

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: Tom McCarthy, DPI Communications Director, (608) 266-3559

2018 graduates had strong showing in AP program

MADISON – Wisconsin’s 2018 public school graduates took more than 71,000 Advanced Placement (AP) exams while in high school, with 66.4 percent of those exams scored three or higher on a five-point scale and eligible for college credit, advance standing, or both at many colleges and universities.

Overall, Wisconsin had 22,965 graduates from the class of 2018 who took at least one end-of-course AP exam last May. That number represents

37.5 percent of estimated graduates (61,266). Overall,

26.1 percent of graduates scored a three or higher on an AP

exam during high school. Many students take multiple

exams from the 38 offered in the AP program. Nationally,

more than 1.2 million graduates took an AP exam while in high school and 23.5 percent of those students earned a score of three or higher on an exam.

Wisconsin 2018 Cohort Data	
	2018
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	22,965
Number of Exams	71,238
Percent Taking an AP Exam	37.5
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	26.1

“The Advanced Placement program provides students an opportunity to take college-level coursework while in high school. Doing well on the exams gives our kids a head start on postsecondary studies in our state’s public and private colleges and universities,” said State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor.

Participation in AP increased by 1,055 graduates in Wisconsin from 2017 to 2018. The number of exams they took went up by 4,578. Of the 71,238 AP exams 2018 graduates took, 24,835 were in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Wisconsin was part of the nationwide leap in increased participation in the computer science principles exam, one of 12 STEM exams. The state had 391 of its 2018 graduates who took the computer science principles exam while in high school. The College Board, which launched the course and exam in 2017, describes computer science principles as ensuring more students, especially those who are underrepresented, are prepared for STEM careers.

(more)

Students from low-income families represent 13.4 percent of 2018 state graduates who took an AP exam while in high school. Among those graduates, 10.4 percent earned a score of three or higher on an exam. Wisconsin public school districts are required to pay exam fees for students whose family income meets guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. The 2018 AP report says that equity gaps continued to narrow in states that contribute to exam fees for low-income students. Ten years ago in Wisconsin, 6.1 percent of low-income graduates took an AP exam and 4.2 percent earned a score of three or higher on an exam. Five years ago, 11.5 percent of economically disadvantaged graduates took AP exams with 9.0 percent earning a three or higher on an exam.

“Students of color, students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and those who are learning English often face challenges in accessing advanced coursework and opportunities like the AP program,” Stanford Taylor noted. “We are determined to continue our work with schools and communities to close equity gaps so all students have access to the resources and rigor they need to be successful.”

Wisconsin’s 2018 graduates who earned scores of three or higher on their AP exams are estimated to save nearly \$43 million in college costs. The calculation assumes three credits for each AP course scored three or higher and an average cost for in-state tuition and fees of \$302.67 per credit hour.

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NOTES: The College Board’s “AP Cohort Data Report: Graduating Class of 2018” provides information for public school graduates only. Breakdowns by racial and ethnic groups or by schools and districts are not available from this report. Additional data about Wisconsin’s AP results for the class of 2018 follows. This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2019-13.pdf>.

AP Cohort Data

Public School Graduating Class of 2018*

Advanced Placement Participation

Public School Class of 2018

Wisconsin	2008	2013	2017	2018
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	15,632	19,124	21,910	22,965
Percent Taking an AP Exam	24.0	31.1	36.4	37.5
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	16.4	21.8	25.5	26.1
Nation				
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	752,255	1,000,386	1,174,758	1,242,990
Percent Taking an AP Exam	25.1	31.6	37.7	38.9
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	15.3	19.1	22.8	23.5

Advanced Placement Participation by Low-Income Students**

Wisconsin Public School Graduates

Year	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	% Low-Income Graduates Taking an AP Exam	% Low-Income Graduates Scoring 3 or Higher
2008	15,632	6.1	4.2
2013	19,124	11.5	9.0
2017	21,910	13.6	10.8
2018	22,965	13.4	10.4

** The College Board identifies low-income students as those qualifying for an exam fee waiver based on free or reduced-price school meal income guidelines. (Data based on 2015-16 NCES estimates)

10 Most Popular Advanced Placement Exams

Wisconsin Public School Class of 2018

Subject	Number of Exams	Percent Scoring 3 or Higher
Psychology	9,698	75.8
English Language and Composition	7,814	65.6
U.S. History	6,337	59.2
English Literature and Composition	5,655	55.6
Calculus AB	5,341	64.3
Biology	4,328	72.5
Statistics	4,199	68.4
U.S. Government and Politics	3,986	61.6
Chemistry	2,684	54.2
World History	2,452	57.5

AP STEM Participation among Wisconsin Public School Graduates

Science	Number of Exams Taken			% Scoring 3 or Higher (2018)
	2013	2017	2018	
Biology	3,113	3,926	4,328	72.5
Chemistry	2,296	2,622	2,684	54.2
Environmental Science	1,011	1,486	1,711	64.0
Physics 1: Algebra-Based^	-	2,392	2,355	48.5
Physics 2: Algebra-Based^	-	508	471	68.6
Physics B^	1,348	2	-	-
Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism	111	115	124	80.6
Physics C: Mechanics	395	473	544	82.0
Mathematics				
Calculus AB	4,757	5,344	5,341	64.3
Calculus BC	1,571	2,157	2,146	78.9
Computer Science A	252	443	541	76.5
Computer Science Principles		125	391	89.8
Statistics	2,778	3,827	4,199	68.4

^ Physics 1 and 2 were introduced in May 2015. Computer Science Principles was a new offering in May 2017. Physics B was last administered in May of 2014.

* Public school graduates are a projection supplied by "Knocking at the College Door" (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2016).