

Students pass test in record numbers

AP exam gives college credits

JESSICA SELBY

jsselby@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — Coventry High School students achieved a new record this year.

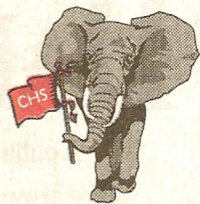
Approximately 80 percent of the students enrolled in the AP History program passed the exam.

This exam, according to Michael Hobin, the principal at Coventry High School, “is the second hardest AP exam that is offered...behind German.”

Each of these students will receive six credits in history to take with them to college.

Lisa Johansen, who teaches the United States History AP course along with social studies department head Matthew Brisette, explained that the students participate in a two year “loop” program. This means that whoever teaches the class, whether it is Brisette or Johnasen, the students remain with that teacher for the two year duration.

During these two years, Brisette said students participate in the annual National History Day event as sophomores and complete an analytical book review after the exam as juniors. The students then take the AP exam in May of their junior year.



Brissette said it takes about a year just to teach the writing skills involved with the program.

“The curriculum that Lisa and I wrote had to be approved by the College Board national testing service,” Brissette said. “The course is content heavy and students learn a lot about analyzing and evaluating historical documents.”

Any student who wishes to enroll in the program can do so, according to Brissette. This is called an “open enrollment,” which, Hobin said, means that any student at the school who wishes to can enroll in the class. In other schools, Johansen said that students usually have to carry a certain average in order to be accepted in or have to be referred in by a teacher at the school.

“Our program is different in that if you want in to the program, you can just opt in,” Johansen said. “I think that it makes us unique, but also more accessible because if we had a very strict program, like some other schools, many of the students who have come into the program may not have been able to and yet these students have surprised us and taken and passed the test.”

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Students break AP test record

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Johansen said there are a variety of reasons that students enroll in the AP course, despite its regimented requirements, strict policies and grueling workload.

"Maybe they just love history or maybe they want to improve their chances of getting into a certain college," she said. "The key with advanced placement classes is that students who take them have a much higher rate of succeeding in college than students who do not.

"These are college-level courses and students who earn a 4 or a 5 on the test leave high school already taking with them up to six college credits just for that one high school course," Johansen said. "The wonderful thing that we are seeing at our school now is that our numbers are increasing and that in addition to our numbers increasing more students are opting to take the class too so we are very excited about that."

The other thing that Johansen said the school is currently seeing is that the students enrolling in the program are gradually making improvements in their test scores.

Brissette said, "every year, since the program was initiated five years ago, the success rate for students has gone up."

"Our program is thriving," Hobin said. "This year we have 80 percent passing, which is a high amount...we continue to strive for 100 percent, but this is a record that the entire school can and should be proud of."

Brissette said he and Johansen push themselves in a friendly competition to increase

the course's success. This school year, he said, the school hopes to take their students to Washington D.C. for the national AP conference.

Johansen's students took the AP United States History test this past May. Those that successfully passed the exam included, Robert Barone, Kenneth Betzold, Nicholas Balkon, Janelle Boucher, David Caianiello, Samantha Cannon, Shannon Croy, Ashley Darosa, Danielle David, Danielle Dipippo, Anita Kunda, Victoria Lavery, Aimee Mello, James Mullen, Lindsey Myers, Katherine Pelton, Marco Petrarca, Wendy Searle, Sarah Skov, Samuel Slezak, Cassandra Thibeault, Katherine Vachawski and Carly Zeh.

The school also offers AP Psychology and there were a number of students who took that test this past May and successfully passed. That list includes Sara Angelino, Nicolina Botelho, Andrew Boyer, Adam Brooks, Abby Card, Kayla Davis, Jason Donovan, Jessica Farrell, Jared Jacavone, Kristen Leveille, Michael Lyman, Kyle Richards, Sarah Seltzer, Matthew Sherman, Joshua Silva, Erik Stamp and Amanda Studley.

AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Italian, AP Calculus and AP Physics are also offered and the school had students who passed each course's respective test. Students passing these other AP tests included Anita Kundu, AP Biology; Robert Barone and Jessica Vigneau, AP Chemistry; Alexandra Titus, AP Calculus; Michaela Tracy, AP Calculus, AP Italian and AP Physics; Steven Vandel and Jessica Vigneau, AP Physics.