

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

The Elements of Success, as described below, are the building blocks that form the true foundation for implementing a successful APTIP. As such, these hallmark elements are required and must be adhered to. While other aspects, including the specific tactics or strategies for carrying out these core Elements, may and should be modified to suit individual situations, NMSI requires strict observance of these Elements. The Elements of Success include:

- 1. Student Support: *Open enrollment and academic tutoring and study sessions*** – It is critical to change the culture of the school from one of exclusivity with regard to who may take AP courses to an inclusive culture that encourages reluctant students to enroll in rigorous courses. Too often, students must prove their way into challenging courses, thereby limiting enrollment to just a few top students. This policy reinforces stereotypes about what AP students “look like.” In most high schools, there are many more students who could succeed in math, science and English AP courses if encouraged to enroll and if given exceptional quality instruction and support. A strong culture of high expectations is critical to success as it demonstrates to students that adults believe they can achieve at the most demanding levels and are willing to help them do so.

This culture of expectations must be accompanied by tangible, academic support so that students are given the tools to succeed in this new environment of high achievement.

Students enrolled in AP courses are strongly encouraged to attend extracurricular study sessions and summer academies. AP Teachers also offer at least 40 hours of tutoring outside of regular class time in order to ensure that their students fully grasp the material. This academic support in combination with the expectation that students can excel in rigorous classes can transform school culture and generate measurable increases in student confidence and achievement.

- 2. Awards: *Incentives for teacher and student performance*** – Offering incentives for performance and extra pay for extra work sends a message to students and teachers that expansion of and success in rigorous AP courses are important. It realigns a cultural misconception that has long viewed AP as an exclusive program. Incentives also send the message that the goal is passing a nationally recognized benchmark of performance rather than just obtaining a grade in a course. They set the stage for a continuous focus toward meeting a very high standard and getting recognition for that achievement. It also encourages teachers to consider taking the training necessary to teach more rigorous courses, because not only students, but teachers also take a risk when it comes to teaching more rigorous courses. Financial awards for adding extra work to their schedules effectively encourages them to take that risk.

- 3. Teacher Support: *High quality, content focused teacher training plus teacher mentoring and vertical teaming*** – Most of today’s high school teachers do not have the level of content knowledge required to successfully teach a rigorous AP math or AP science course. It is critical that intensive training be provided to build this capacity. The College Board provides national quality control for this teacher preparation by approving professional development instructors who have demonstrated and met high standards of performance in teaching rigorous AP courses. Summer training plus additional classes during the year provide teachers with deepened content knowledge and the pedagogy required to provide the highest quality instruction. Additionally, research in professional development shows that, to be effective, professional development must also include continuous support at the school level. Accordingly, the APTIP provides guidance, feedback, training, and other support to help the APTIP teacher reach his or her full potential and the full potential of

the students. It will also assist in guiding same-subject content teachers across vertical grade levels so instructors, early on, can learn how to prepare students for rigorous AP courses. This creates a crucial and continuous pipeline of students who have received the requisite background that will allow them to succeed in AP math and science.

- 4. Program Management: *Expert Teams and Strong Partners*** – The backbone of any successful APTIP is NMSI’s system of metrics and measurements that ensure accountability for results. NMSI collects data from its implementation partners that are keyed to performance benchmarks to gauge and then guide implementation progress. The implementation partners must reach these prearranged benchmarks, per NMSI’s determination, in order to receive each distribution of funds. NMSI has learned through experience that these benchmarks are necessary to ensure that the program is effective and reaches its goal of increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gap. However, NMSI has crafted these benchmarks such that, while they provide an outline and guidance for implementation, they also leave ample space for creativity, independence, and collaboration.

Additionally, building strong working relationships with the school districts implementing APTIP in the state is critical to overall program success as well. APTIP should act as both an agent of change and a source of support and resources (such as providing subject matter experts) for the schools. Partnering with schools that demonstrate strong interest in APTIP helps ensure that the program serves as a catalyst to provide the schools with the direction and the capacity to transform student achievement.