



Our students will shape and lead the future

News release

Oct. 21, 2015

Advanced Placement *Capstone* program at H.M. Jackson High School

Cascade and Everett high schools will launch *AP Capstone* in 2016-17

Next fall, Everett Public Schools may very well be the first school district this side of the Cascades to have all its comprehensive high schools offering *AP Capstone*, according to Nancy Potter, Director of College Board State and District Partnerships. Potter reports the final tally of schools starting the program will be complete in December. Whether Everett is in that unique position when the data is finished, the district is a state and regional leader bringing a highly sought after and competitive program into its high schools.

Henry M. Jackson High School launched the rigorous program this fall. Today, 55 students are enrolled in the two year program.

Year one for *AP Capstone* students is *AP Seminar* in which they learn to evaluate the strength of an argument, pose solutions, collaborate and communicate. In year two, *AP Research* plunges students into designing, planning and conducting a yearlong investigation into a topic they choose. According to Ken

O'Donnell, senior director of student engagement at California State University, the Research class, "... has to be inter-disciplinary, it has to be engaging, and it has to be a pressing." In *AP Research*, students study and set out to solve real life problems of today.

At the end of a successful two year *AP Capstone* endeavor, students graduate with a special designation on their diploma – either an AP Capstone Diploma or an AP Seminar and Research Certificate. The diploma comes from earning qualifying scores in both AP Seminar *and* AP Research *plus* in four other AP courses of a student's choosing. The certificate designation is the result of earning qualifying scores on the Seminar and Research series.

"Whether it is the 'diploma' or the 'certificate,' these designations demonstrate to college admission officials and future employers that a student has been successful at college level work and is a solid candidate for admissions, internships and careers," explained Superintendent Gary Cohn.

The *AP Capstone* program is a rigorous one for students, and it's a rigorous selection process for high schools chosen to join the program. Selected districts must demonstrate a history of Advanced Placement course offerings – and for those courses to be filled with diverse students who ultimately earn qualifying scores on AP tests.

(more)

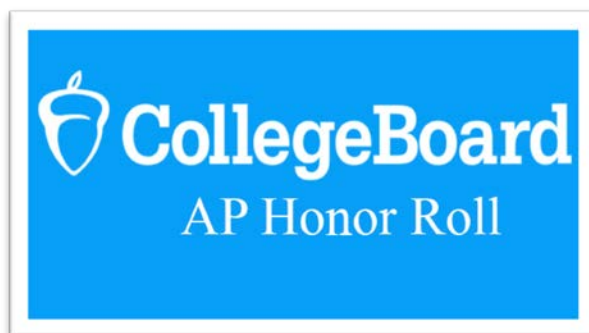
APCapstone™

CollegeBoard

"Everett's stellar leadership is known throughout Washington State. You constantly provide best practices worthy of emulation."

Nancy Potter, Director of the College Board State and District Partnerships

Even though *AP Capstone* did not exist in 2011 (the program is only a year old), Everett Public Schools caught the eye of [College Board](#). Because so many more students and so many more diverse students were successfully taking AP courses, College Board in 2011 named the district to its [AP Honor Roll](#). At that time, only 367 school districts in the U.S. and Canada earned that award for increasing AP enrollment and AP test scores.



In early October, when College Board announced Cascade and Everett high schools were to begin *AP Capstone* in fall 2016, Potter commented, "Everett's stellar leadership is known throughout Washington State. You constantly provide best practices worthy of emulation."

Since the [2011 AP Honor Roll](#) designation, even more students are taking even more Advanced Placement classes and succeeding on the tests – which also earns them college credit in high school. In 2011, only 838 students took AP classes, and they took only 853 AP tests. (Some students take more than one AP class at a time.) In 2014, the number taking classes was 1,445, and those students took 1,663 tests.

Encouraging more students to take rigorous classes like Advanced Placement and now *AP Capstone* is just one of the ways the district is successfully increasing its graduation rate and helping students become college and career ready.

The district also gives the [PSAT](#) free to all sophomores each fall and the [SAT](#) free to all juniors in the spring. "We know students who take the PSAT are more likely to score higher on the SAT," noted Superintendent Gary Cohn. "This gives our students a greater chance to score well, earn scholarships and secure placement in a college or university of their choice."

More about *AP Capstone*

The program began in fall 2014 at just 114 selected high schools in the United States and 22 in Canada, Europe and Asia. College Board's plans include expanding it to qualified high schools in the U.S. and other countries so ultimately students in 65,000 schools across the globe will have access to *AP Capstone* classes.

In 2015-16, when Everett and Cascade high schools launch the program they are expected to be among only 20,000 such schools in the world.

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