

NY MOVES UP IN AP TESTS PASSED

State improves to 7th place, but behind Calif., N.J.

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New York State has moved up a notch in the national rankings for student achievement on college-level Advanced Placement exams, test sponsors announced Tuesday.

Performance by high school seniors in the Class of 2018 propelled New York into seventh place among states, up from eighth in 2017. New York, nonetheless, ranked behind several major competitors, including California and New Jersey, which both showed strong growth. Rankings were released by the Manhattan-based College Board.

In New York, 28.7 percent of public school graduates participated in AP testing and passed with scores of 3 or higher on a scale of 1 to 5. Massachusetts led the nation for the third straight year, with 32.9 percent of seniors participating and passing.

"The standards and the level of study are the best prep kids can get for college success," said James Hunderfund, superintendent of Malverne schools.

Malverne in Nassau and Commack in Suffolk were among 373 school districts in the United States and Canada recently named to an AP "honor roll" for increasing enrollments in advanced courses while maintaining achievement. New York, which held the top place among states in the early 2000s, experienced a gradual decline, then bounced back and forth between seventh and eighth place between 2016 and 2018.

Participation in AP studies also continues its upswing across the country.

Over the past 10 years, the number of U.S. public high school graduates who've taken

THE BIG TEN

Top 10 states with highest percentage of 2018 public high school graduates scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam

STATE	% GRADS PASSING EXAMS
Massachusetts	32.9
Connecticut	32.2
Florida	31.7
Maryland	31.6
California	31.3
New Jersey	29
New York	28.7
Virginia	28.5
Colorado	28.3
Illinois	27.3

SOURCE: COLLEGE BOARD

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an AP exam rose 65 percent, while the number who scored 3 or better increased 63 percent, College Board officials said.

More than 1.24 million students in the Class of 2018 took 4.22 million AP exams nationwide. On Long Island, the program's expansion has produced disparities between individual schools and complaints from some parents that students are feeling too much pressure.

Local inequalities were underlined recently when administrators in the Wyandanch district, Suffolk's poorest, acknowledged they did not offer a single AP course. Many of the region's highest-achieving districts offer dozens of such courses.

"I think it's great that New York has moved up," said Roger Tilles of Great Neck, who represents the Island on the state's policymaking Board of Regents. "The problem, I fear, is that, No. 1, not every student has availability to AP, and second, that

students have to pay fees."

The cost is \$94 per test.

Parents report a rise in students' test anxieties. Several national publications rate high schools on the basis of AP participation and scores, and districts feel the heat if rankings slide. Jeanette Deutermann of Bellmore, lead organizer of regional test boycotts in lower grades, said she recently drew 166 comments on her website — many of which complained of testing costs — when she raised the issue of AP testing.

"I talked to one mother who's paying \$700, because she has two students in high school," Deutermann said. "Seven hundred dollars! How many parents have seven hundred dollars lying around?"

Critics also complained that the push for more AP courses is crowding out other electives, while leaving teens who seek advanced studies with little choice except to pay a fee and spend two or three hours taking a College Board test.

It's all about ratings, critics added.

"People rely on these rankings, but the rankings don't tell the whole story," said Diane Venezia Livingston, a parent critical of what she calls over-testing.

Test supporters noted that students from low-income families often arrange to have fees waived. Many states, including New York, are trying to expand programs designed to subsidize fees. College Board officials insisted Tuesday they would like to address parents' concerns over testing "frenzy."

David Coleman, CEO of the testing organization, said his agency plans during the coming year to require fee payments in November, when students are in the early months of taking AP courses, rather than in the spring as is traditional. About 9,000 high schools nationwide are expected to be affected by the timing change, College Board officials said.



JAMES CARBONE

\$16M from state

clinic, he said. The group also will use state funds to buy its Oceanside building, which it now leases.

Nemiroff said community-based care saves taxpayers money.

An exam or treatment at a clinic "is way, way cheaper than them going to Nassau University Medical Center or than a Northwell hospital E.D. [emergency department] visit," he said. "It saves everybody money. And we can prevent things early if we're in the community."

Central Islip-based Long Island Select Healthcare Inc. will use its more than \$655,000 in state funds to provide care to intellectually and developmentally disabled people via video hookups.

The nonprofit, with eight Suffolk County locations, will purchase equipment such as stethoscopes, oxygen detectors and

devices to perform EKGs, said Dr. James Powell Jr., the chief medical officer.

Some equipment will be stored at group homes, he said. Other more sophisticated equipment will be brought to a patient who has a potential medical issue, accompanied by a nurse or other medical professional, he said.

"I'm listening to the lungs from my home. I'm listening to the heart sounds at home and prescribing based on my findings," Powell said.

Kathy Brieger, the group's interim CEO, said some people with developmental disabilities are especially anxious about visits to a doctor.

"If you have someone with emotional and behavioral issues, a visit in the comfort of their own home allows them to have a great experience without being stressed out," she said.