

Subject: NEWS: Illinois public school graduates continue to excel on Advanced Placement exams

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For Immediate Release

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Illinois public school graduates continue to excel on Advanced Placement exams

New data shows Illinois' Class of 2023 achieved second largest state 10-year increase in the percentage of graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released new data today from the College Board showing that Illinois public school graduates have continued to excel on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The percentage of Illinois Class of 2023 public high school graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam climbed from 20.7% to 27.5% -- a gain of 6.8 percentage points over 10 years, which is the second largest increase among all states in the country.

"Our Illinois high school students consistently demonstrate their dedication and unmatched potential," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "I'm proud to see students of all backgrounds succeeding in AP courses at record levels and we'll continue to build on this success through the State's equity-focused investments."

"Congratulations to the Class of 2023 and to all of their AP teachers who worked incredibly hard to support their students' success on AP exams, so they could earn early college credit and save time and money toward a college degree," **said State Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders**. "We are proud to lead the nation in expanding access to and success on AP exams, particularly for low-income students. The state's strategic investments and collaborative efforts are ensuring that all students have access to rigorous coursework that prepares them for success after high school."



The percentage of graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam expanded for every racial/ethnic group, led by gains for Hispanic students, who saw a 13.8 percentage point increase over 10 years. A score of 3 or higher on an AP exam qualifies for free college credit at all public colleges and universities in Illinois. In the Class of 2023, 55,315 Illinois graduates had taken an AP exam during high school, with 36,517 scoring a 3 or higher, representing a potential cost savings of \$226 million for the state's students and families.

Illinois' investments of state funds in the AP program have been the driving force behind the expansion of access and equity for low-income students. Governor JB Pritzker's fiscal year 2024 budget included \$500,000 for a competitive grant program for eligible school districts to promote rigorous coursework. Additionally, the state dedicated \$2.5 million to further reduce exam costs for low-income students to \$7 in districts participating in the College Board's direct-billing program, ensuring equitable access to AP exams.



Illinois continues to see significant increases in students participating in all types of advanced coursework. Data from the [2023 Illinois Report Card](#) show that more than 13,000 additional students participated in AP, International Baccalaureate, dual credit, or honors courses last year than the year before; more than 12,000 additional students participated in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

In coming years, College Board will expand AP to include its first-ever CTE courses and exams. College Board will pilot a new pathway in the high-demand field of cybersecurity through the 2025-26 school year.

The implementation of [Public Act 101-0654](#) will support continued growth in access to AP and other advanced coursework. The law mandates school districts to automatically enroll students next school year into the next most rigorous level of advanced coursework if they meet or exceed state standards on assessments this spring.

Learn more about Illinois' AP program on the [ISBE Advanced Placement webpage](#). View [Illinois' AP Cohort Data Report](#).

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