Public-private partnership helps push Alabama students to more success in AP courses

Mike Cason | mcason@al.com By Mike Cason | mcason@al.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on September 25, 2013 at 1:11 PM

MONTGOMERY, Alabama --- A public-private partnership to help more Alabama students take advantage of advanced placement courses is growing and is paying off, officials say.

State Superintendent Tommy Bice announced today that Alabama public high school students led the nation in the percentage increase in the number of qualifying exams passed in AP math, science and English courses over the last five years.

Officials attributed the success, in part, to the Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program. APTIP is a joint project of the state Department of Education and A-Plus College Ready. A-Plus College Ready is a division of the A-Plus Education Partnership, a nonprofit organization that works to promote student achievement.

Seventy-six public high schools in Alabama took part in APTIP in 2012-2013. The Legislature boosted advanced placement funding from $2.3 million to $3.8 million for fiscal 2014 to increase the number of participating schools to 97.

"AP is the art of the possible ... I would like to continue the expansion to more Alabama schools as it has shown the return on investment is excellent," Sen. Trip Pittman, R-Montrose, chairman of the Senate’s education budget committee, said in a statement.

In 2012-2013, Alabama public high school students passed 8,793 exams in advanced placement math, science and English.

Of those, 4,766 exams, 54 percent, were passed by students in APTIP schools, said Amy Fineburg, chief academic officer for A-Plus College Ready. A total of 221 Alabama public high schools gave advanced placement exams last year, Fineburg said.

Passing the exams allows students to earn college credit for the high school courses.

More A -Plus College Ready results.pdf
A-Plus College Ready started in 2008. It received a $13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative to start APTIP.

APTIP is now funded mostly by the state, although A-Plus College Ready also raises funds from private donors, such as Alabama Power Foundation, Regions Inc., Boeing and ExxonMobil and others, according to A-Plus.

APTIP helps boost student participation and success in AP courses through study sessions, teacher training, support from master teachers and stipends for teachers and students, according to A-Plus College Ready.

"Our hope is we will continue to receive state funding to add 20 schools a year through 2020," Fineburg said.

© 2013 al.com. All rights reserved.