

COVENTRY

School to add new advanced courses

Coventry High will expand offerings in AP college-level classes

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COVENTRY — Although they have seen some last-minute cuts to their federal and state aid, Coventry Schools are continuing to expand their programming and courses offerings by adding six new AP (Advanced Placement) courses next year, including Government and Politics, French, and Music Theory among others.

The school committee received an update on the status of their AP course offerings this week from Coventry High School Guidance Curriculum Coordinator Donna Beaudoin, who said that last year the district administered 175 AP exams to students. Next year, the district is projected to have students taking 269 AP exams.

"We will be training 10 teachers this summer for this," Beaudoin said. "The numbers went way up."

Committee member Ann Dickson expressed concern with the pass rate on the exams, noting that they seemed low compared to past years. Last year, nine students took the biology exam and 100 percent of them passed, but only 17 percent passed calculus, 50 percent passed English lit (out of two students), 88 percent passed history and 15 percent passed computer science.

"Some of the courses had

higher pass rates in other years," Dickson said. "These don't seem very high. What I want to know is what are we going to be doing?"

Beaudoin explained that next year students will be offered pre-AP courses in 9th grade that will help prepare them for the exams.

"By starting them in 9th grade that's going to be a big part of it," she said. "The percentage also depends on the students as well, and they change from year to year."

Dickson said that the district has been offering AP courses for many years now, and therefore she would expect teachers are trained and experienced in administering exams and courses.

"It's not like we just started offering more AP courses," she said. "I'm concerned we're offering more courses and increasing the rigor at our high school but our scores are like this. I would just ask you to see what we can do to help motivate students and make sure the program is offering what they need."

"It also depends on the AP test they're taking," said Coventry Teachers' Alliance President Kelly Erinakes. "There is a state average for calculus and its 25 percent. They're taking college level courses. When you offered AP in the past it was only open to the top students, but

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now it's opened up to a variety of students so you have to expect that to drop a little bit."

"It's not like a PARC test," she continued. "We've been commended for our scores as a school because they exceed most of our standards. In a lot of areas we are well above the expectation and our counterparts who traditionally score better than us."

Dickson said she was concerned that students would hear of courses with low pass rates and be discouraged from taking them.

"When they hear a pass rate

is low they may not be interested in signing up for that program," she said. "I don't want students to be demotivated to try new things and to work hard and be successful."

Superintendent Craig Levis said he is not worried about the scores because the district now has a model in place that he expects will change the results over the next several years.

"I think we'll be impressed with the results we receive," he said. "We had a small percentage of students that were able to take these classes because there were a lot of prerequisites but we've eliminated that."

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