

News Release

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Advanced Placement continues growth

Wisconsin among top dozen states for AP performance

MADISON — Wisconsin continued its steady growth in the Advanced Placement (AP) program, with more students taking rigorous, college-level coursework while in high school and more graduates earning a qualifying score that gives them a head start on postsecondary studies.

The College Board’s report, “AP Cohort Data: Graduating Class of 2015,” showed that Wisconsin had 20,825 public school graduates, or 35.3 percent of the class of 2015, who took 59,426 AP exams while in high school. Participation is up by 966 students from the class of 2014. For the state’s 2015 graduates, 24.7 percent earned a score of three or higher on an AP exam compared to 23.6 percent of 2014 graduates. Wisconsin remains in the top dozen states nationwide for AP performance.

AP Cohort Data	
Graduating Class of 2015	
Wisconsin	
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	20,825
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	24.7
Nation	
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	1,109,339
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	22.4

“The Advanced Placement Program provides our kids with college-level coursework that exposes them to the rigors of higher education while they are still in high school,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “We’re continuing to see growth in participation and achievement, which is a good place to be. I’m very proud of our teachers for their efforts to prepare our young people to be successful on these college-level exams.”

The Advanced Placement program offers 37 courses, which conclude with an end-of-year exam. Students who earn a score of three or higher on the five-point scale may receive college credit, advanced standing, or both from most colleges and universities. The College Board estimates that Wisconsin’s public school graduates and their families will save about \$35.5 million in college costs through qualifying AP exams. The calculation assumes three credits for each AP exam scored three or higher and an average cost for in-state tuition and fees of \$293.83 per credit.

More than 1.1 million of the nation’s 2015 graduates took an AP exam during their high school careers. They represent 37.3 percent of the 2,973,914 public school graduates in the class of 2015. The percentage of graduates nationwide who scored three or higher on an AP exam was 22.4 percent.

Students from low-income families represent 13.5 percent of Wisconsin’s AP exam-takers for the 2015 cohort. By comparison, for the class of 2010, 8.1 percent of AP exam-takers were from low-income families and in

(more)

2005, just 4.4 percent of low-income public school graduates took an AP exam. Wisconsin law requires that school districts pay the cost of Advanced Placement exam fees for students who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals under federal income guidelines.

Recently, Wisconsin was the recipient of a \$1.1 million, three-year Javits grant to increase the number of underrepresented students in gifted education programs. The Department of Public Instruction is working with the Kenosha Unified, Racine Unified, and Milwaukee Public school districts to identify and provide services to high-ability and high-potential primary-grade students who are from low-income families or who are learning English. By working with first-, second-, and third-grade students in these schools, the grant will support future success in advanced coursework.

“There are disparities in participation in rigorous coursework that can lead to college and workforce success,” Evers noted “We have work to do to ensure every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We want all students to graduate college and career ready.”

Many high schools offer AP courses as part of the established curriculum. Through the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative, any student in Wisconsin can take AP courses online to supplement their school’s offerings. The collaborative — a partnership among Cooperative Educational Service Agency 9’s [Wisconsin Virtual School](#), the DPI, and the [Wisconsin eSchool Network](#) — provides online and blended learning opportunities for students to access AP courses. Currently, 19 AP courses are offered.

In addition to overall AP growth, Wisconsin’s 2015 public school graduates took 20,701 STEM exams, an increase of 1,721 from the previous year. Five of the 10 most popular AP exams in Wisconsin are in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics): Biology, Calculus AB and BC, Chemistry, and Statistics. Other top exams are Psychology, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, U.S. History, and U.S. Government and Politics.

The College Board named 31 Wisconsin public school districts to its Sixth Annual Honor Roll. The honor roll recognizes districts that simultaneously increase access to AP coursework while increasing the percentage of students earning a three or higher on their AP exams.

Sixth Annual AP Honor Roll	
Public School Districts	
Appleton Area*	Luxemburg-Casco
Auburndale	Madison Metropolitan*
Beaver Dam Unified	McFarland
Belleville*	Menomonie Area*
Burlington Area	Onalaska*
Cambridge	Oshkosh Area*
Cedarburg*	Peshtigo*
Denmark	Pewaukee*
Eau Claire Area*	Richland
Freedom Area*	Slinger
Hamilton*	Tomahawk
Hudson*	Verona Area*
Kimberly Area*	Waunakee Community*
Kohler*	Waupaca
Lake Mills Area	Wisconsin Dells
Lodi*	

*District has achieved the honor for multiple years.

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NOTES: The College Board’s “AP Cohort Data: Graduating Class of 2015” reports information for public school graduates only. Breakdowns by racial and ethnic groups or by schools and districts are not available from this report. An AP Participation Map is available at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_29_ap_map.pdf. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_29.pdf.

AP Cohort Data

Public School Graduating Class of 2015*

Advanced Placement Participation

Public School Class of 2015

Wisconsin	2000	2005	2010	2014	2015
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	8,907	12,590	16,658	19,859	20,825
Percent Taking an AP Exam	15.2	19.9	25.8	33.6	35.3
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	10.5	13.8	18.0	23.6	24.7
Nation					
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	405,475	592,309	853,216	1,048,399	1,109,339
Percent Taking an AP Exam	15.9	21.2	27.8	35.7	37.3
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	10.2	13.3	16.5	21.6	22.4

Advanced Placement Participation by Low-Income Students*

Wisconsin Public School Students

Year	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	% Low-Income Graduates Taking an AP Exam	% Low-Income Graduates Scoring 3 or Higher
2005	12,590	4.4	2.9
2010	16,658	8.1	5.7
2014	19,859	12.3	9.5
2015	20,825	13.5	10.1

* The College Board identifies low-income students as those qualifying for free or reduced-price school meals.

10 Most Popular Advanced Placement Exams

Wisconsin Public School Class of 2015

Subject	Number of Exams	Percent Scoring 3 or Higher
Psychology	8,500	75.9
English Language and Composition	6,079	67.2
English Literature and Composition	5,911	65.1
U.S. History	5,740	62.5
Calculus AB	4,998	64.0
Biology	3,567	73.9
Statistics	3,333	68.9
U.S. Government and Politics	3,105	61.4
Chemistry	2,681	55.3
Calculus BC	1,857	78.0

AP STEM Participation among Wisconsin Public School Graduates

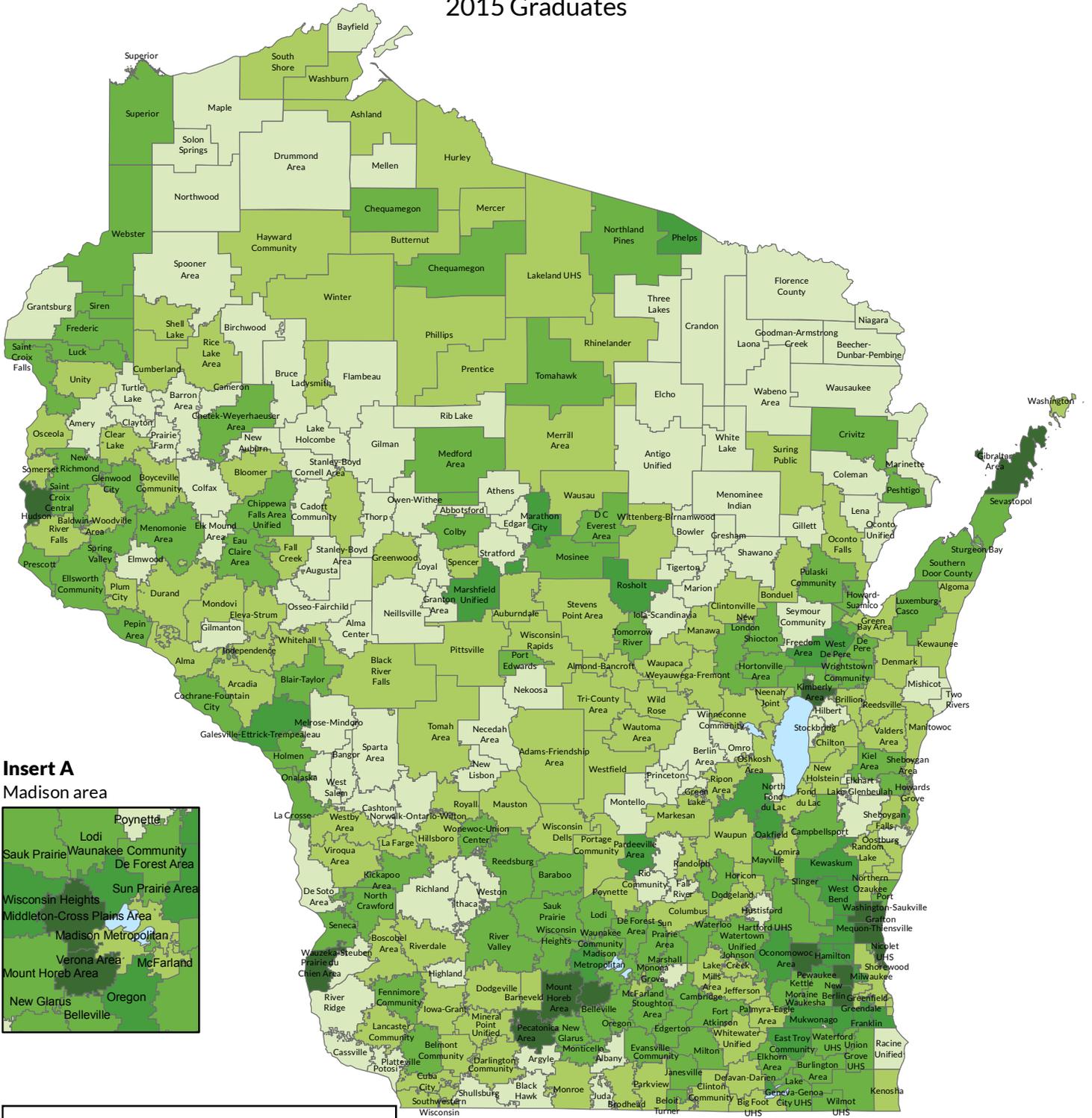
Science	Number of Exams Taken						% Scoring 3 or Higher (2015)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Biology	2,788	2,865	3,003	3,113	3,346	3,567	73.9
Chemistry	1,829	1,946	2,148	2,296	2,424	2,681	55.3
Environmental Science	649	772	904	1,011	1,079	1,156	63.2
Physics 1: Algebra-Based**	-	-	-	-	-	1,256	45.7
Physics 2: Algebra-Based**	-	-	-	-	-	293	52.9
Physics B**	1,006	1,061	1,199	1,348	1,373	478	76.6
Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism	72	94	94	111	131	153	68.6
Physics C: Mechanics	293	342	343	395	531	548	84.7
Mathematics							
Calculus AB	3,940	4,254	4,315	4,757	5,039	4,998	64.0
Calculus BC	1,372	1,413	1,409	1,571	1,727	1,857	78.0
Computer Science A	216	197	211	252	276	381	70.0
Statistics	2,047	2,317	2,631	2,778	3,054	3,333	68.9

** Physics B was last administered in May of 2014. Physics 1 and 2 were introduced in May 2015.

*Public school graduates are a projection supplied by "Knocking at the College Door" (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2012).

Advanced Placement Participation

2015 Graduates



Insert A
Madison area



Legend

Percent of graduates taking at least one AP exam

- 0-15
- 15-30
- 30-45
- 45-60
- 60+



Insert B
Milwaukee area

AP Cohort Data: Graduating Class of 2015
2/22/2016