

The Governor's Expanding Excellence Competitive (Mentoring) Pilot Grant
2014



District:	Shenango Area School District, www.shenango.k12.pa.us		
Superintendent:	Dr. Michael Schreck, mschreck@shenango.k12.pa.us		
District Enrollment:	1,165		
School:	Shenango High School		
School Enrollment:	543	Title I School:	No
Economically Disadvantaged:	23%	Special Education:	9%
English Language Learners:	0%	Aid Ratio:	65%
Lead Grant Contact:	Joseph McCormick, jmccormick@shenango.k12.pa.us		
PLC Moderator	Joseph McCormick, jmccormick@shenango.k12.pa.us		
SPP Indicator:	Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Diploma, or College Credit		
Strategy:	Using a curricular re-design to align feeder courses combined combination with specific shared and content specific cultural beliefs		

Increasing AP Participation and Performance by Curricular Redesign

(Advanced Placement, IB Diploma, or College Credit + Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement)

In order to both strengthen participation and performance within our AP programs, our district underwent a curricular re-design that aligned courses in a manner that individual AP courses became the capstones of departmental progressions. This implementation plan captures the systematic process and cultural beliefs that led to a perfect score on the Advanced Placement SPP Indicator, as well as significant extra-credit for having a higher percentage of students earning a 3 or higher on AP Exams.

Historically, our district had below average Advanced Placement programs. However, over the past six years, our district's participation and performance has skyrocketed by adding multiple Advanced Placement courses, restructuring our curricular progression, and utilizing student learning data to find prospective students. Our team of teachers and administrators seek to share the attributes of our Advanced Placement programs that we feel most directly contributed to our increases in performance and participation. These attributes are found in the curricular redesign of the individual courses as well as the implementation of these courses within the greater scheduling matrix. We have a small school system with limited resources and community demographics that do not naturally lend themselves to high AP achievement, yet our participation and achievement continue to shine resulting in a 100 score on this indicator as well as a 56.34 score within the extra credit bonus category.

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Goal

- Increase AP Participation
- Increase Percentage of Students Scoring 3 or Higher on an AP Exam
- Increase College and Career Readiness

Change in Culture

- AP courses must be closely aligned to AP standards
- AP courses must be rigorous capstones
- Feeder programs must adequately prepare students
- An "AP Environment" must be established in the classroom

Prerequisites

- College Board approval of AP courses
- Resources to properly structure feeder programs
- Resources to provide appropriate AP textbooks and instructional materials
- Faculty and Administrator buy in to establishing a productive AP program
- Support for teachers to expand their AP course beyond the designated instructional time

Rationale

- 100 score on the Advanced Placement Indicator
- 56.34 score on Extra Credit for Advanced Achievement – % 3 or Higher on an AP Exam
- In 2013, 67% of AP Students scored a 3 or higher on an exam
- In 2013, 22% of the Graduating Class has scored a 3 or higher on an AP Exam
- Percentage of exams with a score of 3 or higher have increased by 48% in 6 years
- Percentage of the graduating class with a score of 3 or higher has increased by 11% in 4 years
- 87% of parents feel the school has high academic standards (2013 Parent Survey)
- Open-ended parent feedback on their satisfaction with the school system in 2013 repeatedly had references to the specific strength and achievement of our AP Program
- Feedback from graduates regarding their levels of college preparedness have drastically increased

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- Feedback from parents and awareness of the benefits of earning college credit while in high school is substantial. Positive effects on timely college completion and reduced higher education costs.
- Improved school culture and a focus on rigor in the secondary classrooms, with the bar being set by AP teachers and students.
- Parent praise at public school board meetings regarding students' readiness for college level courses based on AP experiences.

Action Steps with Timeline

Action Steps to Implementation	
Steps	Action
1	Identify desired AP courses to offer following fall.
2	General financial planning for instructional materials and professional development needs.
3	Recruit and advertise AP courses to broad student populations.
4	Curricular planning for course AP Courses. Ongoing review of AP Central and online resources.
5	Purchase necessary AP textbooks and instructional materials. Summer Assignments assigned.
6	Consider attendance at a College Board AP Workshop.
7	Summer assignments for students due. Submit Syllabus for College Board approval.
8	Continual review of scope/sequence and best practices in instruction.

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Personnel Engagement

Personnel Engagement		
Role	Responsibilities	Degree of Engagement High/Medium/Low
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embrace the intense planning and necessary course rigor - Maximize student learning time - Make availability beyond class time for tutoring and review - Instruction - Promote program 	High
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure financial support for AP programs - Assist with promoting AP programs to stakeholders - Ensure master schedule building is done with AP courses in mind 	Medium
School Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Recruitment - Scheduling - Course Selection Advisement 	Low

Professional Development Timeline

PD Timeline		
Date	Description	Delivered by
May	Online tutorial of AP Central and online resources	College Board
July/August	AP Workshop	College Board
Ongoing	Mentorship with an experienced or successful AP content teacher	School/Another District
October	AP Collaborative Networking	Regional

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Benchmarks to Guide and Measure Success

Several data points are referenced in relation to our Biology program redesign and ongoing maintenance. These include:

- AP Reports: Annually reviewing and analyzing AP reports from the College Board
- AP Instructional Planning: Annually reviewing the AP instructional planning guide from the College Board
- Summative Assessments: Testing students in AP format ongoing throughout the school year and adjusting instruction
- Archival Data: Using existing school records to annually identify and recruiting potential AP students

Estimated Cost to Replicate the Strategy

Implementation Expenses			
Date	Description	Delivered by	App. Cost
July	Attendance at a College Board Workshop	College Board	\$2,000
August-June	AP Collaborative	Local Schools	\$200
June	AP Instructional Materials, high cost textbooks, high cost labs, etc	Vendors	Various by subject
August	Personnel Considerations, for small class sizes and appropriate preps	School	Various by current personnel standing

Implementation Challenges

- Expense: AP course materials and resources are expensive. With textbooks costing in the \$140 range and science labs being required, the cost to operate AP courses is much higher than general classes.
- Class Size: AP classes tend to run with smaller numbers than most courses, especially in a small school. This can be deceiving to scrutinizing board members or taxpayers who are looking specifically at average class size or teacher to student ratios.

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- Teacher Duties: AP courses tend to be heavy a burden on the teacher. We consider one AP course to be 1.5 or 2 preps. Significant planning is required.
- Scheduling: As a small school, AP courses always come as single section classes. Scheduling in a way so all interested students are able to schedule all their AP courses is challenging. AP courses are generally the first courses to be built into the master schedule.
- Instruction: Most new AP teachers struggle with the course for the first few years. Most of our seasoned AP teachers look back on the first few years and now wonder how any students got more than a 1 on an exam (if there were scores above a 1). Novice AP teachers have also reported that the teaching style needed for such a rigorous course contradicts what they have learned in their teacher prep programs. The rich content generally requires a large percentage of direct instruction.