

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY**

**Board Agenda Item**

**TITLE:** Report on Participation and Performance in Advanced Placement Courses and Exams for 2006

**DATE:** November 9, 2006

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**OVERVIEW:**

The participation of Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams for 2006 continues to increase, and scores on the AP exams remain high. In 2006, there were 2,961 students enrolled in AP courses representing 19 percent of high school students and 43 percent of the graduating class. Most of these students (2,404) took one or more AP exams. With 4,885 AP exams taken in 2006, 80 percent of the scores on these exams received a 3 or higher. Half of the scores on the AP exams in 2006 were a 4 or higher, which is also a noteworthy accomplishment. The attached report provides a summary of trend participation and performance in AP courses and exams for 2006 by student group and school.

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**FUTURE DIRECTION:**

The participation and performance by HCPSS students in AP courses and exams has grown steadily. These courses present one opportunity to encourage students to engage in rigorous challenges. Other opportunities to participate in enriching and rigorous experiences are also provided to students through the HCPSS curriculum, as well as through programs offered as internship experiences and summer school classes.

The 2006 AP results continue to reflect high achievement by HCPSS students. However, there is still work to be done to achieve the high standards in the *Bridge to Excellence* plan. Staff members will continue to examine the data, to study research, and to design improvement plans at the school and system level to continue to support the highest possible performance for every child.

**Submitted by:**

**Approval/Concurrence:**

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**Sandra J. Erickson**  
Deputy Superintendent

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**Sydney L. Cousin**  
Superintendent

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**Theresa R. Alban**  
Director  
Student Assessment and Program Evaluation

**Introduction**

The participation of HCPSS students in Advanced Placement courses and exams has grown steadily since 2004. More students are participating in AP courses and taking more AP exams. As this participation is increasing, the performance of students continues to be strong with nearly 80 percent of the exams taken by HCPSS students scoring at a 3 or above, a score that earns college credit in most universities.

**Trend Performance**

There has been steady growth in participation in AP courses since 2004 as presented in Table 1. The largest number of AP course participants ever for HCPSS was reported in 2006.

Table 1: Trend Participation in Advanced Placement Courses

	2004		2005		2006	
	Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled	Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled	Number Enrolled	Percent Enrolled
Grade 12	1220	38%	1424	42%	1563	43%
Grade 11	834	24%	895	24%	751	20%
Grade 10	458	12%	542	14%	644	16%
Grade 9	5	0%	2	0%	3	0%
<b>County Total</b>	<b>2517</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>2863</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>2961</b>	<b>19%</b>

More AP exams were taken in 2006 and most of the scores were a 3 or above. Table 2 provides a summary of trend AP exam participation for each student group. (Note: The American Indian student group is not included due to numbers less than 5 for all three years.)

Table 2: Trend Participation in AP Testing

	Number of Test Takers			Number of AP Exams Taken		
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
<b>All Students</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>2174</b>	<b>2404</b>	<b>3458</b>	<b>4348</b>	<b>4885</b>
Male	866	1037	1104	1771	2156	2341
Female	913	1137	1300	1687	2192	2544
Asian	423	536	596	956	1237	1416
African Am.	75	105	151	115	166	252
White	1251	1498	1599	2335	2890	3103
Hispanic	33	16	53	44	52	103
ELL	6	20	*	NA	8	*
FARMS	34	25	46	26	49	72
Special Ed.	26	15	24	17	37	44

\*Fewer than 5 students in group.

Performance on the AP exams has improved or been maintained since 2004 for most student groups. The trend performance on AP exams is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Percent of Scores at 3 or Above on AP Exams for Three Years

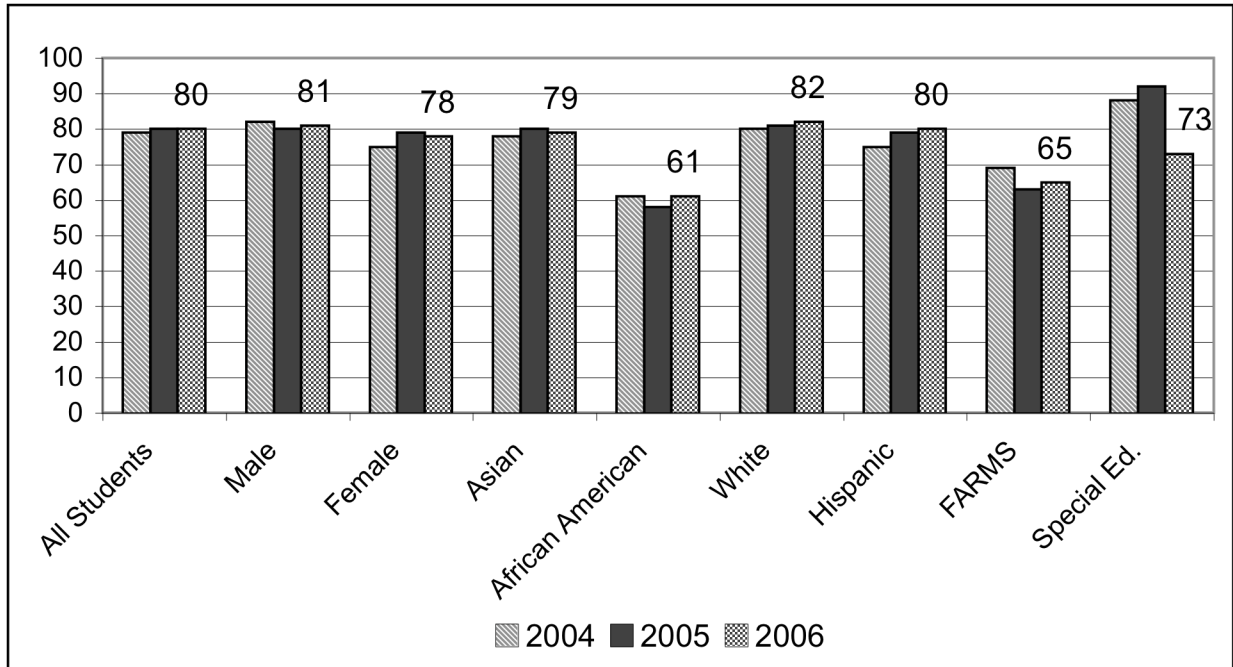
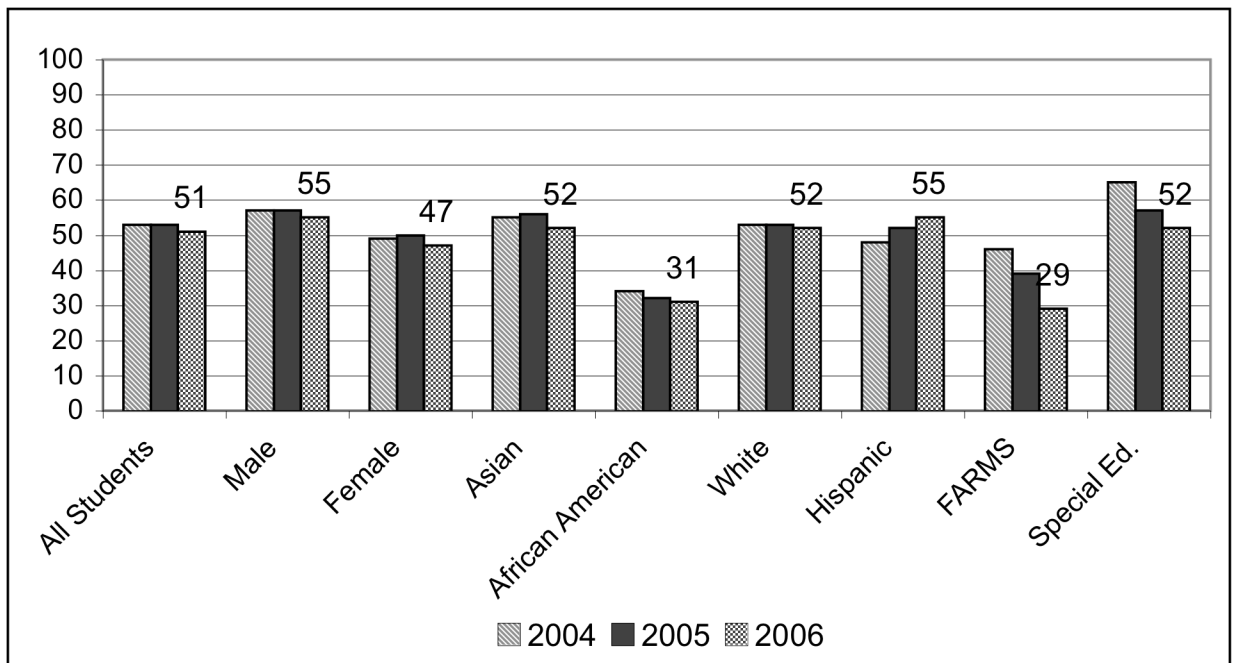


Figure 2: Percent of Scores at 4 or Above on AP Exams for Three Years



The percent of scores at a 3 or above was at least 61 percent for every student group. A score of 3 on an AP exam is often used by universities to award credit for a college level course in that subject. To consistently have more than half of all tests receiving this score is an impressive achievement by HCPSS students.

**Performance by Schools**

The participation of HCPSS students in AP courses and exams has increased steadily at every high school since 2004 as presented in Table 3. While participation has increased, the schools have also been successful in raising or maintaining high achievement on the AP exams with scores at or above 3 ranging from 67 percent to 89 percent at our high schools in 2006.

Table 3: Trend Participation and Performance on AP Exams by School

	Number of Test Takers			Number of AP Exams Taken			Percent of Scores at 3 or Above			Percent of Scores at 4 or Above		
	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06	04	05	06
<b>All HCPSS</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>2174</b>	<b>2404</b>	<b>3458</b>	<b>4348</b>	<b>4885</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>51</b>
Atholton	128	157	180	232	301	349	80	86	83	50	56	52
Centennial	336	429	469	713	934	1122	85	85	83	64	65	56
Glenelg	139	191	204	249	369	385	77	77	74	45	41	38
Hammond	140	132	163	252	239	322	76	79	81	55	56	54
Howard	104	162	173	153	246	284	67	59	67	36	32	39
Long Reach	86	146	168	132	257	320	64	71	70	38	40	42
Mt. Hebron	193	171	232	407	422	517	89	91	89	71	71	68
Oakland Mills	87	88	94	151	148	155	76	76	79	48	53	41
Reservoir	45	142	152	58	262	274	69	65	75	50	33	39
River Hill	350	382	367	767	867	841	77	82	81	47	52	51
Wilde Lake	171	174	202	344	303	316	75	75	75	46	48	48

A summary of AP participation in courses and exams for every student group at each high school in 2006 are included as an attachment to this report. Additional reports on AP participation and performance can be found on the Open District Wizard.

### **Summary and Future Direction**

The participation of HCPSS students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams for 2006 continues to increase, and scores on the AP exams remain high. Nearly three thousand students participated in AP courses in 2006, which means that 19 percent of our high school students and 43 percent of the senior class participated in these challenging courses. These courses present one opportunity to encourage students to engage in rigorous challenges. Other opportunities to participate in enriching and rigorous experiences are also incorporated into the HCPSS curriculum, as well as through programs offered as internship experiences and summer school classes.

*The Washington Post* will present its annual report on AP performance in December. This report is created by Jay Mathews and includes a ranking of schools based on his Challenge Index. This Challenge Index does not consider participation in AP courses, but rather counts only the number of AP exams taken divided by the number of graduating seniors. In response to concerns raised by the limitations of this index, Mr. Mathews will also include information for an Equity and Excellence Index. This index reflects the percentage of the entire senior class who got at least a 3 on at least one AP exam some time during their high school career. While this index examines AP exam performance over the course of a high school career, it still does not consider participation in AP courses. The 2006 Equity and Excellence indices reported by College Board for the HCPSS high schools are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Equity and Excellence Index for Each High School

<b>School</b>	<b>Equity and Excellence Index 2006</b>
Atholton	27.0%
Centennial	54.3%
Glenelg	27.9%
Hammond	29.4%
Howard	21.8%
Long Reach	19.9%
Mt. Hebron	31.8%
Oakland Mills	16.0%
Reservoir	20.4%
River Hill	46.4%
Wilde Lake	26.7%

The 2006 AP results continue to reflect high achievement by HCPSS students. However, there is still work to be done to achieve the high standards in the *Bridge to Excellence* plan. Staff members will continue to examine the data, to study research, and to design improvement plans at the school and system level to continue to support the highest possible performance for every child.

Attachment