



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 13, 2014

CONTACT: Josh Collins, 651-582-8205, josh.collins@state.mn.us

More Students Taking Advanced Placement Courses, Earning College Credit

AP course offerings saved Minnesota students and families \$44 million in 2013

ROSEVILLE – More Minnesota high school students are taking rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) courses than ever before, and those course offerings are paying off—both academically and financially. A new report released this week by the College Board showed that Minnesota high school students posted passing scores on 42,031 AP exams in 2013 alone, earning 126,093 college credits free of charge. With an average rate of \$348.93 per credit hour, those passing scores helped save Minnesota students and their families nearly \$44 million.

"It is exciting to see more students throughout Minnesota not only taking more rigorous courses, but also posting higher scores," said Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius. "Our students are not only challenging themselves and proving that they are ready for college and career, they are also earning a college credit—which means substantial cost savings as they make the transition to postsecondary education."

The College Board 2014 AP Report to the Nation, released February 11, showed the number of Minnesota students who have taken an AP exam before leaving high school has nearly doubled over the last decade, growing from 9,256 in 2003 to 17,482 in 2013. The number of students who have posted passing scores on these exams has also doubled, from 5,882 in 2003, to 11,497 in 2013. Nearly 32 percent of all Minnesota high school students who graduated in 2013 had taken at least one AP exam.

Commissioner Cassellius lauded Minnesota's gains, congratulating students and teachers alike. "These results are a testament to the amazing educators in Minnesota who have not only striven to increase access to college level courses for all students in high school, but who provide targeted, meaningful instruction to ensure their students succeed," she said.

Minnesota invests \$3.5 million in AP programs every year, an investment that covers the cost of college-level, credit-bearing exams, and the cost of training high-quality teachers to provide rigorous college-level instruction. The \$44 million saved by students and families in 2013 through AP course offerings translates into a 13-to-1 return on Minnesota's investment in AP curriculum and programming, not to mention the value these challenging courses add to the academic development and career prospects of Minnesota students.

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Research shows that students who take these rigorous courses have higher admission rates to college. It also shows that many of these students take less remedial coursework, further saving students and families thousands of dollars.

Commissioner Cassellius shared the state's AP test results, along with other important data about Minnesota's progress in closing achievement gaps at a legislative committee hearing this week at the state Capitol.

[Read the full AP Report to the Nation.](#)