N O V E M B E R 1 1 , 2 0 1 3

# Office of Curriculum & Instruction

MISSION STATEMENT

*"The mission of the Verona Public Schools, the center of an engaged and supportive community, is to empower students to achieve their potential as active learners and productive citizens through rigorous curricula and meaningful, enriching experiences."*

## Verona Public School District Placed on the College Board's 4th Annual AP® District Honor Roll for Significant Gains in Advanced Placement® Access and Student Performance

### 477 School Districts Across the Nation Are Honored

Verona Public School District is one of 477 school districts in the U.S. and Canada being honored by the College Board with placement on the 4th Annual AP® District Honor Roll for increasing access to AP® course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. Reaching these goals indicates that the district is successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are likely to benefit from rigorous AP course work. Since 2011, Verona Public School District has increased the number of students participating in AP from 88 to 171 (39% growth) while improving the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher by 4 percent (see chart #1 below).

In 2013, more than 3,300 colleges and universities around the world received AP scores for college credit, advanced placement and/or consideration in the admission process, with many colleges and universities in the United States offering credit in one or more subjects for qualifying AP scores.

Data from 2013 show that among African American, Hispanic, and Native American students with a high degree of readiness for AP, only about half of students are participating because their schools do not always offer the AP course for which they have potential. Verona Public School District is committed to expanding the availability of AP courses among prepared and motivated students of all backgrounds.

**Chart #1**

| Total Students who took AP Exams, excluding Spanish Language | | | Annual Growth in the Number of AP Students (excluding those who only took Spanish Language) from 2011-2013 | Percentage of AP Students who Scored 3+ on at least one AP Exam other than Spanish Language | | | Annual Growth in the Percentage of AP Students who Scored 3+ on at least one AP Exam other than Spanish Language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | |
| 88 | 127 | 171 | 39% | 67% | 74% | 71% | 4% |

"We applaud the extraordinary efforts of the devoted teachers and administrators in this district who are offering more students the opportunity to engage in rigorous college-level course work," said Trevor Packer, the College Board's senior vice president of AP and Instruction. "These outcomes are a powerful testament to educators' belief that a more diverse population of students is ready for the sort of rigor that will prepare them for success in college."

Helping more students learn at a higher level *and* earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with a variety of initiatives and strategies to determine how to simultaneously expand access and improve student performance.

Inclusion on the 4th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on the examination of three years of AP data, from 2011 to 2013, for the following criteria.

**Districts must:**

- Increase participation/access to AP by at least 4 percent in large districts, at least 6 percent in medium districts, and at least 11 percent in small districts;
- Increase or maintain the percentage of exams taken by African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students, and;
- Improve performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2013 scoring a 3 or higher to those in 2011, *unless* the district has already attained a performance level at which more than 70 percent of its AP students are scoring a 3 or higher.

When these outcomes have been achieved among an AP student population in which 30 percent or more are underrepresented minority students (Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native) and/or 30 percent or more are low-income students (students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch), a symbol has been affixed to the district name to highlight this work.

The complete 4th Annual AP District Honor Roll is attached.

**About Verona Public School District**

Located in suburban Essex County, Verona is a high achieving PK-12 school district comprised of approximately 2200 students and 250 faculty and staff. There is great pride in providing its students with an exceptional educational experience. Its schools are guided by the district mission that provides a framework for the academic, emotional and social success of its students: *"The mission of the Verona Public Schools, the center of an engaged and supportive community, is to empower students to achieve their potential as active learners and productive citizens through rigorous curricula and meaningful, enriching experiences."* The district strategic plan helps to facilitate the instructional initiatives and assures all school and district goals reflect adherence to the core beliefs that guide Verona as a school community. The community exudes a palpable commitment to its students and schools as evidenced by the involved and active participation of a divergent and varied school stakeholder group that are thoroughly engaged in the lives of its children. The school community is characterized by active attendance at back-to-school activities, sporting and musical events; assistance with parent organizations; provision of mentoring services, and a sense of pride and tradition evident in its many student accomplishments.

Verona strongly encourages parents, seniors, graduates, and community members to continue to become involved in the lives of its students. Through a shared partnership, Verona can continue to guarantee its students a rewarding, meaningful, and enriching education.

**About the Advanced Placement Program®**

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both — while still in high school. Through AP courses in 34 subjects, each culminating in a rigorous exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments, and see many sides of an issue — skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most rigorous curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students.

Each AP teacher's syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation's leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores — more than 3,600 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores. In the last decade, participation in the AP Program has more than doubled and graduates succeeding on AP Exams have nearly doubled. In May 2013, 2.2 million students representing 18,920 schools around the world, both public and nonpublic, took approximately four million AP Exams.

**About the College Board**

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

**Media Contact:**

Deborah Davis The College Board 212-713-8052 communications@collegeboard.org