



**NEWS RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2015**

September 10, 2015

**The Governor and the State Department of Education Announce  
Encouraging Improvements in State AP Results  
*Alabama ranks number one in math, science and English AP score increases over 7 years***

**Montgomery, Ala.** –Today, Governor Robert Bentley announced an outstanding achievement for Alabama’s high school students; **Alabama is ranked number one in the nation over the last seven years** in percent growth of students achieving qualifying scores on math, science, and English (MSE) Advanced Placement\* (AP) exams.

“Advanced Placement courses are just one of the tools that students have in school to be successful in college or career,” Governor Robert Bentley said. “Our efforts to prioritize college and career training has made an important impact in the lives of students. The statistics show a remarkable amount of growth every year in this program, and that is a testament to the hard work of our students and teachers.”

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)/A+ College Ready AP program has delivered **an astounding increase of 155%\*** since 2008 -- **doubling the nation’s** growth of 57% over that time. The program is also credited for a consistent increase in percent growth of minority qualifying scores for MSE, ranking third in the nation over the last 7 years. *\* (Based on data from the College Board as reported by the National Math and Science Initiative)*

Dr. Tommy Bice, Alabama State Superintendent of Education, said, “This is a truly incredible achievement, but we know how much work has gone into this partnership to make it such a success. Not only does it expand the opportunities for more students to challenge themselves, but the program also gives them the support they need to reach a very high bar – completion of a college-level course while in high school.

“What this means for Alabama families is a potential savings of over \$48 million in college tuition costs. What this means for students is a significantly improved chance to attend college and be successful in whatever career they pursue,” said Bice.

The ALSDE/A+ College Ready partnership provides ongoing support for teachers and students through intensive professional development and study sessions throughout the year and incentives based on academic success. Results show that program schools achieve an average 95% increase in passing Advanced Placement (AP) scores **in their first year** of participation – 14 times greater than the national average.

Gordon Martin, vice chair of the A+ Board, introduced a student, a principal, a teacher and a student from three featured high schools that achieved excellent results: Marbury High School in Autauga County, Arab High School and Enterprise High School. They joined Governor Bentley and Dr. Bice on stage for a panel discussion centered on what participation in the AP program means to them and how it has affected the culture of their school.

“The initiative has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the school culture, students, and teachers,” said Brad Cooper, principal at Arab High School. “Enrolling in AP courses enables students to take on more challenging course work that parallels what they might see in college-level courses. The academic expectation for excellence has always been high at Arab High School, but the ALSDE/A+ College Ready initiative has allowed us to reach new heights in preparing our students for college.”

The Alabama Legislature and The State Department of Education provide significant funds for the AP Initiative, building on initial investments from the private sector, including the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), Alabama Power Foundation, Regions Inc., Boeing and ExxonMobil, along with many other corporations, foundations and individual donors across the state.

In 2015-16, the ALSDE/A+ College Ready AP Initiative will support 148 schools in 67 districts. The program elements include open enrollment in AP math, science and English classes, increased time on task for students, intensive teacher training, support from master teachers, and stipends for teachers and students. The AP Initiative works closely with the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) to assist all Alabama students in meeting the state’s College and Career Ready Standards. It also is adding support for social studies teachers and students this year, as well as accelerating expansion of a Computer Science Principles course in Alabama public schools.

“To build an even stronger pipeline of students prepared for AP courses and college, the ALSDE/A+ College Ready program is expanding its work with middle and high schools to implement 6-10<sup>th</sup> grade courses infused with NMSI’s *Laying the Foundation* lessons” said Mary Boehm, A+ College Ready president. “And with the support this public-private partnership provides, more and more Alabama students will succeed in college. This prospect really inspires all of us to keep the work going and push ourselves even harder each year.”

\*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Board.

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