

PRESS RELEASE

To: Local Media
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Re: **KHS named AP-TIP IN School of the Year... KHS AP Physics Teacher Tom Ferguson is Science Teacher of the Year... and KHS AP Literature & Composition Teacher Jenifer Scott is English Teacher of the Year**

Karen Morris, Director of Indiana's Advanced Placement Training & Incentives Program (AP-TIP IN), announced Tuesday that Kokomo High School earned the 2015 AP-TIP IN School of the Year award. Other School of the Year finalists were Eastern Greene High School, Gavit High School, and Whitko High School.

The AP-TIP IN School of the Year announcement was made during a press conference held at Kokomo High School to celebrate the major accomplishments from the third year of the statewide AP-TIP IN grant program. During the press conference, KHS AP Physics Teacher Tom Ferguson was named AP-TIP IN Science Teacher of the Year, while KHS AP Literature & Composition Teacher Jenifer Scott was honored as the 2015 AP-TIP IN English Teacher of the Year.

Kokomo School Corporation Superintendent Dr. Jeff Hauswald believes these awards confirm that Kokomo High School is among the state's premier college preparatory high schools.

"Kokomo High School's advanced college preparatory program continues to expand and excel," Dr. Hauswald said. "From 23 Advanced Placement Courses to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program to many dual credit courses, Kokomo Schools are setting the bar high when it comes to these efforts. In just over three years, the number of Advanced Placement credits taken by students has tripled...and the results continue to impress.

"Much of this is from the hard work of students, but none of this could be possible if it weren't for amazing teachers like Mr. Tom Ferguson and Ms. Jennifer Scott. I congratulate both of them on the well-deserved recognition. Most importantly, I congratulate KHS students, teachers, staff, and the parents on helping KHS be named an AP-TIP IN School of the Year."

Dr. Hauswald cited KHS Principal Anthony Harl for making one of Kokomo Schools' main goals – "Student readiness and success at the college of choice" – a priority.

Mr. Harl said the staff and students at Kokomo High School are thrilled to receive three of the four major AP-TIP IN awards.

“These awards signify that the hard work put forth by KHS Counselor Mike Susong and our Advanced Placement teachers is paying off,” Mr. Harl explained. “These AP teachers’ dedication has led to increased enrollment in AP courses and more students taking the AP exams, as well as more students passing those AP exams. I wish to congratulate, and thank, the KHS AP teachers for their efforts.”

KHS senior Rachel Stout, an AP Scholar, said that Mr. Harl and every AP teacher at KHS deserves credit for setting high expectations for students, which is transforming the culture within the school. Rachel said she isn’t surprised Kokomo High School earned School of the Year honors.

KHS senior Zach Carroll agreed.

“The changing culture is giving us a new sense of pride at Kokomo High School,” the AP Scholar explained.

KHS senior Arland McIlrath said he has never been more proud to be a Kokomo Wildkat.

“Kokomo High School is having a really big year... both in academics and athletics,” Arland said. “It’s really great to see that happening my senior year.”

Kokomo High School joined the AP-TIP IN grant program, as part of Cohort II, during the 2013-2014 school year. Through the program, which is administered for Indiana by the University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Educational Initiatives, KHS participates in year-round initiatives.

AP Math, Science, and English teachers at KHS receive extensive training and mentoring. Summer training and additional professional development during the year provide AP teachers with deeper content knowledge and the pedagogy required to provide the highest quality instruction. Through the grant, KHS students taking Math, Science, or English AP courses receive additional “time-on-task” through after-school tutoring sessions, Saturday conferences, and exam preparation.

Mr. Susong believes these AP-TIP IN measures have produced dramatic results at the high school. In 2012-2013, the year before AP-TIP started at KHS, 223 students enrolled in Math, Science, and English AP courses, while KHS saw 390 enrollments for all AP classes.

Before this school year began, KHS counselors received 590 requests for AP Math, Science, and English courses, and an additional 334 requests for other AP courses... for a total of 924 requests for AP classes.

“The AP-TIP grant is having an impact beyond Math, Science, and English courses because students are having success in these courses and are registering for additional AP classes,” Mr. Susong noted.

More importantly, KHS students are passing their AP exams at a much higher rate. KHS had 79 passing AP scores in Math, Science, and English during the 2011-2012 school year, for a pass rate of 28 percent. After Kokomo High School’s first year of the AP-TIP grant, those passing scores had jumped to 139, for a 40 percent pass rate for Math, Science, and English AP courses. In year two of the grant (2014-2015), KHS eclipsed its year three goal by boasting 191 passing scores in Math, Science, and English AP classes, for a 41 percent pass rate.

This success in the AP classrooms led the College Board to recognize a record number of KHS students for their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP exams, as 49 KHS students earned 2015 AP Scholar Awards, which eclipses the record of 33 set in 2014 after 20 students earned AP honors in 2012.

Among the 2015 AP Scholars at KHS, Joey Hurlocker and Ryan Ridenour were named National AP Scholars for earning scores of at least 4 (5 is best) on all AP exams taken and 4 or higher on eight or more of the exams. This places Joey and Ryan in the top 1% nationally. Nine KHS students earned the designation of AP Scholars with Distinction, while nine more were named AP Scholars with Honor.

“The staff members at Kokomo High School, with help from mentors through the grant, have created a culture of success,” Kokomo School Corporation Assistant Superintendent Mike Sargent said. “Guidance counselors and teachers actively recruit students to enroll in AP classes. Teachers offer at least 40 hours of tutoring outside the classroom to support students in their AP classes, while developing a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for the AP exams.”

In addition to Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Scott, other KHS teachers involved in the AP-TIP IN program include Robin Beck, Barb Cline, Joy Dewing, Ben Diener, Greta Faurote, Kristin Goralski, Tim Haberfield, Becky Moulder, Nikki Mundy, and Rebecca Swan.

Mr. Harl believes that Teacher of the Year award winners Ms. Scott and Mr. Ferguson have both been instrumental in developing Kokomo High School’s Advanced Placement program.

“Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Scott greatly deserve recognition,” Mr. Harl noted. “Both are outstanding teachers who have the ability to challenge students with a rigorous curriculum, while also providing the support those students need to be successful.”

According to Mr. Susong, Ms. Scott, the 2015 AP-TIP IN English Teacher of the Year, worked tirelessly to grow the AP Literature & Composition program. In 2011-2012, 25 students took the AP Literature exam. In 2014-2015, 71 students took the exam. This

school year, 107 students are enrolled in her AP Literature & Composition course, which means Ms. Scott has quadrupled enrollment in the college preparatory classes.

“We have students enrolled in AP Literature & Composition now who never would have considered taking the course before,” Mr. Susong explained. “These students, however, hear from their classmates how great Ms. Scott is, and take the course. A student recently thanked me for placing her in Ms. Scott’s class because she feels better prepared for college. That student did not want to take the class at first because she feared it would be too hard. That is the impact Ms. Scott has on her students.”

Dr. Sargent described Ms. Scott as an energetic and motivational teacher who finds a way to both challenge and support students. According to Dr. Sargent, Ms. Scott brings literature to life with classroom discussions that focus on a deeper understanding of the curriculum.

Tom Ferguson, the AP-TIP IN Science Teacher of the Year, enjoys tremendous success in his AP Physics classroom. According to Mr. Susong, because of Mr. Ferguson’s work, last school year Kokomo High School ranked 1st in Indiana for number of students passing the AP Physics 2 exam, 4th in the state for number of students passing the AP Physics 1 exam, and 12th in the state for number of students passing the AP Physics C: Mechanics exam. Enrollment in his AP Physics classes has grown from 22 in 2011-2012 to 121 this school year.

“While these statistics are impressive and show Mr. Ferguson’s success, perhaps the most incredible statistic is that the year before the AP-TIP IN grant began (2011-2012), Kokomo High School had 79 passing scores on all AP Math, Science, and English courses. In 2014-2015, we had 73 students pass an AP Physics exam,” Mr. Susong exclaimed. “That is phenomenal success!”

Mr. Susong added that Mr. Ferguson often stays after school to help address student needs and provide students with extra academic support. In fact, several students opted to take AP Physics C: Mechanics as an independent study course. Mr. Ferguson spends extra hours guiding these students through the class to ensure their success.

Dr. Sargent cited Mr. Ferguson for creating relationships with students: “Tom Ferguson connects with students on a personal level, and creates meaningful learning experiences within a Physics curriculum. Tom engages students through real-life experiences and hands-on learning opportunities, such as his annual Physics ‘Cardboard’ Boat Race in the Kokomo High School swimming pool.”

Mr. Ferguson, however, takes no credit for his success in the classroom.

“Capable, hardworking students are the No. 1 key to my success,” Mr. Ferguson noted. “The second key is having a school culture that expects success in AP courses.”