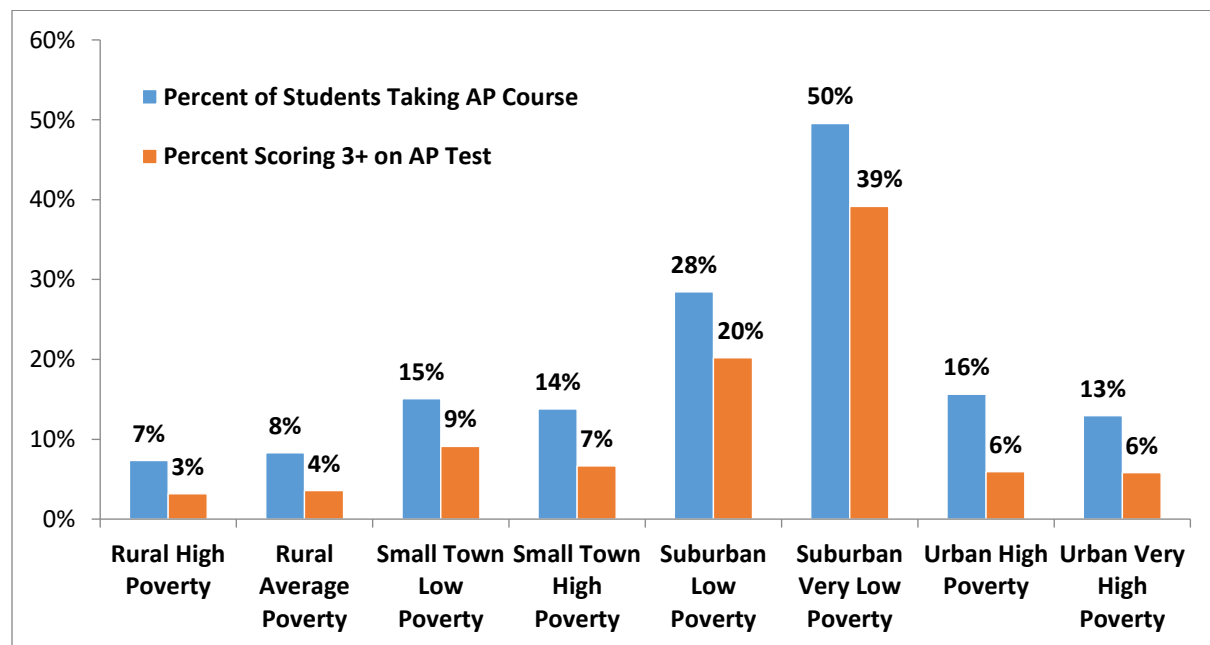


## Provide bonuses to teachers when students pass AP/IB exams

**Proposal:** Create a fund that provides bonuses to AP or IB teachers when their students pass these exams, with larger bonuses to teachers working in high-poverty districts.

**Background:** Both the AP and IB programs are widely viewed as rigorous academic programs. For students, passing AP and IB assessments can mean earning college credit while saving time and tuition money. Ohio incentivizes schools to help students pass AP or IB exams through the state report card system. The Prepared for Success component provides bonus credit when graduates pass at least one of these exams (the generally accepted passing score for AP is three out of five points, while IB is four out of seven points). Nevertheless, too few Ohio schools provide AP or IB courses for high-achieving students—and an even smaller number of students achieve passing scores. As figure 5 below indicates, fewer than 10 percent of rural students have an opportunity to take an AP course, and even smaller fractions pass an exam before they graduate high school. The lack of AP opportunities is also evident in small towns and urban areas. Less than 1 percent of students statewide take IB courses (not displayed in the chart below). Though various factors contribute to low AP or IB course taking and test-passage rates, one explanation might be teachers who are less willing to bear the time commitments needed for rigorous AP or IB instruction, especially in schools where there may not be “critical masses” of students interested in a particular subject.

**Figure 5:** AP course taking and exam-passage rates (score of three or above) by district typology, Ohio’s graduating classes of 2015 and 2016



Source: ODE, School Report Cards: [Download Data](#) (District Prepared for Success file)

**Proposal rationale:** Ohio should encourage schools to offer rigorous coursework to high achievers, including opportunities to take AP/IB courses and exams. This program would provide an incentive for teachers to go the extra mile to help students pass exams that give them a head start on their college education. Akin to the discussion on AP/IB exam fees, it's important to bear in mind that these proposals are modest steps toward solving problems of access to high-quality advanced coursework, especially for high-achieving, low-income students.

**Cost:** The state should allocate an additional \$6 million per year for this initiative. College Board data indicate that in 2017, Ohio students passed 81,781 AP exams; this appropriation would provide average teacher bonuses of roughly \$70 per test passed.

**Resources:** For more data on AP test taking in Ohio, see College Board's "[AP Program Participation and Performance Data 2017](#)." Since 2000, Florida has provided its AP teachers bonuses based on students' exam performance: see Jay Matthews' article "[Paying Teachers and Students for Good Scores](#)" in the *Washington Post* (2004) and Foundation for Excellence in Education's [Florida's Education Revolution: A Summary](#) (2013). And for an overview of how other states incentivize AP enrollment, see the Education Commission of the States' [50-State Comparison of Financial Incentives for AP Courses](#).