

ISSUE: Advanced Placement (AP)

Administered by the College Board, the Advanced Placement (AP) program provides high school students the opportunity to study courses that are equivalent to first-year college courses. After a student receives instruction in special AP classes, in honors classes, or in extra independent study, the students can take examinations that demonstrate that they have obtained the knowledge and skills of comparable college courses. When those students later enroll in a college or university that accepts AP credit, they can present their AP scores. Currently all South Dakota public universities award credit for acceptable exam scores.

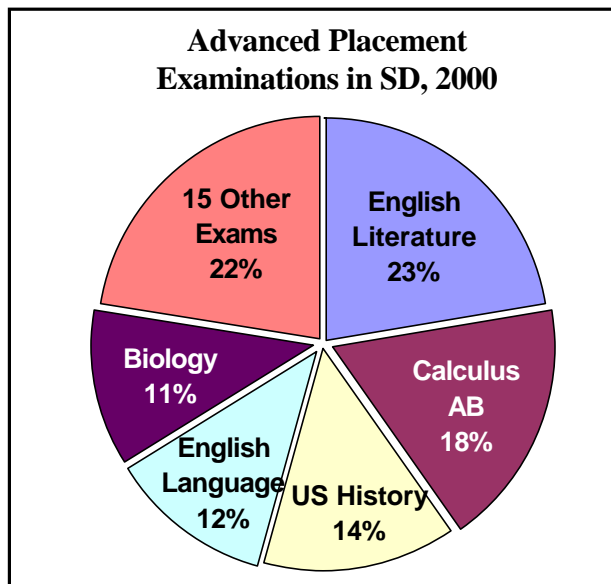
BACKGROUND:

Courses

The AP program contains 33 courses in 19 subject areas. Among South Dakota high school students the exams with the highest participation are English Literature followed by Calculus AB. During 2000 South Dakota students took 440 AP exams for English Literature and 344 for Calculus AB. Other exams taken by South Dakota students included: Chemistry, Government & Politics: US, Physics B, European History, Psychology, Calculus BC, German: Language, Art: History, Economics: Micro, Spanish: Language, Economics: Macro, Statistics, Art: Studio General, Govt & Politics: Comparative, Computer Science AB and Computer Science A.

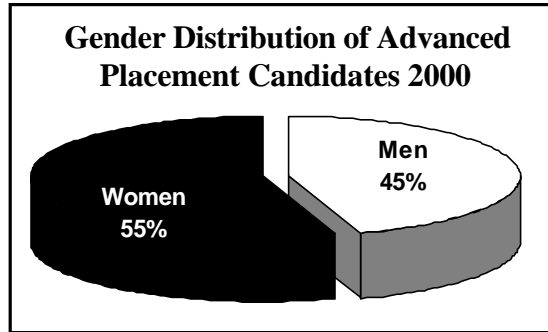
High Schools and AP Institutes

Nearly forty high schools in South Dakota offered some type of AP instruction in the 2000 school year. The South Dakota Board of Regents views the AP program as sound academic planning. Participation prepares students for university level work and if the students place high enough on the exams they can receive university credit toward a degree. To encourage more schools to offer AP courses and to prepare teachers to instruct those courses, training has been made available through AP institutes. Since 1998 institutes have been offered during the summer through regental universities. Summer 2001 AP institutes and AP vertical teams will be offered at Dakota State University (English Vertical Team, July 22-27), South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (Calculus, June 16-19 & Math Vertical Teams, June 20-23), South Dakota State University (Biology, June 17-22; Physics, June 18-22; Calculus, July 8-13; Geography, July 8-13) and University of South Dakota (English Literature, July 15-20).



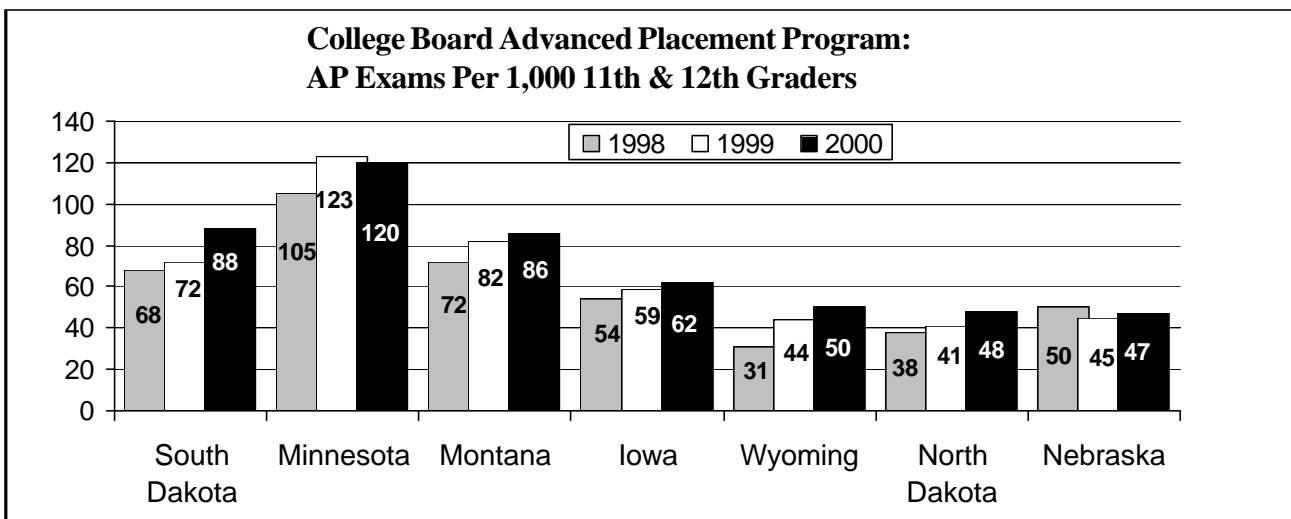
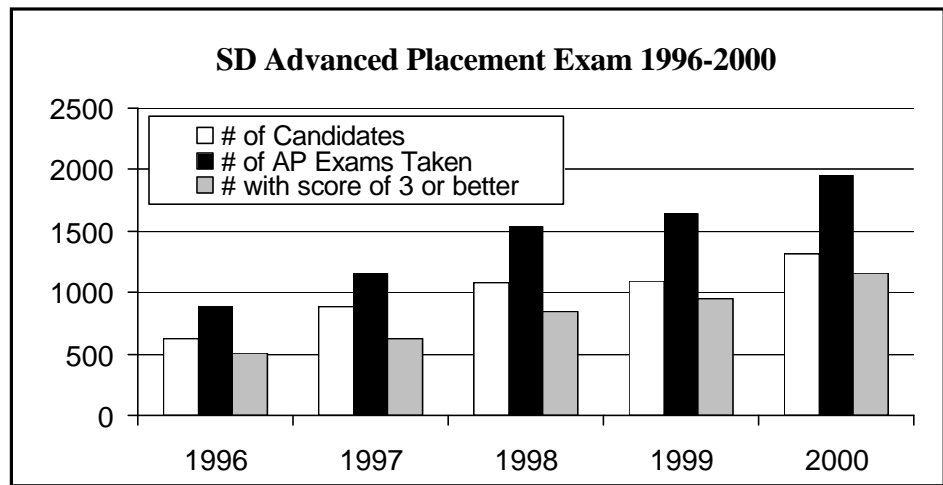
Participation

More women than men are taking advantage of the AP program. The higher participation rate among women is most likely related to the higher percentage of college enrollment by women. The system average enrollment at South Dakota public universities shows that the student population is 55% female.



South Dakota's level of participation in the AP program has shown steady growth since its introduction in 1961. Significant growth has occurred during the past five years as the number of participants more than doubled with 630 candidates taking AP exams in 1996 and over 1,300 candidates taking the exam in 2000.

Coinciding with the increase of candidates, the number of exams taken more than doubled over the past five years. The number of passing scores (a score of 3 or better) has increased in relation to the number of exams taken. The number of exam scores of 3 or better in 1996 was 511. In 2000 the number was 1,153.



CONCLUSION:

The Advanced Placement program is an excellent opportunity for South Dakota high school students. Students who complete AP courses are better prepared for college level work and can reduce the time and cost required to earn a degree. The Board of Regents supports the growth of the AP program in South Dakota. Advanced Placement institutes are an example of the support offered by the Regents. The institutes increase communication between high schools and universities in South Dakota by creating a network among secondary and university faculties.