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District 113 joins AP diploma program

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Starting next year, students at Highland Park and Deerfield high schools will be eligible to earn an AP Capstone diploma that distinguishes students who have successfully completed AP Research and AP Seminar courses that develop skills valued by colleges and employers.

Township High School District 113 is joining more than two dozen Illinois high schools in offering students the opportunity to earn the distinction.

To earn an AP Capstone Diploma, students must successfully complete both AP Research and AP Seminar courses that focus on independent research, collaboration and communication in small and large groups and presentation settings.

Students must earn scores of 3 or higher on AP's five-point scale in both courses, as well as four other AP courses focused on specific disciplines. Both schools offer nearly 30 Advanced Placement courses in areas such as English, U.S. History, calculus, chemistry, physics, art, music, computer science and Spanish language and culture, according to the district.

District 113 Director of Communications Christine Gonzales said faculty members are discussing whether AP Research and AP Seminar will fulfill a graduation requirement or be offered as electives.

"The curricular teams at both HPHS and DHS, along with the district-wide team, are still examining how the program might be implemented," Gonzales said.

Highland Park High School already offers the AP Seminar course.

"Should students choose to take AP Research next year, they may be awarded the AP Capstone diploma if they have also taken four other AP courses," Gonzales said.

Superintendent Christopher Dignam said that Deerfield Principal Kathryn Anderson and Highland Park Principal Tom Koulentes submitted applications this fall to College Board, which sponsors the Advanced Placement program. Dignam said he'd initiated discussions with the College Board about strategies for providing all students a rigorous college preparatory experience.

Dignam said the district was notified Nov. 11 that both schools had been accepted into the program.



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