



PRESS RELEASE

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DISTRICTS, SCHOOLS SHOW MIXED RESULTS ON MINORITY ACCESS INTO AP COURSES/EXAMS

Tampa, FL- According to a report released today by ENLACE Florida, Black and Hispanic students in Florida still lack equitable access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams at the local level. In the report titled: *Florida's AP Program: State Achievement Masks Disparities at Local Level*, ENLACE Florida praises State efforts promoting college readiness through the Advanced Placement program while revealing disparities in some of Florida's largest school districts. In the School District of Hillsborough County, White students represent 48% of the student population in 2006 and constitute 62% of all AP test takers. At the same time, Black students in Hillsborough County represent 21% of the student population in 2006 yet constitute only 9% of all AP test takers. A smaller equity gap exist among Hispanic students in Hillsborough County as they represent 24% of the student population in 2006 yet constitute 18% of all AP test takers. Similarly in Broward County, Black students represent only 19.5% of the AP exam takers in 2006 while making up 36.5% of the total student population; And in Miami-Dade, Blacks make up 14.3% of the AP test takers in 2006 while making up 27.8% of the total student population. "A number of factors may account for the disparities in access and performance in AP courses and exams," said Dr. Paul Dosal, Executive Director of ENLACE Florida. "The number of AP course offerings and the number of actual AP class enrollments vary from school to school, resulting in fewer opportunities for some racial and ethnic minorities to enroll in AP classes and pass the exams," said Dosal. Two Hillsborough County High Schools, which have produced dramatically different AP results, reflect these disparities. At Leto High School, of the 1,163 Hispanic students enrolled in 2006, only 85 were AP examinees while at Plant High School, of the 331 Hispanic students enrolled, there were 97 AP examinees. "The question our report simply

presents is why it is that Plant H.S. with only a third of the Hispanic students in Leto H.S., can produce more Hispanic AP examinees?,” asks Dosal. Florida leads the entire country in the percentage of high school seniors taking Advanced Placement exams and also ranked seventh nationally in the percentage of seniors passing the tests. “The state has done an admirable job, however if one examines school and district performance in the AP program, significant disparities are evident. Black and Hispanic students still do not enjoy equitable access to AP classes and we believe future efforts should be directed at developing AP courses at schools that currently offer very few courses for their students,” said Dosal. Recent proposed state legislation (2006/Sen. Miller/Rep. Gibson) designed to ensure equal access to rigorous coursework never made it out of committee; the legislation would have required each high school in Florida to offer a minimum of four AP courses, one each in English, math, science, and a foreign language. Some skeptics wondered whether there were enough qualified students to enroll and succeed in the new AP courses that schools would have been required to offer. Two school districts working hard to improve on this issue include Duval and Hillsborough who were recently awarded additional funding through the College Board aimed at improving access to AP courses for low-income and racial & ethnic minorities. In addition, Florida statute now exempts all Florida public students from the payment of any fee to take an AP examination. With fees over \$80 for an AP test, recent legislation eliminated a significant barrier to low income students. “We are definitely making progress, but we have much farther to go if we want to meet the College Board goal of eliminating all barriers that restrict access to AP courses from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program,” said Braulio Colón, Assistant Director of ENLACE Florida.

***ENLACE FLORIDA** is a statewide network funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and managed by NCCEP to promote college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students through non-partisan research, communication, advocacy, and support.*

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