



The Barack Obama Green Charter High School

Recognized as a Lighthouse Awardee during the 2021-2023 term for increased equity in Advanced Placement course enrollment.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Lighthouse District Initiative recognizes districts that have demonstrated measurable progress for equitable outcomes. The NJDOE is proud to welcome The Barack Obama Green Charter High School to the third cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

The Barack Obama Green Charter High School

- 232 Total Students
- 9– 12 Grades Offered
- 81% Economically Disadvantaged
- 6% Students with Disabilities
- 11.6% English Learners
- 9:1 Student to Teacher Ratio

Want to learn more? Contact us.

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The Barack Obama Green Charter High School Equity Story

Below, you will find a narrative describing the ways that The Barack Obama Green Charter High has increased equity in Advanced Placement course enrollment.

Engaging Underrepresented Student Groups for Equity in Advanced Placement Course Enrollment

At The Barack Obama Green Charter High School, student voice is something we value. We believe that students deserve the education that they need and WANT. When beginning the journey of reviewing course offerings and curriculum choices, it was immediately apparent that current curriculum choices were not culturally responsive and what was offered did not align with the current students' postsecondary aspirations. Based on state and local data, it was evident that the local education agency (LEA) had students who could be successful in an Advanced Placement (AP) program and thus the initial student round table discussions began. The first step in the planning stage was to educate students about the Advanced Placement program. During the education phase of the process, students' preconceived notions were abolished, and they soon realized that there were many more AP courses available to them. The next step was to utilize data and student interest to identify what courses we would offer. After administering several surveys and cross referencing the survey results with career interest surveys and local data, it was suggested that we offer AP Art, and attempt to become an AP Capstone School. During the first year of implementation, the LEA held monthly meetings with students enrolled in the newly adopted AP courses to discuss all facets of the program. At the conclusion of the inaugural year, it was proven that the decisions made better prepared the students enrolled for the rigor associated with their postsecondary endeavors. By the end of the second year of implementation, we were recognized by the college board for our AP Capstone program and were awarded a banner to adorn on our campus.

Faculty and Staff Collaboration for Equity in Advanced Placement Course Enrollment

As mentioned in the previous section, the LEA started this journey by reviewing data. Prior to meeting with the students, administrators met with teachers to discuss the data and to identify courses that would be appropriate for and attractive to our student population. Once the intended AP course offerings were identified the staff assigned to this Professional Learning Community (PLC) nominated their peers to teach the various AP courses we planned to adopt. The teachers selected worked to ensure that our selection met the needs and wants of our students and worked to ensure

that the courses would be beneficial to the academic growth and postsecondary success of our students enrolled. During the first two years of implementation the staff in the PLC (AP instructors, content area teachers and data specialists) monitored the progress of the students and staff in order to determine the effectiveness of our decision in relation to student achievement and student interest.

Engaging Families of Underrepresented Students for Equity in Advance Placement Course Enrollment

Once courses were identified, the second meeting with students was a family meeting. During the explanation of the AP program and the courses we intended to offer, we allowed for public comment and offered an extensive reference document so that families could further educate themselves on the curricular changes and the positive impact it would have on children enrolled. Throughout the first years of the program, progress meetings and family support sessions were held so that parents could assist and support the students while enrolled in the course. Please note that many of our parents lack a high school diploma and some lack the ability to read and write in their native language. As a result, the LEA made sure that we equipped the families with many resources to help them be a successful support system.

Structural Changes Made to Increase Equity in Advance Placement Course Enrollment

The students enrolled at the LEA typically enter grade nine 1.5-2 academic years behind our grade-level expectations in their foundation skills. When dealing with a large population of students who have foundational differences, it is customary to immediately try to rectify them. As a result of the intense remediation, the nurturing and growth of talents is not at the forefront. When intense remediation is needed in a high school setting, the remediation courses tend to take up a large portion of a student's schedule thus making it almost impossible to participate in any free electives. Once the LEA identified students who would thrive in the AP course selection but did not have the time in their schedule due to their remediation needs, the LEA redesigned the remediation portion of the curriculum and implemented a new support and intervention system so that the AP course offerings would be accessible to all student groups.

Integration of Quantitative Data Sources for Improvement in Advance Placement Course Enrollment

There were six quantitative sources used to identify the need for the initial curriculum change and identify the courses that would be beneficial to our student population: Historic AP data prior to year 2016, PARCC/ NJSLA, MAP Growth Assessment data, Curriculum benchmark data, Classroom data, and PSAT data.