

3 McHenry County school districts make 6th annual AP Honor Roll

Districts increase access to Advance Placement classes while keeping or improving achievement on AP exams

Published: Friday, Dec. 4, 2015 11:18 p.m. CST

This year marks the third year in a row that [Crystal Lake](#)-based Community High School District 155 has made the AP Honor Roll, and it's a recognition that doesn't get old, district officials said.

It is one of three McHenry County school districts that made it onto the sixth annual AP Honor Roll, which means those organizations managed to increase access to Advance Placement course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing achievement on exams.

In addition to District 155, [Woodstock](#) Community Unit School District 200 and [Huntley](#) Community School District 158 were some of 15 Illinois districts and 425 districts across the United States and Canada to make the list, according to the [College Board website](#).

All three districts have consistently made the list for at least a few years running, but District 155 Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Corey Tafoya said it's meaningful every year.

"It speaks to the number of kids choosing to go on the most challenging path they can take," Tafoya said, adding it also speaks to the quality of the teaching staff.

In 2014-15, there were about 2,900 AP exams administered across the district, up from about 2,500 the year before and 1,870 in 2012-13.

Last year, 76 percent of AP exams taken last school year were awarded honor scores of three, four, or five on a five-point scale, an achievement that [next year will allow](#) more students to receive college credit than before.

District 158 Superintendent John Burkey, too, said it's a notable honor to receive year after year because it shows continual growth.

In District 158, the number of exams administered increased from 555 in 2011 to 1,043 in 2015, according to district data. About 75 percent of students scored three or higher in 2015.

"What we're really happy about as a district is this was very much a part of our strategic plan, very much a goal," Burkey said. "It shows that our planning and efforts have really paid off."

Over the years in District 200, efforts have involved actively identifying students who could or

should be taking AP course work, Superintendent Mike Moan said.

Students are approached in class and faculty also reach out to parents to explain the benefits of the more rigorous options.

There, the number of AP exams taken has risen by almost 40 percent between the 2013-14 school year and last year, according to data from the district.

“We’re incredibly proud of the work of our students and staff,” he added.

Inclusion on the sixth honor roll is based on three year’s worth of AP data from 2013 and 2015, looking across 34 exams.

The honor roll criteria includes increasing participation and access to AP classes by at least 4 percent in large districts; 6 percent in medium districts; and 11 percent in small districts. Successful school districts also had to have increased the percentage of exams taken by minorities, as well as improved performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2015 scoring a three or higher to those in 2013.