

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: 2018 graduates had strong showing in AP program

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

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.

“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.

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

Wisconsin 2018 Cohort Data

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.