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Plainville High School Advanced Placement Courses:

Getting an Early Start on College

Over the last four years, Plainville High School has improved and significantly increased opportunities for students to engage in the most challenging courses available to high school students. Plainville High School, under the parameters set by College Board, currently offers 13 different Advanced Placement Courses including; *Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science, English Literature, English Language, U.S. History, Modern European History, Calculus (AB), Calculus (BC), Statistics, JAVA (Computer Programming), and Studio Art.* Course requirements and expectations are challenging and rigorous, and each must have a syllabus (course plan for content) created by a specially trained and certified teacher, approved by the principal, and submitted to College Board for course registration.

Plainville High School is currently in its fourth year of a five year grant with Project Opening Doors (POD) which has been supported by the National Math Science Initiative (NMSI). The objective of the POD program has been to encourage increased participation and success rates in Advanced Placement courses, specifically in math, science, and English. The premise of this foundation is that all college bound students should take at least one such course during high school. This grant has also provided significant funding to provide advanced teacher preparation and training, extra tutoring sessions for students including after school and Saturday sessions, enabled the purchase of some program supplies, and provided monetary reimbursements and awards for student success in English, math and science courses.

The benefits of enrolling in and succeeding in Advanced Placement courses are clear. Students enrolled in these courses have proven to be more ready for college level challenges than their peers, are more competitive in the college application process, receive higher grades when they go to college, and earn college credit for qualifying scores on their AP exams, which are taken in May (often saving families significant tuition expenses).

The number of Advanced Placement exams taken by Plainville High School students has significantly jumped from 96 exams in 2009 to 358 exams this May. Students are guided by teachers, school counselors, and administrators in the process of determining which courses will best align with their post-secondary goals and aspirations. Some courses are available during sophomore year; however, most are taken during the junior and senior year following various prerequisite coursework. Advanced Placement courses are very challenging, since they are truly college level courses, and they are not the best choice for *all* students. However, the majority of students who are willing to take on the challenge and fully apply themselves to these courses, find themselves feeling a sense of reward and accomplishment.

In addition to Advanced Placement courses, Plainville High School also offers three different Early College Experience (ECE) courses through the University of Connecticut. Students who take and pass our ECE *Biology*, *Introduction to Oceanography*, and *Spanish IV* courses (in addition to passing the final exam), receive UCONN credits. This additional opportunity can save UCONN-bound students thousands of dollars. Furthermore, students can earn *Career Pathways* credits from Tunxis Community College for successfully completing select courses at Plainville High

School. This option provides additional motivation and value to students who plan to attend this post-secondary option.

For more information about Plainville High School's Advanced Placement, Early College Experience, or Career Pathways options, please visit www.plainvillehighschool.org to access the Program of Studies and other important information. Families can also contact our school counselors or administrators for more information by calling (860) 793-3220