



Advanced Placement Program

Newport News Public Schools' Advanced Placement (AP) program prepares students for post-secondary success. To prepare students for high school and beyond, the school division is taking steps to develop challenging and rigorous coursework for all students.

NNPS is making strides in raising achievement levels for all students, and a 2015 report from the College Board shows a notable increase in the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses.

From 2010 to 2015, the number of high school students taking Advanced Placement coursework rose 27% from 1,648 to 2,083, demonstrating that Newport News students took more Advanced Placement courses than their counterparts in other area school divisions. In just one year, the number of NNPS students taking at least one AP class increased by five percent: students took 3,374 Advanced Placement courses and the corresponding tests.

The 2015 College Board report shows that all Newport News high schools increased their participation rate and the number of exams administered. NNPS requires all students enrolled in an AP course to take its corresponding final exam.

NNPS encourages enrollment in Advanced Placement courses

Recognizing the benefits of AP coursework, NNPS encourages all students to prepare for and take at least one AP class. Studies show that AP courses move students towards a higher level of preparedness for success after high school. AP courses help improve writing skills and problem-solving techniques, develop good study habits for engaging rigorous coursework, and provide students with a greater level of depth and detail in subject areas.

AP courses are open to all students and the school division covers all exam fees. NNPS is also a leader in AP course offerings with 37 courses in 22 subject areas – nearly every AP course offered.

Newport News Public Schools offers more AP courses than any other public school division or private school on the Peninsula.

Why Take AP Courses?

Advanced Placement courses are college-level courses developed by the College Board, a not-for-profit association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. AP tests are administered through the College Board and scored by an independent party. AP courses also:

- improve writing skills and problem-solving techniques
- develop study habits necessary for tackling rigorous coursework
- provide students with a greater level of depth and detail in the subject areas

Additionally, students who score a 3 (out of 5) or higher on an AP exam may be eligible for college credit.

Washington Post education columnist and blogger Jay Mathews, who developed the “Best High Schools in America” rating system published by the Washington Post, said taking an AP class prepares students for success. “The smartest schools realize that they are engaging, and offer challenging courses that will help them [students] succeed in college,” said Mathews in a phone interview. He said that Newport News “understands that participation in college level courses and tests is good for all students.”

Data has shown that students who have taken at least one AP course are twice as likely to complete college than students who have not taken any AP courses.

Ten Reasons Why Families Should Encourage Students to Take Advanced Placement Courses

1. Students study a subject in greater depth and are in classes with other students who are enthusiastic about sharing ideas and concepts in academically challenging ways.
2. Students who take AP courses are more prepared to do college work because they have learned and practiced important learning and study skills.
3. Students who succeed in AP courses and exams know that they have the ability to succeed in college, which helps them have the confidence to take more difficult and demanding courses.
4. Students who are successful in AP courses often enter college as sophomores. Over 1,400 institutions in the United States grant a full year’s credit to students who have enough credits from taking AP courses and exams.
5. Students who take AP courses often look at things differently. They often have experiences that broaden their horizons and provide them with new insights into their own skills and interests.
6. Newport News Public Schools pays for all costs associated with AP examinations.
7. Students who take AP courses improve their chances of getting into competitive colleges.
8. Students who take AP courses and exams increase their options at college. They may be able to take upper level courses in their field of interest or complete their undergraduate degrees in less than four years, thus saving money on college tuition.
9. Students who excel in AP courses may receive a Scholar Award from the College Board.
10. Most importantly, students who take AP courses know that they have mastered rigorous academic courses. This knowledge may encourage them to take academic risks that result in significant accomplishments in college and throughout their lives.