

Learning Power

Essential Information for School Officials



Funded by the National Math and Science Initiative through support from Exxon-Mobil, the Learning Power program makes cash incentives of \$100/student available to South Dakota students who take online Advanced Placement math, science, and English courses and score 3 or higher on the College Board end-of-course exams. The courses will be made available through the South Dakota Virtual School in collaboration with the Northern State University's E-learning Center. Here are nuts and bolts about the program.

Eligibility

- Public high school students (or home-school or private school high school students accessing the Learning Power program through a public high school) are eligible to participate in Learning Power. The Learning Power AP coursework will be challenging so a solid academic background in the identified content area will be essential.

Learning Power Courses

- Via the South Dakota Virtual School, the Learning Power program offers seven online course options:
 - AP Calculus AB
 - AP English Literature & Composition
 - AP English Language & Composition
 - AP Biology
 - AP Physics B
 - AP Statistics
 - AP Chemistry

Considerations for Assessing Students' Potential for Success

Many students will be attracted by the opportunity of earning cash awards for excelling in the Learning Power program. Thus, it is important that students possess an accurate perception of their readiness and the significant effort required for successful participation in online AP courses in math, science, and English. School officials are positioned to play a key role in exploring and determining with students their aptitude and readiness for success. A viable resource to assist school officials with determining students' potential success with AP courses is College Board's AP Potential program. AP Potential is a research-driven, free Web-based tool located at <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/k-12/prepare/appotential>.

In addition, the following considerations are offered as data points and guidance for assessing students' potential for success and engaging students in meaningful discussions about program

participation. Experienced AP educators contend that the probability for success is heightened if students:

- Possess a strong knowledge base in subject matter content, that is, math, science, or English, as appropriate.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility and study skills necessary for a more-independent learning experience.
- Have access to supports such as a local teacher or mentor when needing a sounding board or direction about course assignments.
- Have access to an adequate technical configuration at school and/or home for participating in an online course effectively.

To determine if the students are academically prepared for AP courses, investigate the appropriate course syllabus posted at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/subjects.html>.

An Understanding of Day-to-Day Participation in Learning Power Courses

The scenario for a student's day-to-day participation in a Learning Power course really depends on each student's circumstances. However, it is anticipated that the following scenarios reflect the majority of day-to-day options for participation:

- A student may participate in the Learning Power online AP course during a designated class period of his/her regular school day by accessing a computer in the library, lab, classroom, or study hall; or by using the computer assigned to him/her as part of a one-to-one computer effort.
- A student may gather with other online AP course-mates face-to-face or electronically for a designated period once a week or a couple of times a week to support and assist one another.
- Students may get together face-to-face or electronically on their own time outside of the school day to support or assist one another.
- A student may opt to do his/her own thing and participate in the course independently when it fits his/her schedule and learning style.

Registration and Participation Process

- 1) The student contacts the guidance counselor, principal, or other designated high school official to indicate their interest in the Learning Power program. The school official confirms the student's eligibility. With the support and assistance of the school official, the student is registered for the Learning Power course or courses via the South Dakota Virtual School website. The student participates in the online course or courses throughout the school term.
- 2) The student takes the College Board end-of-course exam or exams in the spring upon completion of the course or courses.
- 3) In mid-July, the local high school is notified of student's score on the course exam.
 - a. If the student scores 3 or higher on College Board exam, the school issues a cash award in the amount of \$100 payable to the student. The award is paid in August.
 - b. If the student scores lower than 3, the student does not receive a cash award.

Role of the School Official

Learning Power leaders recognize the essential and important role that local school officials play with ensuring that their students access appropriate courses for accomplishing academic requirements. Thus, any student interested in the Learning Program opportunity must engage the designated local official (guidance counselor or high school principal in most schools) as the contact and connector to Learning Program courses.

Following is an overview of the procedures and timeline for a school official.

Spring	There are two basic steps to the spring enrollment process: 1) Students must contact a school official (guidance counselor, principal, or other designated official) in order to access the Learning Power program and associated registration process. The school official is the “gate keeper” for participation in Learning Power and will review the student request for enrollment in identified AP courses. 2) If the school official is supportive of a student request for participation in Learning Power, the official will access the website of the South Dakota Virtual School to initiate the registration process. A student will be registered for a Learning Power class through the same procedure used for other South Dakota Virtual School classes.
September	Official contacts the College Board about administering the AP exam in the following May. The official notes the test date on the local school calendar to avoid conflicts with other activities.
November	Official meets deadline for submitting AP Participation Forms and Teacher Listing to the College Board.
December	Official finalizes arrangements for administering AP exams in May. (Exam may be administered locally or may be arranged with another school district or qualified agency as specified by AP regulations.)
March	Official confirms with College Board the number of exams needed for the May administration date.
April	About mid-month is the final date to inform College Board of changes in number of exams needed without being fined a penalty.
May	Official administers AP exams at assigned date and time and follows exam procedures explicitly to ensure compliance with College Board requirements.
July	About mid-month the official receives student scores for the exams administered in May. The official forwards a copy of the College Board report to the Learning Power program. Learning Power program director initiates a voucher payable to the school district for the cost of end-of-course exams of the list of students as well as an amount of \$100/student for each exam score of 3 or higher. The voucher is mailed to the school district in care of the school official. The official forwards the payment to the school business office.
August	Official works with school business office to initiate vouchers for individual students in the amount of \$100/exam for scores of 3 or higher. The official assumes responsibility for ensuring personal or mail delivery of the payments to recipients.

Costs Associated with Learning Program Courses and Awards

Students do NOT incur costs for participating in the Learning Power program:

- Enrollment and participation in Learning Power courses is provided at NO COST to students.

- College Board end-of-course exam fees are covered by the Learning Power program.
- Cash awards for students are covered by the Learning Power program.
- Textbooks and related materials are to be provided by the local school district.

Technical Requirements for Learning Power Participation

- Successful student participation in online AP courses should be supported by access to high speed internet.

Related Information

- The seven Learning Power AP courses available through the South Dakota Virtual School are the only AP courses supported by the South Dakota Department of Education in the subject areas of math, science, and English for next school term. HOWEVER, South Dakota students may still access online AP courses in other content areas via the identified online provider contracted by the South Dakota Department of Education for the coming school term.

Contact Persons for Learning Power Program

- As questions arise, school officials are encouraged to contact Dr. Jim Parry, Learning Power program director, or MaryLou McGirr, Learning Power program coordinator, by phone at (605)394-1876 or via email at jparry@tie.net or mmcgirr@tie.net, respectively. The mailing address for Learning Power is 1925 Plaza Blvd., Rapid City, SD 57702.