



PRESS RELEASE
ENLACE FLORIDA
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, SOC 107
Tampa, FL 33620

Media Contact: ENLACE Florida

(813)974-3897-direct

(813)313-8903-cell

bcolon@enlace.usf.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Thursday, December 17, 2009*

AP Program Is Not Florida's College-Readiness Solution, Report Says

~Group urges education policy makers to increase high school standards and grad requirements~

Tampa, FL- The Advanced Placement (AP) program, currently Florida's largest acceleration program, should not be viewed as a surrogate for a rigorous college-prep curriculum according to a new report released today by ENLACE Florida. The AP program has been called into question by recent reports and editorials for significant disparities in student performance on AP exams, but the new report by ENLACE Florida emphasizes that the AP program is designed to offer high school students with an opportunity to earn college credit and should not be used to supplant regular, rigorous high school course offerings designed to prepare students for college. "We should all recognize that the AP program is not the only means by which Florida can or should promote college readiness among its high school students," said Paul Dosal, Ph.D., Executive Director of ENLACE Florida. "But it is a valuable component of Florida's curriculum and we must acknowledge that the AP environment of higher expectations benefits students even if they do not pass the examination," said Dosal.

In the report, the group urges education policy makers to infuse the basic high school curriculum with more rigorous and relevant college-prep course work and advises that such a curriculum be made the default for all students. Plans are already in development that will do just that. Florida is one of 48 states participating in the Common Core Standards initiative of the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. These college- and career-readiness standards, scheduled for completion in early 2010, will:

- be aligned with college and work expectations
- Include rigorous content *and* application of knowledge through high-order skills
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards

- Internationally benchmarked, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society
- Evidence and/or research based

Florida is also implementing a new school grading system this year that reduces the weight of FCAT scores to 50% and adds other factors that measure college readiness. The other 50% of a school's grade will be determined by other factors, including:

- High school graduation rate of the school
- High school graduation rate of at-risk students who scored at Level 2 or lower on the 8th grade FCAT in reading and math
- Student performance on statewide standardized end-of-course assessments
- Postsecondary readiness of students, as measured by the SAT, ACT, or the Common Placement Test
- Student participation in and passage of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and exams
- Annual growth or decline in these components

In addition, legislators in the 2010 session are likely to consider again a high school rigor bill that will, if passed,

- Phase in end-of course exams
- Raise math standards by including a mandatory course in Algebra II
- Raise science standards
- Require all high schools to offer a minimum of four courses in AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, or AICE
- Move the FCAT on-line

“These reforms represent a viable and comprehensive effort to improve college readiness in our high schools. The AP program is, as it should be, included in these new initiatives. The state, school districts, and teachers should do everything possible to improve the delivery of this program and expand access to it, but we should not take their eye off the big prize: a college prep curriculum throughout our high schools,” said Dosal.

***ENLACE FLORIDA** is a statewide network promoting college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students through non-partisan research, communication, advocacy, and support.*