

38TH DISTRICT
STATE SENATOR
LINDSEY M. WILLIAMS
SENATE BOX 203038
THE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3038
717-787-6538
FAX: 717-787-8625
5000 MCKNIGHT ROAD • SUITE 405
PITTSBURGH, PA 15237
412-364-0469
FAX: 412-364-0928
1826 UNION AVENUE
NATRONA HEIGHTS, PA 15065
724-224-2131
FAX: 724-224-2145



Senate of Pennsylvania

COMMITTEES
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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
EMAIL: SenatorLindseyWilliams@pasenate.com
WEBSITE: www.SenatorLindseyWilliams.com
FACEBOOK: @SenWilliamsPA
TWITTER: @SenWilliamsPA
INSTAGRAM: @SenWilliamsPA

June 14, 2022

Senator Jay Costa
Democratic Leader
Room: 535 Main Capitol
Senate Box 203043
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Senator Vincent Hughes
Minority Chairman, Appropriations Committee
Room: 545 Main Capitol
Senate Box 203007
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3007

Dear Leader Costa and Chairman Hughes,

As the Democratic Education Chair, I am writing to express my support to ensure \$3 million is included in the FY 2022-23 state budget to expand access to Advanced Placement course work across the Commonwealth as well as ensuring districts and 10th students who chose also have access to the PSAT.

Expanding Student Access to AP

The importance and benefits of AP courses cannot be underestimated. Research shows AP students are better prepared for college: they are more likely to enroll, stay in college, do well in their classes, and graduate on time in four years. Recent studies show that these results hold true even for students who don't reach a qualifying score of 3, 4, or 5.

Pennsylvania has fewer students taking AP courses and exams than the national average and almost all its surrounding states. 19% of high schools in Pennsylvania do not offer any AP courses in the five core academic areas. 35% of our high school do not offer any AP science courses and 61% do not offer any computer science courses which studies clearly show are the fastest growing segments of the job market.

In addition, the ROI for AP is clear - In May 2020, Pennsylvania public and private high school students took a total of 93,294 AP Exams that resulted in scores of 3, 4, or 5. Factoring in a PASSHE per credit hour tuition rate, the total potential tuition cost savings for Pennsylvania students and families was \$139,848,639.

Expanding Student to the PSAT and identifying AP potential

Students who take a PSAT/NMSQT can identify areas for growth and increase their performance on the SAT. Educators and administrators can utilize PSAT-related data to identify students ready for AP and provide feedback on skills where students require greater support. Students who take PSAT-related assessments also receive access to scholarships, free, personalized online practice through Khan Academy, and career planning and exploration.

Providing all school districts, the option of delivering the PSAT available to their 10th graders is a crucial tool to expand access to AP. Unfortunately, in the 2021-22 school year only around 35% of 10th graders in Pennsylvania took the PSAT while in neighboring New Jersey which ranks significantly higher in the percent of students taking AP approximately 70% of 10th graders took the PSAT.

This requested \$3 million in the final budget to provide students across the Commonwealth with these critical opportunities. If you have any follow up questions, please do not hesitate to reach out: Lindsey.Williams@PASenate.com | 412-364-0469.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsey M. Williams".

Lindsey M. Williams
38th Senatorial District