



Wisconsin  
Evaluation  
Collaborative

04

Academic  
& Career  
Planning  
Brief Series

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# EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN ACP PART I

## State of Equity in Wisconsin

This report by the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) leverages evaluation findings and research to provide educators with strategies and resources to ensure that Academic & Career Planning (ACP) services are equitably provided to all students. Parents, community members, and policy makers may also find this valuable.

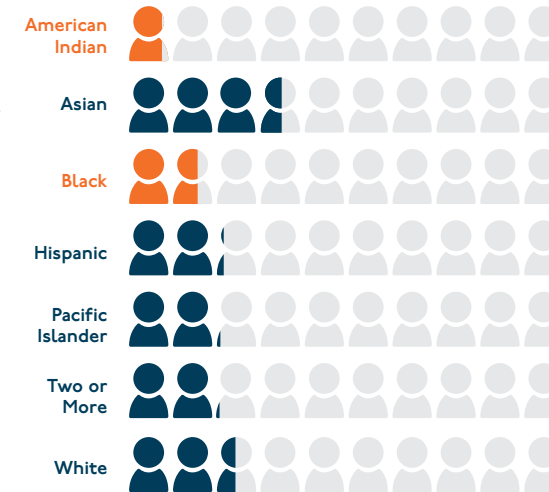
# PARTICIPATION GAPS IN ACP IN WISCONSIN

The following figures show some of the largest participation gaps in various high-leverage ACP-related activities among various student sub-groups. Gaps appear particularly salient for work-based learning activities (Youth Apprenticeships, State Co-Op Education Skills Standards, internships, local co-ops, school-based enterprises, simulations, and supervised occupational experiences), advanced courses (Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate), and dual enrollment participation. Throughout this report participation rates refer to the percentage of students in grades 9-12 that enroll in various activities regardless of completion status. For more information on student participation in ACP activities, please refer to the ACP Implementation Report for 2021-22 ([https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/2022\\_10\\_WEC\\_ACP\\_2022\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/2022_10_WEC_ACP_2022_Annual_Report.pdf)).

ACP is part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's overall vision for every student to graduate high school academically, socially, emotionally, and life ready. ACP honors all post-graduation plans (including all types of post-secondary education, military service, and the world of work). Best practices describe an ACP program that permeates all aspects of secondary education and serves all students to meet their individual needs. However, data show discrepancies in participation among student sub-groups (including race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability status, language status, and gender) across numerous activities associated with ACP. This report (Part I of 2) outlines the state of Equity in ACP in Wisconsin. Part 2 will provide strategies for closing gaps.

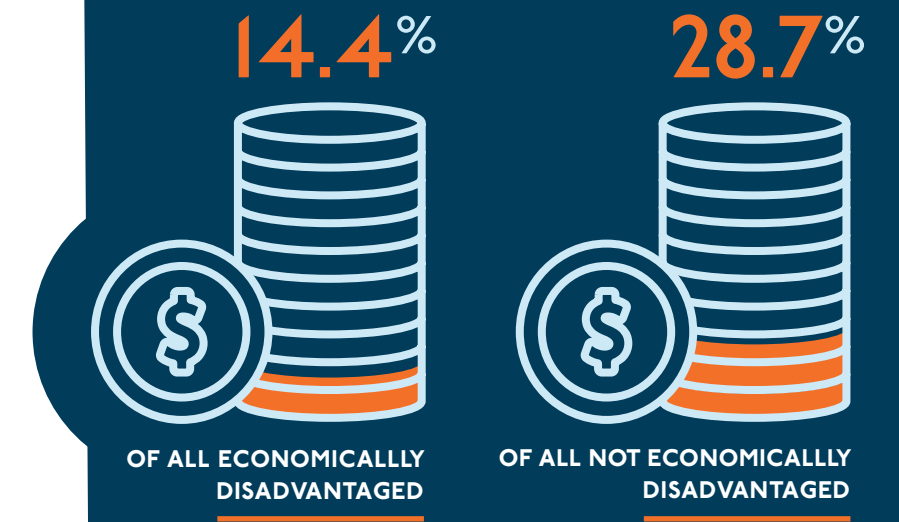
## Advanced Course Participation by Race/Ethnicity in 2020-21

American Indian and Black students consistently participate in advanced courses (AP/IB) at lower rates than Asian and White students.



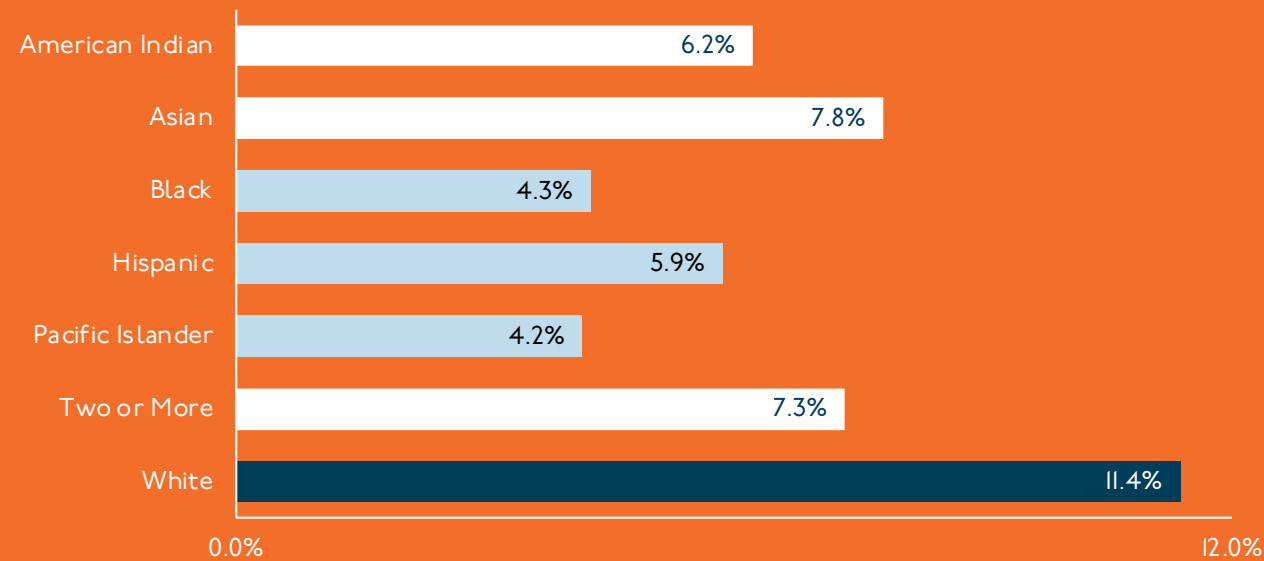
## Advanced Course Participation by Economic Status in 2020-21

Economically disadvantaged students participate at around half the rate that non-economically disadvantaged students do in advanced courses (AP/IB).



**Figure 1: Participation in Work-Based Learning by Race/Ethnicity in 2020-21**

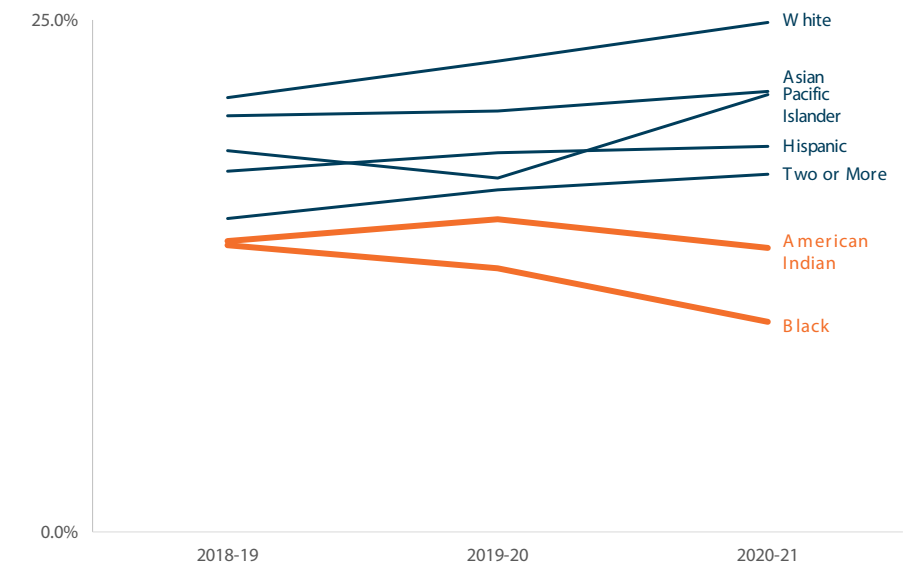
Black, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander students participate in work-based learning activities at around half the rate of White students.



Although reasons for participation gaps are many (including awareness, overly restrictive requirements, cost and transportation barriers, and systemic racism), research has shown that states/districts with robust offerings show widening racial/ethnic participation gaps over time (as seen, for example, in Figure 2) presumably because White/privileged students are better able to take advantage of them.<sup>1</sup>

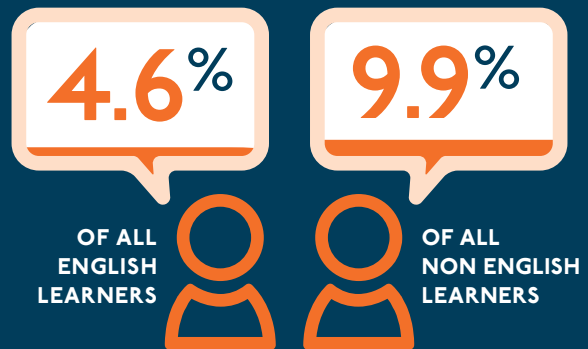
<sup>1</sup> Xu, D., Solanki, S., & Fink, J. (2021). College Acceleration for all? Mapping Racial Gaps in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(5), 954-992. <https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0002831221991138>

**Figure 2: Participation in Dual Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

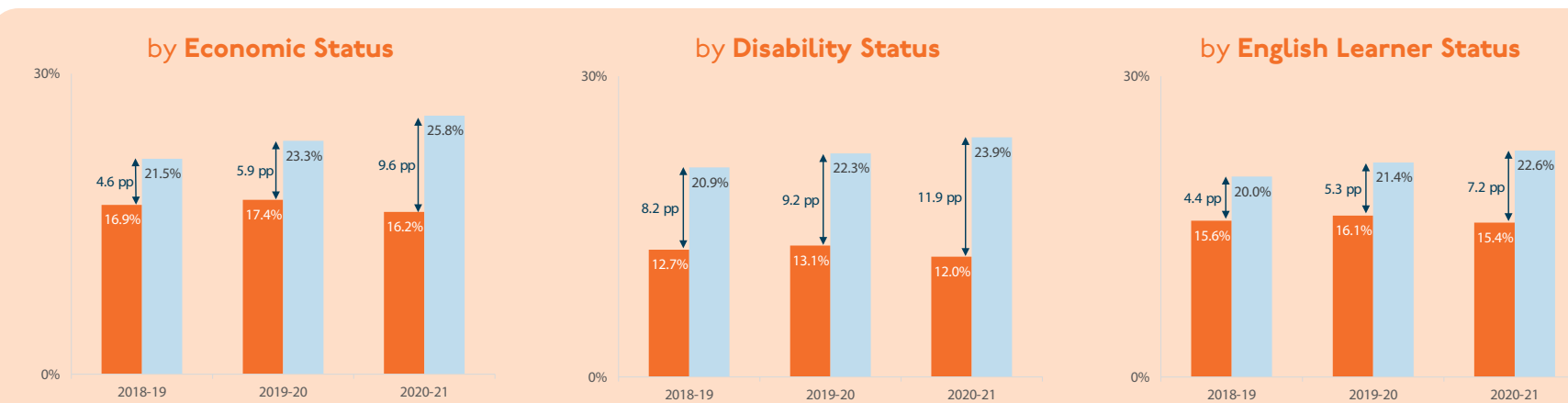


## Work-Based Learning Participation by English Learner Status in 2020-21

English learners participate at less than half the rate of non-English learners in work-based learning activities.



**Figure 3: Percentage Point (pp) Gaps in Dual Enrollment Participation in 2020-21**



While participation in dual enrollment increased for most race/ethnicity groups, it has decreased for American Indian and Black students, widening the gap in participation for these subgroups (Figure 2). Gaps in participation in dual enrollment by economic status, special education status, and English learner status all continue to increase (Figure 3).



## Determining local participation gaps

Districts and schools cannot address inequities in ACP without an understanding of the specifics of the problem. Examining participation and outcome data that are disaggregated—that is, broken down by student sub-groups—is necessary for understanding where gaps are occurring. While the statewide data in this report show trends in all districts combined, each district and school will have its own picture. Assuming that your school or district does not have equity issues and participation/outcome gaps without examining disaggregated data is a sure-fire way to ignore the problem. ALL districts and schools should regularly examine disaggregated data to truly understand how well their policies and programs are serving students.

## Resource

Equity in ACP – Student Participation: Strategic Use of Data  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1igaXI\\_nmlJXZ-mLEn9uVQhGZQHpJXn\\_hpsP509Z3NyU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1igaXI_nmlJXZ-mLEn9uVQhGZQHpJXn_hpsP509Z3NyU/edit)

This resource is available for free on DPI's website. Organized as a 20-to-30-minute team activity, this collection of resources and guidance identifies its intended outcome as follows: "Teams should walk away with a better understanding of student participation data and what it says about program access in their district/school. Using that data to recognize gaps should bring awareness to educators about the importance of using data."

## Next steps for district and school leaders:

1. Examine participation and outcomes for all your school's/district's ACP components by student sub-group.
2. Reflect on your areas of strength and areas that need improvement, both in terms of your general ACP programming and especially in terms of high-leverage, optional opportunities such as dual credit, internships, apprenticeships, AP courses, and other opportunities that "move the needle" on preparation for after high school.
3. Engage with key partners (students, families, teachers, community) to identify barriers and how the programs can be changed to improve awareness of, access to, participation and success in both general and optional ACP programming.
4. Explore resources provided in Part 2 of this report (*Strategies for Closing Gaps/Improving Equity in ACP*) to determine how best to improve your programming.
5. Create a plan to review disaggregated data at various points throughout the year as part of a continuous improvement approach.

## About the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WEC's team of evaluators supports youth-serving organizations and initiatives through culturally responsive and rigorous program evaluation. Learn more at <http://www.wec.wceruw.org>