



Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
Montana Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, Montana 59620-2501
www.opi.mt.gov

HOUSTON FORUM 2008

AP PRESENTATION

Montana demographics:

- Total population in Montana is fewer than one million people
- Declining student enrollment: 165,000 in 1995; 143,405 in 2008
- 54% schools have fewer than 100 students
- 38% schools have fewer than 50 students

AP exam results: American Indian students comprise 11.4 percent of the state school population but, in 2007, took only 1.0 percent of the AP exams. While the pass rate of all exams in Montana is about 65 percent, American Indians are passing AP exams at about half that rate (32 percent in 2007). In 2008, 40 percent of the 45 American Indian students taking the AP exam passed with a score of three or higher. This doesn't necessarily indicate a trend, however, as the overall numbers are small and vary considerably from year to year (for example, in 1999, American Indian students took 1.6 percent of the AP exams).

Montana AP development: In spite of eight years of federal AP grant, schools with the highest poverty rate do not show significant gains in numbers participating and succeeding in AP.

To see if the last four years of AP development activities by the state resulted in increased success on AP exams for the 25 highest poverty schools receiving APIP grant services, the number of exams taken and passed in 2003 was compared to the number of exams taken and passed in 2007. The following chart shows that the highest poverty high schools (at least 50 percent low-income) in this study appear to be the least successful in taking and passing AP exams.

25 HIGHEST POVERTY SCHOOLS RECEIVING APIP GRANT SERVICES 2003-2007

SCHOOL	POVERTY RATE (%)	TREND UP OR DOWN	NUMBER OF AP EXAMS - 2003		NUMBER OF AP EXAMS - 2007		GEAR UP SCHOOL	ON OR NEAR INDIAN RES.
			Taken	Passed	Taken	Passed		
A	50		0	0	0	0		
B	100		0	0	0	0		
C	89		12	2	12	1	yes	yes
D	51	↓	8	4	2	0		
E	53		0	0	0	0		
F	52	↑ ↓	7	3	39	12	yes	yes
G	75		0	0	0	0	yes	yes
H	60	↑ ↓	42	32	63	35		
I	50	↓	34	15	24	14		
J	52		0	0	0	0		
K	67		0	0	0	0		
L	50	↓	8	1	0	0		
M	56		0	0	1	0	yes	yes
N *	59	↑	52	13	180	64		
O	55		0	0	4	0		
P	54		0	0	0	0		
Q	68		0	0	0	0	yes	
R	75	↑ ↓	15	5	10	9	yes	yes
S	75		0	0	0	0	yes	yes
T	65		0	0	0	0		
U	68		0	0	0	0		
V	74		3	0	0	0	yes	
W	50	↓	8	1	3	0		
X	55		3	2	3	0		
TOTAL			192	78	341	135		

*District had extensive SpringBoard™ training from College Board.

Of these 25 high poverty schools, only 11 schools had students who took AP exams in 2003. Again in 2007, only 11 schools had students who took AP exams. Although 56 percent more exams were taken in 2007 than in 2003, the pass rate stayed about the same at approximately 40 percent. The highest poverty high schools in this study appear to be the least successful in taking and passing AP exams. Two exceptions are:

- School R, located on an Indian reservation, is extremely high poverty. The 90 percent AP exam pass rate is explained by a committed administrative team and rigorous curriculum development, aligned in grades 7-12.
- School N is in a blue-collar high poverty community with a history of no students attending college until the district committed to AP course development, a system-wide program of articulation among grades, and sustained professional development through College Board's SpringBoard™ training program.

A third exception is Ronan, a high-poverty public school near an Indian reservation, with an American Indian population of over 50 percent. It has done well in AP exam performance with more than one-third of the 36 exam-takers passing. This school is not included in the above study because it has its own APIP grant. Like School N, this school is part of a system-wide program of articulation among grades and sustained professional development through College Board's SpringBoard™ training program.