

Mountain Lakes Public Schools

District Rankings Study Group

Members of the study body, district administration, and community reviewed research on the factors that influence school rankings. Throughout this process, the group reflected on the district values of inclusiveness of all learners and incentivizing desired student behavior rather than penalizing students. When considering possible changes in program, the group also projected the potential consequences of each action. The group believes that the recommendations below could have a positive effect on school rankings without compromising our educational values.

Standardized Tests:

Advanced Placement Exams ~ The high school administration should develop a policy aimed to increase AP exam participation among our students, especially targeting seniors and high performing students who have elected not to take exams. (See page 2)

SAT/ACT ~ The high school administration should collaborate with students and parents to evaluate the impact of the 2019 pilot administration of the school day SAT and make recommendations regarding its future implementation and consider accompanying it with an school day ACT administration.

NJSLA ~ A Professional Learning Community of K-8 educators from each discipline should be formed to analyze the 2019 NJSLA results and turn key professional resources and lesson plans to each grade level.

School Level Recognition Committees:

Building Level Committees ~ Each building principal should establish a school level committee composed of students, faculty and community members to identify and pursue school level recognitions such as National Schools of Character, Blue Ribbon Schools, Sustainable Schools, Future Ready Schools, Equity and Excellence and so forth.

9-12 Mathematics: Focus on Standardized Testing

Professional Learning Community (PLC) for Curriculum Mapping, Instructional Strategies and Pacing ~ Beginning in June 2019, the Supervisor of Mathematics will lead a PLC with teachers to analyze student performance on the various standardized mathematics assessments. The PLC will review New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Mathematics, district curricular guides, syllabi, and lesson plans to ensure that students have addressed critical learning objectives prior to the grade level assessment. The PLC will also evaluate test preparation materials to determine which, if any, would be an appropriate complement to our instruction.

Partnership between the Public Schools and Local Realtors

Open Houses; School Tours ~ Building Administrators will promote access for school tours to potential buyers through the hosting of open houses and school tours.

School Profiles ~ The administration will provide school profiles on each school to local realtors so that they may share them with potential buyers.

Board of Education and Borough Council Connection ~ These two municipal bodies should work together to address primary concerns that deter potential residents from purchasing homes in Mountain Lakes including; mass transit options into New York City, home maintenance, and property taxes.

Starting Points for the High School Committee on AP Exam Participation and Performance

The Committee will review policies in similar districts regarding AP participation and performance including but not limited to:

Millburn; mandatory participation or loss of weight and all seniors required to take an AP course

Northern Valley; combination of open enrollment and restricted enrollment AP courses/exams

National Honor Society (NHS) Membership:

In order to demonstrate the members' commitment to the four pillars of the NHS; scholarship, service, leadership and character, members will be required to take a certain percentage of AP exams for the courses in which they are enrolled. Failure to take the required number of exams would result in forfeiture of NHS Status.

MLHS AP Scholar Program/Continuous Enrollment in AP Courses/Senior Policy:

In order to become a member of the MLHS AP Scholar Program; students must take the exam for all courses which they are enrolled. When an underclassman fails to take the AP exam for a particular course, the student may be denied enrollment in another AP course in that discipline the following year. Seniors who do not take the AP exam for a given course will be required to offer tutoring to underclassmen for their final exams.

For reference, MLHS typically believes that class grades are compatible to AP Exam scores as follows:

Class grade of A = 5 on AP Exam/ Class grade of B = 4 on AP Exam/ Class grade of C = 3 on AP Exam/ Class grade of D = 2 on AP Exam/ Class grade of F = 1 on AP Exam

Please consider offering two final exam options to all students taking an AP class.

Option ONE: Take the *Actual* AP Exam (\$94) in May, which can only help a student's GPA.

AP Exam score of 3 = C+ on final transcript (3.3 GPA)

AP Exam score of 4 = B+ on final transcript (4.3 GPA)

AP Exam score of 5 = A+ on final transcript (5.3 GPA)

<< NO AP score can hurt a student's grade in class. >>

Example 1: Student has a "B" in the class, takes the AP Exam and receives a "5". Their final transcript grade would be raised to an "A+" (5.3 GPA).

Example 2: Student has a "B" in the class, takes the AP Exam and receives a "3" (or lower). Their final transcript grade would remain a "B" (4.0 GPA).

Advantages:

- Students are encouraged to take their AP Exam with hopes of improving their GPA (with no risk).
- Students can finish with the Exam portion of the class in May vs. June.
- Students can improve their GPAs while helping our school improve its' ranking.

Bottom Line:

- Encourage and reward students for taking their AP Exams.

Option TWO: Take teacher's *Sample* AP Exam (\$Free) in June, which can help or hurt their final grade.

Teacher will select a sample AP test from Barron's, Princeton Review, or similar, to administer to students as their final exam.

Their score would be averaged into final grade as laid out in original syllabus.

Summary:

All MLHS AP Course Descriptions currently state: "Students who successfully complete this course are expected to take the AP exam."

Given this, they can either take the \$94 Actual AP Exam or Free Sample AP Exam.

If students choose both Options ONE and TWO, they will receive the higher GPA of the two results on their final transcript.