



**An Introduction to the
Advanced Placement Program®**

Rockford Public Schools

Welcome

The Rockford Public School District is committed to every student's success.

We believe access to rigorous course work such as Advanced Placement® (AP®) plays an important role in that success.



Overview

- What are Advanced Placement® Courses?
- The Benefits
- AP® Exams
- What Is It Like to Take AP?
- Next Steps: Help Your Child Make the Best Choices



What Are Advanced Placement[®] Courses?

Advanced Placement[®]: The Basics

- AP[®] courses are college-level courses offered in high school
- Courses reflect what is taught in top introductory college courses
- Students take **AP Exams** at the end of the course, measuring their mastery of college-level work
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP exam can typically earn students college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college

Our AP[®] Courses

- **Arts:** Art History, Music Theory, Studio Art: Drawing Portfolio, Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio, Studio Art: 3-D Design Portfolio
- **English:** English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition
- **History and Social Sciences:** Comparative Government and Politics, European History, Human Geography, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology, United States Government and Politics, United States History, World History
- **Mathematics and Computer Science:** Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Computer Science A, Statistics
- **Sciences:** Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics 1, Physics 2, Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, Physics C: Mechanics
- **World languages:** Spanish Language

AP[®] in Rockford - 2013

- 904 AP exams were taken in 2013
- 74 AP Scholars: students who received scores of 3 or higher on 3 or more AP exams
- 23 AP Scholars with Honor: students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken
- 30 AP Scholars with Distinction: students who received an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken
- 5 National AP Scholars: students who received an average score of at least 4 on all AP exams taken

AP[®]

AP[®]: The Benefits

AP[®]: The Benefits

- Students learn rigorous college-level content and skills
- Taking AP is valued in the college admission process
- AP courses are interesting and rewarding academic experiences
- Opportunity to earn valuable credit and placement in college



AP[®] from the College Admissions Perspective

- 85% of selective colleges and universities report that a student's AP experience favorably impacts admission decisions*
- Colleges rank grades in college-preparatory courses and strength of curriculum as the two top factors in the admission decision
- AP courses tell college admission officials that students are challenging themselves and preparing for the rigors they'll encounter in their college careers

**Unpublished institutional research, Crux Research Inc., March 2007*

AP[®]: Skills & Advantages that Last a Lifetime

- Taking an AP course helps students build critical thinking skills, confidence, and the essential time management and study skills needed for college success
- Nationally, research shows that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically earn higher grade point averages in college and have higher graduation rates than their non-AP peers*

**2009, The College Board, "The Relationship Between AP Exam Performance and College Outcomes"*

AP[®] Helps Students Graduate on Time & Save Money

Students who take AP courses and exams are much more likely to complete a college degree on time.* Graduating in four years represents a significant savings on the cost of college.

- Only 1 in 4 college students completes a bachelor's degree in 4 years.
- The average cost of college for a single year is \$21,500** for in-state schools (tuition, fees, room/board, misc. expenses).

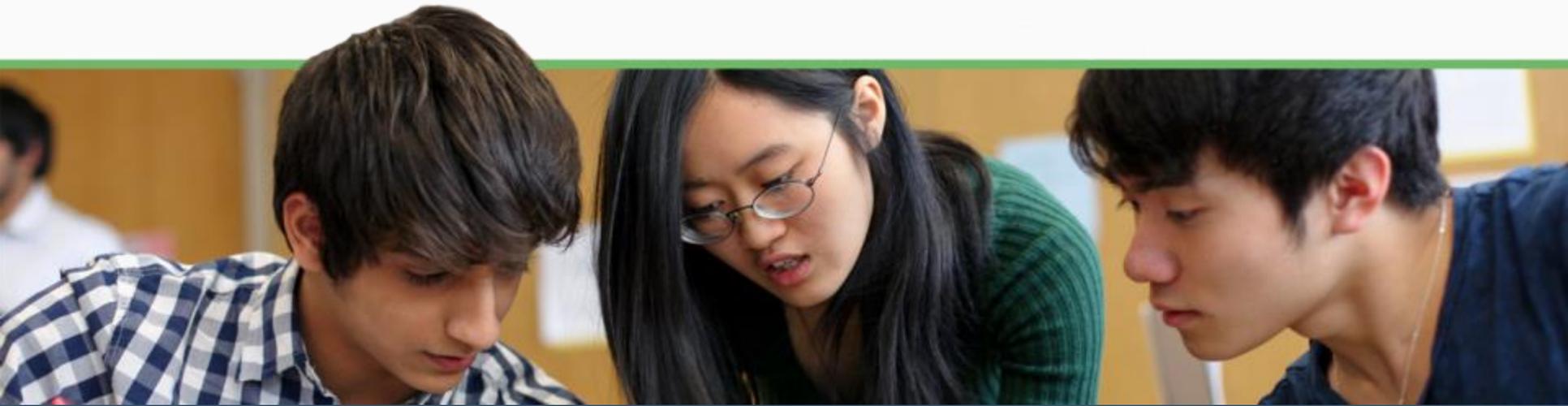
*College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences, *The College Board, 2008*

***The College Board, Trends in College Pricing 2011, Figure 1*

AP[®] Expands Students' Options

When students earn college credit through AP Exams, their options and opportunities expand:

- Move to upper-level college courses sooner
- Pursue a double major
- Gain time to study and travel abroad



AP[®]: A More Engaging Learning Experience

AP courses challenge students to work and participate at a higher level:

- Opportunities to explore topics in depth
- More time in and out of the classroom required to complete assignments and projects
- High expectations for critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evidence, multiple perspectives, and clear written and verbal communications

AP[®]

AP[®] Exams

AP[®] Exams

AP Exams are administered by schools worldwide on set dates in May each year.

- Exams are typically 2–3 hours and include:
 - Multiple-choice questions
 - Free-response items such as essays, problem solving, document-based questions and oral response



AP[®] Exam Fees

- The exam fee for 2014 is \$89 per exam.
- Assistance is available for eligible students with financial need:
 - The College Board offers a \$26 fee reduction per exam for eligible students with financial need.
 - State and District funding provide an additional \$43 fee reduction
 - Students with financial need pay \$20 per exam

Credit and Placement Opportunities

Each college and university has its own policies regarding AP[®] credit and placement. The College Board offers information about AP credit at thousands of college and universities at www.collegeboard.org/apcreditpolicy.



The screenshot shows the 'AP Credit Policy Info' page on the College Board website. The page is titled 'AP Credit Policy Info' and 'Advanced Placement Program'. It features a search bar labeled 'School Name' with a dropdown arrow. Below the search bar, there is a list of subjects: A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L - M - N - O - P - Q - R - S - T - U - V - W - X - Y - Z. The page also includes a 'TrustIt' logo in the bottom right corner.

- Search by school name or alphabetically
- Data for each school includes a direct link to that school's Web page detailing AP credit and placement policies
- A statement from the college or university about its AP policy

AP[®] and our Higher Education Community

- 678 AP exams were passed (3+) by RPS students in 2013
- Tuition costs for a typical course (3 credit hours) at:
 - Rock Valley College - \$250
 - University of Illinois - \$3400
 - Washington University - \$4200

A Sampling of Credit for University of Illinois

Course	Minimum Score	Credits Earned
Biology	5	8
Calculus BC	3	5
Calculus BC	4	8
Chemistry	3	3
Economics	4	3
English Lit	4	7
Physics B	4	10
Psychology	5	4

AP[®]

What is it like to take AP[®]?

AP[®] Myths & Realities

Myth	Reality
AP courses are for students who always get good grades.	AP courses are for any students who are academically prepared and motivated to take college-level courses.
AP courses are too stressful.	It's no secret that AP courses are challenging. But the support you receive from your classmates and teachers can help you manage the work load.
I don't think I will score high enough on the AP Exam to get college credit.	You don't need to score a 5. Many colleges grant credit — and placement as well — based on a 3 or higher on an AP Exam.
Taking AP courses could hurt my GPA.	In the Rockford Public Schools, AP courses earn students quality points that impact their GPA. Essentially, it's a weighting, where a C earns a 3.0, a B earns a 4.0, and an A earns a 5.0. Taking AP courses shows colleges that you're willing to challenge yourself academically.
I can't take AP because no one has recommended me.	If you think you're ready to take an AP course, then you're ready to advocate for yourself — just talk to a teacher or counselor.

Our School Offers Support for AP[®] Students

Our school offers these resources and programs to support our AP students:

- AP Prep Camp - Students new to AP are eligible to participate in our 2-week summer program
- Tutoring –
 - Most teachers provide tutoring to help students transition into their AP course at the beginning of the year
 - Most/all teachers provide tutoring in the weeks leading up to the exam
 - Peer tutoring is available along with study sessions for many courses

Students & Parents ... In Their Own Words

[An AP teacher talks about her high expectations for her students](#)

[AP Program: Turning Curiosity into a Science](#)

[Karl describes AP classes as a glimpse into what college is like](#)

[The Value of AP for Latino Students \(in Spanish\)](#)

[Teachers recognize AP student achievements](#)

[AP Program: Creativity Makes A Mark](#)

College Admissions Officials In Their Own Words

[AP Program: The impact of AP credit and placement on the college experience](#)





Next Steps: Help Your Child Make the Best Choices

AP[®]: Start the Conversation

Help your child prepare to talk to a teacher or counselor about AP. Here are some questions to encourage your child to think about:

What AP course is right for me?

Before you talk to a teacher or counselor, think about what interests you:

- Which courses do you enjoy most in school? In which subjects do you excel?
- What college majors are you considering? What careers excite you?

Ask your counselor or teacher the following questions:

- In which AP courses at our school am I likely to do well?
- Are there other courses that can help me succeed in AP or prepare me for college and careers?

What steps do I need to take?

- What is our school's enrollment deadline?
- May I speak with a student who has taken an AP course?
- Are there study groups or people who can offer help if I need it?
- What can I do next to help me prepare for AP?

AP[®]: Resources Worth Exploring for Students and Families

- AP information: apstudent.collegeboard.org
- College and Career Planning: bigfuture.org
- Personalized feedback, practice and college planning based on your PSAT/NMSQT[®] results: My College QuickStart™
www.collegeboard.org/quickstart
- AP credit policy information from colleges and universities:
www.collegeboard.org/apcreditpolicy

Explore AP[®]: Take the Next Step

