



CASE STUDY 2: ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Schools Decide How to Offer AP Seminar

The Journey

As a former AP teacher (AP U.S. History and AP U.S. Government and Politics), I've long valued the academic rigor and expectations of AP courses. However, as the coordinator of Gifted and Advanced Learning, I've also realized an appreciation for and need of courses that allow students to dive more deeply into areas of their interest and those do not always align to existing AP course topics. The skills learned in AP Seminar are transferable to all content areas and are essential for college and career. Adding AP Seminar in the district has allowed numerous students who did not feel up to the challenge of an AP course to flex their intellectual curiosity in a course that feels more customizable to them and their teachers. AP Seminar remains a course where many first-time AP students feel comfortable and more likely to thrive.

We officially started onboarding AP Seminar as the first course in the **AP Capstone™ program** five years ago. We moved from just 2 schools that elected to adopt AP Seminar on their own to 19 schools, which accounts for two-thirds of our high schools. While the vision was to create pathways for all students to complete the AP Capstone trajectory, it became clear that there was an appeal to sophomores to take the class as a one-off approach. This was because of personal interest as much as scheduling challenges/ opportunities.

Most recently we added English 10: AP Seminar to the mix, meaning we now offer it as either an English 10 course, a stand-alone course accessible to any student, or as part of a 2-year trajectory within the AP Capstone program. Interestingly, one of district's high schools made AP Seminar their required grade 11 course and it seems to fit well in their English sequence progression.

Implementation Process

The process required the establishment of a multiyear AP Program Plan put forth by my office and then supported by executive leadership at the district level. That plan spelled out that AP Capstone was expected to be offered in all high schools by the end of the plan. In addition, the district arranged for our own private AP Summer Institute training. One-on-one conversations were held with each principal as we attempted to help them make purposeful AP course choices for that first year—something we continue to do yearly. We also supplied each AP Seminar classroom with

DISTRICT:
Baltimore City Public Schools

LOCATION:
Baltimore City, MD

MEET THE ADMINISTRATOR



Dennis Jutras
Coordinator of Gifted and Advanced Learning

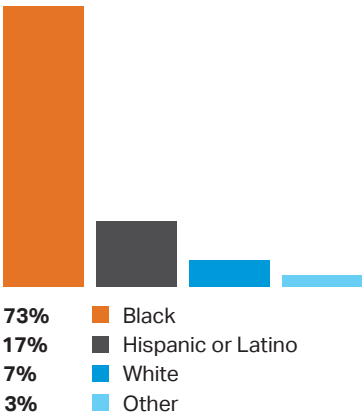
DISTRICT STATS

19 out of 26
High Schools are Offering AP Seminar

562
Students enrolled in AP Seminar

61%
Low-income Students

BCPS AP enrollment increased from 1,654 students to 3,115 in 4 years, since adding AP Seminar.



books and resources as requested by each teacher to help them successfully launch these new classes.

While every high school principal readily acknowledged the value of AP Seminar, since it did not fulfill a graduation requirement, it fell to elective status and was frequently “bumped” to accommodate graduation required courses. Several schools chose to convert their elective offering to only a core English course, and enrollment has doubled for the 2023-24 school year. This transition has made the course more equitable and accessible to more students. We hope to transition to offering AP Seminar as a core English course for all our students in the future.

Our AP Seminar Teachers

Since the addition of English 10: AP Seminar we’ve seen an increased interest among ELA teachers to teach the course. Many, like their students, are eager to spread their wings and move on from highly scripted instruction and follow their interests and help facilitate that same opportunity for their students.

After initial AP Seminar training, the district provides AP Capstone professional development on all system-wide PD days, which are led by an accomplished AP Seminar/AP Research teacher who share their experiences and resources but also facilitates the sharing among these teachers. This teacher lead has also been available to provide support virtually through emails and video conversations as needed by individual teachers. Again, print materials, digital licenses for publications such as *The New York Times*, and iPads and tripods have been provided to teachers to remove the burden of teaching from a resource deficit position.

ADMINISTRATOR TO ADMINISTRATOR

- 1 Make it Truly Accessible:** Don’t eliminate any students from consideration for this course. Students who may not have been stars in other accelerated courses may end up thriving in AP Seminar because their individuality has a place to be heard now and it can be vitally empowering for both their present as well as their future.
- 2 Consider Everyone:** School librarians/media specialists are some of the best-trained sets of teachers for this type of course but almost any discipline can teach the course.

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—DENNIS JUTRAS, COORDINATOR OF GIFTED AND ADVANCED LEARNING, BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS