

# SENIORS SLIDE, AND SO DO AP SCORES

Teachers, administration, and students speak to the effects of seniors quitting on AP exams and a solution which would replace AP classes.

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According to statistics released by Malvern, 13 out of 18 AP test averages released from spring of 2017 were lower than the national averages in those tests. Malvern's scores were close to a .54 of a point lower on average for the 18 test sample size.

Some teachers have also been saying their scores declined from spring of 2016 to spring of 2017. AP United States History teacher Mr. Robert Colameco was "shocked" by his scores from May.

Since 2002, Colameco's percentage of passing scores (students who get 3's and above) has never dropped below 68 percent. But that changed dramatically in 2017 with only 42 percent of students passing.

"It was not just a drop. It was a bang," he said.

AP Calculus BC teacher Mr. Tom Pannulla said the scores did not drop too much, but they could be much better.

"AP Calc BC is a pretty senior-heavy course. For both of my years teaching the class, I think [the senior slide] definitely affected the scores," he said.

Pannulla said there were a lot of 1's in the score results. AP Economics teacher Mr. John Ostick said the same about his similarly senior-heavy course.

"There are too many 1's. There were some 4's and 5's, but there were too many 1's and 1's are unacceptable," Ostick said. "That's a problem I have with the results on the AP test."

Senior Nick Villano has taken several AP classes while at Malvern, and he has seen elements of the senior slide.

"I know a lot of people take naps or draw pictures or other things," Villano said. "I would definitely try once I am in the exam room to see what I know."

Senior Drew Brady said some seniors last year didn't even attempt the exam while in the room.

"I do not blame them because it is odd

**Several AP Classes' test scores at Malvern are well below the national average.**

**Some students say they are not trying on the tests. Why?**

that Malvern makes us take the test even if it can not give us any credit at the college we are going to," Brady said.

There is a rule that if you take 3 or more AP classes as a senior and one of them cannot be given credit by the college, you do not have to take the test. However, that only applied to a few seniors last year.

Junior Dylan Tran said that he would not try his very best on the test if it did not count for anything.

"I would answer probably all the questions for fun, maybe draw some cool pictures on the Scantron," Tran said.

Ostick said it is disappointing when he hears about seniors going into the exam room and putting their heads down.

"If they are in it for the right reason, to learn at a very high academic level, they excel," Ostick said. "But if they are in it for the wrong reason, to have it on their college transcript because their parents or potential coaches say they have to have it on their transcript for admission, to me that's the problem."

Brady, who recently committed to Cornell University for rowing, said he chose to take three AP classes this year because he saw past rowers do the same.

"I felt that I needed to if I wanted to be prepared for the rigor of an Ivy League school," Brady said. "Coaches also told me over the summer that taking AP courses in field of study I am going to major in will help my admissions profile and would ease my course load."

Sillup thinks there are two main drivers for students who choose to take AP courses.

"It's an indicator that you're taking the most rigorous courses offered by that school,

and you can potentially get college credit," Sillup said.

Director of College Counseling Mr. Ian Harkness said that AP certainly has respect and credit nationally. However, there is a movement among independent schools to move on from AP.

Independent schools from Scarsdale High School near New York to The Haverford School removed AP classes in favor of courses in which cover the same advanced topic but without the restrictions of the College Board. Students still have the option of taking the AP test at those schools.

In recent discussions about the relevance and effectiveness of AP classes, Sillup brought up the idea of offering college-accredited classes at Malvern replacing APs.

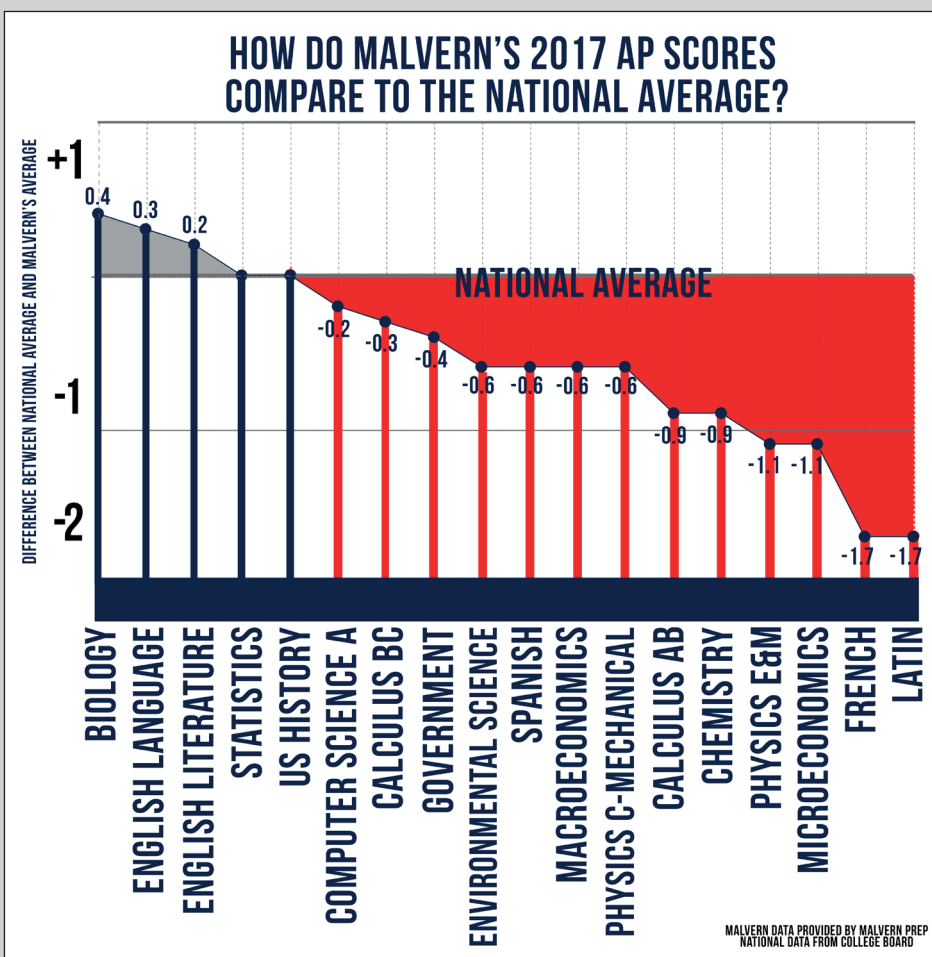
"Let's say we offer Villanova University Business Calculus. If you take Business Calculus and you meet all the requirements set forth by the educator, we want to give you that college credential," Sillup said. "You've also been exposed to all the knowledge for BC Calc, so you have the choice to sit for that exam."

Sillup said Malvern teachers would have to become an accredited teacher by a certain university in order to teach the class at school. He said they are in discussions with the University of Pittsburgh to partner with Malvern.

Sillup thinks these classes can give students a much higher chance of getting college credit since a college class is more likely to count for credit than an AP course. Having a teacher grant you college credit without having to take the AP test could lessen the effects of the senior slide during those exams.

Harkness said Malvern will consider all the best options going forward in their decisions on AP classes.

"If we are going to be one of the best of the best independent schools, we need to know what the highest curriculum measures and how we are preparing you for the future," Harkness said. ◊



> STUDENT COUNCIL, 1

Student Council did decide, however, to keep some of the same festivities for Spirit Week that had been done before.

"We kept World Cup soccer and Jimmy's BBQ for the events during the week," Dlugos said. "We got rid of the smaller events like Fastest Kid and Closest to the Pin."

These decisions have to be a consensus among each class's Student Council representatives. McKnight said that they meet a couple times a month to discuss events being held. He added that the month of October is always a hectic month so they try not to look too far into advance at these meetings.

"This is our biggest week of the entire school year. We have been focusing on this since we started school, and there were lots of revisional plans that we had to make," Dlugos said. "The guys [Student Council representatives] make the plans, and my job is to help them follow through with it."

In previous years, students volunteered to participate in activities just moments before the

competitions started. This year, Student Council decided to change this process up a bit.

"We talked about who would be a good fit for these competitions and who would want to do them," McKnight said. "We hoped to improve the competitiveness of the games by doing this."

The overall student reaction to this year's Spirit Week was very positive. One of those who liked it was senior Patrick Keenan.

"In previous years, I really did not enjoy going to the Blue and Grey games," Keenan said. "I always found them very boring and the same kids would participate every year."

Keenan said that he was pleasantly surprised with the changes to this year's activities.

"I did not expect bubble soccer to be a fun thing to be a spectator for, but it was actually really funny watching kids getting decked and being flown all over the gym. I was happy that the last Spirit Day in my Malvern career was the best one," he said. ◊



THUMBS UP • One of the traditions of Spirit Week that has remained the same for a few years is the after-school Jimmy's BBQ feast in the O'Neill parking lot. Senior Jack Walker approved. / G. Reilly