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Delaware Among Top Five States in Nation For Students

Earning a “3” or Higher on An AP Exam Over Five Year Period--Five year gain exceeds five percent--

The College Board fourth annual “Report to the Nation” on Advanced Placement (AP) participation and performance data for all public high schools across the U.S. shows that in a five year period, from 2002-2007, the number of Delaware students who received a grade of “3 or higher on AP exams significantly increased from 9.3% to 14.5%, a gain of 5.2%. This gain surpassed the national average of 3.5% for the same time period. Only Maryland, Maine, Colorado and New Hampshire had a higher percentage gain.

Since 2002, Delaware has seen a constant, steady upward trend of students taking at least one AP exam during high school. In 2002, 1,017 students of all ethnicities took at least one AP exam. Just five years later, in 2007, that number has escalated to 1,843, an 81.2% increase. In 2007, 27.4% of the public high school class took at least one AP exam during high school. This compares to 24.9% for the nation.

Also, 18.6% of the class of 2007 took one or more science AP exams, which also surpassed the national average of 15%. Science exams consist of Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics B, Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, and Physics C: Mechanics. Other AP exams include mathematics, language, English and art.

The number of public high schools in Delaware offering AP courses has risen slightly since 2002; the number of AP courses offered in those high schools has continued to rise; the number of students taking at least one AP course has nearly doubled. See table below:

Advanced Placement Data		
	2002-2003	2006-2007
Number of HS Offering AP Courses	25	28
Number of AP Courses Offered	187	293
Number of Students Taking At Least One Course	2114	3949
Total Enrollment Grades 9-12	28640	31972
AP Participation Rate*	7.0	12.4
*The AP Participation Rate is the number of AP students per 100 students in grades 9-12 in high schools offering AP courses.		

The College Board partners with colleges and universities to create AP exams of college-level learning in 37 subject areas. Most colleges in the U.S. recognize AP exams in the admissions process as a sign of a student's ability to succeed in rigorous higher education curricula. They also award college credit or placement into a higher level college course so that college entrants can move directly into the courses that match their level of academic preparation for college.

The "Report to the Nation" also provided an in-depth analysis of closing "equity and excellence gaps." This gap appears whenever the percentage of underserved students achieving access to and success on AP exams is less than the percentage of underserved students in the entire class of 2007. For example, if 20% of students in the entire class are African Americans, true equity and excellence would not be achieved until 20% of the students taking AP exams, and scoring 3 or better, are

African Americans, as well.

For Delaware in 2007, the Hispanic or Latino student population was at 5.6% while the percentage of the same students who scored a 3 or higher on AP exams was at 5.8%, thereby eliminating the equity and excellence gap. Although 6% of the Black or African American student population in Delaware scored a 3 or higher on AP exams and exceeded the national average of 3.3%, an equity and excellence gap remains because the Delaware Black or African American population is 26.2%

Nationally, more than 15 percent of the public high school class of 2007 achieved at least one AP® Exam grade of 3 or higher—the score that is predictive of college success. This achievement represents a significant and consistent improvement since the class of 2002 when less than 12 percent of public school graduates attained this goal.

Of the estimated 2.8 million students who graduated from U.S. public schools in 2007, almost 426,000 (15.2 percent) earned an AP Exam grade of at least a 3 on one or more AP Exams during their high school tenure, the report documents. This is up from 14.7 percent in 2006 and 11.7 percent in 2002.

Earning a 3 or higher on an AP Exam is one of "the very best predictors of college performance," with AP students earning higher college grades and graduating from college at higher rates than otherwise similar peers in control groups, according to recent reports from researchers.

State Reports:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/ap/nation>

Full report:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/ap-report-to-the-nation-2008.pdf>

Delaware Report:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/Delaware-AP-Report-2008.pdf>

The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) Has Released the Results From the Eighth Administration of The Fourth and Sixth Grade Science and Social Studies Portions of The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) Conducted in October, 2007.

In fourth grade **science**, 92.9% of the students tested scored at Level 3 or higher, a 1.4 percentage point increase from last year's scores. In grade six, 80.1% scored at Level 3 or higher, a 1.5 percentage point increase from last year's assessment. The science test measures students' knowledge and understanding in four areas: Inquiry, Life Science, Earth Science and Physical Science.

In fourth grade **social studies**, 68.4% of students scored at level 3 or higher, a 1.7 percentage point decrease over last year's results. In grade six, 65.6% of students scored at level 3 or higher, compared to 61.1% last year. The social studies test measures students' knowledge and understanding in four areas: Civics, Economics, Geography and History.

Subject/Grade	Well Below_(Level 1)	Below_(Level 2)	Meets_(Level 3)	Exceeds_(Level 4)	Dis
Science Gr. 4	1.1%	6.0%	53.5%	23.7%	
Science Gr. 6	4.3%	15.6%	55.6%	13.8%	
Social Studies Gr. 4	8.2%	23.4%	53.3%	10.8%	
Social Studies Gr.6	7.4%	27.0%	55.0%	7.7%	

Since testing began in 2000 in science and social studies, there has been a steady rise in the number of students meeting or exceeding the standards.

Grade 4 Science has seen a near 10% increase in scores; grade six has seen nearly 20% gains. In Social Studies, improvement is more than 18% while at grade six, this rise in scores is near 14 percent.

The number of students participating in these assessments is at or exceeds 99 percent.

Systemwide Reform: Students Show Marked Improvement in Christina Schools:

The Community Training and Assistance Center ("CTAC") released a report in 2006 that demonstrates significant improvement in student learning is possible when systemwide reform is the focus. The report details an unusually high level of education progress and highlights the successes gained by the largest school district in Delaware, Christina School District, after a two-year intensive effort to improve education in their public schools.

Christina undertook system-wide reforms to address a persistent pattern of underachievement and to tighten the achievement gap among groups of students within the district. More than 3,900 parents were active in school planning and more than 2,900 annually assessed the accountability and effectiveness of the reform.

Primary findings include:

- Student achievement increased as evidenced on three major independent assessments (Delaware Student Testing Program, SAT 9/10 and Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP);
- For the first time in this district, student achievement among African American and Hispanic students significantly improved;_
- The teachers and administrators at the Standard Bearer Schools (CTAC developed model for planning that focuses on addressing the root causes of student achievement) indicated, to a statistically significant extent, improvements in conditions related to teaching and learning, organizational support and alignment, school planning and human resource practices; and
- District capacities in data, research, instructional support, organizational development, professional development, fundraising and corporate involvement were strengthened markedly.

"The results of this reform demonstrate that meaningful improvements are achievable when communities come together to implement a comprehensive approach to improve student learning," said William Slotnik, Executive Director of CTAC.

This initiative began with an assessment of district readiness and capacity; broad-based implementation of the reform plan, New Directions in Christina, started in the 2004-2005 school year. The comprehensive approach was designed to build the capacity of the district to make and sustain improvements in student achievement, strategic management and policy, leadership, human resource development and management and stakeholder satisfaction and ownership.

The CTAC report details changes in the way the district and schools aligned instruction with standards, assessed students, managed data, conducted school planning and involved stakeholders, particularly parents, in school improvement.

CTAC is a national non-profit organization with a twenty-eight year record of success in developing leadership, planning and managerial expertise within school systems, states, community-based organizations, collaborative partnerships, state and municipal governments, and health and human service agencies.

Full report:

<http://www.ctacusa.com/ChristinaReport06.pdf>

Delaware's Top Two Youth Volunteers Selected in 13th Annual National Awards Program

Wilmington and Delmar students earn \$1,000 awards, engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital

Honors also bestowed on other top youth volunteers in Delaware

Anna Schuck, 17, of Wilmington and Matthew Waldman, 14, of Delmar were named Delaware's top two youth volunteers for 2008 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 13th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Anna was nominated by The Charter School of Wilmington in Wilmington, and Matthew was nominated by St. Francis de Sales Catholic School in Salisbury, Md. As State Honorees, each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees – one middle level and one high school youth – from each of the other

states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2008 at that time.

Anna, a senior at The Charter School of Wilmington, founded a school club that has raised nearly \$15,000 to help build a boys school in Uganda by organizing benefit rock concerts. The H.U.G. Club (for "Helping the Underprivileged Globally") was launched after Anna saw a documentary about the horrific effects of a 21-year civil war in northern Uganda. "I couldn't bear to watch the injustices taking place before me," said Anna. "Why was no one doing anything? How could we sit back and watch millions of people suffer and do nothing?"

While Anna's club has worked on several projects, its biggest undertaking was "Rock Uganda," a series of seven concerts featuring more than 40 rock bands. For each show, Anna secured the venue, recruited the performers, distributed promotional flyers, obtained donations from local businesses, and enlisted a large group of young volunteers to help at the event. With more than 300 youth attending each concert, the shows have raised \$14,500 to provide dormitories, sanitation facilities, teachers, books and other necessities for the Sir Samuel Baker Secondary School in Uganda. And many more people have been made aware of the strife in Uganda and the plight of children there, according to Anna.

Matthew, an eighth-grader at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, organized and participated in a variety of volunteer activities benefiting his school, community, the Salvation Army and the Humane Society. "I believe in serving my community, looking at the global picture and helping those who are reaching out for help and who are in need," Matthew said.

Instead of celebrating his last two birthdays with parties and presents, Matthew organized and hosted a student dance, asking attendees to donate food and care items for lost, abandoned and neglected animals residing at a local Humane Society shelter. "I felt it was important because the animals are helpless," he said. Matthew also worked an entire weekend serving food at a charity antique show, solicited donations as a bell ringer for the Salvation Army, purchased Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children, and participated in the Humane Society's annual fund-raising walk. "I learned that there is so much in this world that is so wrong and we all need to help each other," he said. "You have a say in what happens in this world. You can either help it or hurt it. Don't be afraid to go out there and help others."

In addition, the program judges recognized three other Delaware students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion:

Alexandra Browne, 17, of Wilmington, a senior at Mount Pleasant High School, has served as chair of her school's Relay for Life fund-raising event for the past two years, which raised more than \$60,000 for cancer research, education and patient support. Alexandra worked the entire school year on the fund-raisers, holding planning meetings, making presentations at school assemblies, overseeing committees, seeking support from local businesses and organizations and recruiting event volunteers and team members.

Taylor Folt, 16, of Wilmington, a junior at Brandywine High School, spent a month last summer teaching English and American History to elementary-school students in a small town in India. She also helped build a basketball court and install a roof on an outdoor bathroom, taught children Western playground and card games, mentored and encouraged young girls, and worked to promote positive cultural interactions and friendship.

Kimberly Tancredi, 18, of Chadds Ford, PA, a senior at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del., raised \$2,000 to purchase Christmas presents and other items for more than 100 disadvantaged children at a day care center in Wilmington, Del. Kimberly collected the money through bake sales and auctions of donated prizes, then purchased toys, warm clothing and other items, and recruited a volunteer "Santa" to help distribute the gifts at the Ministry of Caring day care facility.