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WCPSS ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) TEST RESULTS, 2006-07

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College-level coursework is offered to high school students through the Advanced Placement (AP) program. Many colleges and universities provide credit to students who earn a high score on the AP exams, which are offered by the College Board. All comprehensive high schools in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) offer AP courses and exams, although the availability of specific courses varies from school to school. Many students take more than one AP course, and not all AP students take the corresponding exams. The cost to take each AP exam in 2006-07 was \$84.

AP Exam grades determine whether a student is qualified to receive college credit or advanced placement into a higher level course in college. The scores are reported on a 5-point scale as follows:

- 5 = Extremely well qualified
- 4 = Well qualified
- 3 = Qualified
- 2 = Possibly qualified
- 1 = No recommendation

Analysis of 2006-07 AP reports from the College Board reveals the following:

1. The number and proportion of WCPSS students taking AP courses and exams continues to grow. Between 1996-97 and 2006-07, the number of students enrolled in WCPSS grew by 50%. During that same time, however, the number taking AP exams increased by 175% and the number of exams taken increased 195% (Figure 1).
2. As more and more students in WCPSS are taking AP exams, the average exam score has dipped slightly (3.42 in 1996-97 to 3.35 in 2006-07) while the percent of exams with scores of 3 or higher has hovered between 75-80% (Table 1). This pattern is consistent with both state and national trends over that same time span (Table 2).
3. WCPSS AP exam scores (both average score and percent of scores 3 or higher) have surpassed the corresponding state and the national figures each year since 1996-97 (Figure 2). Comparison data for the U.S. for 2006-07, however, are not yet available.
4. The exams taken most often in 2006-07 were Environmental Science (1,084), English Language and Composition (1,056), U.S. History (955), Statistics (760), and Psychology (759), see Table 3.
5. In some courses, as the numbers of test takers have increased, the percentage of passing scores has decreased. Specific tests illustrating this pattern include English Language and Composition, Statistics, U. S. Government and Politics, and European History (Tables 3 & 4).

Figure 1

Total Number of AP Exams Taken by WCPSS Students

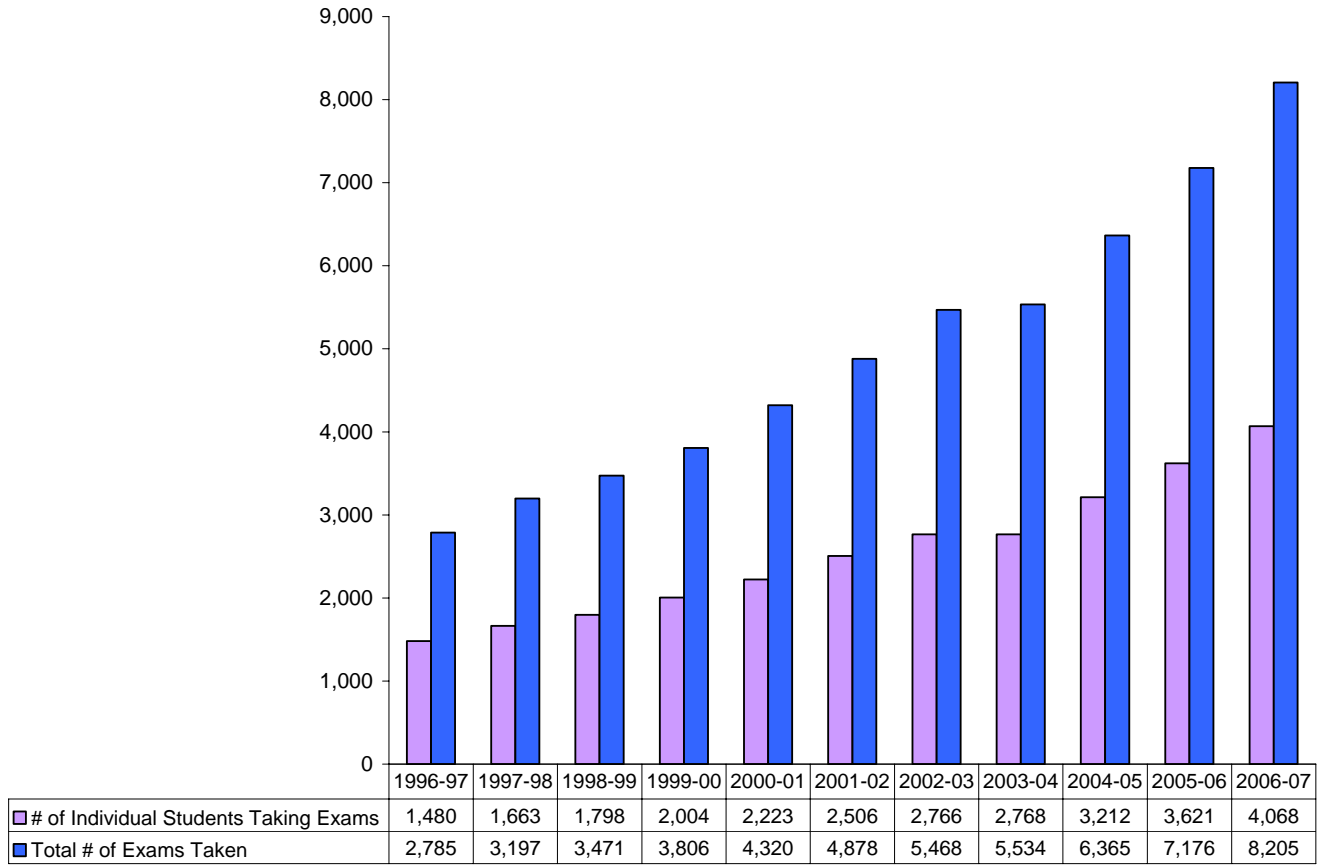


Table 1
WCPSS Participation and Performance in AP Exams over Eight Years

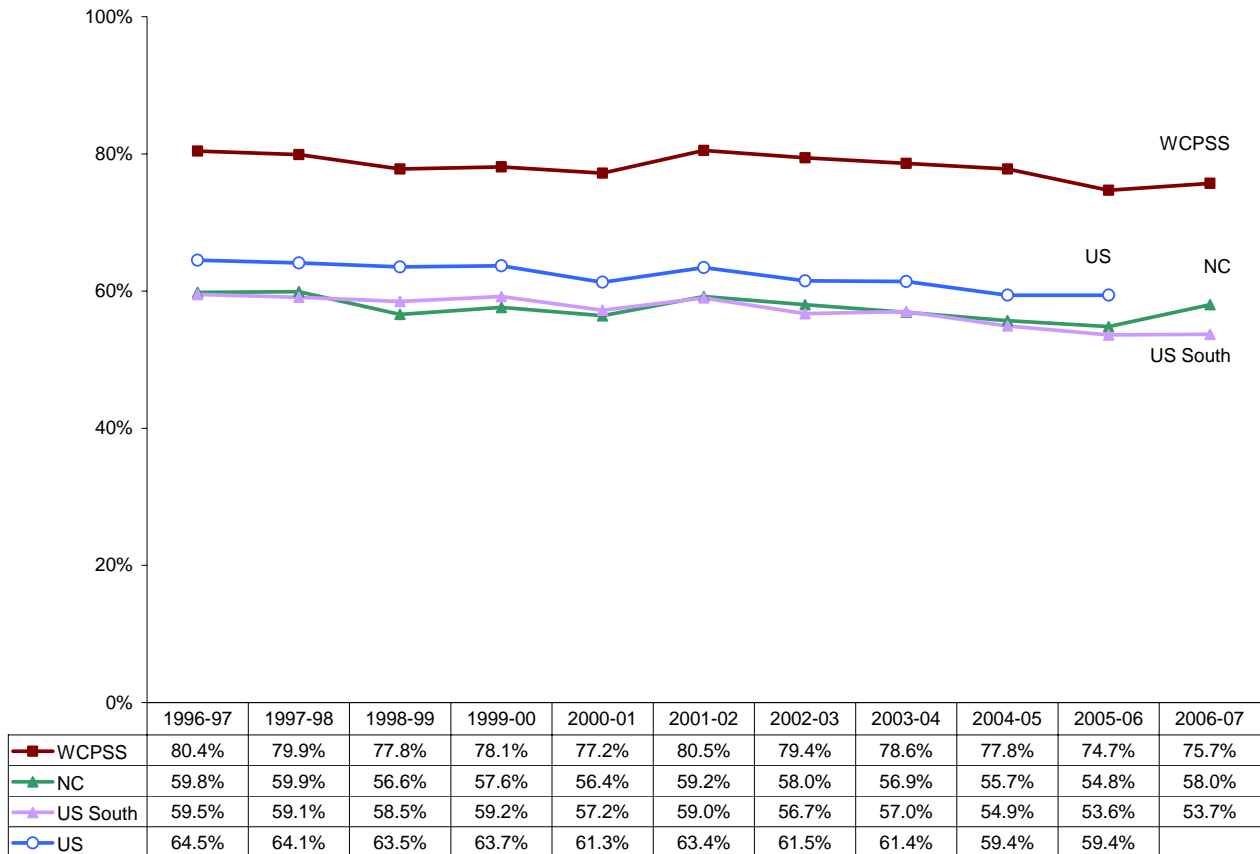
	Number of Students Taking Exams	Total Number of Exams Taken	Percent of Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher	Average Exam Score
1996-97	1,480	2,785	80.4%	3.42
1997-98	1,663	3,197	79.9%	3.44
1998-99	1,798	3,471	77.8%	3.41
1999-00	2,004	3,806	78.1%	3.38
2000-01	2,223	4,320	77.2%	3.38
2001-02	2,506	4,878	80.5%	3.48
2002-03	2,766	5,468	79.4%	3.42
2003-04	2,768	5,534	78.6%	3.46
2004-05	3,212	6,365	77.8%	3.40
2005-06	3,621	7,176	74.7%	3.30
2006-07	4,068	8,205	75.7%	3.35

Table 2
AP Average Scores for WCPSS, NC, and the U.S.

Year	WCPSS	NC	US
1996-97	3.42	2.87	3.02
1997-98	3.44	2.89	3.02
1998-99	3.41	2.81	3.02
1999-00	3.38	2.83	3.01
2000-01	3.38	2.81	2.95
2001-02	3.48	2.87	3.00
2002-03	3.42	2.83	2.95
2003-04	3.46	2.81	2.95
2004-05	3.40	2.78	2.89
2005-06	3.30	2.76	2.89
2006-07	3.35	2.84	---

Note: U.S. comparison data for 2006-07 not yet available.

Figure 2
Percentage of AP Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher in WCPSS, NC and U.S



Note: 1. A score of 3 is a passing score on college level material. Some colleges award credit for scores of 3 or higher.
2. U.S. comparison data for 2006-07 not yet available.

Table 3
WCPSS AP Exams Taken by Subject

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Biology	254	185	211	248	227	238	206	135	188	250	260
Calculus AB	349	404	354	374	336	418	499	188	198	229	269
Calculus BC	77	117	150	152	192	202	226	526	532	555	672
Chemistry	138	147	133	197	185	206	146	120	148	178	203
English Lang. & Comp.	497	536	558	651	824	788	794	870	857	1,034	1,056
English Lit. & Comp.	301	373	355	364	462	537	510	380	437	529	471
Environmental Science	0	38	87	115	177	299	690	787	836	939	1,084
European History	115	154	189	194	178	197	204	200	231	234	218
Govt. & Politics U.S.	15	21	25	37	49	100	216	164	245	223	286
Physics B	85	107	150	118	131	140	153	149	118	86	117
Psychology	13	47	71	47	145	167	196	315	447	477	759
Spanish Language	77	74	55	103	83	93	90	110	183	208	182
Statistics	135	203	288	290	310	364	347	379	565	583	760
U.S. History	470	487	523	644	691	724	729	696	652	794	955
World History	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	55	77	48	242	272	281

Note: Table lists only the most commonly taken exams. AP World History was not offered prior to 2001-02.

Table 4
WCPSS AP Performance by Subject: Percent of Exams with Scores of 3 or Higher

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Biology	76.8	81.6	75.4	72.6	73.1	85.7	75.7	83.0	81.9	82.4	77.7
Calculus AB	77.4	85.9	84.5	86.6	83.9	92.6	89.6	66.5	69.2	59.0	68.4
Calculus BC	93.5	93.2	81.3	90.1	95.3	89.1	84.5	89.7	87.2	90.5	84.7
Chemistry	76.1	81.0	74.4	81.7	73.5	72.8	82.2	79.2	68.9	70.2	79.3
English Lang. & Comp.	85.5	77.4	78.3	80.6	72.8	81.5	80.1	74.7	72.9	66.2	75.9
English Lit. & Comp.	79.4	81.3	78.3	77.5	74.2	79.7	74.7	80.3	79.6	76.9	77.3
Environmental Science	---	81.6	55.2	76.5	82.5	75.3	79.4	76.4	71.5	73.6	74.8
European History	87.8	89.0	88.4	88.7	82.6	86.8	85.3	80.5	84.0	84.2	73.4
Govt. & Politics U.S.	93.3	81.0	88.0	86.5	98.0	94.0	87.0	84.1	82.0	78.9	79.7
Physics B	82.4	87.9	86.7	76.3	86.3	70.7	79.7	86.6	85.6	67.4	73.5
Psychology	84.6	72.3	74.6	91.5	82.8	85.0	76.5	83.8	81.0	81.3	75.0
Spanish Language	75.3	85.1	78.2	81.6	88.0	81.7	74.4	90.9	82.0	73.6	65.9
Statistics	90.4	85.7	88.9	69.0	82.9	78.0	83.0	81.5	80.2	71.7	74.7
U.S. History	74.0	68.6	66.5	67.5	64.0	70.4	71.9	74.4	74.8	70.0	71.0
World History	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	74.5	77.9	83.3	79.8	80.1	87.5

Note: Table lists only the most commonly taken exams. AP World History was not offered prior to 2001-02.