



To: Ohio Senate Education Committee
From: Maureen LaRaviere, K-12 Executive Director, College Board
Date: May 14, 2025
Re: HB 96 Testimony

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Education Committee:

On behalf of College Board, I am providing testimony to HB 96 regarding funding of exam fees for low-income students' rigorous coursework. Specifically, this testimony focuses on Advanced Placement and CLEP opportunities for low-income students.

College Board, a mission-driven not-for-profit that helps connect students to college and career success through programs like Advanced Placement and the SAT, has a long and productive history of collaborating in Ohio. Ohio has long made a considerable investment in providing all students with the opportunity to challenge themselves with rigorous college-level coursework in high school through programs like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and the College-Level Examination Program.

On behalf of the College Board, I want to thank the Senate for their support of the Advanced Placement and CLEP low-income line item over the last several budget cycles. These exams are an important part of high school improvement and academic achievement, and we welcome the state's continued funding that reduces test fees for high school students from low-income families.

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) provides students of all ages the opportunity to show mastery of college-level material in 34 subjects at a fraction of the cost of a college course. High school students can benefit from the financial savings of credits earned through CLEP. High school students can take CLEP exams in non-AP subjects like College Algebra or Sociology. CLEP provides ease of access, as they are delivered digitally at CLEP test centers or remotely for students who have the necessary technology. There is an increased interest among Ohio districts for expanding CLEP use as an additional opportunity for students to earn credit.

This funding has been critical to expanding opportunities for Ohio students to earn credit for college through these exams, which in turn has led to commendable results.

Most notably, in 2024, approximately 73,000 public and non-public Ohio students took 130,000 AP Exams, a 7% increase from the year prior – exceeding expected annual growth.

- Of those students, 10,197 students qualified for a fee reduction and took 15,408 AP Exams in 2024.

These data reveal growth in student participation and exam performance among districts such as Delaware, Coshocton, Cleves, Milford, Mt. Healthy, Youngstown, Columbiana, Salem, Troy, Eaton, Beavercreek, Springfield, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Public Schools, Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, Garfield Heights, Columbus Public Schools. The variance in size and location demonstrates the growth of AP interest among students in all areas of Ohio – especially among students who qualify for a fee reduction.

Our research shows that starting college and career pathways early in high school changes students' trajectories and introduces and hones skills prized in the workplace: research, oral presentation, and teamwork. We have found that taking one AP course in 10th grade increases students' opportunities for the rest of high school, whether that path is AP, dual enrollment, or Career and Technical Education. One course that specifically focuses on those prized workforce skills is AP Seminar English.

- Taken in sophomore year, this course is resonating among students since the course provides flexibility to research a topic of interest relevant to them and provides an outlet to students who are increasingly becoming more absent in school.
- Students will begin to experience the intended outcomes of the new Ohio Reads initiative, this course ensures there is a rigorous AP English course offering option made available to students as they matriculate to high school.

As College Board embarks on the launch of two new courses, AP Cybersecurity and AP Business Principles/Personal Finance within the next three years, we anticipate strong interest among Ohio districts to offer these courses to students to meet the growth in Ohio's business partnerships with Amazon Web Services Data Center, Intel, and Anduril – as these courses will align with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's work-based learning initiatives and will seek to result in an Industry Recognized Credential. Ohio is at the forefront with one of the first states to approve the AP Cybersecurity course code, which will allow for a streamlined launch among the three Ohio districts represented in this fall's pilot – Strongsville, Nardon Hills, and Lorain County Joint Vocational School District.

However, the demand among districts and schools has steadily and quickly expanded, and INCREASING state funding efforts to \$1.4M would support this exponential growth. These additional funds would also reduce the contribution from a student who qualifies for a fee reduction from \$20 to \$5.

This funding is necessary because:

- While College Board offers fee reductions to income-eligible students, there still is a remaining amount that students must cover. Currently, income-eligible students who

qualify for a fee reduction pay \$20 per exam for this spring's 2025 AP Exam administration.

- Since most four-year colleges give students credit, placement, or both in subsequent coursework on the basis of AP Exam scores, the estimated potential tuition savings for Ohio students who qualified for a fee reduction scoring a 3 or higher on an AP Exam in 2024 was \$10.4 million (based on average in-state tuition and fees per credit hour at public four-year institutions in 2023-2024). Additionally, with Ohio's statewide AP Credit policy, the tuition savings and credits earned provide a stronger conduit for postsecondary enrollment.
 - In 2024, 96,500 AP exams taken by Ohio students earned a qualifying score of 3 or higher – and there was nearly an 18% increase in the number of exams earning a 3+.
- Closing the opportunity gap in AP participation for low-income students is vital to ensuring all students can experience the benefits of challenging coursework, from preparing them for career success to making college more affordable. Funding support plays a significant role in this work—particularly when engaging students earlier with foundational advanced courses.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We remain committed to our work with Ohio and its school districts to measurably deliver on the promise of rigorous coursework at the high school level. We look forward to working with the chairman and committee members to ensure that all students can access these exams.

Sincerely,

Maureen LaRaviere

K-12 Executive Director