federal funds. These grants support professional development partnerships between schools and higher education institutions focused on math

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and science teachers. IDOE has established three priority areas for these funds, including one “to support Pre-AP and AP school programs.”

Policy Barriers at the State and Institutional Level

- With state AP appropriations remaining fairly constant over the eight fiscal years while AP enrollment has expanded significantly, the state’s support has been restricted exclusively for math and science exams since fiscal year 2006. The state had sufficient funding to pay for all English exams through fiscal year 2005 and professional development through fiscal year 2004.
- In spring 2008, the large number of students taking AP exams caused the state to limit its exam payments exclusively for math and science exams for 11th and 12th grade students. 9th or 10th grade students who did not qualify for free or reduced price lunch paid the cost of taking all AP exams, including math and science.
- In 2007 the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) did not initially receive sufficient federal Advanced Placement Test Fee funds to cover AP exams, due to the increase in numbers of students who participate in the free and reduced lunch program. In 2008 the state received supplemental funding for fiscal year 2007, and significantly higher levels of funding for fiscal year 2008. These funds are dependent on federal appropriations, which will need to continue to keep pace with nationwide growth in the numbers of students taking AP exams.
- Federal USDOE guidelines for the AP Test Fee program require that these funds supplement, not supplant, state funds. Thus Indiana does not receive federal funds for low-income students’ math and science exam fees, as the state pays for these exams for all students regardless of income.
- Many school corporations use their Honors Diploma Awards and Gifted and Talented Grants to offset the cost of High Ability Program teacher salaries; these funds are usually not provided exclusively for staff training, professional development, and equipment and supplies. Very few schools use these funds to defer the exam and registration costs that students incur when taking AP courses.
- Few Indiana applicants for Math and Science Partnerships grants have proposed funding for AP professional development, and none of those applications has been awarded grants to date.
- The cost of transportation and lack of state support has hindered the development of regional AP schools or programs to serve rural areas.
- The lack of state financial support for continuing education for teachers limits the number with helpful post-baccalaureate content area coursework.
- No school corporation or support organization in Indiana has ever received funding from the federal competitive AP Incentive Program grant, which provides funds to support increases in the percentage of low-income students taking AP and International Baccalaureate courses and exams. The Institute for Educational Initiatives, IDOE, Indiana Academy at Ball State and BioCrossroads submitted a grant application in the summer of 2008 to support professional development and

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increase student participation in AP programs in 17 schools with high numbers of low-income students.

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Policy Issue: Professional Development and Teacher Credentials

Policy Statement: Teacher credentialing, oversight, and supports should ensure that the rigor of college-level instruction in high schools is equivalent to that on campus.

Summary of Policy Environment

- The 1994 Advanced Placement statute allows state AP appropriations to be used to cover the cost of stipends for math and science teachers to attend AP professional development for (IC 20-36-3-8). There were sufficient funds to cover professional development through 2005.
- College Board’s AP Teacher Standards articulate voluntary standards for AP teacher preparation and professional development:
"While the AP Program has no formal requirements teachers must satisfy prior to teaching an AP course, the Program suggests AP teachers have at least three years prior teaching experience, and an advanced mastery of the discipline, before undertaking an AP course. Participating in professional development opportunities geared specifically toward novice AP teachers has generally been suggested as a first step to becoming a successful AP teacher."
- There are no Indiana requirements or standards for AP teacher preparation or professional development.
- In summer 2008 the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Educational Initiatives launched the AP Bridge Project, providing free AP professional development at locations around the state.

Policy Barriers at the State and Institutional Level

- AP training is of varied quality, depending on the location and instructor. Little evaluation work has been done in Indiana to support improvements in AP workshops. College Board is beginning to implement a plan for more “quality control” of its trainings.
- There is no single standard expectation for AP professional development that a teacher should complete in Indiana.
- Few graduate programs offer subject content courses at night, on weekends, or over the summer when teachers are free to take classes.
- Many existing AP teachers obtained state teaching licenses at a time when there was a requirement for a Master’s degree. Starting in the 1980s, Indiana has provided teachers with the option to obtain license renewals based on continuing professional development, which may result in fewer teachers obtaining advanced subject area coursework. While the College Board does not require teachers to have specific credentials or undertake professional development prior to teaching an AP class, some schools report difficulty in finding teachers with sufficient subject area expertise who are prepared to teach AP.

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Policy Issue: Program and Curriculum Development

Policy Statement: College-level classes taught in high school should be equivalent to college courses on campus.

Summary of Policy Environment

- Course curriculum framework and exams are created by committees of college professors and high school teachers. AP teachers each develop their own specific syllabi to teach this content.
- The College Board has implemented a Course Audit procedure to ensure that all classes are aligned with their Course Descriptions. Starting in school year 2007-08, in order for schools to use the AP label on classes, each AP teacher's class syllabus must be reviewed by a college professor in the appropriate subject area. In its first audit, the College Board approved only 1/3 of courses nationwide on first application, though ultimately 97% were approved after revisions.
- Prior to approving AP exam reimbursements for science and math classes and for low-income students, staff at the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) confirm that the reimbursed classes are listed on the AP Course Ledger of all AP classes authorized via the Course Audit.
- Colleges and universities are assured that a high score on an AP exam is consistent with high mastery of the subject matter, due to the rigorous process of test development and consistent scoring.
- One of the options for advanced coursework to achieve Core 40 with Academic Honors Diplomas is for students to take two year-long AP classes and exams (511 IAC 6-7.1-6.f).
- The Advancing Academic Excellence (AAE) initiative, directed by the Indiana Student Achievement Institute (InSAI) as an intermediary for Lumina Foundation for Education, has been working with 35 high schools in order to increase the percentage of students who earn college credit and/or advanced college standing while in high school by means of credit by examination, performance, transfer or experience.
- At least three Indiana-based providers offer AP classes via distance education: Ball State University's Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities; the Central Indiana Educational Service Center's Indiana Online Academy (IOA); and Indiana University High School (IUHS). Indiana Academy's lectures are delivered online or by DVD/videotape, while IOA and IUHS provide self-directed independent study guided by a teacher. These three, as well as out-of-state distance learning providers, can be used by schools that have only a few students enrolled in AP classes.
- Many schools offer IB and/or Dual Credit for the same class designated as AP. This allows schools to offer more curricular options despite low numbers of students in each of these programs.
- The College Board supports an Advisory Board made up Indiana educators and policy makers.

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Policy Issue: Program and Curriculum Development (continued)

Policy Barriers at the State and Institutional Level

- Each time a school submits a request reimbursement for AP exam fees, IDOE staff verify that that the reimbursed classes are listed on the AP Course Ledger of all AP classes authorized via the Course Audit. There is no system in place for the department to verify that other AP classes offered are all authorized via the Course Audit.
- The courses offered by the Indiana Academy vary from year to year based on instructor availability, so they can be difficult to rely on for distance learning for regular course offerings.
- Recruiting teachers qualified to teach AP and limited state and local support for regional programs hinders the development of AP programs in smaller schools and districts, particularly in rural areas.
- The frequent practice of schools offering IB and/or Dual Credit for the same class designated as AP sometimes results in curriculum conflicts for teachers. In some schools there is competition for students in all three programs.
- The frequent practice of schools offering AP and Dual Credit for the same class results in a conflict among students who need to decide early in the semester whether they want to sign up for dual credit or take the AP exam.
- Within IDOE, AP has typically been a part-time responsibility of one or more staff. There has been no single person whose full-time job it is to pull together a statewide AP (or dual credit or IB) strategy.
- With the advent of Indiana’s End of Course Assessments, students in certain AP classes now have to sit for two different exams. This most typically happens with AP Language and Composition which is often offered during the junior year and by which students receive credit for English 11.

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Advanced Placement Subcommittee – March 26, 2008

Policy Issue: College Credit Transferability

Policy Statement: Students who successfully complete college-level course work during high school should earn transferable college credit to meet general education and/or degree-specific requirements.

Summary of Policy Environment

- Students receiving scores of 3 or above on AP exams typically earn credit and/or advanced standing at many of the nation’s colleges and universities.
- The Advancing Academic Excellence Initiative will start tracking students from its participating schools into higher education. This effort will be made possible by the new E-Transcript initiative, as the IDOE Student Test Number (STN) is now electronically reported to public colleges and universities for each matriculating high school student from Indiana. The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) will soon start requiring public colleges and universities to report STNs to its SIS data system. Nearly all the Independent Colleges of Indiana are accepting the E-Transcript; as a result, similar analysis may soon be available for the independent colleges.
- The College Board’s online listing of colleges includes a brief summary of each college’s AP credit and placement policy and a link to policy on the college’s website if it is available.
- Some colleges refer to the American Council on Education’s *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination* when establishing cutoff scores and credit hours awarded for Advanced Placement exams.
- Indiana’s Advanced Placement statute states that:
“Each state educational institution [public colleges and universities] shall work with the department in the development of a policy of granting academic credit and advanced placement to students”

Policy Barriers at the State and Institutional Level

- Score cutoffs and amount and type of credit awarded vary widely across Indiana institutions of higher education. In many cases department chairs are the final decision makers on whether or not to award credit, which leads to inconsistent awarding of credit across time and campuses. There has been no coordinated effort to standardize credit awards in Indiana.
- Colleges transcribe AP credit differently, sometimes listing the equivalent college course, credit by exam, or AP designation.
- AP exam scores are not a part of the CTL which would help ensure transferability of credit earned.