



## North Carolina high school students are taking and passing Advanced Placement exams at a greater rate, but disparities still exist for disadvantaged students.

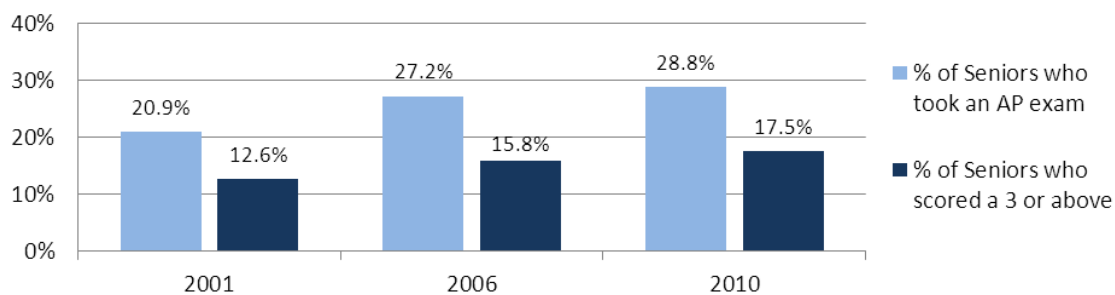
### Advanced Placement Test Performance in North Carolina

North Carolina students who choose college as part of their career pathway have an opportunity to accelerate course credits through Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Currently, 417 public schools in North Carolina offer AP courses in one or more of 34 possible academic subjects. Exams are scored on a five-point scale, and students who score a three or above can often receive college credit in the subject – in addition to the high school credit they receive for taking the course.

***The good news is that there has been a major increase in AP test taking and passing rates in the state; the disturbing news is that our disadvantaged students are underrepresented among those taking and passing AP exams.***

According to the [7<sup>th</sup> Annual AP Report to the Nation](#), more than 24,000 public high school seniors in North Carolina – close to one-third of seniors – took an AP exam in 2010, and just over 15,000 received a 3 or above. This is a major increase from 2001 when more than 13,000 took an exam, and fewer than 8,000 received a 3 or above. The growth has come not just in the raw number of AP participants, but in the percentage of high school seniors participating and succeeding in the AP program as shown in the chart below.

**2010 North Carolina Advanced Placement Participation and Results**



Source: College Board, 7<sup>th</sup> Annual AP Report to the Nation – North Carolina State Supplement

With 28.8 percent of high school seniors taking at least one AP exam in 2010, North Carolina ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. However, when looking at the passing rate for AP test takers, the percentage of students in the state who took an AP exam and scored at least a 3, North Carolina falls to 24<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

### Not All Students Are Benefiting from AP Courses

Despite the growing number of North Carolina high school seniors taking and passing AP exams, students of color are not succeeding at the same rates.

- Though African American/Black students made up 30.1 percent of the North Carolina high school senior class in 2010, they made up only 13.3 percent of all those who took at least one AP exam. They also made up only 6.9 percent of students who scored a 3 or above on at least one AP exam. North Carolina ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for this sub-group.
- Hispanic/Latino students in the state made up 7 percent of the senior class, 5.7 percent of test takers, and 5.4 percent of those who scored a 3 or above. North Carolina ranks 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation for this sub-group.
- American Indian/Alaskan Native students in the state comprise 1.1 percent of seniors, 0.7 percent of test takers, and 0.3 percent of those who scored a 3 or above. North Carolina ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation for this sub-group.

The numbers for low-income students are also disturbing. Though more than 23,000 high school seniors in North Carolina took an AP exam in 2010, only 2,798 of these were low-income students. While the passing rate for all North Carolina high school seniors was 61 percent, only 45 percent of low-income test takers scored a three or higher on an AP exam.

**If North Carolina is going to fully recognize the opportunity that AP courses provide to help students achieve college credit before graduating from high school, the disparity between white and minority students and between affluent and low-income students *must* be addressed.**