

WHS Considers AP Program

Implementation of the Move on When Ready (MOWR) program, which prepares students for college and career, is in its first year of implementation at Wickenburg High School. The program requires that students take End of Course (EOC) exams at the conclusion of their freshman and sophomore classes and if they pass these exams they become eligible for the Grand Canyon Diploma and scholarship funding to attend community college after their first two years of high school. This program is offered under the guidance of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) and is implemented in Arizona through the Center for the Future of Arizona. To participate in the program NCEE has three primary requirements: 1) Schools must offer a competency-based curriculum, meaning that students move away from seat time to earn credit and toward showing what they know by passing EOCs, 2) Schools must be willing to participate in a research study of the program, which is conducted by the University of Michigan, 3) Schools must implement both a “lower division” program, meaning the freshman and sophomore program we now have in place, and also an “upper division” program which serves students desiring to compete for entrance into “selective universities”.

Wickenburg High School has one more year to design and implement its upper division program and has begun to consider its options. At this stage, based upon the programs which the NCEE has approved for the upper division, it looks like WHS will focus on the development of an Advanced Placement (AP) program. This is in the early stages of discussion, but seems to make the most sense as WHS already offers some AP courses.

The upper division AP program is known as the Advanced Placement International Diploma (APID). Students earn an APID through completing 5 AP courses and passing the AP exam for the course with a score of 3 or better out of 5 possible points. The idea which NCEE is proposing is that students who complete this level of rigorous course work and earn the APID will then earn entrance into various selective universities across the United States. Although we expect only a few students to take advantage of this opportunity, it does present the possibility that students at WHS can compete internationally with any student educated at the K-12 level.

As more information becomes available and the District continues to review this topic I will write additional articles on the subject. I am excited that we will be able to ensure all WHS students will have access to a world class education and believe that the long-range benefits to them and their families will be tremendous.