

DHS Joins NMSI College Readiness Program to Expand AP Opportunities

DeRidder High School has joined the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) College Readiness Program to increase Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities for its students. DHS is joining a coalition with Vernon Parish schools through a Department of Defense program at Fort Polk.

The NMSI College Readiness program seeks to improve opportunities and



achievement for students by advancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and English language arts courses. The program includes a three-year partnership with high schools to increase the number of students taking AP courses and passing the courses with a 3 or above, which are qualifying scores for college credit.

NMSI's mission is "to inspire, engage and empower all students to succeed in today's knowledge economy by advancing STEM teaching and learning." The non-

profit organization is dedicated to transforming math, science, and English education with proven and effective programs. The program provides a continuum of training and support for students and teachers through mentoring, summer training, Saturday study sessions, and funding for classroom supplies and achievement-based rewards. Over 1,000 high schools, including approximately 20 in Louisiana, are currently involved with the program.

The NMSI College Readiness Program focuses on AP exams, which are prime indicators of college-preparedness and success. According to NMSI data, students who master AP courses in high school are three-times more likely to graduate from college. After three years in the program the average increase in qualifying AP scores among NMSI partner schools is more than five times the national average.

The College Readiness Program supports teacher training and instruction through AP Summer Institutes followed up by workshops during the school year for teachers of the AP courses to reinforce content knowledge. The program also provides mentors for one-on-one support. Teachers of AP courses at NMSI schools have access to effective teaching materials to customize their instruction and assignments towards students' individual learning needs.

In addition, NMSI pays for teachers who teach in feeder schools to attend their "Laying the Foundations" program which provides teachers in grades 3-12 with the training, support, and resources they need "to drive student achievement and facilitate their progression toward advanced coursework in high school." NMSI schools receive an annual evaluation for performance analysis and goal-setting to maximize program effectiveness.

The College Readiness Program provides students with three study sessions per AP subject held on Saturdays throughout the school year led by AP experts. These sessions are also attended by the AP teachers from the school. The NMSI grant also pays 50% of the cost of the AP exam for students. In addition, the grant provides both teachers and students with a monetary award for qualifying scores of 3 or higher on each AP exam.

“We are excited to be partnering with NMSI College Readiness program, and are grateful to Fort Polk Progress for helping secure the Department of Defense grant to help fund the program at DeRidder High School,” said Instructional Supervisor Kim Hayes. “This three-year commitment will strengthen our teaching in STEM and English language arts courses through effecting teacher training and will provide our students with more opportunities to prepare for successful futures beyond graduation.”