

Scioto Foundation

AP Mini-Grant Program Evaluation – 2011



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SCIOTO FOUNDATION
AP MINI-GRANT PROGRAM EVALUATION
2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report represents the findings of a preliminary program evaluation conducted for the Scioto Foundation's AP Mini-Grant Program and support for the AP Summer Institute. These findings represent a snapshot of the program in its first three years of existence. While it is difficult to ascertain outcome-based results with such a short program history, preliminary findings seem to indicate progress is being made towards improving Advanced Placement education in Scioto County high schools. The data and research presented herein should serve to establish a research methodology and protocol to better assess the results of this program in future years. We are pleased to have worked with a variety of school officials from Scioto County on this project, especially those who took the time to respond to the grant recipients' survey and those who participated in the stakeholders' focus group. Scioto Foundation Executive Director Kim Cutlip provided valuable data and information for this program evaluation.

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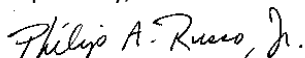
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Respectfully,



Dr. Philip A. Russo, Jr.
Director, Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some of the key findings from the AP Mini-Grant Program Evaluation include:

- Despite being in existence for only three years, preliminary data indicates that the AP Mini-Grant program is helping to increase the opportunities for Scioto County high school students to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Additional data collection over the next several years may be used to determine more outcome based results in terms of the change over time in the number of AP course offerings, AP course enrollment data, and students' AP test scores.
- AP Summer Institute scholarship recipients are very satisfied with Shawnee State University as the Institute host; increased diversity in the subject areas that are covered in the Institute's workshops seems to be the most pressing need.
- AP Summer Institute scholarship recipients could benefit from an annual follow-up meeting to discuss their AP classroom experiences and provide feedback to other teachers.
- AP Mini-Grant recipients and AP Summer Institute scholarship recipients are generally satisfied with the grant program and funding; from an administrative standpoint, making AP Mini-Grant application materials available online (and perhaps allowing for online submission of grant applications) could improve the program.
- Variation exists among the high schools in Scioto County in terms of AP course offerings, recruitment, and enrollment; this variation most likely is caused by lack of resources, lack of school commitment, and lack of student interest in AP courses.
- The Scioto Foundation can take on a greater role as a facilitator between Scioto County high schools and the Educational Service Center (ESC) in Scioto County in order to address some of these variations and begin to remove some of the obstacles that might block AP course offerings and enrollment in individual high schools.
- A research methodology and protocol has been established for the continued monitoring and evaluation of the AP Mini-Grant program and AP Summer Institute scholarships.

INTRODUCTION

This program evaluation project was initiated at the request of the Executive Director of the Scioto Foundation. One of the components of the University College Access Network (UCAN) plan for the Scioto Foundation is to provide support for local school districts to help establish and expand Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings in school districts within Scioto County, Ohio. The support provided by the Scioto Foundation is a two-fold process focused on increasing the number of certified AP teachers in Scioto County school districts and increasing the number of students (and also providing support for them) enrolled in AP courses in Scioto County high schools. The main thrust of this component has come from the establishment of the AP Mini-Grant Program as well as scholarship funding to support Shawnee State University's Advanced Placement (AP) Summer Institute program. In essence, these components of UCAN are designed to increase the number of certified AP instructors in participating school districts and to expand the number of students taking AP courses.

The Scioto Foundation has awarded AP Mini-Grants of up to \$1,000 per school district for three consecutive years: 2008, 2009, and 2010. These Mini-Grants are designed to allow individual teachers and districts to use the grant funding to cover some of the costs associated with their AP curriculum, including teaching materials, and testing fees / preparation materials for a variety of scholastic tests (AP exams, the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test or PSAT, or the American College Test or ACT).¹ To date, the AP Mini-Grant Program has awarded thirty-seven grants totaling \$26,832. In 2008, nine (9) AP Mini-Grants were awarded totaling \$9,000; in 2009, ten (10) AP Mini-

¹ Scioto Foundation. *UCAN AP Mini-Grant Application*. 2010-11.

Grants were awarded totaling \$9,912; and in 2010, eight (8) AP Mini-Grants were awarded totaling \$7,920. A breakdown of the school districts awarded AP Mini-Grants by year is provided below².

AP Mini-Grant Recipients by School District	2008	2009	2010	Three Year Totals
Bloom-Vernon Local	X	X		2
Clay Local	X	X	X	3
Green Local	X	X	X	3
Minford Local	X	X	X	3
New Boston Local	X	X	X	3
Northwest Local				0
Notre Dame Schools	X	X	X	3
Portsmouth City	X	X		2
Sciotoville Community School		X	X	2
Valley Local	X	X	X	3
Washington-Nile Local				0
Wheelersburg Local	X	X	X	3
Totals	9	10	8	27

Additionally, the Scioto Foundation has underwritten the majority of the cost for teachers in Scioto County to attend the annual AP Summer Institute at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio. The AP Summer Institute is designed to provide “subject specific professional development opportunities that provide teachers with the support and training needed to teach AP courses and to utilize Pre-AP teaching strategies.”³ The Scioto Foundation has partnered with Shawnee State University for the past three AP Summer Institutes (2009, 2010, and 2011) by offering scholarships to Scioto County teachers to offset the vast majority of the cost of attending the Summer Institute. In 2009, twenty-four (24) Scioto County teachers completed the AP Summer

² Data provided by the Scioto Foundation.

³ Shawnee State University. Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure. 2011.

Institute; in 2010, twenty (20) Scioto County teachers completed the AP Summer Institute; and in 2011, twenty-four (24) Scioto County teachers completed the AP Summer Institute. A breakdown of the number of teachers who completed the AP Summer Institute by school district and year is provided below⁴.

AP Summer Institute Scholarships by School District	2009	2010	2011	Three Year Totals
Bloom-Vernon Local	0	2	5	7
Clay Local	2	2	2	6
Green Local	4	1	1	6
Minford Local	1	3	1	5
New Boston Local	3	1	1	5
Northwest Local	0	4	0	4
Notre Dame Schools	2	0	1	3
Portsmouth City	0	1	3	4
Sciotoville Community School	6	2	1	9
Valley Local	4	2	7	13
Washington-Nile Local	0	2	0	2
Wheelersburg Local	2	0	2	4
Totals	24	20	24	68

In 2009, the registration fee for the AP Summer Institute for an out-of-state teacher was \$495, but the cost to register for teachers eligible for the Scioto Foundation’s AP Summer Institute scholarship was only \$30.⁵ In 2010, the registration fee for the AP Summer Institute per teacher was \$555.⁶ The Scioto Foundation’s AP Summer Institute scholarship covered the entire cost of the registration fee for Scioto County teachers. Finally, in 2011, the registration fee for the AP Summer

⁴ Data provided by the Scioto Foundation.

⁵ Shawnee State University. Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure. 2009.

⁶ Shawnee State University. Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure. 2010.

Institute per teacher was \$595. The Scioto Foundation's AP Summer Institute scholarship paid for \$555 of the registration fee for Scioto County teachers.⁷

This project was designed to provide a preliminary evaluation of the AP Mini-Grant Program in order to assess the impact and effect that these grant programs are having on AP course offerings and student enrollment in participating school districts. The preliminary evaluation identified the most relevant and salient data required to evaluate the program. The goal is to create an annual or biennial monitoring process whereby appropriate data can be collected and analyzed each year.

In order to complete this program evaluation, data collection and analysis was divided into five categories:

- AP Course Data for Scioto County high schools from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE)
- AP Testing Data for the State of Ohio and nationally from the College Board
- AP Summer Institute Participation and Participant Evaluations
- Mail Survey of AP Mini-Grant Recipients and AP Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients
- Stakeholder Focus Group Session with UCAN Advisory Committee

Each of these five categories will be dealt with in the coming sections of this final report.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Before reviewing the data, a review of the current academic literature on Advanced Placement research is warranted. Much of the academic literature on Advanced Placement coursework tends

⁷ Shawnee State University. Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure. 2011.

to focus on the relationship between AP credit and academic success. The question that most research tends to ask is what is the relationship and what effect does it have on future academic success. The literature seems split as to whether the relationship is significant.

Clearly, evidence abounds that suggests a direct relationship between those students who take AP courses in high school and future academic success at the collegiate level. Numerous research studies by Rick Morgan (Morgan and Crone, 1993⁸; Morgan and Ramist, 1998⁹; and Morgan and Maneckshana, 2000¹⁰) indicate, on a consistent basis, that AP students perform at heightened levels of success when compared to other college students. This research has been corroborated by studies conducted across the nation, e.g. the University of Michigan, the University of Texas, the University of California, and Saginaw Valley State University. Specifically, Dodd, Fitzpatrick, De Ayala, and Jennings (2002) at the University of Texas at Austin conducted a study that reported that AP students tended to make higher grades in subsequent courses at the college level when compared to non-AP students.¹¹

There are, however, studies that suggest a minimal relationship between AP credit and academic success in college. One such study was conducted by Saul Geiser and Veronica Santelices (2004) at the University of California, Berkeley. They concluded a weak statistical relationship

⁸ Morgan, R. & Crone, C. Statistical Report No. 93-210: Advanced Placement at the University of California: An Examination of the Freshman Year Courses and Grades of Examinees in Biology, Calculus, and Chemistry. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, NJ: 1993.

⁹ Morgan, R. & Ramist, L. Statistical Report No. 98-13: *Advanced Placement Students in College: An Investigation of Course Grades at 21 Colleges*. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, NJ: 1998.

¹⁰ Morgan, R. & Maneckshana, R. Statistical Report No. 2000-09: *AP Students in College: An Investigation of Their Course-Taking Patterns and College Majors*. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, NJ: 2000.

¹¹ Dodd, R.G., Fitzpatrick, S.J., De Ayala, R.J., & Jennings, J. A. College Board Research Report No. 2002-09: *An Investigation of the Validity of AP Grades of 3 and a Comparison of AP and Non-AP Student Groups*. New York, NY: The College Board. 2002.

exists between those who took AP courses and later performance in college.¹² Interestingly, and subsequent to Geiser and Santelices (2004), a study by Rick Morgan and colleague John Klaric (2007), reported lower graduation rates for non-AP students when compared to students who took AP tests.¹³

The examples cited above, are demonstrative of the on-going debate between the proponents and detractors of Advanced Placement coursework. Everson and Donnelly (2010) in *The College Board's Advanced Placement Program: A Review of the Literature* summarized that, in general, the research suggests that AP students experience more success in college than those who did not take AP courses in high school.¹⁴

While the dialogue and research continues relative to AP courses and credit and its relationship to future academic success, most agree on the existence of a relationship. Identifying this "relationship" in a conclusive, measurable form has been thus far elusive for top educational researchers. Until intrinsic factors such as motivation, curiosity, intellect, purpose, as well as socio-economic factors are included in analytical studies, the strength of the relationship between Advanced Placement courses and improved academic achievement will continue to be debated.

¹² Geiser, S., & Santelices, V. *The Role of Advanced Placement and Honors Courses in College Admissions*. Center for Studies in Higher Education. Berkeley, CA: 2004.

¹³ Morgan, R. & Klaric, J. College Board Report No. 2007-04: *AP Students in College: An Analysis of Five-Year Academic Careers*. The College Board. New York, NY: 2007.

¹⁴ Everson, H.T. & Donnelly, S. Advanced Programs Initiative Working Paper No. 2010-01: *The College Board's Advanced Placement Program: A Review of the Literature*. The Center for Advanced Study in Education Graduate School, City University of New York. New York, NY: December 2010.

GRADUATION AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT TESTING DATA

One of the primary goals of the Scioto Foundation's AP grant and scholarship programs is to increase the number of certified AP instructors in participating school districts and to expand the number of students taking AP courses. In order to better understand AP courses and testing, data for all public Scioto County high schools was obtained from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). This data is reported annually by each public school district in the State of Ohio and the ODE publishes the data online.¹⁵

ODE publishes data for the eleven (11) Scioto County public school districts. Those districts are: Bloom-Vernon Local, Clay Local, Green Local, Minford Local, New Boston Local, Northwest Local, Portsmouth City, Sciotoville Community School, Valley Local, Washington-Nile Local, and Wheelersburg Local. The corresponding high schools for each school district are: South Webster High School, Clay High School, Green High School, Minford High School, Glenwood High School, Northwest High School, Portsmouth High School, East High School, Valley High School, Portsmouth West High School, and Wheelersburg High School respectively. There is also one private school in Scioto County. Notre Dame Schools (Notre Dame High School) did not respond to requests for their graduation and AP course and testing data.

For the purposes of this evaluation, data from the most recently available four school years were examined. These years were: 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009. There is a one year lag for available data provided by the ODE. The 2009-2010 data file contains data pertaining to the 2008-2009 school year. Data from the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years

¹⁵ Ohio.gov – Department of Education. *iLRC (Interactive Local Report Card Home) - Download Data.* <http://ilrc.ode.state.oh.us/Downloads.asp>.

has not yet been released by the ODE. Specifically, there were several pieces of data from each school district that were included in this analysis. Those data items were: total number of graduates, final graduation rate, number of graduates participating in an AP test, percent of graduates participating in an AP test, number of AP test takers with an AP score of 3 or above, and percent of AP test takers with an AP score of 3 or above. A score of 3 or above on an AP test is the minimum threshold for a student to potentially receive college credit for their AP courses. It must be noted that due to federal and state educational privacy laws, any data item for which a school reports data when there are less than ten (10) members in a subgroup is classified as NC (Not Calculated) in order to protect the identity of those individuals.¹⁶

Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, public high schools in Scioto County had 921 graduates for a final graduation rate of 96.0%. Of those 921 graduates, 159 took an AP exam (17.3%). There were no AP test takers who scored 3 or above for 2005-2006. However, six (6) school districts had data redacted in this category as NC. It should be noted that eight (8) of the eleven public school districts in Scioto County for 2005-2006 had at least one student take an AP exam. Portsmouth High School had the most AP test takers with 56 for this school year.

In 2006-2007, public high schools in Scioto County had 744 graduates for a final graduation rate of 88.2%. Of those 744 graduates, 123 took an AP exam (16.5%). However, three (3) school districts had data redacted in this category as NC. There were twenty-three (23) AP test takers who scored 3 or above for 2006-2007 for 18.7%. The same three school districts had data redacted in this category as NC. It should be noted that seven (7) of the eleven public school districts in

¹⁶ Ohio.gov – Department of Education. iLRC (Interactive Local Report Card Home) - Glossary. <http://ilrc.ode.state.oh.us/Glossary.asp>.

Scioto County for 2006-2007 had at least one student take an AP exam. Minford High School had the most AP test takers with 41 for this school year.

Public high schools in Scioto County for the 2007-2008 school year had 854 graduates for a final graduation rate of 95.9%. Of those 854 graduates, 175 took an AP exam (20.5%). However, one (1) school district had data redacted in this category as NC. There were twenty-six (26) AP test takers who scored 3 or above for 2007-2008 for 14.9%. The same school district had data redacted in this category as NC. It should be noted that seven (7) of the eleven public school districts in Scioto County for 2007-2008 had at least one student take an AP exam. Minford High School had the most AP test takers with 46 for this school year.

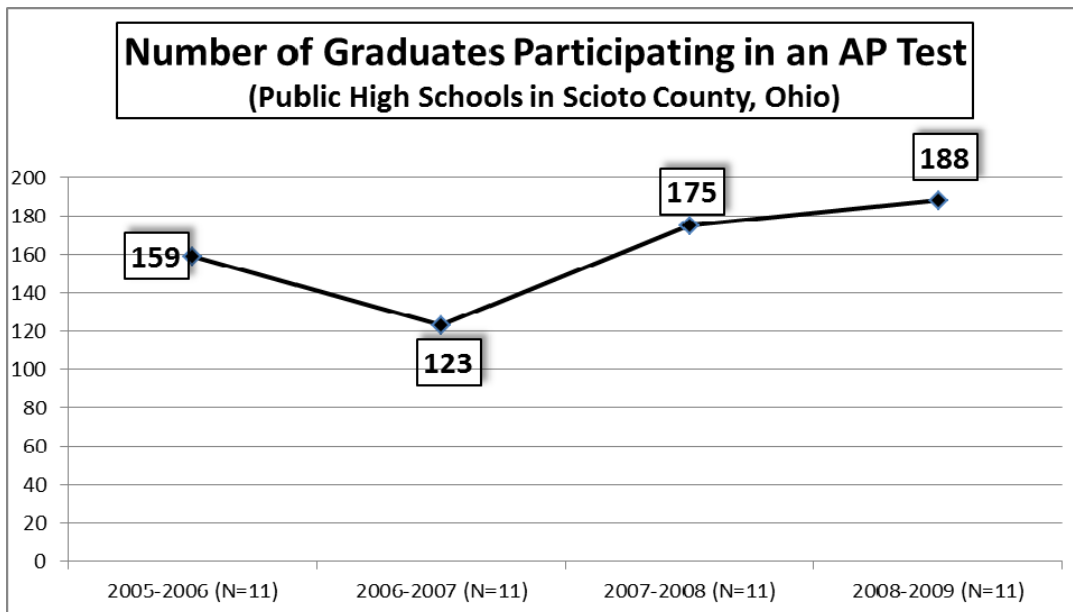
In 2008-2009, public high schools in Scioto County had 872 graduates for a final graduation rate of 96.6%. Of those 872 graduates, 188 took an AP exam (21.6%). However, two (2) school districts had data redacted in this category as NC. There were forty-two (42) AP test takers who scored 3 or above for 2008-2009 for 22.3%. The same two school districts had data redacted in this category as NC. It should be noted that nine (9) of the eleven public school districts in Scioto County for 2008-2009 had at least one student take an AP exam. South Webster High School had the most AP test takers with 55 for this school year.

Collapsing the data from each of these four (4) school years provides an aggregate look at the graduation and AP data from public high schools in Scioto County.

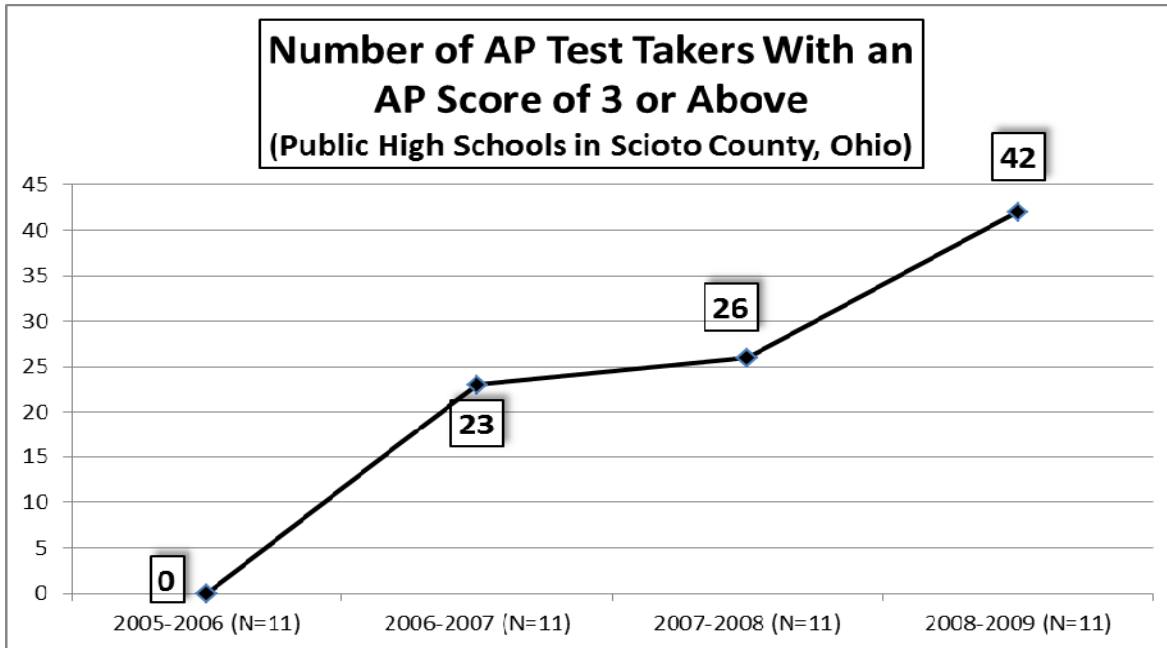
Public High Schools in Scioto County, Ohio

Year	Total Number of Graduates	Final Graduation Rate	Number of Graduates Participating in an AP Test	% of Graduates Participating in an AP Test	Number of AP Test Takers with an AP Score of 3 or Above	% of AP Test Takers with an AP Score of 3 or Above
2005-2006 (N=11)	921	96.0%	159	17.3%	0	0.0%
2006-2007 (N=11)	744	88.2%	123	16.5%	23	18.7%
2007-2008 (N=11)	854	95.9%	175	20.5%	26	14.9%
2008-2009 (N=11)	872	96.6%	188	21.6%	42	22.3%
FOUR YEAR COUNTY TOTALS / AVERAGES	3391	94.2%	645	19.0%	91	14.1%

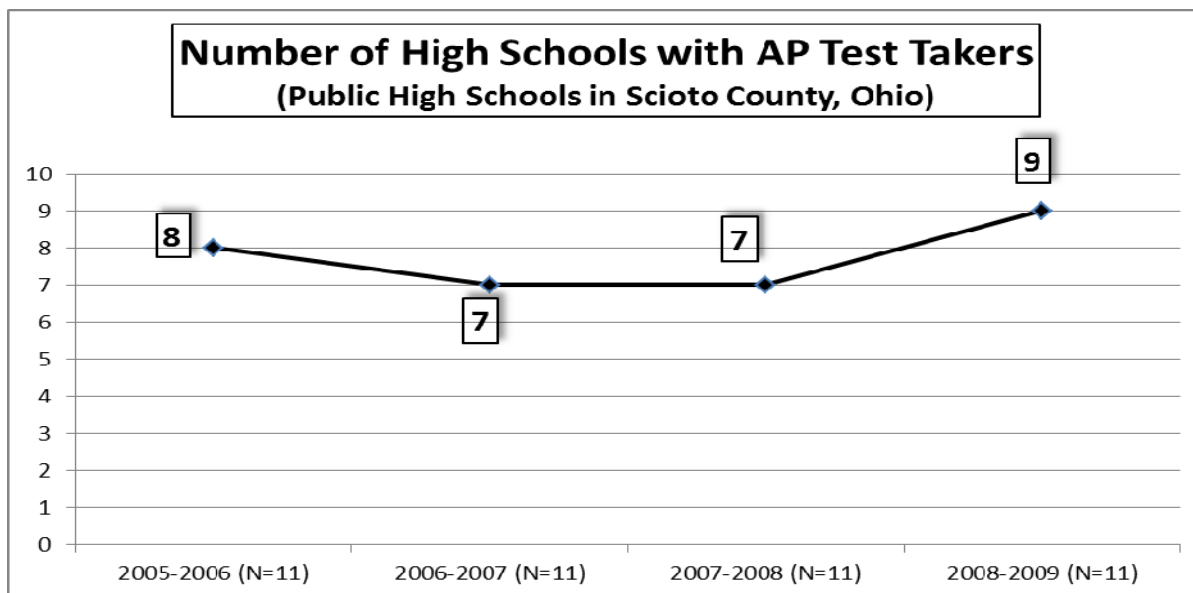
Examining each of these four school years in the data range yields some potentially positive trends since 2006-2007. Since 2006-2007, the total number of graduates and the graduation rates for public high schools in Scioto County have both increased. Also increasing in that same three year time period is both the number and percentage of graduates participating in an AP test.



The number of AP test takers scoring 3 or above has also increased in that same time period; however, on a percentage basis, the number of AP test takers scoring 3 or above has only increased since 2007-2008.



Finally, it should also be noted that the number of public high schools in Scioto County that had at least one AP test taker has also increased since 2006-2007.



When considering the potential impact of the AP Mini-Grant Program and the AP Summer Institute scholarships, it should be noted that the first AP Mini-Grants were awarded in 2008-2009. While that means that this is the first and only year in the data range for which AP data can be examined within the context of the grant funding and scholarship program, there are still some important data trends to monitor in upcoming years. The natural expectation with the presence of AP grant funding and scholarship funding from the Scioto Foundation would be to continue to see increased numbers of graduates who took an AP test while in high school, increased numbers of high schools having students participating in at least one AP test, and increased numbers of students taking an AP test and achieving a score of 3 or above. The expectation would be for these trend lines to continue to show positive growth in the years to come.

The other natural expectation, particularly as it relates to the impact of the scholarships for Scioto County teachers to attend the AP Summer Institute, would be to see increases in the number of teachers with the proper training to teach AP courses, increases in the number of AP courses offered in Scioto County high schools, as well as increases in the enrollment of students in these AP courses.

While ODE does not collect data on individual AP courses offered by each school district, the College Board collects data as it pertains to AP testing by subject area. This data provides some insight into the subject areas in which students are testing as well as performance on those tests. Data from 2008 and 2009 yield some positive trends for high schools in Scioto County. In 2008, there were seven (7) high schools accounting for a total of 176 students who took an AP exam that year. Of those 176 students, 26 students scored 3 or above. A total of 244 exams were

administered to those 176 students with 31 exams being scored 3 or above. Those numbers increased across the board from 2008 to 2009. In 2009, there were nine (9) high schools accounting for a total of 191 students who took an AP exam that year. Of those 191 students, 43 students scored 3 or above. A total of 294 exams were administered to those 191 students with 50 exams being scored 3 or above.

Additionally, from 2008 to 2009, the total number of subject areas across all school districts in Scioto County in which students were tested increased from 21 total subject areas in 2008 to 23 total subject areas in 2009. The number of unique courses remained consistent at eight (8) for both 2008 and 2009, although there was one change in subject areas over that time period. In 2008, students tested in AP Micro-Economics, but none did so in 2009. However, in 2009, students tested in AP Biology, but none had done so in 2008. The other seven (7) courses remained the same for both years: AP Macro-Economics, AP English Literature & Composition, AP English Language & Composition, AP Calculus AB, AP Chemistry, AP Government & Politics: US, and AP Psychology. Data for 2010 and 2011 was not available. In subsequent years, these patterns should continue to trend upward in terms of the total number of students taking an AP exam, the number of Scioto County school districts with students taking an AP exam, the number of subject areas students are taking an AP exam in, and the number of students (and number of tests) in which a score of 3 or above is earned.

Furthermore, a mail survey conducted for this program evaluation collected some self-reported data from grant recipients. A more thorough examination of the survey data on AP courses in school districts appears in the section of this report entitled "Mail Survey of AP Mini-

Grant Recipients and AP Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients.” However, the data indicates that two school districts reported an increase in the number of AP courses being offered and the number of students enrolled in those AP courses. Once again, this is a pattern that should continue in the years to come and hopefully extend to additional school districts.

In order to provide some context for the state of AP education in Scioto County, Scioto County public school districts were compared with these surrounding counties: Adams, Jackson, Lawrence, and Pike. Aggregate data for high school students in these four counties over the four-year period can be seen below.

Public High Schools in Adams, Jackson, Lawrence, and Pike Counties, Ohio

Year	Total Number of Graduates	Final Graduation Rate	Number of Graduates Participating in an AP Test	% of Graduates Participating in an AP Test	Number of AP Test Takers with an AP Score of 3 or Above	% of AP Test Takers with an AP Score of 3 or Above
2005-2006 (N=18)	1796	92.9%	127	7.1%	37	29.1%
2006-2007 (N=19)	1744	89.9%	85	4.9%	44	51.8%
2007-2008 (N=19)	1776	89.0%	91	5.1%	42	46.2%
2008-2009 (N=19)	1685	87.3%	95	5.6%	52	54.7%
FOUR YEAR FOUR COUNTY TOTALS / AVERAGES	7001	89.8%	398	5.7%	175	44.0%

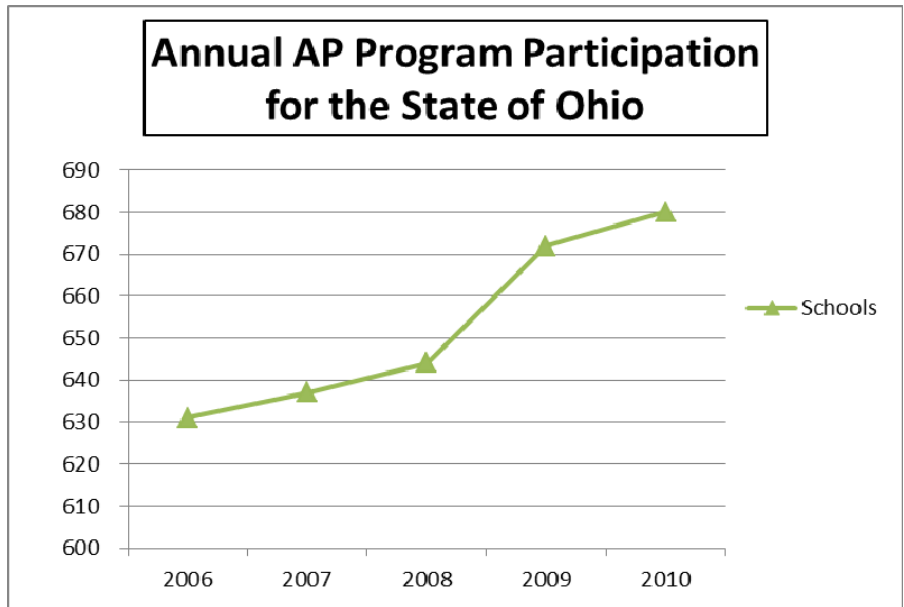
Overall, the comparative data of the school districts from the four counties surrounding Scioto County show that these four counties are significantly behind Scioto County in both the number and percentage of high school graduates who participated in an AP test. However, the percentage of AP test takers with an AP score of 3 or above is much greater in this four county area as compared to Scioto County over the same four year time period. It appears, based on this data,

that while far fewer students in this four county area are taking AP exams, those students tend to fare much better in terms of their score on the AP exams. There are a multitude of factors that could explain these results but are beyond the scope of this evaluation. Regardless of the factors influencing the comparative differences, increasing the number of students who score 3 or above on an AP test is an area in which public high schools in Scioto County could improve.

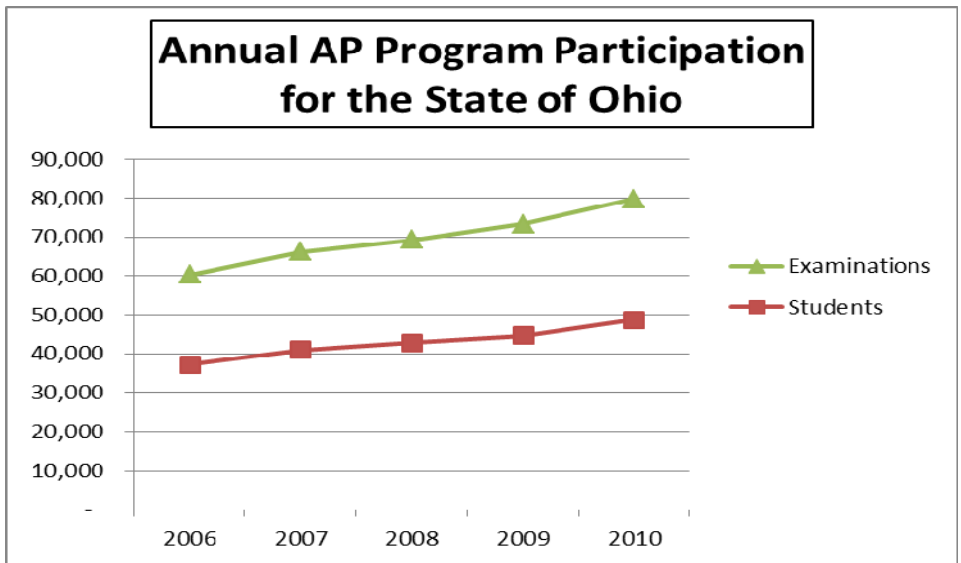
STATE OF OHIO AND NATIONAL ADVANCED PLACEMENT TESTING DATA

In addition to comparing AP testing data to the counties surrounding Scioto County, the data can also be framed within the context of the State of Ohio as well as nationally. For every state, the College Board provides data on Annual AP Program Participation. For the State of Ohio, since 2006, the data indicates increases across the board in terms of the number of high schools offering AP courses, the number of students taking AP exams, and the total number of AP exams being taken.¹⁷ The number of Ohio high schools offering AP courses has steadily increased from 631 in 2006 to 680 in 2010.

¹⁷ The College Board. *Annual AP Program Participation for the State of Ohio*. http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/student/testing/ap/sumrpts/2010/OHIO_Summary.xls.



The number of students in Ohio taking AP exams has steadily increased from 37,260 in 2006 to 48,633 in 2010. The total number of AP exams being taken by Ohio students has also increased during that same timeframe from 60,275 in 2006 to 79,794 in 2010. It should be noted that these figures include every instance of a student taking an AP exam in any year. Students who take more than one AP exam are counted twice in these figures; likewise students who take AP exams in multiple years are also counted twice in these figures.



The 2010 Advanced Placement results released by the College Board show that the number of Ohio AP test takers and those test takers scoring a 3 or above are both increasing. In 2006, 18,526 Ohio high school seniors took at least one AP exam. That figure rose to 23,045 by 2010. Likewise, the number of Ohio high school seniors who scored a 3 or above on an AP exam at any point in high school increased from 11,555 in 2006 to 14,323 by 2010.¹⁸

Nationally, in 2006, 646,310 high school seniors across the United States took at least one AP exam. That figure rose to 853,314 by 2010. Likewise, the number of high school seniors across the United States who scored a 3 or above on an AP exam at any point in high school increased from 403,150 in 2006 to 508,818 by 2010¹⁹ For some perspective, 11.8% of the class of 2010 in Ohio completed high school having scored 3 or above on an AP exam at any point in high school. The national average was 16.9%, and Ohio ranked 31st out of 50 states.²⁰

AP SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Scioto Foundation has underwritten the majority of the cost for teachers in Scioto County, Ohio to attend the AP (Advanced Placement) Summer Institute at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio in the form of scholarships. The AP Summer Institute is designed to provide “subject specific professional development opportunities that provide teachers with the support

¹⁸ College Board. *The 7th Annual AP Report to the Nation: State Supplement Ohio*. <http://www.collegeboard.com/apreport>. February 9, 2011.

¹⁹ College Board. *The 7th Annual AP Report to the Nation*. <http://www.collegeboard.com/apreport>. February 9, 2011.

²⁰ College Board. *The 7th Annual AP Report to the Nation*. <http://www.collegeboard.com/apreport>. February 9, 2011, page 5.

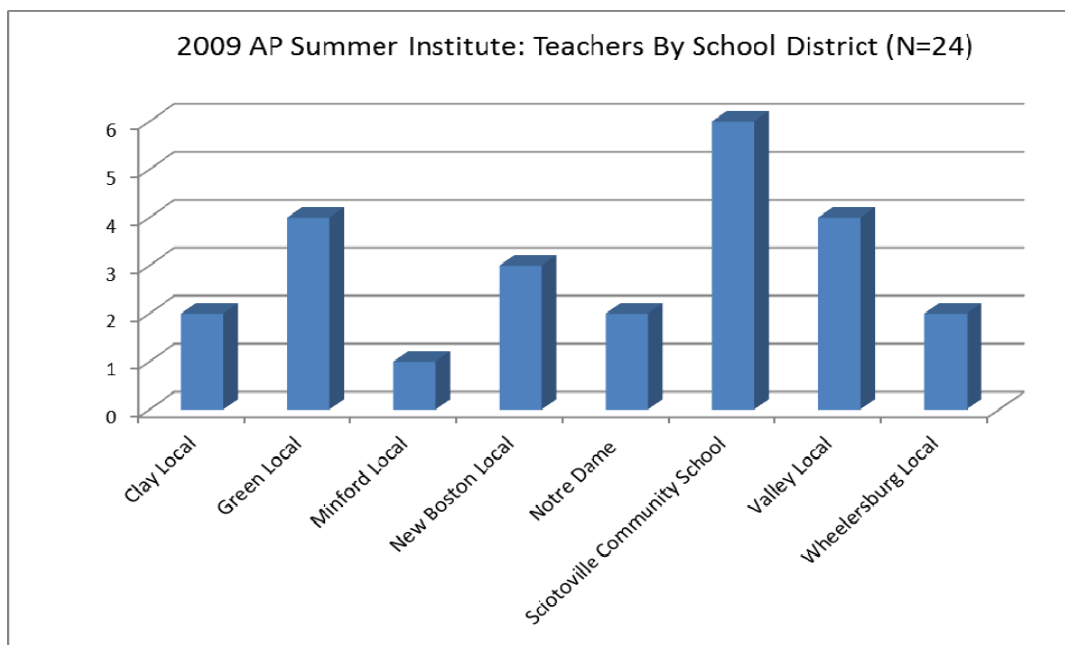
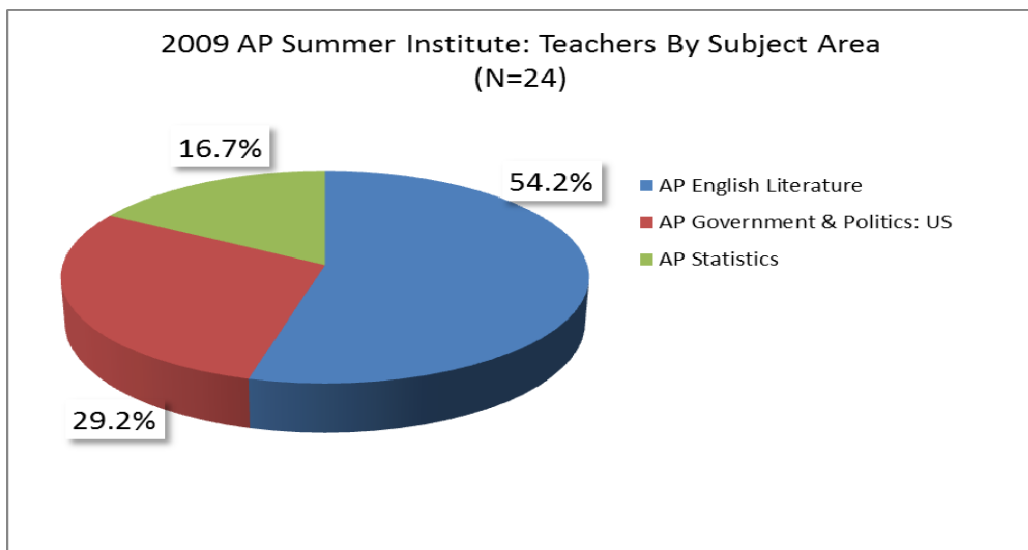
and training needed to teach AP courses and to utilize Pre-AP teaching strategies.”²¹ The Scioto Foundation has partnered with Shawnee State University for the past three AP Summer Institutes (2009, 2010, and 2011).

The Summer Institute is held each summer (usually in June) on the campus of Shawnee State University, and the University brings in outside consultants to lead the workshops. Each year, the Summer Institute offers AP workshops in a variety of subject areas rotating based on need, teacher interest, and consultant availability.

The goal of underwriting the majority of the cost for Scioto County teachers to attend the Summer Institute is to provide support for teachers seeking professional development opportunities in the area of Advanced Placement teaching. The focus is on increasing the number of Scioto County teachers that complete the Summer Institute, thus increasing the number of teachers able to offer AP courses in Scioto County school districts. A brief review of the Summer Institute for each of the past three years is provided below.

In 2009, the AP Summer Institute offered AP Workshops in the following subject areas: AP English Literature, AP Statistics, and AP Government & Politics: US. A total of twenty-four (24) teachers from Scioto County representing eight (8) different Scioto County school districts completed the Summer Institute with the support of the Scioto Foundation.

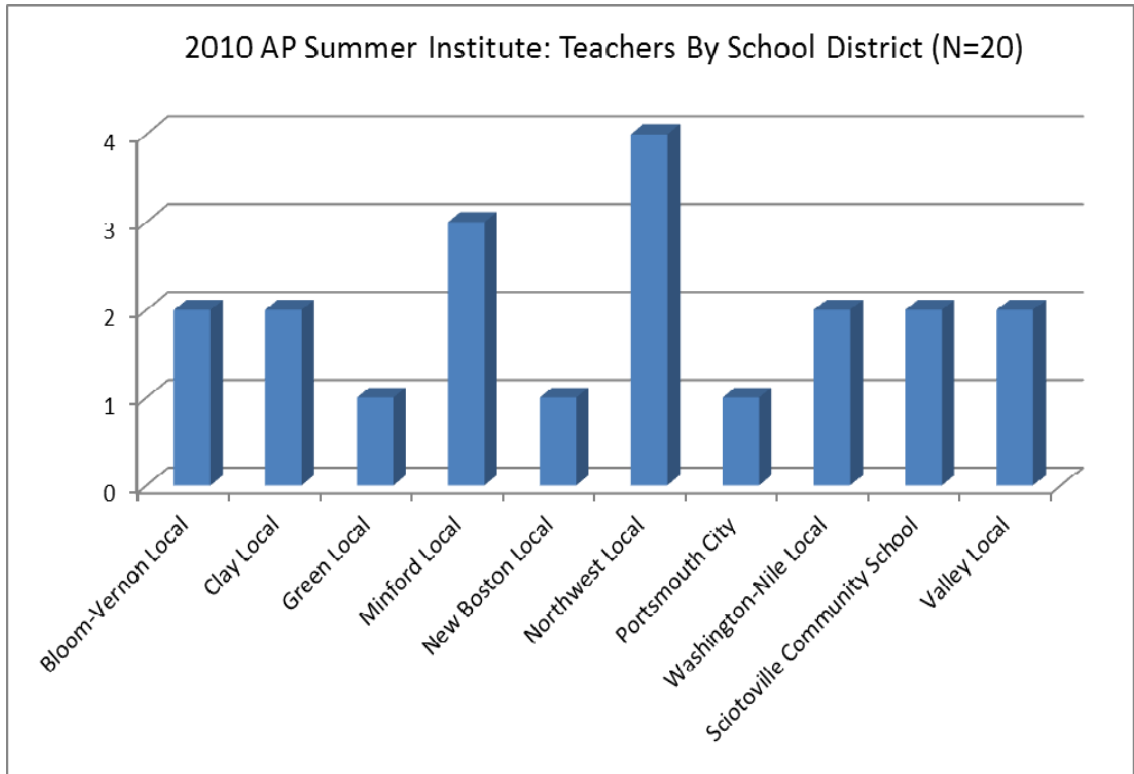
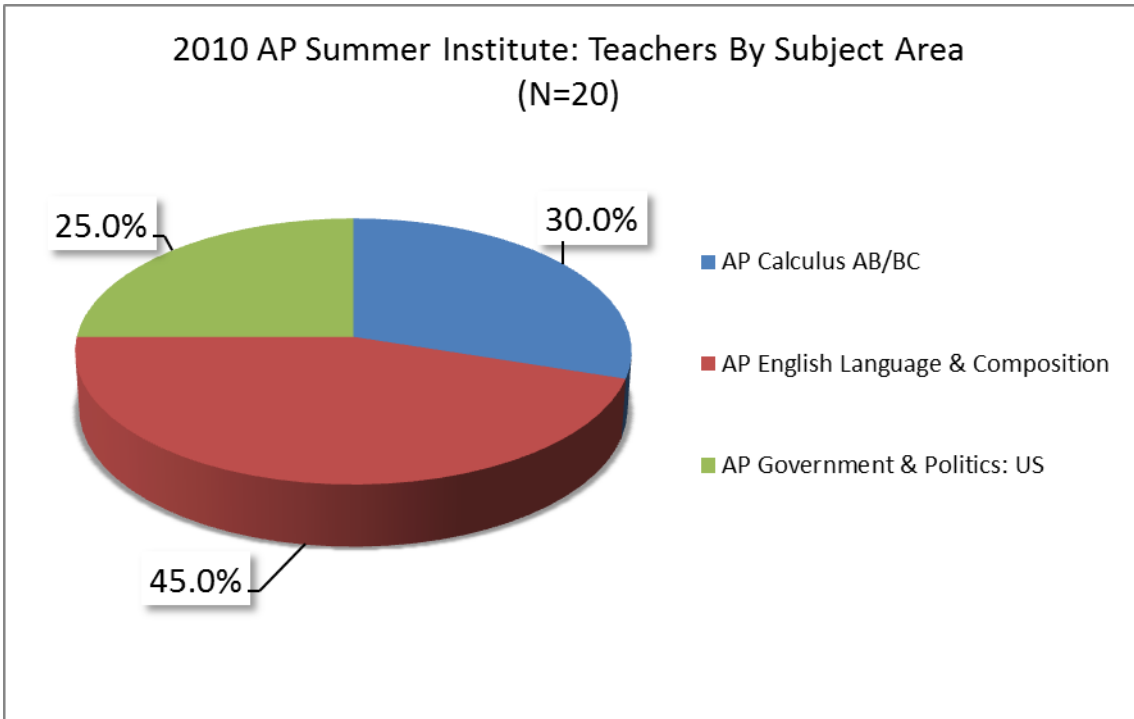
²¹ Shawnee State University. *Advanced Placement Summer Institute Brochure*. 2011.



Participant evaluation data and consultant evaluation data was not available for the 2009 AP Summer Institute.

In 2010, the AP Summer Institute offered AP Workshops in the following subject areas: AP English Language & Composition, AP Calculus AB/BC, and AP Government & Politics: US. A total of twenty (20) teachers from Scioto County representing ten (10) different Scioto County school

districts completed the Summer Institute with the support of the Scioto Foundation.



Two conclusions can be drawn from a review of the 2010 AP Summer Institute. First, there remains consistent interest in the Summer Institute, and teachers continue to participate in the workshops with support from the Scioto Foundation. Second, a copy of an internal summary report of the AP Summer Institute participant evaluations provided by Shawnee State University reveals very positive reviews of the AP Summer Institute across all AP workshops.²² Those teachers who completed the Summer Institute had very positive reviews of the curriculum, the learning environment, and the overall administration of the program on the part of Shawnee State University. As stated in the Summary Report, “One hundred percent of the participants rated the overall quality of their session as excellent or good.”²³ Additionally, the report indicated that book publishers provided multiple sample textbooks free for each participant as takeaways from the workshops.

Issues or problems that were identified in the Summary Report were all administrative in nature and relatively minor. These issues included confusion as to the ‘type’ of graduate credit being offered for completing the Summer Institute, a lack of evening activities for those who opted for on-campus housing, and issues with parity in the travel reimbursement for the workshop consultants.²⁴ Overall, the participant evaluations would seem to indicate that the AP Summer Institute functions well both administratively and as a meaningful learning experience for teachers seeking professional development.

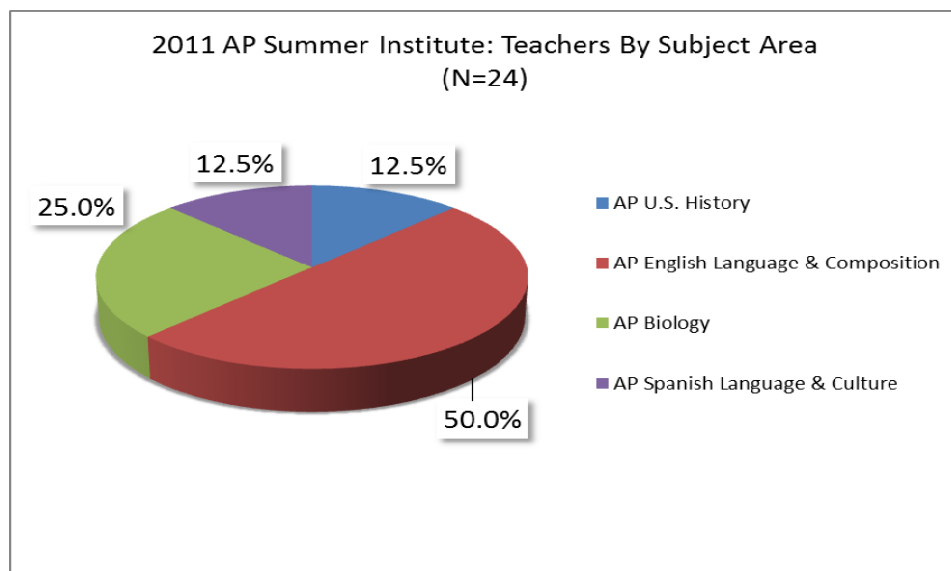
²² The participant evaluations were based on the responses of all teachers attending the AP Summer Institute, not solely teachers from Scioto County, Ohio.

²³ Shawnee State University. *AP Summer Institute Summary Report*, 2010.

²⁴ Shawnee State University. *AP Summer Institute Summary Report*, 2010.

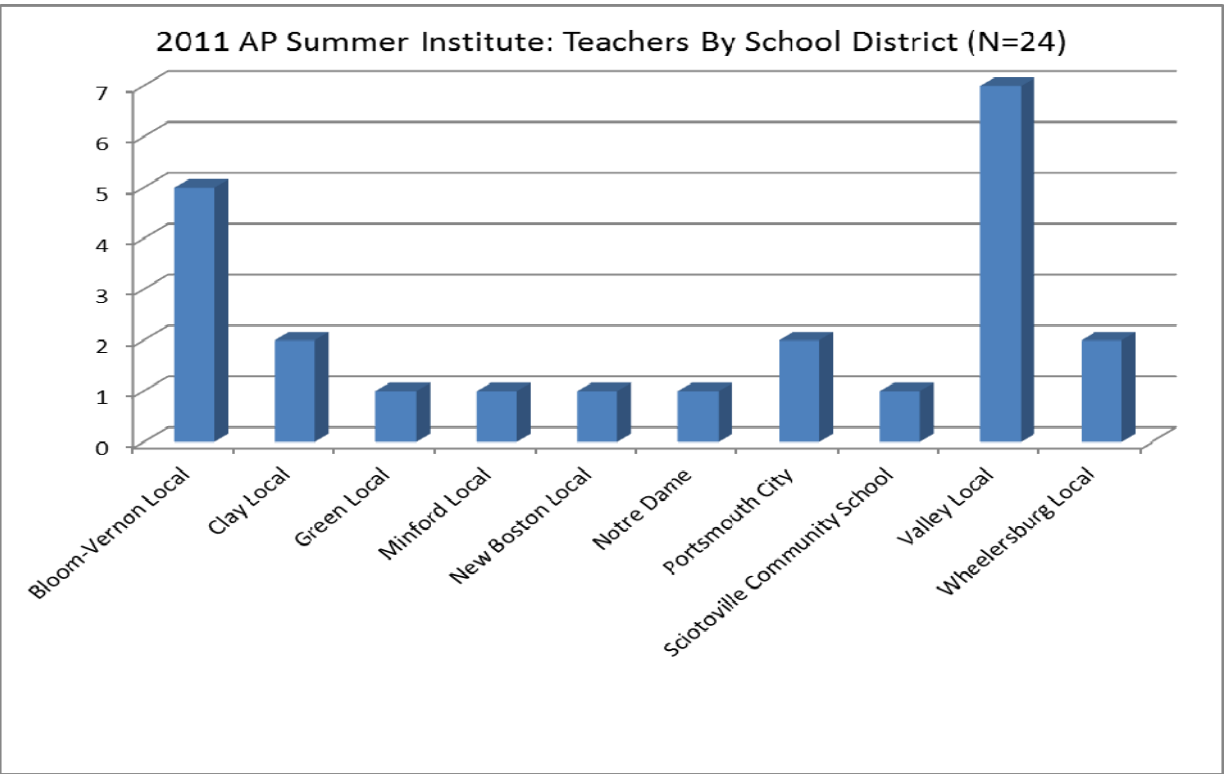
Shawnee State University also provided their internal evaluation for the three workshop consultants. Each of the three workshop consultants were rated as excellent by the AP Summer Institute staff. Additionally, all three workshop consultants “received high praise from the teachers in attendance.”²⁵ It was noted that all three workshop consultants were “sensitive to the different levels of AP experience among the teachers.”²⁶ Overall, it seems that there was an overwhelmingly positive review of the workshop consultants on both the part of the AP Summer Institute staff as well as the teachers who participated in the workshops.

The most recent AP Summer Institute was held in June 2011. The AP workshops covered the following subject areas: AP English Language & Composition, AP Spanish Language & Culture, AP U.S. History, and AP Biology. A total of twenty-four (24) teachers from Scioto County representing ten (10) different Scioto County school districts completed the Summer Institute with the support of the Scioto Foundation.



²⁵ Shawnee State University. *AP Summer Consultant Evaluation Form*, 2010.

²⁶ Shawnee State University. *AP Summer Consultant Evaluation Form*, 2010.



Of those twenty-four (24) teachers, only three (3) teachers indicated that they had already taught an AP or Pre-AP course.²⁷

In 2011, as was seen in 2010, there remains consistent interest in the AP Summer Institute, and teachers continue to participate in the workshop with support from the Scioto Foundation. Discussions at previous UCAN Advisory Board Meetings indicated there was a need for a diversification of workshop subject areas offered in subsequent years of the AP Summer Institute. In 2011, the Summer Institute offered an AP Biology workshop for the first time. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the teachers from Scioto County who completed the Summer Institute in 2011 took the AP Biology workshop. Finally, it should be noted that the vast majority of teachers from Scioto County who completed the Summer Institute in 2011 had not previously taught an AP or

²⁷ Similar data for 2009 and 2010 was not collected by Shawnee State University.

Pre-AP course. This would seem to indicate a willingness on the part of these teachers to seek out professional development opportunities with an eye towards teaching an AP course in the future. This type of professional development should translate into teachers that are better prepared in the classroom, more prepared to teach AP courses, and more willing to offer AP courses during their teaching careers. Participant evaluations and consultant evaluations were not yet available for 2011.

Overall, there seems to be a very positive working relationship between the Scioto Foundation and the AP Summer Institute at Shawnee State University. There have been a consistent number of teachers from Scioto County participating each year. The participant evaluations for 2010 were overwhelmingly positive in regards to the learning and professional development being provided through the workshops. And AP Summer Institute officials seem responsive to the needs of teachers based on their willingness to rotate the workshops offered each year and to offer new workshops as demand warrants.

**MAIL SURVEY OF AP MINI-GRANT RECIPIENTS AND
AP SUMMER INSTITUTE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

One of the primary areas of concern when conducting a program evaluation is receiving feedback on the program from those who are the targeted direct beneficiaries of the program. While students are the ultimate beneficiaries of the AP Mini-Grant Program, the focus remains on teachers as the direct recipients of the AP Mini-Grants as well as the recipients of the professional development provided by the AP Summer Institute. In order to obtain the necessary feedback from the school district staff who have received AP Mini-Grants and completed the AP

Summer Institute, the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University assembled a survey instrument designed to elicit feedback about the current grant programs, the impact on AP courses in each school district, and to gather some general information about AP courses from the perspective of each grant recipient's school district. While the Foundation's grant/scholarship program focuses on school district staff through the provision of grant money for AP teaching and testing related costs as well as underwriting the cost of professional development, issues related to AP courses do not stop at this point. Another area of importance to consider is what is happening within individual school districts as it relates to AP courses. A fuller picture of AP course offerings and opportunities for Scioto County high school students must also take into account how individual school districts deal with a variety of issues related to AP course offerings and the recruitment of students to those courses. The survey questionnaire was designed to capture this type of information in addition to basic information about the AP Mini-Grant Program.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY: The mail survey protocol used a modified-Dillman²⁸ methodology which has proven to increase response rates through precise design and administration techniques. The mailing list used to conduct this survey was provided to the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University by the Scioto Foundation (AP Mini-Grant recipients for 2008, 2009, and 2010) and Shawnee State University's AP Summer Institute registration databases (AP Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients for 2009 and 2010).

²⁸ See Dillman, Don A. 2000. *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

All surveys conducted by the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University are subject to review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) within the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship (OARS) at Miami University to insure compliance with federal regulations governing research involving the use of human subjects. In order to receive approval from OARS, the survey instrument must specifically state the rights of those who choose to participate by submitting a survey response. For this survey, respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, that they may choose not to answer any question, that only aggregated summaries of responses will be reported (not individual school district staff member responses), and that returning the survey served as consent to use the information it contained in the preparation of a final report evaluating the AP Mini-Grant Program. Approval of the survey instrument was granted by OARS on December 22, 2010²⁹.

A master mailing list was created from the data provided by the Scioto Foundation (AP Mini-Grant recipients) and Shawnee State University's AP Summer Institute registration databases (AP Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients). The master mailing list contained a total of seventy-one (71) school district staff member names and addresses. Since school district staff members could have applied for an AP Mini-Grant in multiple years and/or applied for both an AP Mini-Grant and completed the AP Summer Institute, duplicate school district staff member names and addresses were removed from the database. An eleven (11) question tri-fold survey questionnaire was mailed to the fifty-one (51) individual grant recipients remaining in the master mailing list in December 2010. Each survey packet included a tri-fold survey instrument and a return-addressed

²⁹ The Institutional Review Board (IRB) certified that this research was designated as Exempt from IRB Review on December 22, 2010. The project was assigned Exempt Research Certificate Number 00244.

postage-paid business reply envelope. The survey requested that the AP Mini-Grant recipient and/or AP Summer Institute completer complete the survey.

A second survey instrument was mailed to the individual school district staff members in the master mailing list in March 2010. The second survey instrument packet was identical to the first one and provided grant recipients with a second opportunity to participate.

A total of 12 usable responses were returned, for a response rate of 23.53%³⁰.

Net Grant/Scholarship Recipients Mailed	51
Grant/Scholarship Recipients Responding	12
Response Rate	23.53%

All surveys are subject to sources of error, such as bias in the wording of questions, timing, issue salience, as well as other factors. The instrument design, format, and timing attempted to increase the response rate and to minimize bias. The findings reported herein can be taken as an accurate reflection of the opinions of only those who responded to the survey. However, these opinions are ephemeral and therefore may change over time. Thus, they reflect a snapshot of grant recipients' views at the time the survey was conducted.

The majority of surveys returned were completed in full. However, some respondents chose not to answer parts or specific questions in the survey. Incomplete surveys were included in the database, thus some questions may have more responses than others. Due to rounding, some of the reported percentages may not equal 100%.

³⁰ The response rate is calculated by dividing the number of returned surveys (12) by the total number of grant recipients who were mailed surveys (51).

The survey instrument was drafted by the staff at the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University in consultation with Scioto Foundation officials. The survey questions were designed to elicit responses in several forms. While the instrument comprised forced choice and rating intensity questions, open ended questions allowed the grant recipients to respond in their own words about a number of issues about the AP Mini-Grant Program, the AP Summer Institute, and AP courses in general. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey instrument.

The first set of questions asked specifically about the AP Mini-Grant Program. Grant recipients were asked to provide information about how they heard about the program, why they chose to apply for the grant funding, and how they used the grant funding.

The second section of questions gathered information on AP courses in the grant recipient's school district. Grant recipients were asked to list the AP courses they had taught in the past five (5) years. They were also asked to assess their school district's receptiveness to increasing the number AP course offerings for students. Finally, grant recipients were asked to identify the greatest obstacle to increasing the number of AP course offerings in their school district.

The next set of questions focused specifically on the recruitment of students for AP courses. Grant recipients were asked how recruitment was handled in their school district and to then assess their satisfaction with their school district's ability to recruit students to take AP courses. Finally, grant recipients were asked to identify the greatest obstacle to recruiting students to take AP courses in their school district.

The final two questions reverted back to the AP Mini-Grant program by asking grant recipients for ideas on changes or improvements that could be made to the program in future funding years.

The last question on the survey asked grant recipients if they would be interested in participating in a follow-up focus group session concerning the AP Mini-Grant Program.

SURVEY RESULTS: The survey asked for some basic contact information from the grant recipients (name, telephone, and e-mail address) as well as information pertaining to school district and subject area taught. Of the twelve (12) respondents to the survey, 58.3% had completed the AP Summer Institute at Shawnee State University while the remaining 41.7% were recipients of an AP Mini-Grant. 50.0% were male and 50.0% were female. Nine (9) different school districts were represented with the number of respondents from each district in parentheses:

Bloom-Vernon Local (1)	Sciotoville Community School (1)
Clay Local (3)	Valley Local (1)
Green Local (1)	Washington-Nile Local (1)
Minford Local (2)	Wheelersburg Local (1)
New Boston Local (1)	

In terms of subject areas taught, five (5) respondents were school district administrative staff (superintendent, guidance counselor, etc.), four (4) respondents taught math, and the remaining respondents taught English, Language Arts, and Government & Politics.

The first question asked respondents “How did you hear about the AP Mini-Grant Program?” Nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they had heard about the program from someone within their school district by a building principal, guidance counselor, superintendent, or co-worker. The remaining 41.7% of respondents heard about the program via direct contact from the Scioto Foundation via Scioto Foundation staff or via materials prepared by the Scioto Foundation. All of

the respondents who were school district administrative staff indicated that they had heard about the program directly from the Scioto Foundation, while all of the respondents who were teachers indicated that they had heard about the program from someone within their school district. This would seem to indicate that the Scioto Foundation is having success promoting the program particularly at the school district level, and it seems that the pertinent grant/scholarship information is being successfully disseminated to teachers in the school districts represented by the survey respondents.

The second question asked respondents “Why did you apply for the AP Mini-Grant?” Based on the grant application information provided each year to the Scioto Foundation, grant recipients have used AP Mini-Grants in the past for testing fees and preparation (AP, PSAT, or SAT) or teaching supplies/materials. Respondents indicated that they applied for the grant funding for the AP Summer Institute because they felt the Summer Institute would be informative, that it would “give our students more opportunity in choice of classes,” and that the Foundation’s scholarship helped to avoid a monetary hardship to attend the Summer Institute. Those respondents who received AP Mini-Grants cited several reasons why they applied for the grant funding. Those reasons included a desire to “increase student access to AP courses,” to help provide “additional learning opportunities for our students,” and to offset the costs associated with AP testing. One respondent indicated that in their school district: “Our goal is to significantly increase AP participation.” The responses provided to this question seem to indicate that there is both a financial component as well as an educational component that serves as a driving force for these grant applicants. In other words, it seems that these grant/scholarship resources are being

leveraged to provide opportunities for both teachers and students in Scioto County that might not otherwise be provided.

The third question on the survey asked respondents to “Please describe how you used the grant funding?” Seven (7) of the twelve (12) respondents (58.3%) used the grant funding in the form of a scholarship to cover the cost of attending the AP Summer Institute. The remaining five (5) respondents used the AP Mini-Grant funding for teacher training, test preparation / exam assistance, and testing fees. Finally, one respondent indicated that they used the grant funding “for students that have a financial need and used a small amount for an incentive for those that do well.”

The fourth question focused more specifically on AP courses and asked, “What Advanced Placement (AP) courses have you taught in the past five (5) years? Please provide course title, year, and enrollment.” The responses to this question were fairly varied and diverse. Some chose to provide information based on their personal experience as a teacher while others provided information for their entire school district. First, those who responded to the question based on their personal experience will be addressed. One respondent from the Minford Local School District indicated that they had taught Calculus in each of the past five (5) years averaging 10-12 students per year. A respondent from the Clay Local School District had taught Calculus in three (3) of the past four (4) years with three (3) students in 2007-2008, two (2) students in 2009-2010, and seven (7) students in 2010-2011. Another respondent from the Clay Local School District had taught English Literature & Composition in 2010-2011. A respondent from the Washington-Nile Local School District had taught US Government & Politics in 2010-2011. One respondent from

Sciotoville Community Schools indicated that they would be teaching Calculus in the upcoming (at the time of the survey) second semester of the 2010-2011 school year.

Other respondents provided information regarding AP courses for their entire school district. One school district (New Boston Local School District) has offered AP courses in English Literature & Composition (2007-2008), US Government & Politics (2008-2009), Statistics (2009-2010), and Calculus (2010-2011). Another district, Valley Local School District, has offered the following AP courses:

2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Calculus A/B US Government & Politics Chemistry	Calculus A/B US Government & Politics Chemistry English Literature & Composition	Calculus A/B US Government & Politics Chemistry English Literature & Composition	Calculus A/B US Government & Politics Chemistry English Literature & Composition	Calculus A/B US Government & Politics Chemistry English Literature & Composition

Wheelersburg Local School District has offered the following AP courses in the past two years.

Enrollments are noted in parentheses:

2009-2010	2010-2011
Calculus (14) English Literature & Composition (7) US Government & Politics (8) Chemistry (13)	Calculus (18) English Literature & Composition (6) US Government & Politics (7) Chemistry (26)

New Boston Local School District has offered the following AP courses:

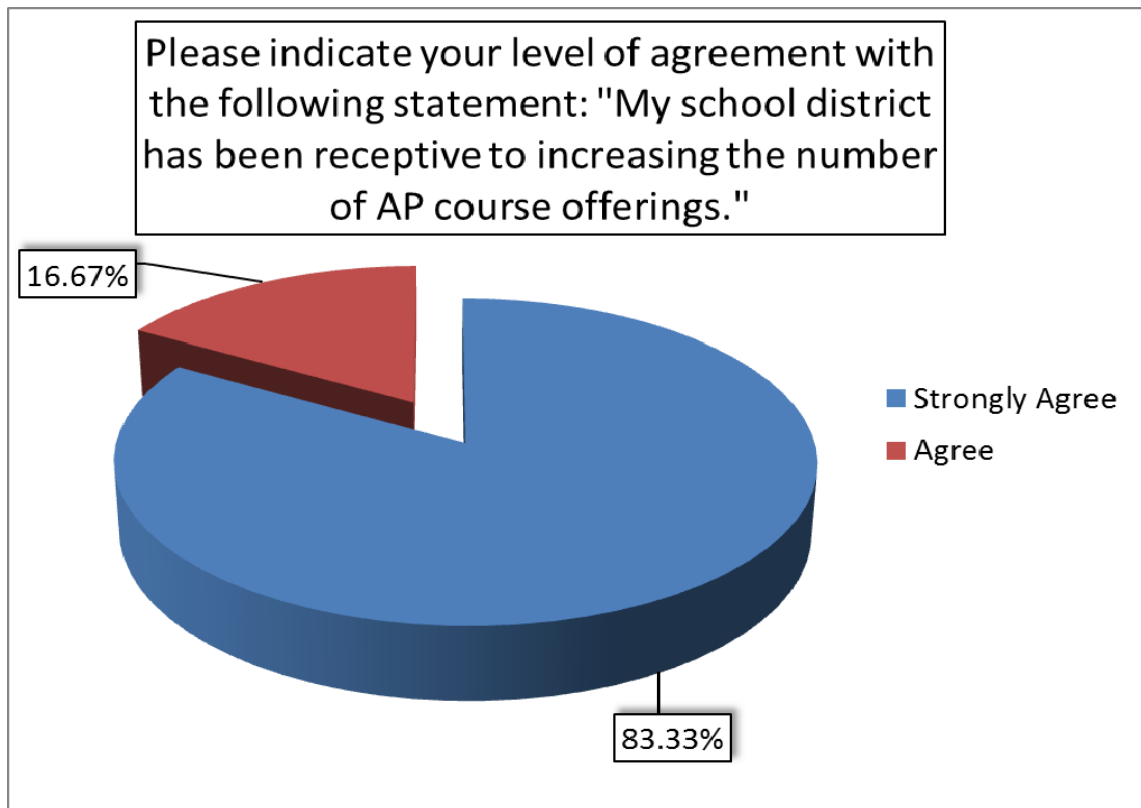
2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
English Literature & Composition	English Literature & Composition	US Government & Politics	Statistics	Calculus

What is interesting to note in terms of AP course offerings is that the core courses seem to be: Calculus, English Literature & Composition, US Government & Politics, and Chemistry. Statistics is also occasionally taught. This data seems to validate some of the concerns expressed regarding the need for the AP Summer Institute to offer workshops in a greater variety of subject areas. This would enable more (and different) teachers to participate in the Summer Institute and also diversify the AP course offerings in individual school districts.

It is also interesting to examine enrollment data. While only two (2) respondents (from the Clay Local and Wheelersburg Local School Districts) reported longitudinal enrollment data for AP courses in their school districts, each of these districts shared a similar pattern. That pattern showed an increase in the number of students enrolled in AP courses for 2010-2011 as compared to previous years. In subsequent school years, we would expect both the number of AP course offerings as well as the enrollments in each course to grow as the AP Mini-Grant Program and support for the AP Summer Institute continues.

The next question attempted to gauge the grant recipient's opinion on the growth of AP course offerings in their school district. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: "My school district has been receptive to increasing the number of AP course offerings." The overwhelming majority of respondents (83.3%) strongly agreed with this statement; the remaining 16.7% of respondents agreed with this statement. These responses would seem to indicate that there is support within individual school districts to grow the number of AP courses being offered. One could have logically assumed that this might have been the case based on the number of respondents who indicated that officials in their

individual school districts encouraged teachers to pursue AP Mini-Grant funding and AP Summer Institute scholarship opportunities based on responses to the first two questions on the survey.



The next question was a follow-up to the previous question and asked respondents, "What is the greatest obstacle to increasing the number of AP course offerings in your district?" This was an open-ended question which allowed grant recipients to describe the greatest obstacle in their own words. Some of the respondents provided multiple obstacles in their response. A content analysis of the responses to this question yielded a total of fourteen (14) obstacles cited. Collapsing those responses into meaningful categories yielded some interesting results. The most frequently cited obstacle was issues related to staffing within individual school districts as 43.86% of the responses fell into this category. Some of the issues related to staff included the total quantity of staff in a district as well as staff lacking the necessary training, professional development, and certification

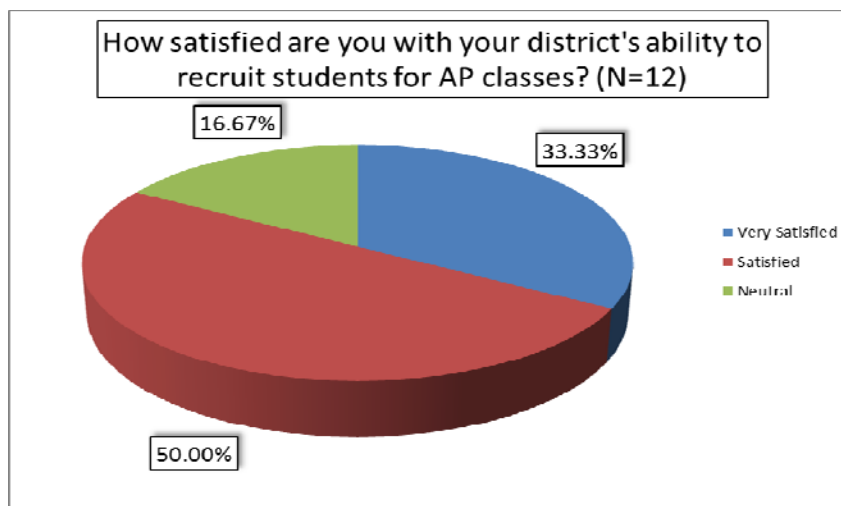
to teach AP courses. One respondent seemed to encapsulate the problem, particularly for the smaller school districts in Scioto County with their response: “In such a small district in which every staff member has multiple preps/subject/duties to cover, it is hard to justify using a staff member for 4-10 students when decreasing class sizes/offering other courses may be better for the district.” This response illustrates the challenge that some school districts face when it comes to offering AP courses in terms of having enough trained teachers, necessary staffing levels for the majority of students who are non-AP students, as well as other duties that teachers must cover.

The remaining responses identified the following obstacles: Scheduling (14.29%), Students (14.29%), Time (14.29%), and Budgetary Concerns (14.29%). Scheduling seems to refer to when AP courses can be logically offered and making sure the sequence of courses is properly established. Students refers to not having enough students who wish to enroll in AP courses as well as the rigor with which students are being prepared in courses that are designed to feed into AP courses. Time refers to the amount of teacher preparation time and effort that must be devoted to planning, teaching, and administering AP courses. One respondent noted that the additional time involved in teaching an AP course does not bring about any type of additional compensation: “The extra time involved with no compensation. Compensation would not have to be monetary. It could be extra planning time. I have spent countless hours doing extra work to prepare for the AP class. The other teachers say I am crazy because they get the same pay that I get and also the same prep time. There is no difference in benefits...only more work.” Finally, budgetary concerns were also identified as obstacles to increasing the number of AP course offerings in school districts. Generally, these concerns revolved around the cost of offering AP courses that would attract only

a handful of students as well as looming budget cuts to public education from the State of Ohio.

The next three questions on the survey focused on the issue of recruitment of students to enroll in AP courses. First, respondents were asked to explain, “How do you (or your district) recruit students for AP classes?” The majority of the respondents (58.33%) indicated that individual teachers handled recruitment efforts by identifying quality students who might benefit from taking an AP course. 25.00% of respondents indicated that the high school guidance staff handled recruitment efforts and spoke to students individually about the benefits of enrolling in AP courses. Finally, two respondents indicated that AP courses were simply announced as being offered and that no real recruitment effort or strategy was being employed in their school districts.

A follow-up question asked respondents, “How satisfied are you with your district’s ability to recruit students for AP classes?” One-third of the respondents (33.33%) were ‘very satisfied’ with their school district’s recruitment ability while another 50.00% were ‘satisfied’ with their school district’s recruitment ability. Two respondents (16.67%) selected ‘neutral’ in response to this question.



The final question regarding the recruiting of students to enroll in AP courses was a follow-up to the previous question and asked respondents, “What is the greatest obstacle to recruiting students for AP courses in your district?” This was an open-ended question which allowed grant recipients to describe the greatest obstacle in their own words. Some of the respondents provided multiple obstacles in their response. A content analysis of the responses to this question yielded a total of thirteen (13) obstacles cited. Collapsing those responses into meaningful categories yielded some interesting results. The most frequently cited obstacle (46.15%) revolved around the perception on the part of students that AP courses were ‘too hard.’ Respondents indicated that some students express reluctance to enroll in AP courses because of the workload, the commitment required, and the difficulty of AP courses. Closely related to this obstacle, two (2) respondents (23.08%) indicated that students expressed reluctance to enroll in AP courses because of the potential harm that taking an AP course might cause to their overall Grade Point Average (GPA) if the student did not perform well in the AP course. Two (2) respondents (23.08%) reported no obstacles to the recruitment of students to AP courses. Finally, one (1) respondent (7.69%) indicated that having qualified AP teachers in their district was an obstacle to recruitment efforts, while one (1) respondent (7.69%) expressed concerns with Vertical Alignment requirements.

The next to last question on the survey asked grant recipients “What changes or improvements could be made to the AP Mini-Grant Program for future funding years?” There were eight (8) responses to this question and the majority of respondents (62.50%) indicated that they were pleased with the current format of the grant funding and did not have any changes or

improvements in mind. These responses seemed to indicate that the status quo should be maintained for the AP Mini-Grant Program and AP Summer Institute scholarship funding. One respondent felt that more or different training for teachers could be beneficial and that perhaps there could be other professional development activities related to AP training that could be underwritten by the Scioto Foundation. Another respondent felt that once a pool of trained AP teachers in Scioto County was established, "...re-training would be good for those already teaching an AP course or making money available to purchase textbooks or individual novels/texts would be good." This same respondent also suggested that the Scioto Foundation could contribute funds to allow for "...AP teachers to peer review/visit..." other AP teachers. The funds could defray the cost of substitute teachers to cover those teachers who agree to be a peer reviewer. Finally, one respondent indicated that funding should be made available for teachers to attend a national conference on AP teaching: "The Summer Institutes are always encouraging us to go to a national conference, but there are never funds available." While the majority of respondents felt that the AP Mini-Grant Program should continue as-is, there were also some ideas presented that could lead to additional opportunities for the Scioto Foundation to expand the AP Mini-Grant program in other ways.

The final question on the survey asked grant recipients: "Would you be interested in participating in a UCAN AP Mini-Grant focus group for Scioto County school districts?" The majority of respondents (60.00%) responded that they would be interested in participating in a focus group session regarding the AP Mini-Grant program.

Overall, the survey results yielded some interesting findings. While basic information about the

grant recipients was collected (why they applied for the grant, how the grant funding was used, and data about AP course offerings in individual high schools), some insightful information about AP course offerings and how students are recruited to enroll in AP courses was also provided. Respondents seemed to have a positive outlook on the AP Mini-Grant Program and expressed an interest in seeing the program continue. Clearly, there was a sense that the grant funding helped to fill a funding gap for AP courses and training that exists in Scioto County due both to school district as well as personal budgetary constraints. A positive sign was that the data provided regarding AP course offerings and enrollment did show an increase in both course offerings and enrollment for the 2010-2011 school year for those school districts that responded. Finally, some ideas for expanding the AP Mini-Grant program were provided.

However, the survey also demonstrated that Scioto County high schools can be quite varied in terms of how they handle AP courses, the recruitment of students to AP courses, and their level of commitment to AP courses. There is no uniform template for AP courses utilized across all twelve (12) Scioto County high schools. This means that some school districts are more committed to AP courses than others. Some districts have more resources to commit to offering AP courses. And some districts have more rigorous student recruitment efforts to enroll in AP courses than others. The problems most often cited in terms of AP course offerings were issues related to resources (not enough teachers or not enough qualified teachers). Continuing the AP Mini-Grant Program and AP Summer Institute grant/scholarship funding programs will help to continue to attack some of these problems.

When it comes to recruitment, the problems most often cited were general reluctance on the

part of students to enroll in AP courses for a variety of reasons. This problem may be the most difficult of all to solve, particularly for the Scioto Foundation. Overcoming the root causes of student reluctance to take AP courses may have more to do with changing the mindset of individual students, as well as parents, than with anything else. Convincing students of the positive benefits of enrolling in AP courses is something that will take time and is something that parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and other school district staff will have to embrace.

In order to get more details on the responses to the survey and to generate a discussion of how to improve both the role of the Scioto Foundation in AP education in Scioto County, and how to improve AP education in general in Scioto County, a stakeholder focus group session was held. The results of this focus group session will be examined in detail in the next section of this report.

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP SESSION

As a follow-up to the survey of AP Mini-Grant recipients and AP Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients, a stakeholder focus group session was held. The focus group was held as a breakout session during the Spring 2011 UCAN Advisory Committee Meeting and Training Session held on April 13, 2011. The grant recipients who indicated on the survey that they would be interested in participating in a focus group session were invited to attend. Those individuals from Scioto County school districts who were regularly attending the UCAN Advisory Committee Meeting and Training were also invited to participate in the focus group. All participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and individual responses would not be reported as identifiable. Participants were also made aware that the focus group session was being audio recorded. A total

of thirty (30) Scioto County School District officials participated in the focus group.

Dr. Andrew M. Dudas served as the moderator for the focus group and led the discussion. The session began with a brief overview of the AP Mini-Grant Program, the Program Evaluation project being conducted, and an overview of the survey instrument that grant recipients had previously received. A total of five (5) topics were identified for the focus group: Familiarity, Communication, Uses of Grant Funds, Obstacles, and Future Improvements / Changes. A total of eleven (11) questions were utilized for the focus group session. Appendix B contains a copy of the focus group topics and questions.

The first question asked the participants, “How many of you are familiar with the AP Mini-Grant Program?” The overwhelming majority of participants indicated that they were at least somewhat familiar with the program. The level of familiarity varied considerably which was borne out by the second question which asked, “How many of you have received an AP Mini-Grant and/or attended an AP Summer Institute?” Far fewer participants had actually been a grant recipient, but many indicated that someone in their school district had been a grant recipient or they knew other school district officials who had been involved in one or both of these programs. Overall, the participants seemed to have a fairly solid grasp of the AP Mini-Grant Program and the AP Summer Institute. This was to be expected as information and updates on these AP programs are regularly provided to the Advisory Committee throughout the year.

The second topical area that the focus group covered was Communication. Of particular interest was receiving feedback on how well the Scioto Foundation communicates information about these AP programs including: goals and objectives, availability of funds, application

deadlines, and uses of grant funds. The vast majority of participants indicated that they felt that Foundation staff did a very good job communicating on all of these issues, particularly as the grant application deadline approaches each year. The general consensus was that marketing materials regarding both of the AP grant funding programs were relatively easy to find both from individual school district officials and from the Scioto Foundation directly. It seems that on the issue of communication, there is confidence that the Foundation is getting the information out in a timely fashion through individual school districts as well as making information available to individual Scioto County teachers and officials. This can be particularly challenging as personnel changes and turnover occur in school districts. Essentially, the Foundation is making the grant application materials available through multiple distribution channels and penetrating through the individual school districts.

One suggestion that was offered was that the grant application (and marketing materials) could be made more easily accessible with an increased online presence. At a minimum there were several participants who agreed that having the AP Mini-Grant application form available for download from the Foundation's website would be an enhancement. Taking this suggestion a step further, one participant asked whether the AP Mini-Grant application could be filled out and submitted online in its entirety. While there may be some technological issues to be worked out in order for these suggestions to come to fruition, these seem to be logical next steps to enhance the Scioto Foundation's communication efforts regarding the AP Mini-Grant program.

The third topic considered issues related to the uses of the grant funding. Specifically, the participants were asked to share their own experiences. The question for this topic was, "What has

the grant funding been used for in your district?” The responses were in line with what was expected based on the grant application data provided. AP Mini-Grant funding had been used for supplies and materials for AP courses (including books, practice exams, etc.) and for AP testing fees for a variety of scholastic tests. Additionally, individual teachers had received scholarships to cover the cost of attending the AP Summer Institute. As a follow-up, the participants were asked about other potential uses of AP grant funding or a wish list of other expenses that AP grant funding could cover. One participant mentioned that there should be an annual follow-up to the AP Summer Institute in which teachers who participated in the Institute reconvened the following year in order to share their experiences in the classroom. This would be an opportunity to review what was learned at the Institute and what worked (as well as what did not work) in an AP course. In other words, Summer Institute Scholarship Recipients could share their real-world teaching experiences.

The fourth topic dealt with Obstacles. Questions related to this topic were designed to address the survey responses to questions about obstacles within individual school districts when it comes to AP course offerings as well as obstacles to the recruitment of students to enroll in AP courses. While the most pressing obstacles (school district funding, staff training and availability (resource allocation problems), vertical alignment, and student demand) to increasing the number of AP course offerings had already been identified, the follow-up question, “How can these obstacles be overcome?” yielded some very insightful information about AP courses at the individual school district level. First of all, it must be noted that school districts vary in terms of their commitment and interest in offering AP courses for a variety of reasons. And clearly, each school district faces

unique challenges and problems. School district funding was a significant concern at the time for all of school districts represented at the focus group session. At that time, the State of Ohio's biennial budget had not yet been passed by the Ohio legislature, so there was genuine concern for school district funding for the 2011-2012 school year and beyond. As one participant mentioned, budget cuts may force districts to make cuts in staff and services and offer only the "bare necessities." As several participants mentioned, depending on how deep the budget cuts might be, AP education may not fit into the category of "bare necessities."

These funding concerns as they specifically relate to AP courses revolved around having enough teachers to cover all of the required non-AP courses, having qualified teachers in place to teach AP courses, and deciding that offering AP courses was in the best interest of the both the school district and the entire student body. One participant noted that if school district funding were to be significantly reduced, AP courses would definitely be on the list of potential items to be eliminated in order to save money for the school district.

As the discussion to these responses evolved, what developed was a brainstorming session of sorts on the part of the participants. Participants began to generate some ideas for overcoming funding and resource allocation problems within individual school districts. Some of the participants suggested trying to find ways to pool resources within Scioto County. One suggestion was to pool school district resources in terms of AP testing (time, date, physical location, exam proctors, etc.) so that students from multiple school districts could be examined simultaneously. Another opportunity for the pooling of resources could come in the form of ordering AP testing supplies. Another suggestion mentioned ways to merge AP courses from different school districts

so as to increase the total enrollment numbers and ease some of the burden on individual school districts when it comes to resource allocation for teachers. One idea was proffered to use video conferencing and/or video recorded course meetings either in real-time or accessible online at any time to allow students from multiple districts to take an AP course from a teacher from another school district. Another idea was that perhaps an entire course could be taught online serving students from all over Scioto County. Several of the participants suggested working closely with the Scioto County Educational Service Center (ESC) to coordinate the pooling of resources and working through the details of the possibilities for these ideas. Essentially, the ESC could help to consolidate services for Scioto County high schools in the area of AP education.

Essentially, much of what came out of this brainstorming session could be considered efforts aimed at school district collaboration. The term collaboration has been a buzzword in the State of Ohio for quite some time now especially since the formation of The Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration by the Ohio General Assembly in 2008. This statewide commission was charged with developing recommendations on ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government operations, to achieve cost savings for taxpayers, and to facilitate economic development in the state. School districts were included in the Commission's purview. Clearly, any efforts aimed at school district collaboration in order to achieve cost savings or provide services to students with course offerings that they may otherwise not have access to would seem to fit with the Commission's ultimate recommendations.³¹

³¹ The Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration. *Building a Better Ohio: Creating Collaboration in Governance*. Columbus, OH: 2010.

The other issues that were discussed within the topic of Obstacles included recruiting efforts for student enrollment in AP courses. Discussion related to this obstacle focused on the concept of vertical alignment. The idea behind vertical alignment is that students should be enrolling in pre-AP courses as early as the sixth grade and continuing through to enrolling in an AP course in a student's senior year. Creating proper sequences of courses that naturally lead to a final AP course is something that is not present in every school district in Scioto County. Some districts expressed concern that the students in their school districts were simply not prepared for an AP course because their pre-AP courses had not been rigorous enough and therefore did not adequately prepare students for an AP course.

One of the more challenging issues within the topic of Obstacles relates to how teachers and school district officials can overcome student resistance to enrolling in AP courses. Some of the survey responses referred to student reluctance to enroll in AP courses because of the time commitment, the difficulty of the coursework, and the potential harm to a student's GPA, etc. Clearly these are issues that have to be worked out on a case-by-case basis with individual students, but the participants noted that effort needs to be made to change the mindset of students and parents and encourage them to enroll in AP courses despite their reluctance.

Much of the discussion related to overcoming the obstacle of student resistance to enroll in AP courses looked at ways to incentivize students. Some school districts are more heavily weighting AP course grades when calculating student Grade Point Averages (GPA). These weighting systems can, in turn, impact a student's overall class rank. Other school districts have implemented minimum requirements for class rankings (such as valedictorian or salutatorian) which require

students to complete a certain number of AP courses in order to qualify for these distinctions.

The final question in this topical section asked participants, “What role can the AP Mini-Grant program play in helping to overcome these obstacles?” While most participants had difficulty answering this question when it comes to the AP Mini-Grant Program in its current form, there seemed to be some who felt that the Scioto Foundation could look at expanding their efforts targeting AP courses in Scioto County. One such idea was to have the Scioto Foundation act as a facilitator of sorts between individual school districts and the ESC for collaborative efforts. The facilitation could lead to other forms of grant funding to support AP course needs in Scioto County. While there weren’t any specific roles or functions identified for the Scioto Foundation to take on, there was general agreement that the Foundation could play a role in fostering more communication, more collaboration, and ultimately help to increase AP course opportunities for all Scioto County school districts.

The fifth and final topic for the focus group session was titled Future Improvements / Changes to the AP Mini-Grant Program. Participants were asked, “What changes or improvements can be made to the AP Mini-Grant Program for future funding years?” Some of the potential changes / improvements mentioned on the survey indicated that grant recipients would like to see a greater diversity of subject area workshops offered as part of the AP Summer Institute. This is something that has already been addressed by Shawnee State University starting with the 2011 AP Summer Institute.

Participants also indicated that there could be some opportunities for greater involvement by the Scioto Foundation to support testing preparation for students enrolled in AP courses. Beyond

simply getting students enrolled in AP courses across Scioto County, there is also the issue of getting students to take the AP exams for each AP course. Helping to get students more prepared for the actual examination process (being comfortable and familiar with the material and testing environment) could be helpful for getting more students to take an AP exam.

Overall, the focus group session seemed to validate much of the data and information about the AP Mini-Grant Program that had already been collected, especially in terms of the Foundation's communication efforts, the uses of the grant funding, and the obstacles facing AP courses in many (if not all) school districts in Scioto County. What was most beneficial was the brainstorming that took place. Some of the ideas generated regarding AP courses and overcoming some of the obstacles to AP education served as a good starting point for fostering a discussion of what more the Scioto Foundation can do when it comes to assisting Scioto County school districts. Ultimately, some of these ideas for additional assistance from the Foundation may come to fruition in new efforts and initiatives targeting AP education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary goal of conducting this program evaluation was to begin to measure the relative success of the AP Mini-Grant Program while, at the same time, creating a research methodology and protocol for the continued monitoring and evaluation of the AP Mini-Grant program in subsequent years. While it is probably too early to be able to definitely state that these programs are positively impacting AP educational outcomes in Scioto County, the preliminary data seems to indicate that these programs are positively impacting AP educational opportunities in Scioto

County. The AP Mini-Grants are helping school districts provide support resources for current AP students. And the AP Summer Institute scholarships are increasing the number of Scioto County teachers prepared to teach AP courses. Preliminary data indicates that some Scioto County school districts have increased their AP course offerings and student enrollment in these courses has increased as well. For these reasons, it is our recommendation that the AP Mini-Grant Program continue. In regards to the AP Summer Institute scholarships, it is our recommendation that this program (and the partnership with Shawnee State University) also continue.

That being said, there are some additional recommendations and steps that can be taken to improve these grant programs.

- AP Mini-Grant Program: Make grant application materials available online (and perhaps allow for online submission of grant applications).
- AP Summer Institute: Continue to work with Shawnee State University to increase the diversity in the subject areas that are covered in the Institute’s workshops to meet the needs of Scioto County school districts.
- AP Summer Institute: Hold an annual follow-up meeting to the AP Summer Institute in which teachers who participated in the Institute reconvene the following year in order to share their AP classroom experiences with other teachers.
- Scioto Foundation: Take on a greater role as a facilitator between Scioto County high schools and the Scioto County Educational Service Center (ESC) in order to foster collaboration and to attack some of the obstacles that might block AP course offerings and enrollment in individual high schools.
- Research Methodology and Protocol: These AP programs will require continued monitoring and evaluation. Future evaluations need to replicate this evaluation by reviewing the following:
 - Annual Scioto County AP course offerings
 - Annual AP course enrollment data
 - Annual AP testing data
 - Annual review of the AP Summer Institute participant evaluations
 - Annual review of the AP Summer Institute consultant evaluations
 - Periodic feedback from AP Mini-Grant recipients and AP Summer Institute Scholarship

- recipients about the respective programs
- Periodic feedback from the UCAN Advisory Committee about the AP Mini-Grant Program and the AP Summer Institute

CONCLUSION

While still in the early stages of its implementation, the AP Mini-Grant Program and the AP Summer Institute scholarships can be seen to have had a positive impact in helping to increase the Advanced Placement educational opportunities for Scioto County high school students. One would expect these opportunities to continue to increase in subsequent years of the program. However, there are still issues related to AP education that neither the AP Mini-Grant Program nor the AP Summer Institute are currently equipped to address. Supplemental programs and initiatives in addition to the existing AP programs will be necessary to address these issues.

This program evaluation can be useful in addressing both the current and future needs of the Scioto Foundation's efforts at enhancing AP education in Scioto County. The Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University recommends that the Scioto Foundation conduct a similar program evaluation utilizing a similar research protocol in three to five years to better assess changes in AP educational opportunities and measure AP educational outcomes in Scioto County as a result of the AP Mini-Grant Program and the AP Summer Institute scholarships.

APPENDIX A

9) What is the greatest obstacle to recruiting students for AP courses in your district?

10) What changes or improvements could be made to the AP Mini-Grant Program for future funding years?

11) Would you be interested in participating in a UCAN AP Mini-Grant focus group for Scioto County school districts?

- yes
- no

Thank you for completing this survey. Please place your survey in the self-addressed, postage paid return envelope and drop it in the mail.

Contact Us:

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University College Access Network (UCAN)

AP Mini-Grant Recipient Survey 2010

Conducted by the Center for Public
Management and Regional Affairs
at Miami University



Questions about this survey:

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact Sr. Project Manager Andrew M. Dudas at the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at 513-529-6959 or Executive Director Kimberly E. Cutlip at the Scioto Foundation at 740-354-4612. You may also contact the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship at Miami University at 513-529-3600 with additional questions regarding your rights as a survey respondent.

rev. 12/01/2010

Recipient Survey

The Scioto Foundation has asked the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University to conduct a program evaluation of the Advanced Placement (AP) Mini-Grant component of the University College Access Network (UCAN) program. The purpose of this survey is to gather information from past grant recipients regarding:

- why you applied for the grant,
- how the grant funding was utilized, and
- how the grant funding has impacted AP classes in your school district.

Please begin the survey:

Name: _____

School District: _____

Subject Area: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

please continue 

1) How did you hear about the AP-Mini Grant Program?

2) Why did you apply for the AP Mini-Grant?

3) Please describe how you used the grant funding?

4) What Advanced Placement (AP) courses have you taught in the past five (5) years? Please provide course title, year, and enrollment.

please continue 

5) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "My school district has been receptive to increasing the number of AP course offerings."

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

6) What is the greatest obstacle to increasing the number of AP course offerings in your district?

7) How do you (or your district) recruit students for AP classes?

8) How satisfied are you with your district's ability to recruit students for AP classes?

- very satisfied
- satisfied
- neutral
- dissatisfied
- very dissatisfied

please continue 

APPENDIX B

UCAN AP MINI-GRANT FOCUS GROUP

- Welcome and thank you for participating.
- Introduction: Who we are, Final Stage in Our Evaluation Project, Follow-Up to Mail Survey of Mini-Grant Recipients & Summer Institute Participants
- We have several questions that we would like to ask the entire group. Participation is voluntary and individual responses will not be reported as identifiable. Because of time constraints we will move through the questions fairly quickly. We are taking notes and audio recording this session.

Begin with a brief description of the AP Mini-Grant Program...

Topic #1 – Familiarity

1. How many of you are familiar with the AP Mini-Grant program?
2. How many of you have received an AP Mini-Grant and/or attended an AP Summer Institute?

Topic #2 – Communication

3. Goals and Objectives
4. Availability of Grant Funds
5. Application Deadlines
6. Uses of Grant Funds

Topic #3 – Uses of Grant Funds

7. What has the grant funding been used for in your district?
Supplies & Materials / Testing Fees / Summer Institute Fees

Topic #4 – Obstacles

8. Obstacles to AP Course Offerings?
 - District Funding
 - Recruiting Efforts
 - Student Resistance
 - Other Obstacles????
9. How can these obstacles be overcome?
10. What role can the AP Mini-Grant program play in helping to overcome these obstacles?

Topic #5 – Future Improvements / Changes

11. What changes or improvements can be made to the AP Mini-Grant Program for future funding years?
 - Increase diversity of subject areas for the Summer Institute
 - Role of Scioto Foundation in helping to improve recruitment efforts?
 - Other Changes / Improvements???

Thank You For Participating!