

**27.6%**

**Participation Rate**

among BCPS 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, a decrease of 0.6% from the previous year

**65.0%**

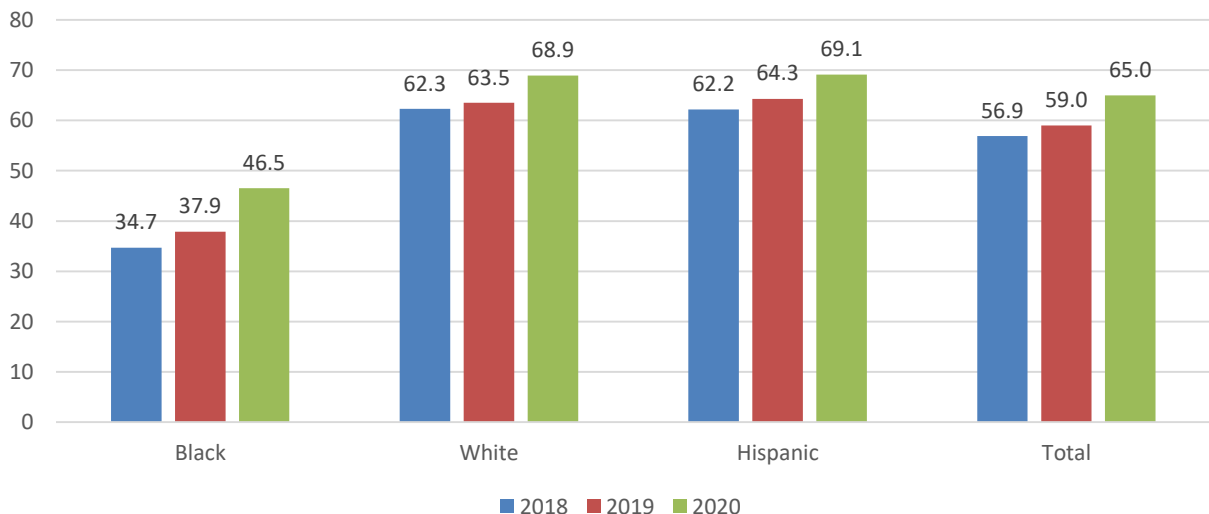
**Exam Passing Rate**

with students earning scores of 3 or higher, an increase of 6.0% over the previous year

**AP at a Glance**

- In 2019-20, 15,563 BCPS high school students completed 27,756 AP tests, an average of 1.8 exams per participant.
- The AP exam **passing rate for the District increased** over the past three years from 56.9%, 59.0%, and 65.0%. This marks six consecutive years the passing rate has exceeded 50%.
- The **passing rate** for each of the three largest racial/ethnic groups, Black, White and Hispanic students, **increased** for the fifth consecutive year.
- The percent of Black students passing increased by 8.6 percentage points and the percent of Hispanic students passing increased by 4.8 percentage points.
- Comparing last year to this year, the gap in passing rates between Black and White students decreased by 3.2 percentage points.
- Psychology continues as the most popular AP course, with 3,006 students testing on that exam.
- In 2019-20, the District had a total of 3,853 high school AP Scholars, with 1,255 students recognized with distinction. AP Scholar Awards are granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.

AP Exam Passing Rates, 2018-2020



**Additional Resources**

A detailed report and data tables specific to AP in Broward County may be accessed at:

<https://www.browardschools.com/sar>

For further information on the AP program, see:

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org>

# THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DANIEL GOHL**  
**CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

October 2, 2020

**TO:** High School Principals  
Center Principals  
Charter High School Principals

**FROM:** Daniel F. Gohl  
Chief Academic Officer

**VIA:** Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.  
Chief School Performance & Accountability Officer

**SUBJECT:     **ADVANCED PLACEMENT RESULTS, 2017-18 THROUGH 2019-20****

The 2019-20 school year proved to be unique due to the global health pandemic related to the coronavirus. College Board surveyed students and based on the results of the survey adjusted the method and type of Advanced Placement exams. College Board developed online free-response exams for each course. As stated on College Board's Website, "To be fair to all students, some of whom have lost more instructional time than others, the exam will only include topics and skills most AP teachers and students have already covered in class by early March. Like many college-level exams, this year's AP Exams are open book/open note. Students can take exams on any device they have access to—computer, tablet, or smartphone. They'll be able to either type and upload their responses or write responses by hand and submit a photo via their cell phone."

The 2019-20 Advanced Placement (AP) results as of September 14, 2020 for Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) students are detailed in the attached Brief and appendices. Highlighted findings include:

- The passing rate increased by 6.0 percentage points during the 2019-20 school year, from 59.0% in 2018-19 to the current rate of 65.0%. This marks the sixth consecutive year the passing rate exceeded 50%.
- The 2019-20 results show a 3.2 percentage point decrease in the gap between Black and White students. Passing rates have increased across the board for the three largest racial/ethnic groups (Hispanic, Black, and White).
- AP Scholar Awards are granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams at any point in their high school career. In 2019-20 the District had a total of 3,853 high school AP Scholars, with 1,255 students recognized with distinction. AP Scholar with Distinction is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken.
- AP exam participation in BCPS decreased by 2, 347 for grades 10, 11, and 12 from 2019 to 2020. This year 15,563 high school students completed 27,756 AP exams, averaging 1.8 exams per participant.

If you have any comments concerning this memorandum or the attached brief, please contact **Richard Baum, Director, Student Assessment & Research at 754-321-2500**. For questions about AP courses or staff training, please contact **Bob McKinney, Advanced Studies Coordinator at 754-321-2119**.

VSW/DG/RGB/ MJJ/rs  
Attachments

cc: School Board Members  
Senior Leadership Team  
Cadre Directors  
Director, Charter School Support



# Assessment Brief

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Number 202

Report from the Office of the Superintendent

October 2020

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM ENROLLMENT AND RESULTS, 2017-18 THROUGH 2019-20

This Brief presents enrollment rates and exam results for Broward County Public Schools' (BCPS) Advanced Placement (AP) program as of September 14, 2020. The AP program provides an opportunity for high school students to experience college-level coursework and demonstrate mastery of content on national, subject-specific examinations. AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, and many colleges and universities will award course credit for scores of 3 or higher.<sup>1</sup>

### Student participation rates, overall and by race/ethnicity

Table 1

*High School Enrollment<sup>2</sup> and AP Exam Participation in BCPS, 2017-18 through 2019-20*

Grade	High School Enrollment	AP Enrollment	AP Exams	AP Course Participation Rate
<b>2017-18</b>				
Total	78,697	19,170	32,564	24.4
9th	19,539	2,363	2,274	12.1
10th	19,880	4,705	6,599	23.7
11th	19,570	6,106	11,438	31.2
12th	19,708	5,996	12,249	30.4
<b>2018-19</b>				
Total	78,346	17,367	30,104	22.2
9th	19,803	2,254	2,254	11.4
10th	19,535	4,110	5,958	21.0
11th	19,332	5,192	10,018	26.9
12th	19,676	5,811	11,873	29.5
<b>2019-20</b>				
Total	77,994	16,979	27,774	21.8
9th	20,052	2,287	2,271	11.4
10th	19,705	4,156	5,603	21.1
11th	18,799	5,414	9,790	28.8
12th	19,438	5,122	10,092	26.4

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the AP program, see <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/home>

<sup>2</sup> Enrollment calculated using BCPS benchmark day enrollment data which is recorded on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of school.

As shown in Table 1, BCPS' total high school enrollment **decreased** slightly by 352 (less than 1%) students since the 2018-19 school year, while AP participation **decreased** by 389 (2.2%) students. The **decrease** in students participating in AP courses led to a **decrease** in the number of exams completed by 2,330 exams.

AP participants completed, on average, 1.8 AP exams in 2019-20. The average number of AP exams taken is unchanged for the fourth consecutive year (see Table 2). Asian participants completed more exams on average (2.3) than students of any other race/ethnicity. Black students tended to take slightly fewer exams (1.5) than the District average. Hispanic students participated (1.7) slightly below the District average of 1.8 exams per student, while White students participated just above the average, at 1.9 exams. Across the three years reviewed, while there has been slight variability in the number of program participants and exams administered, there has been almost no variation in the average number of exams taken in aggregate or by demographic group.

Table 2

*Number of High School AP Students Tested, Number of AP Examinations, and Average Number of Exams by Race/Ethnicity in Broward County, 2017-18 through 2019-20*

Race/ Ethnicity	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20		
	N Tested	n Exams	Avg. n Exams	N Tested	n Exams	Avg. n Exams	N Tested	N Exams	Avg. n Exams
Broward	17,727	32,564	1.8	16,584	30,104	1.8	15,563	27,774	1.8
Asian	1,358	3,291	2.4	1,380	3,237	2.3	1,344	3,064	2.3
Black	4,155	6,496	1.6	3,711	5,748	1.5	3,338	5,108	1.5
Hispanic	6,234	11,139	1.8	6,129	10,848	1.8	5,813	10,084	1.7
Multi-ethnic	575	1,066	1.8	533	1,001	1.9	537	970	1.9
Native American	77	161	2.1	64	125	2.0	55	107	1.9
White	5,313	10,390	2.0	4,767	9,145	1.9	4,476	8,441	1.9

### Average scores and passing rates for the District's largest racial/ethnic groups

Figure 1 (next page) shows the passing rates for each of the three largest racial/ethnic groups. All three groups have increased their passing rate for three consecutive years. From the 2018 – 19 school year to the 2019 – 20 school year Black students' passing rate increased by 8.6 percentage points, White students' passing rate increased by 5.4 percentage points, and Hispanic students' passing rate increased by 4.8 percentage points.

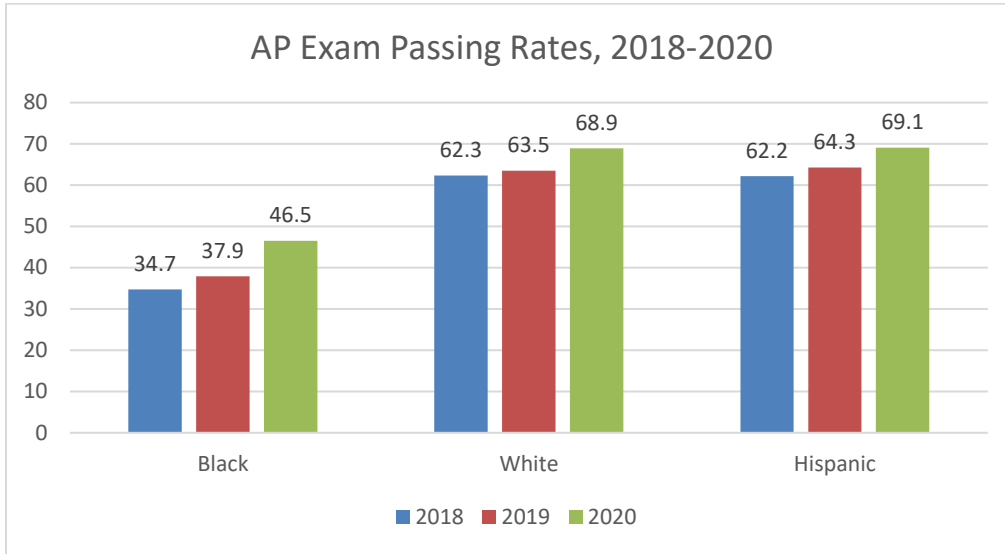


Figure 1. AP exam passing rates for three largest racial/ethnic groups, 2018 through 2020.

Table 3 displays performance on AP exams across student racial/ethnic groups. Performance differed across racial/ethnic groups. Asian students consistently earned the highest scores while Black students consistently earned the lowest scores of all the racial/ethnic groups for the past three years. Asian, Hispanic, Multi-ethnic, and White students maintained passing rates above 50% over the past three years. The proportion of Black students passing an AP exam increased by 8.6 percentage points over the past year, from 37.9 to 46.5 percent. Additionally, the mean score of Black students exceeded 2.0 for the fourth consecutive year and increased each year (2.09 in 2017, 2.17 in 2018, 2.25 in 2019, and 2.47 in 2020).

Table 3

AP Passing Rates and Mean Scores in BCPS by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18 through 2019-20

Ethnicity	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20		
	<i>n</i> Exams 3+	% Exams 3+	Mean Score	<i>n</i> Exams 3+	% Exams 3+	Mean Score	<i>n</i> Exams 3+	% Exams 3+	Mean Score
Broward	18,514	56.9	2.82	17,767	59.0	2.90	18,060	65.0	3.04
Asian	2,200	66.8	3.13	2,143	66.2	3.13	2,219	72.4	3.28
Black	2,251	34.7	2.17	2,179	37.9	2.25	2,373	46.5	2.47
Hispanic	6,931	62.2	3.01	6,974	64.3	3.06	6,967	69.1	3.19
Multi-ethnic	563	52.8	2.69	587	58.6	2.82	624	64.3	2.97
Native American	87	54.0	2.80	77	61.6	2.83	65	60.7	2.91
White	6,478	62.3	2.95	5,807	63.5	2.98	5,812	68.9	3.14

Performance gaps between Black and Hispanic students and their White peers have been a long-standing concern. **Comparing last year to this year, the gap in passing rates between Black and White students decreased by 3.2 percentage points.** The gap between Hispanic and White students continued to decrease resulting in Hispanic students outperforming White students on average (Table 4). Notably, the gap between Hispanic and White students changed from -0.8 to -0.2 percentage points from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

Table 4

*Differences in Percent of AP Exams Scored 3 or Above in BCPS by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18 through 2019-20*

Group	Percent of Exams 3 or Above			Change in gap 2018-19 to 2019-20
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Black	34.7	37.9	46.5	
<i>Black and White Gap</i>	<i>27.6</i>	<i>25.6</i>	<i>22.4</i>	<i>- 3.2</i>
White	62.3	63.5	68.9	
<i>White and Hispanic Gap</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-0.8</i>	<i>-0.2</i>	<i>-0.6</i>
Hispanic	62.2	64.3	69.1	

Table 5 shows the gaps in the mean exam scores between Black, Hispanic, and White students. In 2019-20, **Hispanic students' mean AP exam score was slightly higher than White students', by .05 points.** Black students' mean score was .67 points lower than White students. **The Black-White score gap decreased by .06 points, while the Hispanic-White gap decreased by .03 points, in favor of the Hispanic students.**

Table 5

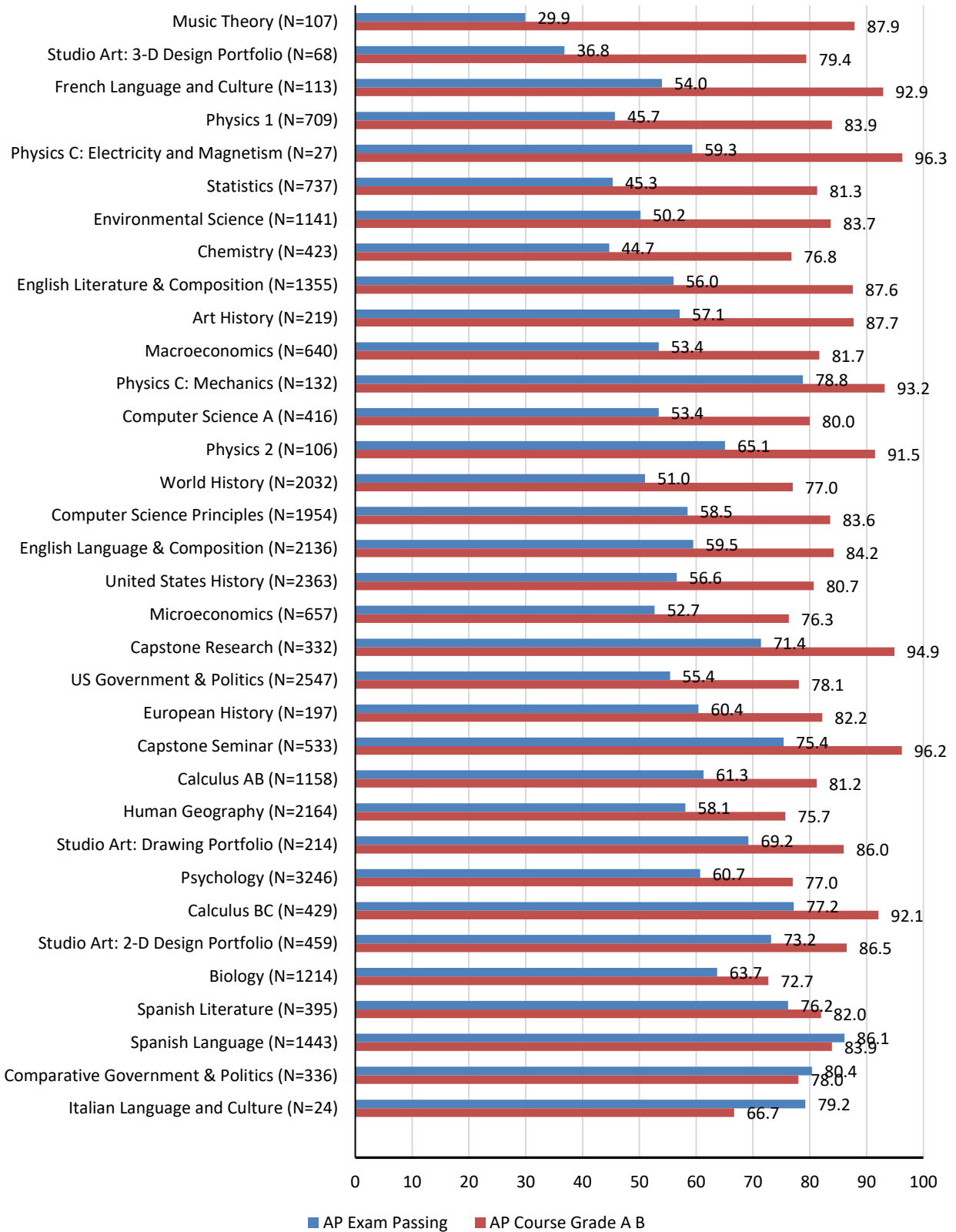
*Differences in Mean AP Exam Scores in BCPS by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-18 through 2019-20*

Group	Mean Exam Score			Change in gap 2018-19 to 2019-20
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Black	2.17	2.25	2.47	
<i>Black and White Gap</i>	<i>.78</i>	<i>.73</i>	<i>.67</i>	<i>-.06</i>
White	2.95	2.98	3.14	
<i>White and Hispanic Gap</i>	<i>-.06</i>	<i>-.08</i>	<i>-.05</i>	<i>-.03</i>
Hispanic	3.01	3.06	3.19	

### Relationship between exam passing rates and course grades

Figure 2 (next page) examines the relationship between AP exam passing rates and course grades. It displays, by AP subject area, the percent of students earning an exam score of 3 or higher versus the percent of students earning a course grade of A or B. The subjects are sorted in the figure by magnitude of discrepancy between AP exam passing rate and course grade rate – from the largest (Music Theory) discrepancy to the smallest (Spanish Literature). Only subjects with more than 20 students who have exam scores and course grades are included.

Figure 2. AP Exam Passing Rates and Course Grades, 2019-20





There were 31 subject areas where course grades outpaced AP exam performance. This difference ranged from 5.8 to 58 percentage points. Course grades surpassed AP exam performance in twenty-three courses by at least 20 percentage points. Those courses were: Music Theory, Studio Art: 3-D Design Portfolio, French Language and Culture, Physics 1, Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism, Statistics, Environmental Science, Chemistry, English Literature & Composition, Art History, Macroeconomics, Physics C: Mechanics, Computer Science A, Physics 2, World History, Computer Science Principles, English Language & Composition, United States History, Microeconomics, Capstone Research, US Government & Politics, European History, and Capstone Seminar. The large discrepancies between class grades and exam passing rates in these courses suggest expectations for these classes may not be aligned with the rigor of the exams. Conversely, three subject areas saw more students passing the AP exam than earning an A or B in coursework: Spanish Language, Comparative Government & Politics, and Italian Language & Culture.

The most popular AP subject areas based on exam participation were Psychology (3,006 students), US Government and Politics (2,369), US History (2,225), Human Geography (2,042), English Language and Composition (1,984), World History (1,789), and Computer Science Principles (1,734). The subjects with the highest exam passing rates were Spanish Language (97.9%), Chinese Language & Culture (91.7%), Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio (90.5%), and Studio Art: Drawing Portfolio (88.7%). Conversely, the subjects with the lowest exam passing rates were Music Theory (44.6%), Chemistry (49.4%), Physics 1 (49.6%), and Statistics (49.8%).

### **AP Scholars**

The AP Scholar Awards recognize high school students who have demonstrated praiseworthy college-level achievement on AP exams. These awards are academic distinctions for students to cite among their credentials. The AP Scholar designation is granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams and is based on all exams taken this year and in previous years. In school year 2019-20 the District had a total of 3,853 high school AP Scholars, with 1,255 students recognized with distinction. The schools with the most AP Scholars were: Cypress Bay High School (850 scholars), Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (452 scholars), Western High School (322 scholars), West Broward High School (269 scholars), Nova High School (255 scholars), and Cooper City High School (213 scholars).

## Summary

Across the three years examined, overall high school enrollment is unchanged while the number of students participating in AP testing decreased. The average number of exams taken by a student was unchanged, and the proportion of exams passed with a score of 3 or higher increased by six percentage points this school year.

Ninth and tenth grades maintained approximately the same participation rate, while eleventh grade showed a small increase, twelfth grade showed a small decrease. Overall decrease in students participating in AP courses led to a decrease in the number of exams taken by 2,460 exams.

The exam passing rate increased for the three main ethnic groups across the past three years, with 46.5 percent of Black students, 69.1 percent of Hispanic students, and 68.9 percent of White students achieving a score of 3 or higher on AP exams. While passing scores went up for all three groups, the gap between Black students and White students changed by 3.2 percentage points compared to the previous year, while the gap between Hispanic students and White students continued in favor of Hispanic students. Hispanic students' average score (3.19) surpassed that of White students (3.14).

Twenty-three courses showed a discrepancy of twenty percentage points or more between students earning an A or B in the course and those passing the corresponding AP exam. This may suggest a misalignment of classroom expectations with exam knowledge requirements in those courses.

The District had a total of 3,953 high school AP Scholars this school year. The AP Scholar designation is given to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams. At seven schools this honor was bestowed on more than 200 students.

This brief is based on scores released through September 14, 2020 from College Board. There remain 185 students without reported scores.

## Appendices

Additional school- and exam-level data are provided in the appendices. Appendix A provides three years of districtwide passing rates by AP exam. Appendix B provides 2019-20 passing rates for each AP exam by school. Appendix C provides aggregate AP exam results by school over a three-year period.

*Prepared by*

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