



PRESS RELEASE

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123 Students Recognized for Exceptional Achievement by College Board

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Student Named Advanced Placement (AP) National Scholar

La Mirada High junior Lawrence Koh was named a National AP Scholar – the highest AP Scholar award and one typically reserved for seniors -- for passing eight Advanced Placement exams with a score of at least 4 on each.

The College Board’s AP Program gives students the opportunity to pursue college-level courses during high school. Students who succeed on AP exams are more likely to graduate college on time, saving significant amounts in tuition, according to the College Board.

“Offering students the opportunity to earn college credit enables us to prepare them for the rigors of today’s college coursework,” said Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian. “Every year, more students in NLMUSD are taking AP courses and challenging themselves as they master the 21st century curriculum critical for college and career success.”

The College Board recognized a total of 123 Norwalk-La Mirada students with AP Scholar awards for their exceptional achievement on AP exams:

1 National AP Scholar	Granted to students in the United States who receive an average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.
24 AP Scholars with Distinction	Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams
18 AP Scholars with Honor	Granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.
80 AP Scholars	Granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams.

Shannon Baker, District Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation, said the District’s policy of open access to AP courses with no prerequisites and an expansion of class offerings is key to encouraging more and more students to take these classes. The number of NLMUSD taking advanced placement courses increased by 23 percent from last year and by 123 percent since 2010-11.

“Our counselors have done a great job encouraging kids who may be nervous about the idea of taking a college level class to give it serious consideration,” Baker said. “With that support and encouragement, kids are making the choice to challenge themselves by taking these classes.”

Baker said the District’s decision to add another full-time college and career counselor to each of the three comprehensive high schools will support continued growth in the number of AP students.

Norwalk High School Principal Dr. Ryan Smith said the expansion of class offerings to 17 AP courses has encouraged more students at his school to take the challenge.

“A kid may not do well in AP Calculus, but could be very comfortable taking AP Psychology,” Smith said. “Last year, we offered AP European History for the first time, and this year we will offer ninth-grade students AP Human Geography – a social studies class. We try to have a fit for everyone.”

In all, 22 AP classes are offered among all three comprehensive high schools.

The College Board recognized 122 NLMUSD students with AP Scholar awards for their exceptional achievement on AP exams, including 2015 Norwalk High valedictorian Madelaine Venzon, who earned the AP Scholar of Distinction designation. Venzon took on a senior-year schedule of six AP classes (Calculus, Chemistry, English Literature, Physics, Psychology and U.S. Government) and passed all six exams, enabling her to begin her studies at UCLA as a sophomore.

2015 Norwalk High valedictorian Madelaine Venzon earned the AP Scholar of Distinction designation. Venzon took on a senior-year schedule of six AP classes (Calculus, Chemistry, English Literature, Physics, Psychology and U.S. Government) and passed all six exams, enabling her to begin her studies at UCLA as a sophomore. Smith said the accomplishment is believed to be a first for his school. Venzon credits Norwalk High staff for supporting her effort.

“Many people told me that it would be impossible for me to be successful, but my counselor supported my efforts by allowing me to take on a full AP schedule,” she said. “My teachers were very understanding and kind. Some even came to visit me on exam days to cheer me on.”

NLMUSD School Board President Jesse Urquidi applauded the students for their willingness to step up to the academic challenge.

“We know that access to rigorous course work is essential for college- and career-readiness,” Urquidi said. “I’m really proud of these students. And kudos goes to the staff whose shared commitment to student success and well-being supports the impressive achievement we are seeing.”

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