

College Board Public Comments for Interim Charge #3

The College Board, as a mission-driven non-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity, welcomes the opportunity to provide information to the Texas House Higher Education Committee on questions related to Interim Charge 3 – progress toward the goals of the 60x30TX plan. College Board's comments focus on how Advanced Placement (AP), the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and scholarship programs are helping Texas meet the various attainment goals within the plan. We also include recommendations on the following:

1. Embedding AP in the overarching goals of the 60x30TX plan.
2. Enacting a statewide CLEP credit policy.
3. Supporting programs that expand opportunities for student college and career goals.

Recommendation #1: Embed AP in the Overarching Goals of the 60x30TX Plan

AP plays a critical role in Texas' college readiness, completion, and affordability agenda—key pieces of the state's 60x30TX plan. Students who take AP Exams are more likely to enroll in college,¹ stay in college, do well in their classes,² and graduate in four years.³ These outcomes are measurable and backed by research.

The state's AP program success is driven by key policies focused on access and participation that amplify the hard work done on a daily basis by students with support from educators, administrators, and parents. As a result, the Texas AP program has a long-standing record of delivering on the goals of the 60x30TX plan for all students, and especially for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged populations. **Given the AP program's reach to 309,274 public school students in 2019, Texas will only meet its 60X30 goals by continuing to support a strong AP program statewide.**

Texas AP Incentive Program

The state's AP Incentive Program supports educators with training funds and provides AP Exam fee funding for low-income students to increase access and participation in AP. For the most recent administration in May 2020, the incentive program covered \$30 per AP Exam for low-income students.

Continued investments in AP over the years has led to dependable growth in the number of students participating in AP Exams and ensures students face no financial barrier to participating in exams that lead to college credit. The data show how these key policies support the state's overall 60x30 goals:

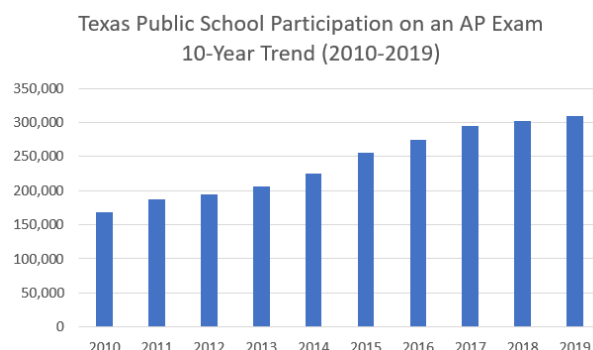
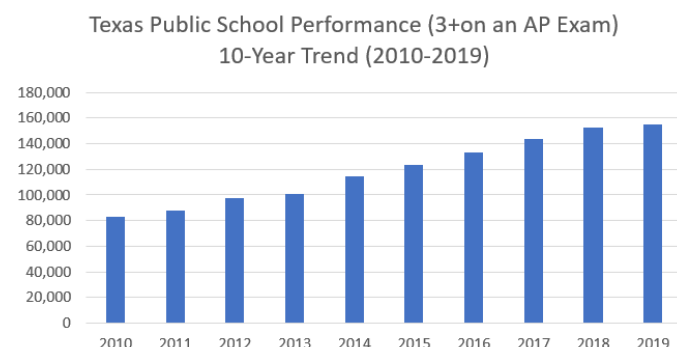
- In 2019, 121,648 public-school students took an AP Exam with a fee reduction.
- In total, 148,331 Hispanic students took an AP Exam in 2019, representing approximately 48% of all public-school examinees.
- In the last 10 years, the public-school participation in AP Exams in Texas has increased from 168,450 examinees in 2010 to 309,274 in 2019—a growth of 84%.

¹ Chajewski, M., Mattern, K. D., & Shaw, E. J. (2011). Examining the role of Advanced Placement® exam participation in four-year college enrollment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30, 16–27.

² Mattern, K. D., Shaw, E. J., & Xiong, X. (2009). *The relationship between AP® Exam performance and college outcomes* (College Board Research Report 2009-4). New York: The College Board. Patterson, B. F., Packman

³ Mattern, K. D., Shaw, E. J., & Xiong, X. (2009). *The relationship between AP® Exam performance and college outcomes* (College Board Research Report 2009-4). New York: The College Board. Mattern, K. D., Marini, J. M., & Shaw, E. J. (2013). *Are AP students more likely to graduate from college on time?* (College Board Research Report 2013-5). New York: The College Board.

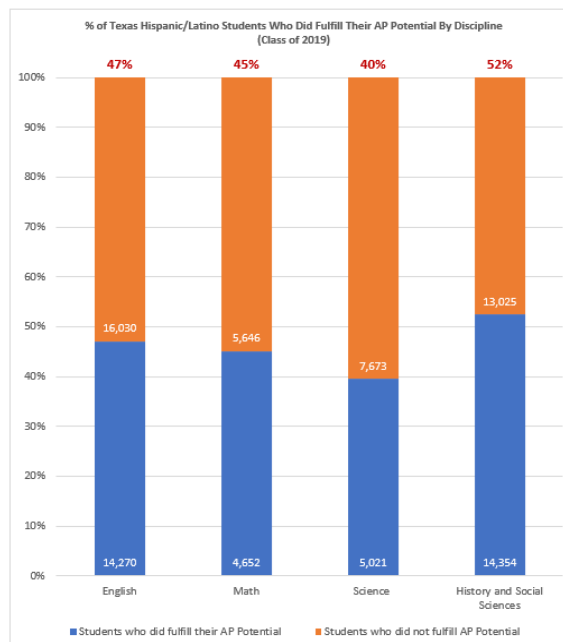
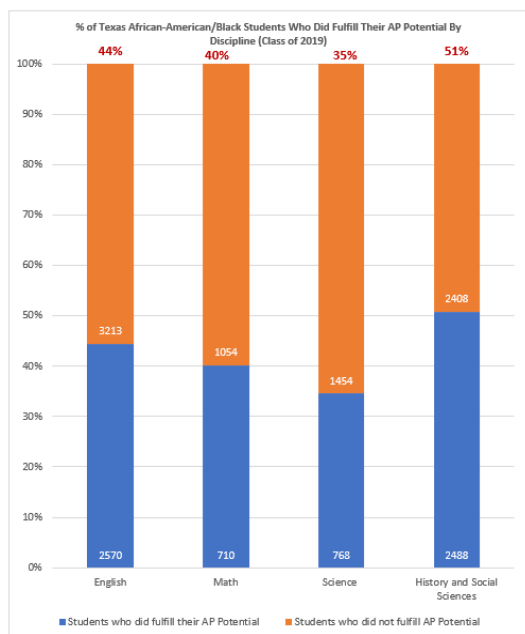
In addition to increasing participation in AP Exams, Texas has seen an increase in AP Exam performance. The number of students scoring a 3 or higher has also increased in the last 10 years, from 82,599 exams in 2010 to 154,913 in Texas—a growth of 88%.



AP Potential to Support All Students

To meet the state's completion goal, Texas must continue to harness the rich data Texas obtains through strong student participation in the SAT Suite of Assessments which generates AP Potential data⁴. This free tool helps school leaders increase access to AP, and potential college credit, by using assessment score data to identify students with the potential to succeed in AP.

College Board data show that hundreds of thousands of students have the potential to succeed in AP but do not take any matched AP course. Bridging this gap is crucial to supporting student access to college and meeting the state's goals. Data from the Texas graduating class of 2019⁵ demonstrates that 38%, or 38,209 Texas public school students, who were identified with AP Potential did not fulfill that potential.



⁴ AP Potential is a free, Web-based tool that allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or higher on a given AP Exam based on their performance on an SAT Suite of Assessments exam. It is rooted in a long line of research showing that PSAT/NMSQT® scores, and by extension SAT scores, predict performance on AP Exams—often with more accuracy than other traditionally used methods.

⁵ This is based on cohort data for the class of 2019 which looks at a student's entire experience with AP while in high school.

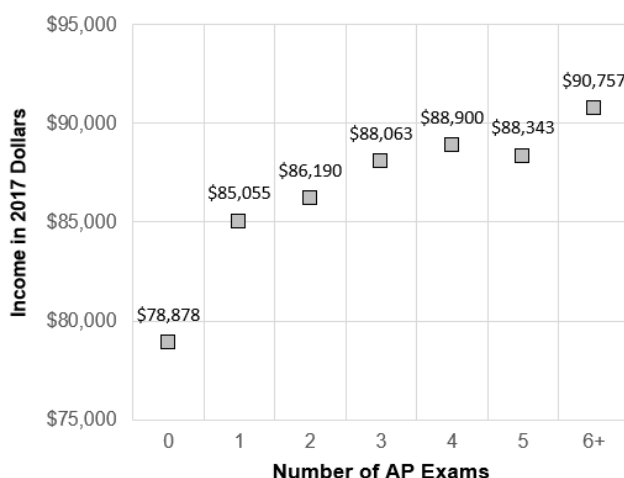
ROI on the Texas AP Incentive Program

College Credit & Tuition Savings: The Advanced Placement credit law produces significant college savings for Texans by granting college credit for scores of 3 or higher at public colleges and universities statewide. Within a year of the statewide AP credit policy passing in Texas in 2015, there were 240 new or improved AP credit policies at Texas' four-year public campuses. This law helps address the state's fourth goal of controlling and reducing student loan debt.

Tuition Savings: 2019 AP administrative data in Texas show that public and private high school students took a total of 292,337 AP Exams that resulted in scores of 3, 4, or 5. Based on the potential to earn at least 3 college credit hours for each AP Exam score of 3 or higher, this represents an estimate of 877,011 college credit hours. At an average rate of \$348.95⁶ per credit hour, the total potential cost savings for Texas students and families was \$306,032,988.45.

Income Gains from AP Participation: Recently, College Board examined how AP Exam participation influences earnings in Texas. On average, AP students in Texas earn \$6,200 to \$11,900 more per year in their early-30s compared to individuals with similar demographic characteristics, academic preparation, and access to AP who did not take AP Exams.

Figure 1 (AP and Estimated Early-Career Income in Texas) shows the predicted annual incomes of Texans in their early-30s based on the number of AP Exams they took during high school, including students who did and did not earn scores of 3, 4, or 5 on those exams. The largest increase in predicted income – from \$78,878 to \$85,055 (or about \$6,200) – is associated with students taking their first AP Exam and represents a 7.8% increase in predicted early-career income per year. Students taking six or more exams earn about \$11,900 more than similar students who took no AP Exams.⁷



Notes: Based on Texans in the 2004 high school graduating class with controls for PSAT/NMSQT scores, high school AP offerings, and student demographics. The sample comprises approximately 61% of students in the 2004 high school graduation cohort in the State.

Recommendation #2: Enact Statewide CLEP Credit Policy

Texas can significantly increase the number of students obtaining postsecondary credentials via the CLEP program. CLEP has been the most widely trusted credit-by-exam program for more than 50 years and lets students demonstrate their mastery of introductory college-level material and earn

⁶ These estimates are based on Table 5 of the 2019 College Board report, *Trends in College Pricing*. This report indicates that the average in-state tuition and fees at Texas public four-year colleges was \$10,468 per year in 2019-20 or \$348.95 per credit, assuming 30 credits are taken by a full-time student. These estimates also assume that all the 292,337 AP Exams with scores of 3 or higher taken in Texas were applied toward college credit.

⁷ Additional information on the link between AP and financial well-being can be found in the following research paper available for download at <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3622531>: Hsu, J., Hurwitz, M., & Mabel, Z. (2020). *Evaluating the Relationship between Advanced Placement and Financial Well-Being in Adulthood*. Washington, DC: College Board.

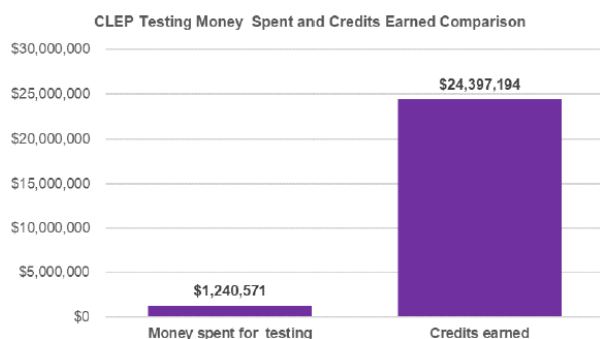
college credit in 34 subjects. It serves a diverse group of traditional and nontraditional students—high school students getting a head start on college, college students accelerating their degrees, and service members and other adults returning to college to expand their career prospects. Importantly, multiple research studies show CLEP students have better higher education learning outcomes than non-CLEP students.⁸

- Among first-generation college-going students and underrepresented students, those earning a CLEP score of 50 or higher have considerably higher graduation and retention rates at colleges as well as higher transfer rates from two- to four- year colleges than comparable groups of dual enrollment students and students without early credit.
- Earning college credit through CLEP had a causal impact on degree completion for military-affiliated and students age 25+.

While CLEP is accepted at more than 2,900 colleges and universities, only 19 states have state- or system-wide CLEP policies. Texas unfortunately is not one of them. **Thus, the College Board recommends Texas adopt a CLEP credit policy as a strategy to meet its 60x30 credential goals.** The College Board will provide the Committee with a list of all the CLEP cut scores by subject area for all the state's public two and four-year institutions. Many have strong credit-granting policies while others maintain scores above the recommended 50 score threshold. A uniform credit granting policy, akin to the state's existing AP credit policy, will have a big impact on students' ability to gain credit to complete their degrees, and save on tuition costs. The College Board does not anticipate a fiscal note to the state if this policy is enacted, yet the benefits to students will be significant through tuition savings, acceleration towards degree completion, and retention.

Texas CLEP Data

While there is no statewide CLEP policy in place, Texas students still earn college credit and savings from CLEP. For every dollar spent on CLEP exams in Texas, approximately \$20 are received in tuition savings. Existing data on CLEP demonstrates that a credit policy would amplify the positive impact the program would have on the state's 60x30 plan – especially for the 39% of adult student CLEP test takers in the state.



Note: These estimates are based on Table 5 of the 2019 College Board report, *Trends in College Pricing*. The report indicates the average in-state tuition and fees at Texas public four-year colleges are \$10,470 per year or \$349 per credit, assuming 30 credits taken by a full-time student. These estimates also assume that all 13 exams taken in Wisconsin were applied toward college credit and equivalent to ACE recommendations.

- In 2018-19, Texas students took a total of 13,939 CLEP exams. Based on an average rate of \$349.00 per credit hour at Texas four-year public institutions, students spent \$1,240,571 and earned \$24,397,194 of credit.

- Texas ranks first among states receiving CLEP exam scores and first in US CLEP testing among active duty service members.

Credit and Placement Policies in Texas

Given the consistent findings that students who earn minimum CLEP exam scores of 50 demonstrate college success, the College Board recommends that colleges and universities award credit for scores of 50 on any CLEP exam. In doing so, Texas will leverage opportunities that the

⁸ Godfrey, Kelly E., and Sanja Jagesic. Validating College Course Placement Decisions Based on CLEP Exam Scores: CLEP Placement Validity Study Results. College Board Research Report, 2AD (New York: The College Board, 2016)



existing CLEP program already offers to Texans to further advance its 60x30 goals. Here's a snapshot of the existing Texas CLEP statistics:

- Texas ranks first among states receiving CLEP exam scores.
- Texas ranks first in the U.S. for CLEP testing among active duty service members.
- 39% of CLEP test takers are considered adult students.
- All Texas universities and colleges award credit for CLEP exams, though at varying scores.
- No college or university awards credit for all CLEP exams.
- For every dollar spent on CLEP exams in Texas, approximately \$20 are received in tuition savings.
- In 2018-19, Texas students took a total of 13,939 CLEP exams.
- Based on an average rate of \$349 per credit hour at Texas four-year public institutions, students spent \$1,240,571 and were eligible to receive a tuition benefit worth \$24,397,194.

Recommendation #3: Support Programs that Expand College & Career Opportunities for Students

HB 3, the recently passed school finance law, supports academic gains and boosts the college-going culture in high schools across the state by reimbursing districts for exams⁹ like the SAT and requiring students, starting with the class of 2022, to complete the FAFSA.¹⁰

By offering the SAT during the academic day, Texas is fostering a college-going culture – especially among first-generation college-bound students. Student performance informs policymakers and educators about how prepared students are to succeed in college and career, and provides students access to college planning and free application fee waivers for low-income students. As a result of the state's HB 3 college readiness agenda, 25% more Texas public school students participated in an SAT in the fall of 2019 than in the fall of 2018. Simply put, more students than ever before, *from all parts of the state*, had the opportunity to participate in the SAT on a school day at their campus.

The FAFSA requirement in HB 3 requires students to complete a critical step in the college planning process. The College Board introduced a new scholarship program called the College Board Opportunity Scholarships in 2018 to offer students access to scholarship pools when they complete six easy steps related to college planning. One key step includes completing the FAFSA. In doing so, students become eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship that's awarded through a monthly drawing. School districts across the state have embraced CBOS to help hundreds of Texas students get scholarship awards. CBOS is good example of where the College Board partners with states to achieve college readiness goals.

CBOS Participation in Texas Among Rising Seniors



45,744

Class of 2021 students who signed up for College Board Opportunity Scholarships



244

Number of scholarship winners in the Class of 2021



\$194,000

Scholarship dollars awarded to the Class of 2021

Source: CBOS participation data as of August 1, 2020
*Families of lower-income students earn \$60K or less per year.

⁹ HB 3 funds the College Preparation Assessment law which makes nationally norm-referenced assessments available to students. Currently, districts are reimbursed when a student take either take the SAT, ACT, TSIA, or an industry certification exam.

¹⁰ Students can also meet the graduation requirement by completing the TASFA or filling out an op- out form.