

News Release

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More Wisconsin students taking, outperforming national average on AP exams

Access to testing improves for students from low-income families

MADISON – Wisconsin’s public school graduates performed above the national average on Advanced Placement exams while in high school with a record number of them taking the college-level tests.

A report released today by The College Board shows 26.2 percent of Wisconsin’s Class of 2019 graduates scored a three or higher on a five-point scale on the AP exams, an increase from Wisconsin’s class of 2018 graduates, and above the 23.9 percent national average. The data ranks Wisconsin as 11th in the nation in that category.

“The strong student performance and growth we saw on these Advanced Placement exams is a tribute to the tireless work of Wisconsin teachers and students,” State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. “The AP program gives Wisconsin students a jump start on postsecondary studies at our many public and private colleges and universities. Providing students with greater access to these academic opportunities is critical.”

Overall, more students from low-income families in Wisconsin are taking and succeeding on AP exams than ever, with 13.9 percent of 2019 graduates identifying in that category. Among those graduates, 11.1 percent earned a score of three or higher on an exam – a 0.7 percent increase from 2018 graduates. Class of 2019 graduates in Wisconsin also took 71,897 AP exams while in high school, an increase of 659 from 2018. Much of this growth is attributed to a 91.8 percent increase in participation on the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subject exam for computer science principles.

Wisconsin’s 2019 graduates earned an estimated 159,117 combined college credits through the AP exams, saving more than \$48 million in college costs, according to the data.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2020/more-wisconsin-students-taking-outperforming-national-average-ap-exams>.