



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release
September 13, 2010**

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LITTLE ROCK: Arkansas students performed better overall on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations according to today's announcement by the College Board. They also reported an increase in the number of the state's public school students taking the AP test in school year 2009-2010.

"This news reaffirms what we have known about the strength of AP policies and programs in place in our state," Education Commissioner Tom W. Kimbrell said. "Arkansas is often cited as a national model for providing public school students access to AP courses. We know that students who take these rigorous courses have an easier time succeeding in college."

The College Board also released information concerning scores for the SAT Reasoning Test, which is used in the college admissions process and was taken by about 3 percent of the 2010 graduating class. (The majority of Arkansas students take the ACT for college admissions.) Though participation in the SAT dipped slightly from the previous year, scores were the same or better.

Specifics regarding Advanced Placement in Arkansas' public schools include:

- The number of test takers increased by 8.6 percent to 19,972 in 2010.
- The number of tests administered increased by 11.5 percent to 33,504.
- The number of tests with scores of 3, 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5) increased by 13.1 percent to 9,750.
- 2,852 African-American students (14.3 percent of test takers) took one or more AP exams, for a 12.6 percent increase in participation from 2009. These students took 4,537 AP exams, with 389 of the exams being scored a 3, 4 or 5 for a 27.5 percent increase over last year.
- 1,209 Hispanic students (6.1 percent of test takers) took one or more AP exams, for a 30.1 percent increase in participation over last year. These students took 1,958 exams, with 558 being scored a 3, 4 or 5 for a 30.7 percent increase since 2009.

"We're pleased to see increased and more diversified participation in AP programs and SAT testing," said Dr. Jim Purcell, director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. "Those learning experiences help to better prepare students for higher education at Arkansas colleges and universities."

Advanced Placement courses are courses with curricula approved by the College Board and taught by specially trained teachers. As part of education reform effort in 2003, Arkansas policy makers enacted laws to increase access to Advanced Placement for public school students.

This included passing legislation that requires all high schools to offer at least one Advanced Placement course in each of the four core subjects – mathematics, English, social studies and science – and for the state to pay the fee for any public school student taking Advanced Placement exams. In 2007, the state was awarded a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to pilot an effort to increase both access and scores in Advanced Placement.

Regarding the 2009 SAT, the College Board reported that 939 Arkansas public school students took the test, representing a 4.3 percent drop from 2008. Participation by black students, however, increased by 32.3 percent from last year. Score details include:

- The state's public school students' mean score in Critical Reading remained the same at 569, as compared with a one-point increase in scores nationally to 498.
- The state's public school students' mean score in Math remained the same at 568 as compared with a one point increase nationally to 511.
- The state's public school students' mean score in Writing increased by one point to 553. Scores nationally also increased by one point to 488.

For complete information about the scores, please visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com.

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The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.