



ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM REPORT

Three-Year Summary Analysis · 2024–2026 Exam Administrations

Review for the Board of Education

Prepared July 2026 · Revised August 2026

Sources: College Board AP Student Datafiles & Scholar Rosters · WCSD Student Information System

Executive Summary

The 2026 Advanced Placement (AP) administration was the strongest in this three-year window on nearly every measure. Waunakee Community High School students took 1,020 AP exams, a 14.6% increase over 2025 and the first time the school has surpassed 1,000 exams in this window. The share of exams earning a college-qualifying score of 3 or higher rose to 91.2%. That success rate sits far above the 60–75% range typical of AP exams nationally, and it was achieved while participation expanded, not by narrowing access.

Participation growth and quality of results are moving together. Over three years, the number of students testing grew from 487 to 542, students took more exams each (1.88 per student in 2026), the mean score climbed from 3.69 to 3.87, and the share of exams earning the top score of 5 reached 30.3%. AP Scholar recognition grew 25% over two years to 229 awards in 2026 (official College Board roster), with the largest gains in the highest tier: Scholars with Distinction rose from 56 in 2024 to 93 in 2026.

The clearest opportunities for us are in access. Just over half of students in grades 10–12 (53.3%) tested in 2026, but participation among economically disadvantaged students ($\approx 24\%$), students with IEPs ($\approx 6\%$), and English learners ($\approx 4\%$) remains well below that overall level, and participation gaps persist for Black and Hispanic/Latino students.

The Program at a Glance

Metric	2024	2025	2026	Trend
AP exams taken	891	890	1,020	▲ +14.6% YoY
Students tested	487	522	542	▲ +11.3% over 2 yrs
Exams per student	1.83	1.70	1.88	▲
Mean exam score	3.69	3.71	3.87	▲
Exams scoring 3+	86.1%	86.7%	91.2%	▲ +5.1 pts
Exams scoring 4–5	59.4%	62.8%	67.8%	▲ +8.4 pts
Exams scoring 5	25.6%	24.4%	30.3%	▲
AP Scholar awards	183	211	229	▲ +25% over 2 yrs
Seniors with 3+ during HS	43.5%	52.1%	45.5%	◆ see trends

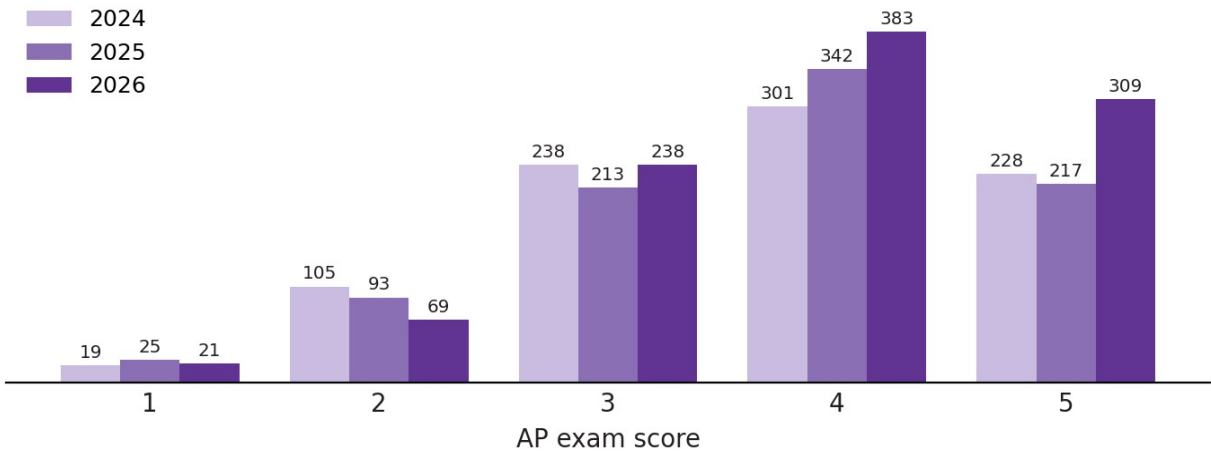
Metric	2024	2025	2026	Trend
Grade 10–12 participation	49.3%	51.6%	53.3%	▲

‡ throughout this report marks results suppressed where fewer than 10 exams or 10 students are represented.

2026 Performance in Depth

Scores moved upward in 2026. Two-thirds of all exams (67.8%) earned a 4 or 5, and only 8.8% fell below the college-qualifying threshold, which is down from 13.9% in 2024. The distribution below shows the top of the scale expanding while scores of 1 and 2 compress.

Exam score distribution by year (count of exams)



Strength is broad-based across the largest programs. Psychology, the school’s biggest AP course by participation, administered 238 exams with 81.9% earning a 4 or 5. Every subject with at least 10 exams posted a 3+ rate of 73% or better, and two, U.S. Government & Politics and Calculus BC, achieved a 100% qualifying rate. Calculus AB stands out with a 4.37 mean and 88% of students earning a 4 or 5.

Results by Subject

Subject	Exams	Mean	% 3+	% 4-5	2025 % 3+	2024 % 3+
Psychology	238	4.10	93.3%	81.9%	93.7%	96.4%
English Language & Comp.	185	3.76	90.3%	61.1%	83.9%	71.6%
U.S. History	136	3.68	88.2%	62.5%	86.9%	85.3%
Biology	83	4.10	97.6%	75.9%	86.2%	96.7%
Calculus AB	59	4.37	96.6%	88.1%	80.3%	87.9%
Macroeconomics	52	3.37	75.0%	42.3%	40.6%	58.3%
Chemistry	50	3.80	98.0%	60.0%	98.1%	94.6%
Statistics	49	3.20	73.5%	44.9%	82.2%	95.2%
English Literature & Comp.	46	3.76	93.5%	60.9%	94.7%	93.3%
U.S. Government & Politics	43	4.33	100.0%	79.1%	—	89.7%

Subject	Exams	Mean	% 3+	% 4-5	2025 % 3+	2024 % 3+
Precalculus	26	3.50	96.2%	46.2%	91.7%	‡
Calculus BC	19	4.58	100.0%	89.5%	82.4%	‡
Microeconomics	13	3.54	84.6%	38.5%	‡	‡
All other subjects (8)	21	‡	‡	‡	—	—

Subjects with fewer than 10 exams in 2026 (2-D Art & Design, Computer Science A, Environmental Science, Chinese Language, Human Geography, Physics 1, Physics C: Mechanics, World History: Modern) are combined and suppressed. Watch items: Statistics has declined two consecutive years (95.2% → 82.2% → 73.5% scoring 3+); Macroeconomics rebounded strongly (40.6% → 75.0%) but remains the lowest-performing large course; English Language & Composition has improved 18.7 points since 2024 (71.6% → 90.3%).

2026 Results vs. National Score Distributions

WCHS students outperformed the national AP population in every comparable subject in 2026. College Board’s published 2026 score distributions allow for a subject-by-subject comparison for the 13 WCHS courses with at least 10 exams, which is 999 of the school’s 1,020 exams. Across those subjects, 91.3% of WCHS exams earned a 3 or higher versus a national rate of 72.5% weighted to WCHS’s course mix, an advantage of nearly 19 points. The margin ranges from +9 points in Macroeconomics to +32 points in Calculus AB, where WCHS students were also more than two-and-a-half times as likely as their national peers to earn a 5 (52.5% vs. 20%).

Subject	Exams	WCHS %3+	Nat'l %3+	Diff (pts)	WCHS %5	Nat'l %5
Psychology	238	93.3%	74%	+19	35.7%	15%
English Language & Comp.	185	90.3%	73%	+17	25.9%	16%
U.S. History	136	88.2%	74%	+14	20.6%	14%
Biology	83	97.6%	71%	+27	36.1%	15%
Calculus AB	59	96.6%	65%	+32	52.5%	20%
Macroeconomics	52	75.0%	66%	+9	25.0%	19%
Chemistry	50	98.0%	75%	+23	22.0%	15%
Statistics	49	73.5%	62%	+12	12.2%	17%
English Literature & Comp.	46	93.5%	75%	+18	26.1%	15%
U.S. Government & Politics	43	100.0%	76%	+24	53.5%	23%
Precalculus	26	96.2%	82%	+14	7.7%	29%
Calculus BC	19	100.0%	82%	+18	68.4%	46%
Microeconomics	13	84.6%	68%	+17	30.8%	19%
All comparable subjects	999	91.3%	72.5%	+19	30.6%	17.0%

National figures are College Board’s published 2026 score distributions for all AP students worldwide (apstudents.collegeboard.org), rounded to whole percentages as released. The “all comparable subjects”

national rate weights each subject’s national distribution by WCHS exam volume, so it represents the result a nationally typical student body would post taking WCHS’s exact course mix.

Top-score performance tells the same story: 30.6% of WCHS exams in these subjects earned a 5, versus 17.0% expected from national distributions.

Three-Year Trends

Participation and performance are rising together. Exam volume jumped 14.6% in 2026 on the strength of an unusually large and high-achieving junior class (254 of 542 testers) and deeper course loads: the share of students sitting three or more exams rose from 18% in 2025 to 25% in 2026.

College Board’s “Equity & Excellence” measure, the share of the entire senior class that earned a 3+ at any point in high school, ranged from 43.5% to 52.1% across the three classes, roughly double the national figure of 24.8% for the U.S. public-school class of 2025. The 2026 dip to 45.5% reflects a smaller senior testing cohort (146 senior testers vs. 185 in 2025) rather than weaker scores; today’s outsized junior class positions the Class of 2027 for a strong rebound on this measure.

AP Scholar Recognition

Scholar awards are growing fastest at the top. Total awards rose from 183 (2024) to 211 (2025) to 229 in 2026, per the official College Board roster, advancing 25% in two years. The mix has shifted markedly toward the more demanding tiers: Scholars with Distinction grew 39% year-over-year to 93, and for the first time the two honors tiers together (167) far outnumber the base award (62). Sixty-three Distinction awards belong to seniors, and 79 juniors already earned Scholar with Honor or Distinction, a strong leading indicator for 2027.

Award	Criteria (College Board)	2024	2025	2026
AP Scholar	3+ on three or more exams	78	85	62
AP Scholar with Honor	Avg. 3.25+ and 3+ on four or more exams	49	59	74
AP Scholar with Distinction	Avg. 3.5+ and 3+ on five or more exams	56	67	93
Total		183	211	229

All three years reflect official College Board AP Scholar rosters. Of the 229 awards in 2026: 108 went to seniors, 117 to juniors, and 4 to sophomores.

Results by Student Group

The tables below disaggregate exam results by gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level, and pair district enrollment data with College Board records to examine participation among special populations. Consistent with small-cell privacy practice, results representing fewer than 10 exams or fewer than 10 students are suppressed (‡).

Gender

Group	2024 Exams	2024 %3+	2025 Exams	2025 %3+	2026 Exams	2026 %3+
Female	513	86.5%	515	86.8%	580	91.7%
Male	371	85.2%	358	86.3%	424	90.3%
Another / nonbinary	<10	‡	<10	‡	<10	‡

Female students account for a majority of exams in all three years (57% in 2026), and success rates by gender are effectively equivalent: 91.7% of exams from female students and 90.3% from male students earned a 3+ in 2026.

Race and Ethnicity

Group (CB self-report)	2024 Exams	2024 %3+	2025 Exams	2025 %3+	2026 Exams	2026 %3+
White	727	85.4%	691	86.8%	763	91.5%
No response	40	95.0%	77	90.9%	114	94.7%
Asian	33	97.0%	46	84.8%	61	86.9%
Hispanic/Latino	48	77.1%	42	81.0%	37	86.5%
Two or more races	33	90.9%	30	86.7%	35	94.3%
Black/African American	<10	‡	<10	‡	<10	‡
Am. Indian/AK Native	<10	‡	<10	‡	—	—

In 2026, qualifying rates for Hispanic/Latino students (86.5%) and students of two or more races (94.3%) were at or near the school average, and Hispanic/Latino students posted their strongest results of the three-year window (mean 3.62, up from 3.31–3.33). Small student counts make year-to-year rates volatile for several groups; participation, addressed below, is where we see the greater gaps.

Grade Level

Grade level	2024 Exams	2024 %3+	2025 Exams	2025 %3+	2026 Exams	2026 %3+
10th grade	113	85.0%	145	88.3%	156	89.1%
11th grade	466	86.3%	413	91.8%	570	93.7%
12th grade	310	86.1%	326	79.4%	290	87.9%
9th grade / other	<10	‡	<10	‡	<10	‡

Eleventh grade is the grade participating the most in our AP program with 570 exams in 2026 at a 93.7% qualifying rate. Tenth-grade participation has grown 31% since 2024 (105 → 138 testers), giving more students an early experience, led by growth in Precalculus (1 → 26 exams) and US History.

Special Populations: Access and Performance

Group	Enrolled 10-12 (2026)	Tested 2026	Particip. 2026	Particip. 2025	Particip. 2024	2026 %3+
Economically disadvantaged	85	20	23.5%	19.1%	14.5%	84.6%
Section 504 plans	138	51	37.0%	35.6%	27.4%	94.1%
Students with IEPs	86	<10	‡	‡	‡	‡
English learners	24	<10	‡	0%	0%	‡
All students (10-12)	1012	539	53.3%	51.6%	49.3%	91.2%

Access is our gap area. While more than half of all students in grades 10-12 now sit for at least one AP exam, participation is roughly 24% for economically disadvantaged students and about 4-6% each for students with IEPs and English learners. Economically disadvantaged students who do take the test are succeeding at a strong rate in 2026 (84.6% scoring 3+, up from 70.6% in 2024), which is evidence that the gap is one of enrollment, not necessarily readiness. Students with Section 504 plans participated at 37% and exceeded the school average in 2026 (94.1% scoring 3+).

Participation by race/ethnicity shows Black students testing at under half the rate of their peers (fewer than 10 testers in each of the three years), and Hispanic/Latino participation (30.3% in 2026) trailing White (55.0%) and Asian (73.5%) participation.

Cost is not the structural barrier, but awareness may be. For students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, the district provides a full exam-fee waiver on top of College Board’s fee reduction. AP exams carry no cost for these families. The financial support is available, so the participation gap points instead to communication and outreach. Making the waiver visible early in the course-registration cycle, in counselor conversations, registration materials, and family communications, may reduce cost as a perceived barrier to enrolling in an AP course.

We are already working on this. In 2025-26 the High School completed the first year of a multi-year partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS), a national nonprofit focused specifically on closing enrollment gaps in AP and other advanced coursework for underrepresented students. EOS combines student and staff survey data with individualized student-insight information to identify capable students who have not yet opted into advanced courses and to structure personal invitations from trusted adults. The participation gaps documented above are the focus of this partnership. The disaggregated baselines in this report provide a yardstick for evaluating its impact over the next several AP exam administrations.

Identifying AP Potential with the PreACT

Because WCHS administers the PreACT in grades 9 and 10 rather than the PSAT, the school’s equivalent of College Board’s AP Potential tool is ACT’s published AP-readiness research. ACT (Radunzel & Allen, 2020) derived PreACT/ACT cut scores associated with at least a 50% chance of scoring 3+ — and, separately, 4+ — for 23 AP courses, the same course set College Board covers with PSAT-based AP Potential. ELA and social-science courses key off the English + Reading (E+R) sum; STEM courses use the STEM score (the average of math and science); separate values exist for fall and spring test dates. The table below shows the fall benchmarks for WCHS’s current AP offerings: a sophomore with a fall E+R of 39 or higher, for example, has at least an even chance of a 3+ in AP Psychology as a junior.

AP course (WCHS offering)	Score used	Fall score for likely 3+	Fall score for likely 4+
Psychology	E+R	39	46
English Language & Comp.	E+R	42	54
U.S. History	E+R	44	55
European History	E+R	45	57
U.S. Government & Politics	E+R	47	59
English Literature & Comp.	E+R	49	61
Biology	STEM	22	26
Statistics	STEM	23	27
Microeconomics	STEM	23	25
Chemistry	STEM	24	28
Macroeconomics	STEM	24	27
Calculus AB	STEM	25	28
Physics 1	STEM	27	30

Fall-testing cut scores from ACT Research Data Byte R1839 (Radunzel & Allen, 2020); spring-testing values run 1–4 points higher. ACT does not publish cut scores for Calculus BC: consistent with College Board’s AP Potential guidance, students meeting the Calculus AB benchmark with strong performance in courses leading up to calculus may consider BC. ACT recommends using these scores holistically alongside grades, coursework, and student interest — for recruitment, a 50% chance of a qualifying score is an intentionally inclusive bar.

The recommended practice each fall: generate an “AP-ready roster” from grade 9–10 PreACT results, cross-reference it against current AP and honors enrollment, and have counselors extend personal invitations to students who clear the benchmarks but have not enrolled, prioritizing the underrepresented groups identified above and pairing the score data with EOS student-insight information so the invitation comes from an adult the student trusts.

Executive SWOT Analysis

A high-level strategic view of the AP program based on the three-year record.

STRENGTHS

- 91.2% of exams scored 3+ in 2026 — far above the 60–75% typical nationally — while participation grew
- Seniors earning a 3+ in high school (43–52%) run near double the U.S. class-of-2025 rate (24.8%)
- Scholar awards up 25% in two years, with the fastest growth in the Distinction tier (+66% since 2024)
- Deep, high-performing core: Psychology, English Language, U.S. History, Calculus, Biology, Chemistry
- Broad catalog — students tested in 21 subjects in 2026

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build fall “AP-ready rosters” from grade 9–10 PreACT results using ACT’s AP-readiness benchmarks to recruit first-time AP students
- Leverage year two of the Equal Opportunity Schools partnership to convert identified students into enrollments
- Communicate the existing exam-fee support — the district adds a full fee waiver on top of College Board’s fee reduction for free/reduced-lunch students, so awareness, not cost, is the gap
- Convert the large, high-achieving 2026 junior class into record senior-year outcomes for 2027
- Grow 10th-grade on-ramps — Precalculus expanded from 1 to 26 exams in two years
- Expand dual credit partnerships — the district’s preferred career-readiness early postsecondary opportunity (EPSO) strategy — to serve career-focused students alongside AP

WEAKNESSES

- Participation gaps: ~24% of economically disadvantaged students and ~4–6% of students with IEPs and English learners test, vs. ~53% overall
- Black and Hispanic/Latino students participate at well below peer rates
- Concentration risk: three courses (Psychology, English Language, U.S. History) supply 55% of all exams; STEM electives (Computer Science, Physics, Environmental Science) remain thin

THREATS

- Senior-year testing softened in 2026 (146 senior testers vs. 185 in 2025), pulling down the Equity & Excellence measure
- With a few large courses driving participation, an underperforming cohort or staffing change can move school-wide results
- Evolving university credit policies could alter the value students perceive in AP exams
- Digital exam transitions and periodic College Board scoring-standard updates add year-to-year variability

Methodology & Data Notes

- **Sources.** College Board AP Student Datafiles for the 2024, 2025, and 2026 administrations; official College Board AP Scholar rosters for 2024, 2025, and 2026; WCSD student information system demographic exports for 2023–24, 2024–25, and 2025–26. National comparisons from College Board’s published 2026 AP Score Distributions (apstudents.collegeboard.org, retrieved July 2026). PreACT AP-readiness benchmarks from ACT Research: Radunzel, J., & Allen, J. (2020), Predicting Success on Advanced Placement Exams Using ACT Aspire, PreACT, and ACT Test Scores (R1835), and companion Data Byte R1839.

- **Exam counts.** Each year includes only exams administered that year. The Calculus BC “AB subscore” is excluded from all counts and statistics so Calculus BC is counted once per student.
- **Privacy.** Results representing fewer than 10 exams or fewer than 10 tested students are suppressed (‡), consistent with small-cell conventions used in peer district reporting.
- **Race/ethnicity.** Performance tables use student self-reports to the College Board; 10–21% of exams each year come from students who declined to respond. Participation-rate tables use district SIS federal race/ethnicity categories.
- **Participation rates.** Denominators are grade 10–12 enrollment because 9th-grade AP testing at WCHS is negligible (1–3 students per year). College Board tester records were linked to SIS records by state student ID, with a name-plus-birthdate fallback for records missing an ID; more than 99% of tester records matched each year (485 of 487 in 2024, 518 of 522 in 2025, 539 of 542 in 2026), so subgroup numerators and the all-students numerator share a consistent basis.
- **Revision note (August 10, 2026).** Participation figures in this edition supersede the July draft. The earlier draft’s subgroup numerators counted only records matched by student ID (79–86% of testers), which understated subgroup participation relative to the all-students rate; all participation rates now use the full ID-plus-name/birthdate linkage described above.
- **Equity & Excellence.** The share of all 12th-grade students (not only AP students) who earned at least one score of 3 or higher at any point in high school, following the College Board method.
- **Scholar awards.** All three years reflect official College Board AP Scholar rosters. (An internal projection computed from the July 2026 datafile using published College Board criteria matched the official 2026 roster exactly — 229 awards across all tiers — confirming the reliability of the underlying score data.)
- **Branding.** This report follows the June 2022 WCHS Brand Guidelines: primary purple (PMS 267C / #613393), cool grey accents, and the approved Lato typeface.