



Where Excellence Is Tradition

Challenging courses prepare teens for college, careers

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Equipping and preparing all students for their college and career experience is central to any high school's mission. Along with the student's grade-point average, the No. 1 predictor of success is the student's course load during high school. Studies show that, along with a range of elective classes (e.g. art, music, business, computer science/information technology), students who take the full standard college and career preparatory course sequence in math, English, science and social studies are better prepared and have greater success in college and the workplace. Because of this key predictor of student success, high schools across DuPage County are focused on ensuring large numbers of students experience a rigorous and challenging course load during all four years of high school.

In 2012, the Glenbard District 87 Board of Education established a few non-negotiable multi-year goals that help provide clarity and focus as we strive to challenge each student with a rigorous learning experience. These metrics are centered on ACT (now SAT) attainment score, Advanced Placement passing rates and completion of key course sequences (Biology through Physics and Algebra I through Algebra II Trigonometry). All Glenbard students, many of whom are low income, first generation college-bound students, are encouraged and supported as they experience a culture of rigor and high expectations.

Challenging all students to achieve high standards of learning and achievement is not easy work. The following are key culture shaping strategies and approaches that our talented staff are deploying as more students are "leveling up":

- Key outreach efforts are being implemented to both identify and encourage students to take Advanced Placement classes. Many of these first time AP students are low-income and minority students.
- Our staff facilitated summer weeklong AP Launch sessions, where students learned about the assets they possessed that would make them successful in AP courses, identified key study skills that would help them manage the work load, and became familiar with supports in place they could use to get help.
- Specific growth mindset approaches, which focus on grit, perseverance and goal setting, are being implemented by staff.
- Our talented instructors are making shifts in their instructional approaches where learning experiences are relevant and engaging, while still expecting students to demonstrate college-ready skills.
- Lunchtime and after-school support structures are being organized for students. These include mentoring, tutoring and cohort study groups.
- We are partnering with our six sender K-8 school districts to ensure we work together to

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align curriculum to provide a pipeline of students excited to take on the challenge of “leveling up” to an AP course in an area of interest.

In addition, more than 850 traditionally underrepresented juniors and seniors are enrolled in AP courses at the four Glenbard high schools this semester. Our staff's intentional, focused, multi-year efforts to raise the level of rigor for all students has resulted in success. We are proud of the following key student success indicators:

- While our poverty rate has doubled, our ACT composite score is the highest in four years and we have increased the percentage of students who earn a 20 or higher ACT score by 10 percentage points.
- In the past six years, Glenbard has doubled the number of AP test takers, and our AP exam passing rate (3 or higher) has just slightly decreased from 77% to 72%. Glenbard AP exam scores are still 20 points above the state average.
- Among the Class of 2016, 42% of our graduates passed at least one Advanced Placement class during their four years.
- During the past four years, we have nearly doubled the number of students completing the Biology-Chemistry-Physics & Algebra I- Algebra II Trigonometry sequence of courses by their junior year.

As we work to ensure that all graduates are ready to enter college or a high-skill career when they leave our high schools, it is incumbent upon us as a school community to make sure students enroll in a challenging course sequence and receive the support necessary to help them succeed in the courses that will best prepare them for life after high school.

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