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WCPSS ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) TEST RESULTS, 2008-09

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College-level coursework is offered to high school students through the Advanced Placement (AP) program. Many colleges and universities provide credit to students who earn a high score on the AP exams, which are offered by the College Board. All comprehensive high schools in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) offer AP courses and exams, although the availability of specific courses varies from school to school. Many students take more than one AP course, and not all AP students take the corresponding exams. The cost to take each AP exam is currently \$86.

AP Exam grades determine whether a student is qualified to receive college credit or advanced placement into a higher level course in college. The scores are reported on a 5-point scale as follows:

- 5 = Extremely well qualified
- 4 = Well qualified
- 3 = Qualified
- 2 = Possibly qualified
- 1 = No recommendation

Analysis of 2008-09 AP reports from the College Board reveals the following:

1. The number and proportion of WCPSS students taking AP courses and exams continues to grow. Between 1996-97 and 2008-09, the number of students enrolled in WCPSS grew by 54%¹. During that same time, however, the number of students taking AP exams increased by 228% and the number of exams taken increased 252% (Figure 1).
2. As more students in WCPSS are taking AP exams, both the average exam score and the percent of exams with scores of 3 or higher have declined, albeit very slightly, over the past decade (Table 1). This pattern is consistent with both state and national trends (Table 2 and Figure 2).
3. WCPSS AP exam scores (both average score and percent of scores 3 or higher) have surpassed the corresponding state and the national figures each year since 1996-97 (Figure 2).
4. The exams with the largest number of test-takers in WCPSS in 2008-09 were Environmental Science (1,383), English Language/Composition (1,200), Psychology (1,021), and U.S. History (1,005), see Table 3.
5. The number of AP courses and tests varies by school, with Enloe High School accounting for the largest number of courses and tests in 2008-09 (Table 4).

¹ Based on 20th day enrollment for each year (taken from reports found at: <http://www.wcpss.net/demographics/> on August 21, 2009).

Figure 1
Total Number of AP Exams Taken by WCPSS Students

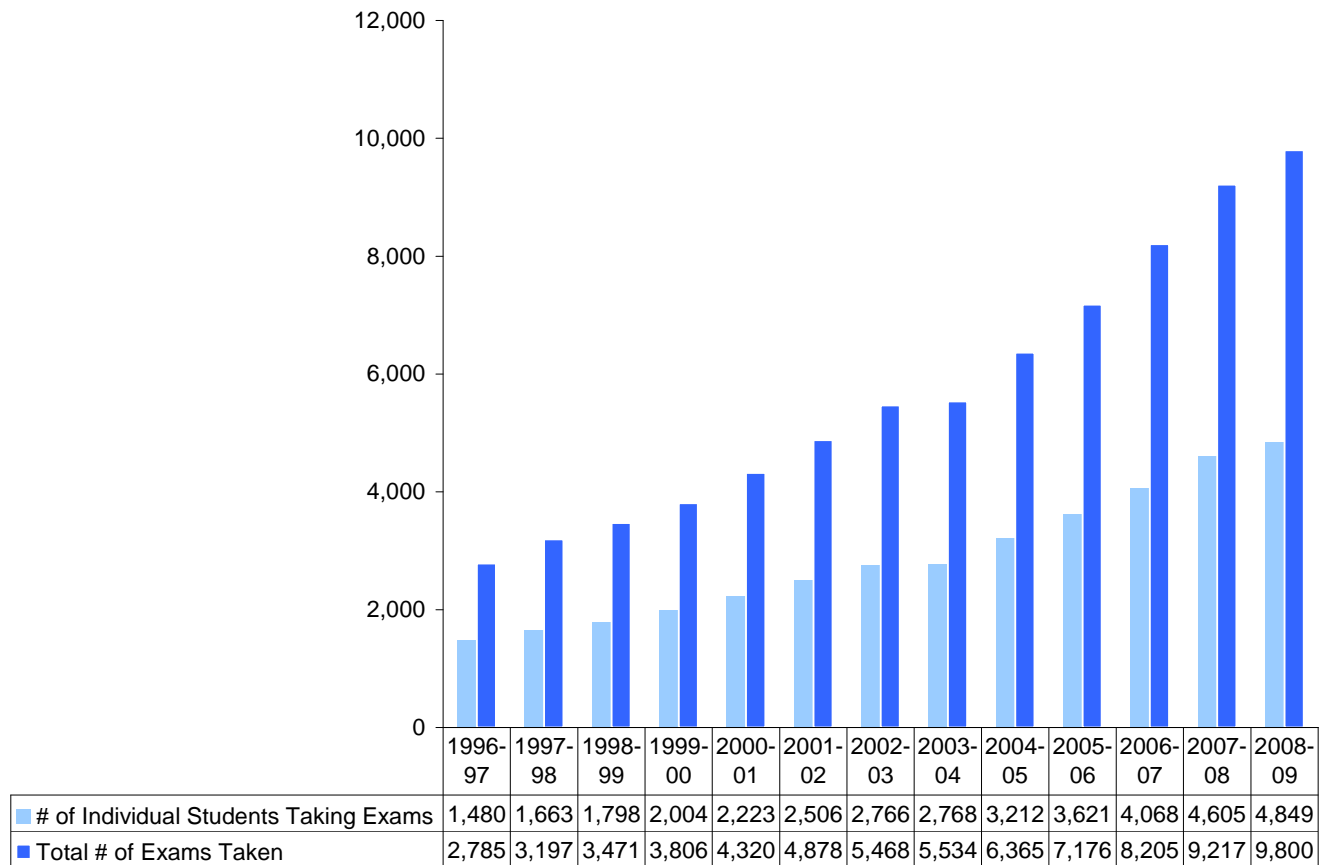


Table 1
WCPSS Participation and Performance in AP Exams

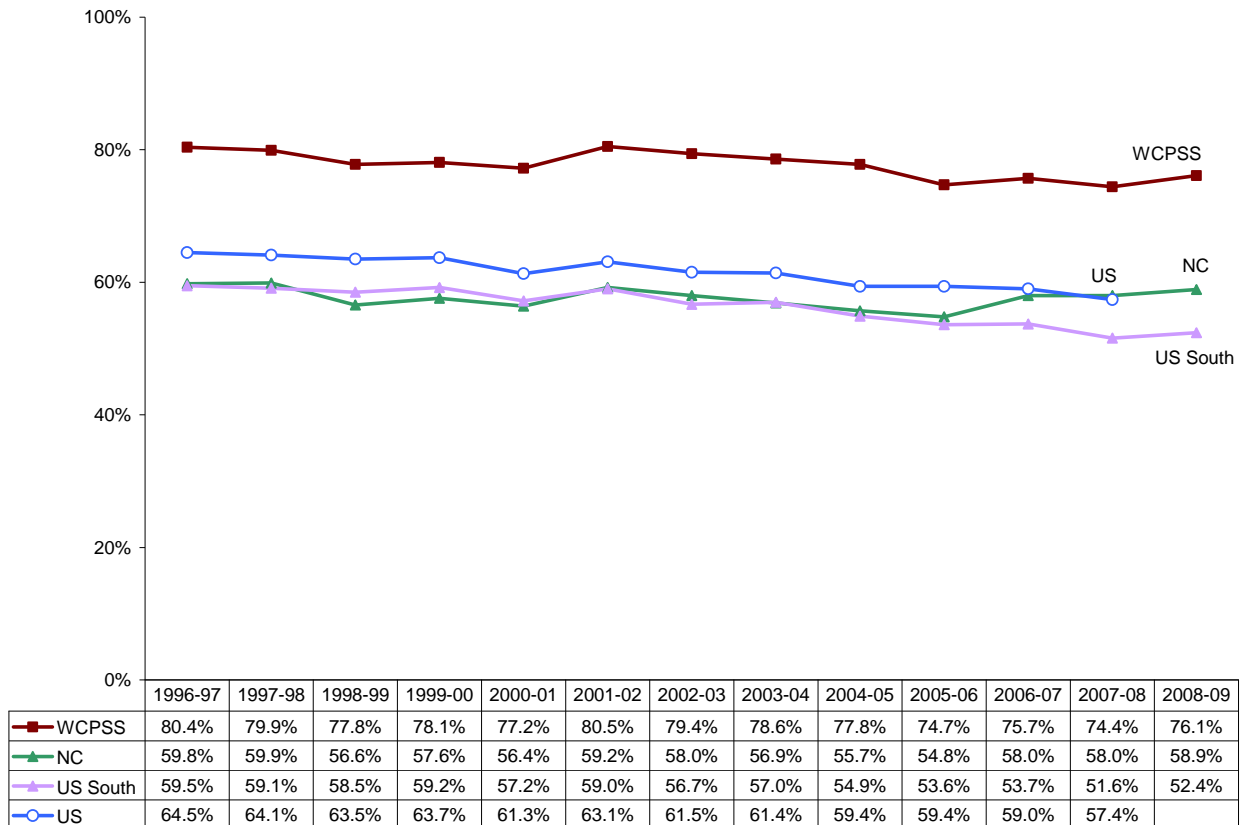
	Number of Students Taking Exams	Total Number of Exams Taken	Percent of Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher	Average Exam Score
1996-97	1,480	2,785	80.4%	3.42
1997-98	1,663	3,197	79.9%	3.44
1998-99	1,798	3,471	77.8%	3.41
1999-00	2,004	3,806	78.1%	3.38
2000-01	2,223	4,320	77.2%	3.38
2001-02	2,506	4,878	80.5%	3.48
2002-03	2,766	5,468	79.4%	3.42
2003-04	2,768	5,534	78.6%	3.46
2004-05	3,212	6,365	77.8%	3.40
2005-06	3,621	7,176	74.7%	3.30
2006-07	4,068	8,205	75.7%	3.35
2007-08	4,605	9,217	74.4%	3.30
2008-09	4,849	9,800	76.1%	3.36

Table 2
Average AP Exam Scores for WCPSS, N.C., and the U.S.

Year	WCPSS	N.C.	U.S. South	U.S.
1996-97	3.42	2.87	2.88	3.02
1997-98	3.44	2.89	2.88	3.02
1998-99	3.41	2.81	2.87	3.02
1999-00	3.38	2.82	2.88	3.01
2000-01	3.38	2.81	2.84	2.95
2001-02	3.48	2.87	2.87	2.99
2002-03	3.42	2.83	2.81	2.95
2003-04	3.46	2.81	2.82	2.95
2004-05	3.40	2.78	2.76	2.89
2005-06	3.30	2.76	2.72	2.89
2006-07	3.35	2.84	2.71	2.88
2007-08	3.30	2.84	2.65	2.83
2008-09	3.36	2.88	2.68	

Notes: U.S. comparison data for 2008-09 was not available at time of printing. Comparison data for U.S., U.S. South, and N.C. include public and non-public school students. The College Board defines "U.S. South" as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Figure 2
Percentage of AP Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher in WCPSS, N.C., and U.S.



Notes: U.S. comparison data for 2008-09 was not available at time of printing. A score of 3 is a passing score on college level material. Some colleges award credit for scores of 3 or higher. Comparison data for U.S., U.S. South, and N.C. include public and non-public school students.

Table 3
WCPSS AP Exams Taken and Performance by Subject

AP Exam		1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Biology	# Exams	254	185	211	248	227	238	206	135	188	250	260	315	348
	% 3 or Higher	76.8	81.6	75.4	72.6	73.1	85.7	75.7	83.0	81.9	82.4	77.7	67.6	73.9
Calculus AB	# Exams	349	404	354	374	336	418	499	188	198	229	269	313	277
	% 3 or Higher	77.4	85.9	84.5	86.6	83.9	92.6	89.6	66.5	69.2	59.0	68.4	73.5	66.4
Calculus BC	# Exams	77	117	150	152	192	202	226	526	532	555	672	604	702
	% 3 or Higher	93.5	93.2	81.3	90.1	95.3	89.1	84.5	89.7	87.2	90.5	84.7	86.6	91.0
Chemistry	# Exams	138	147	133	197	185	206	146	120	148	178	203	213	219
	% 3 or Higher	76.1	81.0	74.4	81.7	73.5	72.8	82.2	79.2	68.9	70.2	79.3	73.7	67.1
English Lang. & Comp.	# Exams	497	536	558	651	824	788	794	870	857	1,034	1,056	1,306	1,200
	% 3 or Higher	85.5	77.4	78.3	80.6	72.8	81.5	80.1	74.7	72.9	66.2	75.9	73.7	78.8
English Lit. & Comp.	# Exams	301	373	355	364	462	537	510	380	437	529	471	638	667
	% 3 or Higher	79.4	81.3	78.3	77.5	74.2	79.7	74.7	80.3	79.6	76.9	77.3	74.0	78.0
Environmental Science	# Exams	0	38	87	115	177	299	690	787	836	939	1,084	1,253	1,383
	% 3 or Higher	---	81.6	55.2	76.5	82.5	75.3	79.4	76.4	71.5	73.6	74.8	75.7	69.4
European History	# Exams	115	154	189	194	178	197	204	200	231	234	218	274	254
	% 3 or Higher	87.8	89.0	88.4	88.7	82.6	86.8	85.3	80.5	84.0	84.2	73.4	73.4	77.2
Govt. & Politics U.S.	# Exams	15	21	25	37	49	100	216	164	245	223	286	303	366
	% 3 or Higher	93.3	81.0	88.0	86.5	98.0	94.0	87.0	84.1	82.0	78.9	79.7	77.9	80.9
Human Geography	# Exams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	77	60	145	257
	% 3 or Higher	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	50.0	100.0	92.2	75.0	73.8	67.7
Physics B	# Exams	85	107	150	118	131	140	153	149	118	86	117	166	138
	% 3 or Higher	82.4	87.9	86.7	76.3	86.3	70.7	79.7	86.6	85.6	67.4	73.5	76.5	71.0
Psychology	# Exams	13	47	71	47	145	167	196	315	447	477	759	810	1,021
	% 3 or Higher	84.6	72.3	74.6	91.5	82.8	85.0	76.5	83.8	81.0	81.3	75.0	75.1	80.4
Spanish Language	# Exams	77	74	55	103	83	93	90	110	183	208	182	134	154
	% 3 or Higher	75.3	85.1	78.2	81.6	88.0	81.7	74.4	90.9	82.0	73.6	65.9	78.4	73.4
Statistics	# Exams	135	203	288	290	310	364	347	379	565	583	760	755	857
	% 3 or Higher	90.4	85.7	88.9	69.0	82.9	78.0	83.0	81.5	80.2	71.7	74.7	73.2	77.2
U.S. History	# Exams	470	487	523	644	691	724	729	696	652	794	955	1,050	1,005
	% 3 or Higher	74.0	68.6	66.5	67.5	64.0	70.4	71.9	74.4	74.8	70.0	71.0	66.7	72.7
World History	# Exams	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	55	77	48	242	272	281	339	340
	% 3 or Higher	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	74.5	77.9	83.3	79.8	80.1	87.5	78.8	82.1

Note: Table lists the most commonly taken exams. AP World History was not offered prior to 2001-02.

Table 4
WCPSS AP Courses and Tests by School, 2008-09

School	# Different AP Courses Offered	# AP Enrollments	# Unique Students Enrolled in AP	# AP Tests	# Unique Students Taking AP Tests
Apex	19	749	377	461	262
Athens Drive	19	801	353	514	246
Broughton	19	1,067	624	751	405
Cary	19	749	332	422	219
Enloe	29	3,019	1,019	2,018	824
Fuquay-Varina	18	356	211	219	148
Garner	14	357	213	113	72
Green Hope	22	1,560	633	1,138	483
Holly Springs	16	593	345	352	213
Knightdale	11	221	100	84	48
Leesville	18	849	437	503	280
Middle Creek	14	695	281	335	166
Millbrook	17	627	301	418	200
Panther Creek	19	1,093	497	639	326
Sanderson	18	714	300	349	179
SE Raleigh	18	460	234	281	151
Wake Early College	0	0	0	0	0
Wake Forest-Rolesville	17	860	361	399	208
Wakefield	26	1,238	558	717	361
East Wake Health Sci.*	5	74	64	37	24
East Wake Int. Tech.*	0	0	0	16	11
East Wake Arts/Educ.*	3	51	43	22	13
East Wake Engineering*	1	35	35	12	10
TOTAL	37	16,168	7,281	9,800	4,849

* - Students at the four East Wake High Schools may have been cross-enrolled in AP courses across campuses.