

### **Advanced Programs Act of 2011 – S.1179**

The Advanced Programs Act of 2011 renews the existing Elementary and Secondary Education Act program that supports states that raise academic achievement through increasing student access to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and exams. The Act provides students access to high-quality, rigorous education standards and programs that prepare them for college and careers. Students who perform well on Advanced Placement exams also generally receive college credit that reduces the cost of college attendance.

The Act consists of two distinct programs, the AP Test Fee Program and the AP Incentive Program. In fiscal year 2011, the AP Test Fee program provided over \$16 million nationwide to pay for low-income students to sit for AP and IB exams; New Mexico received almost \$120,000. Many students whose test fees were paid under this program would have otherwise been unable to participate in AP or IB examinations, and they may not have enrolled in the rigorous courses necessary to prepare for these examinations.

The AP Incentive Program supports a broader approach to increasing AP and IB participation. It provides grants to states, districts, or partnerships to increase 1) the number of teachers in high-need schools who are qualified to teach AP or IB; 2) the number of AP or IB courses offered at high-need schools; and 3) the number of students in high-need schools who enroll in and pass AP or IB courses and exams. The AP Incentive Program prioritizes applications that are state- or district-wide and target schools with high concentrations of low-income students.

New Mexico has been a national leader in expanding student access to Advanced Placement programs. Hobbs Municipal Schools has received numerous national awards for its commitment to providing broad and open access to AP programs; in 2010, almost 19% of its graduating seniors had at least one qualifying score on an AP exam.<sup>i</sup> Senator Bingaman has been instrumental in the formation of the New Mexico Advanced Programs Initiative, a nonprofit organization that works directly with New Mexico public schools and districts to ensure that all students are prepared for advanced academic coursework, including Advanced Placement.<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> See [http://hobbschools.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_6/File/Starla/Advanced%20Placement%20Flyer3.pdf](http://hobbschools.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Starla/Advanced%20Placement%20Flyer3.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> See <http://www.nmapi.org/>