

SUCCESS STORY

Highland High School District

Getting Started With Pre-AP

MAKING THE DECISION

Leaders at Highland High School were looking for resources to provide consistency across courses so that, no matter the teacher, students in the same course would have access to the same learning outcomes. Leaders appreciated that the Pre-AP courses provide a framework, and not a set curriculum, that lets teachers choose their instructional components while maintaining a rigorous grade-level course.

“Pre-AP is not a curriculum, it’s a framework. That has been the biggest benefit—defining what a rigorous class looks like across the courses.”

EXPLAINING PRE-AP TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

- School counselors met with students and described how Pre-AP provides grade-level instruction, with more classroom collaboration and focused time for the content that matters most to their success. At this time, they do not explicitly label Pre-AP on transcripts, though all students taking grade-level courses are in Pre-AP classrooms. Students who are ready for more are enrolled in Pre-AP honors courses, which maintain a grade-level focus but at more depth.
- After the district decided to move forward, school leaders communicated to parents via a registration night for freshman and a parent newsletter.

Implementing Pre-AP

COLLABORATION IS KEY

The team kept **collaboration and co-planning** central:

- Highland High School teachers and administrators attended professional learning in the first year.
- The school hosted post-professional learning check-ins to gauge teacher pain points and successes.
- Teachers had 3 days in the summer to prepare and met for an hour each week during the school year to discuss implementation.

“If you really want to shift an approach, you can’t have people go off in different directions. You have to create a school culture where they will work together.”



GILBERT,
ARIZONA

MEET THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Melinda Murphy
Principal

SCHOOL STATS

3,012

Students enrolled

800

Students enrolled in Pre-AP

16%

Low income



73.74% ■ White
2.72% ■ Black
14.84% ■ Hispanic
0.7% ■ Other

PRE-AP COURSES IMPLEMENTED

- English 1
- Algebra 1
- Biology
- Pre-AP Art

The Impact of Pre-AP

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

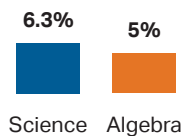
The team reports that teachers are helping their students make connections across their coursework. Students are now at the center of their lessons, which teachers need to plan for.

“We have seen students more engaged because of the shared resources. Teachers feel like they have more of a voice in their professional learning communities because they are more aligned.”

SETTING A HIGHER BAR

Now in their second year of Pre-AP, the team at Highland High School expects further growth from their students, and reports notable increases in state test scores.

2018 STATE ASSESSMENT SCORES INCREASED



All quotations are from Melinda Murphy, Principal, Highland High School District.

TOP TIPS

- 1 Be a champion! Support teachers through this new experience as life-long learners.
- 2 Encourage teachers to pace their instruction similarly, so they can collaborate and learn from each other.
- 3 Pre-AP is for all students. Every student deserves engaging and relevant grade-level coursework that motivates them to reach their full potential and access greater opportunities.

Learn more about the Pre-AP Program at pre-ap.collegeboard.org.