



For Immediate Release

College Board Honors Hillsborough Schools for Achievement In Creating Culture Focused on College and Career Readiness

Tampa, FL – The College Board announced that Hillsborough County Public Schools has been awarded the prestigious Beacon Award for “profound achievement in using AP to create a culture focused on college readiness.”

“Hillsborough has attained unmatched achievement by aligning and focusing an entire community — from principals to teachers to parents and students — on the goal of college and career readiness,” said Eric Cantor, senior vice president of the College Board’s College Readiness division. HCPS is one of four school districts in the nation honored by the College Board with 2011 AP[®] District of the Year awards for opening AP classroom doors to a significantly broader pool of students while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher. The other districts are Chicago Public Schools; Colton Joint Unified School District, Colton, Calif.; and West New York School District, West New York, N.J.

The 2011 AP District of the Year awards will be presented at the AP Annual Conference in San Francisco on July 22.

“These districts are defying expectations by expanding access while improving scores,” said College Board President Gaston Caperton. “They are experimenting with initiatives and strategies that have driven increases in average exam scores when making AP available to a much broader and more diverse student population.”

Participation in college-level AP courses can level the playing field for underserved students, give them the confidence needed to succeed in college, and raise standards and performance in key subjects such as science and math. Many U.S. school districts have focused on expanding access to AP courses as part of a strategy for fostering college and career readiness. While these efforts have resulted in more than double the number of students earning scores of 3 or better (the score typically cited as a “qualifying” or “successful” score

because the majority of U.S. colleges and universities provide college credit or advanced placement for this score) these efforts also have resulted in more than double the number of students now earning scores of 1 or 2. Accordingly, there has been a slight decline since 2001 in the percentage of AP students scoring 3 or better, a decline that is to be expected in any program attracting a broader cross-section of students.

“A common element across these award-winning districts is that they are not focused on AP alone; they use AP’s rigor and high standards as a key element of a much larger college readiness system,” said Cantor. “Efforts to instill rigor in middle school and foster a college-going culture prepare students for Advanced Placement course work as the final stepping stone to college.”

In a press release announcing the award winners today, the College Board had this to say about Hillsborough County Public Schools:

From 2008 to 2010, Hillsborough achieved the largest increase in the number of students earning AP scores of 3 or better of any school district in the nation – an increase of 1,814 students. No other school district on this year’s AP District Honor Roll approaches this large of an increase in the number of individual students who earned scores of 3 or better and thereby qualify for college cost savings. In the same time period, Hillsborough increased student participation in AP courses and exams by an annual rate of 19 percent.

While dramatically expanding access, Hillsborough maintained the percentage of AP students scoring 3 or better at 40 percent in 2008 and 2010 and increased the percentage of underserved minority AP students scoring 3 or better from 28 percent to 29 percent. The result is that 628 more of these minority students earned AP scores of 3 or higher in 2010 than in 2008, the second-largest increase of any district in the country.

For more information, visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org or contact Jennifer Topiel at the College Board at 212-713-8052 or communications@collegeboard.org