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Drinking
Water
Standards

Zeldin's EPA moves to
roll back limits on
certain toxic chemicals
A4-5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Memorial
Day

Long Island
remembers the fallen
★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Veteran Alexander Callender, 80, at
the Smithtown Memorial Day parade.

PLUS: Oakdale soldier
killed in Iraq honored
A6-8
VIDEO AT NEWSDAY.TV
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

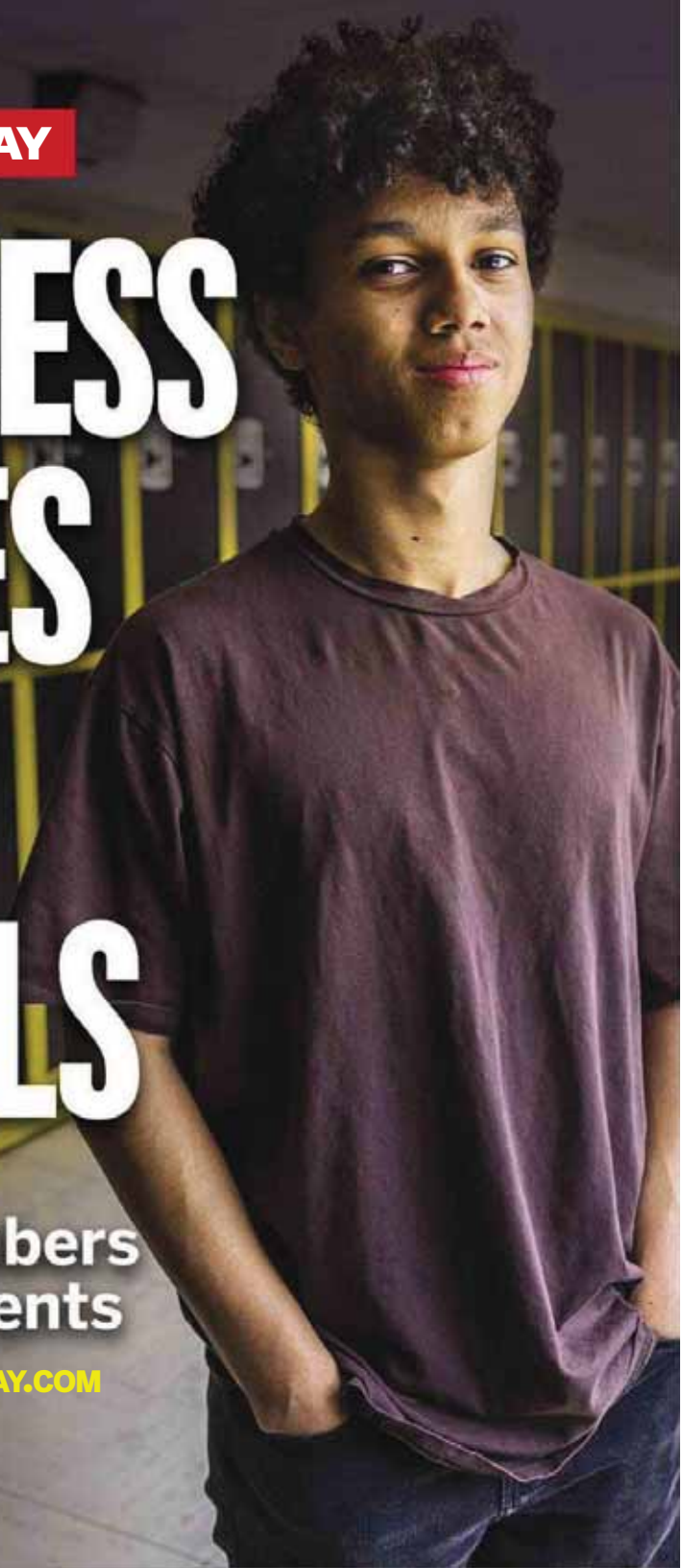
ONLY IN NEWSDAY

AP SUCCESS
SURGES
IN LI
SCHOOLS

What the
improving numbers
mean for students

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Uniondale High senior Randolph
Gonzalez has taken nine AP
courses in the past four years.



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TOP STORIES

MORE LI SCHOOLS EARN HONOR ROLL SPOT FOR AP TESTS

Island sees increase in top rankings;
nationwide access to program grows

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ONLY IN NEWSDAY

More Long Island schools were named to the Advanced Placement honor roll for 2025, and the number of schools that earned the highest ranking rose by one-third, according to the College Board, which administers the tests.

In Nassau and Suffolk, 110 schools received either platinum, gold, silver or bronze awards — up from 107 in 2024. Eight earned spots on the honor roll for the first time.

And of the 110 on the list, 23 schools notched platinum awards, compared with 17 the year prior, according to a Newsday analysis.

The gains come amid a nationwide surge in participation in AP classes, with more students taking and passing AP exams across the country compared with a decade ago, according to the College Board.

Some Island educators said they have expanded course offerings and sought to make classes more accessible for all students. They argued the advanced coursework remains relevant, despite a move away from standardized testing — with the state poised to drop its Regents graduation requirement in 2027, and many colleges making SAT and ACT scores optional for admission.

AP exams, they said, offer students a less expensive way to potentially earn college

credit, while the rigorous coursework prepares them for higher learning.

Studies have found taking AP coursework helps students excel at four-year colleges.

“We find that early AP course participation leads to higher scores on state exit exams, greater enrollment in early college credit courses, and increased college attendance and completion rates, particularly at four-year institutions,” researchers at the University of Texas at San Antonio, who looked at early AP enrollment for students who were not considered academically prepared, wrote in a 2025 report.

But some advocates complained the program focuses heavily on test preparation at the expense of deeper learning. Education experts also note that, despite strides in AP participation, inequities still persist. They said low-income students and students of color are not equally represented in the program and questioned whether the college-level work offered long-term benefits.

“When you look at children that are in low-income school districts, they have less access to advanced coursework, they have lower per-pupil funding, and that all goes into how many AP courses are offered,” said Allison Roda, a Molloy University professor who has

WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

■ **A total of 110 Long Island schools** have been named to the College Board’s 2025 AP honor roll, which evaluates students’ participation in Advanced Placement exams.

■ **Twenty-three schools attained the highest ranking**, platinum. Eight schools earned spots on the honor roll for the first time.

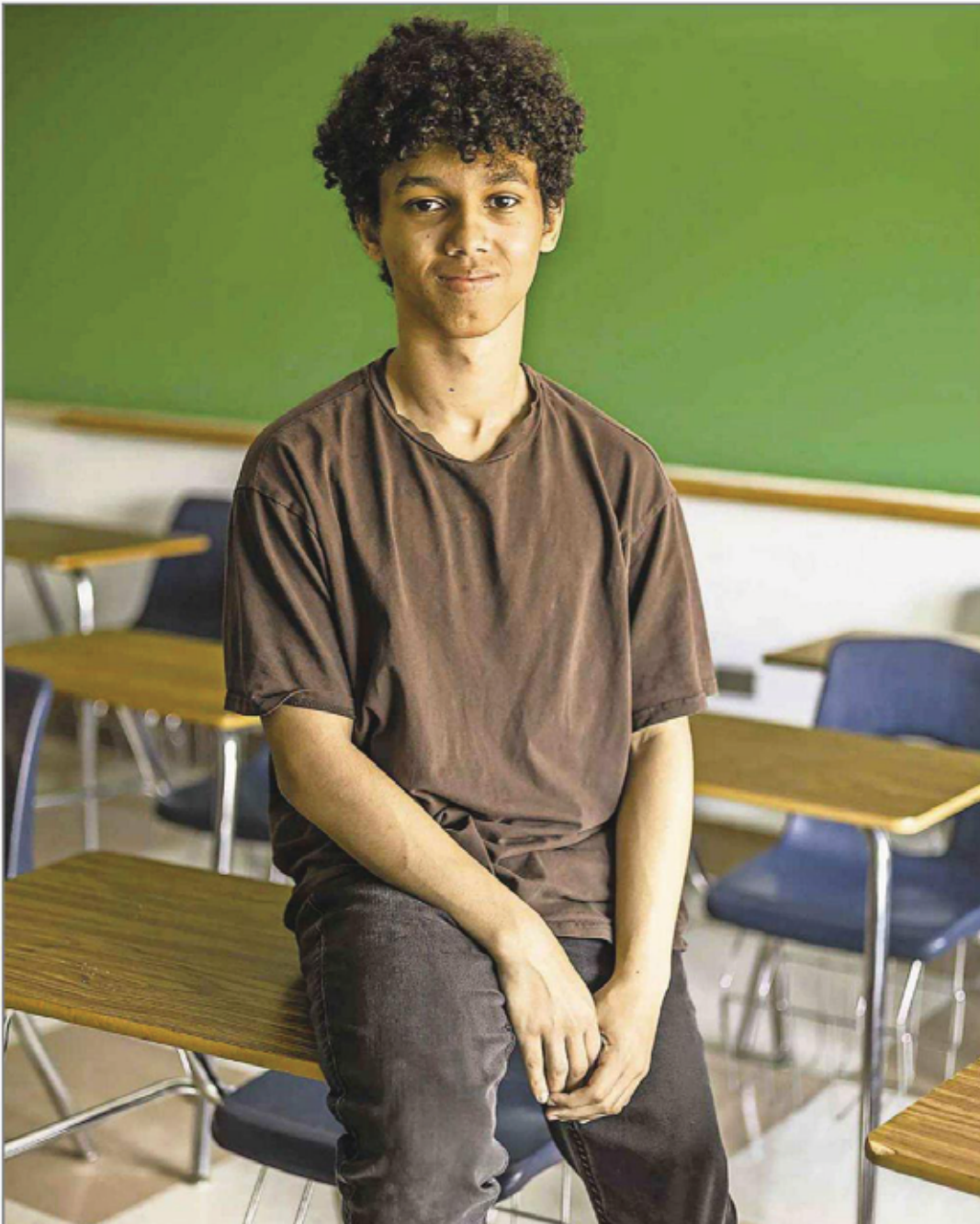
■ **Advocates say AP coursework helps** prepare students for higher learning, but some experts say low-income students and students of color are not equally represented in the program.

studied inequality in advanced learning programs.

Providing opportunity for all

The College Board revamped its award system in 2023. Evaluations are based on three benchmarks: 40% or more of graduating students must take AP exams, 25% or more must earn a passing exam score of at least 3 on a scale of 1 to 5, and at least 2% must take five or more exams throughout their high school years, according to the College Board. While 3 is the lowest score to qualify for college credit, neither the score nor the courses are universally accepted.

Statewide, 34.4% of graduates passed one exam in 2025, a 3.7 percentage point increase from the year prior. That’s the second-highest overall percentage in the nation behind Massachusetts’ 35.8%.



Randolph Gonzalez, 18, a senior at Uniondale, is taking three Advanced Placement classes this semester.

Uniondale High School earned a spot on the College Board's honor roll for the first time in 2025, with school leaders saying AP participation has increased significantly. This academic year, 600 students were enrolled in AP classes compared with 295 during the 2021-22 school year, according to Stacie M. Reid, the district's director of guidance.

The school currently offers 24 AP courses and will be adding two more next fall: cybersecurity and business with personal finance.

A majority of the school's students are low-income and either Hispanic or Black. Reid said educators strive to ensure coursework is open to all students.

"This reflects our commit-

ment to academic excellence and ensuring that we provide equity and opportunity for all students," Reid said in a phone interview.

David Hollander, the district's social studies director, told Newsday in a phone interview that students who complete AP coursework "show greater resilience and greater ability to succeed when they get into college. . . . So for us, it really shows that commitment and a belief that all of our students are capable of achieving at high levels."

Randolph Gonzalez, 18, a senior at Uniondale High School, said in a recent phone interview he was currently taking three AP courses and will graduate with nine under his belt.

"This is really giving me a lot more confidence for my future," said Gonzalez, an AP ambassador at the school who is heading to Boston University. He said that even if the exposure is challenging for some students, overall, "It's a decent motivator for them to start excelling and getting on track for college."

Participation, outcomes

Sachem High School East also was newly added to the AP honors list. The district, which has two high schools, now offers 25 AP classes with 1,256 students enrolled, compared with 1,093 enrolled in 22 classes in 2021, according to a district spokesperson. The schools administered 2,518 exams in 2025,

up from 1,867 in 2021.

Superintendent Patti Trombetta said in a statement the "real value" is "less about the test itself and more about access, participation and outcomes." The school allows all students to participate and has also made courses available to students in ninth grade.

Roberta A. Gerold, superintendent of the Middle Country district and home to Centereach High School, which was newly honored, said the district's two high schools offer many paths for students to succeed — including through vocations and the arts. She said Centereach High offers 21 AP classes with 697 students enrolled, and courses are open to everyone.

"What made us so proud here was how important the students thought their studies were, and how important this particular achievement is for them," Gerold said.

Bellport High, in the South Country school district, made its debut on the honor roll with silver status — the third-highest ranking, above bronze.

Superintendent Antonio Santana, in an interview before he resigned earlier this month, said the district has added more AP courses and is also offering pre-AP classes.

The College Board ranking, he said, is important because "it reflects the work happening inside of classrooms, the expectations we have for our students, and the support systems that help students rise to those expectation."

Equity concerns

Roda, of Molloy University, said despite increased enrollment in AP classes, inequities continue in schools serving communities with diverse populations.

"I think AP, IB (International Baccalaureate) gifted, accelerated or honors classes all follow the same pattern of racial and socioeconomic underrepresentation for Black, Latinx, Native American and low-income students, compared to Asian and white students and middle class students," said Roda, author of two books, including "Making School Integration Work: Lessons from Morris."

Fewer AP courses, she said, can have "long-term consequences" in terms of college acceptance as well as "transferring those courses to get credit for college."

Some research supports this, including a 2025 study published by Stephanie Owen in

the peer-reviewed academic journal Education Finance and Policy. Based on administrative data from high schools in Michigan, Owen found "students from non-economically disadvantaged families, White and Asian students, and higher-achieving students are more likely to take advantage of additional AP courses when they are offered, thus widening existing gaps in course-taking," according to the report's abstract.

In a statement, a College Board spokesperson said while the company remains concerned about AP participation, the number of Black and Hispanic students taking exams increased in the last 10 years.

Five of the Island schools added to the honor roll in 2025 are in low-income districts where more than 40% of the students were considered economically disadvantaged and more than 50% of the school population were students of color.

Jeanette Deutermann, founder of the group Long Island Opt-Out, has also raised concerns about the AP exams. She said in 2021 her son took AP French as a senior at a Nassau high school, and she felt the course taught to the test rather than providing substantial learning.

"Over the last decade, AP has gone test-centric. The whole premise was it was supposed to offer higher level coursework for kids that had strong passions and interests . . . and it's become more of a moneymaking scheme," she said.

Each AP exam costs \$99. The College Board offers up to a \$37 fee reduction per exam for those showing financial need and has provided more than \$54 million in fee reductions for exams in 2025, according to company spokesperson Sara Sympson.

Despite the scrutiny, the AP honor roll was still viewed as a hallmark of success by many districts.

Jordan F. Cox, superintendent of Commack schools, hailed the news that his district's high school had made the list in 2025.

"This recognition reflects the broader work happening across our schools to support all students in finding the right path and being prepared for what comes next," he said.



SCHOOLS WITH AP HONORS

The AP school honor roll recognizes schools across four levels of distinction for 2025: **Platinum, Gold, Silver** and **Bronze**. Criteria for recognition include students' participation rates and passage rates on college-level Advanced Placement tests sponsored by the Manhattan-based College Board. Schools can win additional recognition by demonstrating that they provide students with equitable access to advanced courses and exams.

** Moved up to a higher tier this year on the honor roll*
*** New this year to the honor roll*

School	District	Overall tier
Babylon Junior-Senior High School*	Babylon	Platinum
Baldwin High School	Baldwin	Silver
Bayport-Blue Point High School	Bayport-Blue Point	Silver
John F. Kennedy High School	Bellmore-Merrick	Gold
Sanford H. Calhoun High School	Bellmore-Merrick	Gold
Wellington C. Mepham High School	Bellmore-Merrick	Gold
Bethpage High School*	Bethpage	Gold
Carle Place High School	Carle Place	Silver
Center Moriches High School	Center Moriches	Bronze
Cold Spring Harbor Junior-Senior High School	Cold Spring Harbor	Platinum
Commack High School**	Commack	Bronze
Connetquot High School	Connetquot	Bronze
Deer Park High School	Deer Park	Bronze
Diocese of Rockville Centre	Chaminade High School	Platinum
Diocese of Rockville Centre*	Holy Trinity Diocesan High School	Gold
Diocese of Rockville Centre	Sacred Heart Academy	Platinum
Diocese of Rockville Centre	St. Anthony's High School	Silver
Diocese of Rockville Centre*	St. Dominic High School	Silver
Diocese of Rockville Centre	St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School	Silver
Diocese of Rockville Centre	St. Mary's High School	Silver
East Hampton High School	East Hampton	Silver
East Islip High School	East Islip	Silver
W. Tresper Clarke High School	East Meadow	Silver
East Rockaway High School	East Rockaway	Silver
Wheatley School	East Williston	Platinum
Eastport-South Manor Junior-Senior High School	Eastport-South Manor	Silver
Elwood-John H. Glenn High School*	Elwood	Gold
Farmingdale High School*	Farmingdale	Silver
Garden City High School	Garden City	Platinum
Glen Cove High School	Glen Cove	Bronze
Great Neck North High School*	Great Neck	Platinum
Great Neck South High School	Great Neck	Platinum
Greenport High School**	Greenport	Bronze
Half Hollow Hills High School East*	Half Hollow Hills	Gold
Half Holow Hills High School West*	Half Hollow Hills	Gold
Hampton Bays High School	Hampton Bays	Bronze

School	District	Overall tier
Harborfields High School*	Harborfields	Platinum
Hauppauge High School	Hauppauge	Silver
Herricks High School	Herricks	Platinum
George. W. Hewlett High School*	Hewlett-Woodmere	Gold
Huntington High School	Huntington	Silver
Island Trees High School	Island Trees	Silver
Islip High School	Islip	Silver
Jericho High School	Jericho	Platinum
Kings Park High School	Kings Park	Silver
Division Avenue High School	Levittown	Silver
General Douglas MacArthur High School	Levittown	Silver
Locust Valley Middle High School*	Locust Valley	Silver
Lynbrook High School*	Lynbrook	Gold
Malverne High School*	Malverne	Silver
Manhasset High School	Manhasset	Platinum
Massapequa High School	Massapequa	Silver
Mattituck High School	Mattituck-Cutchogue	Gold
Centereach High School**	Middle Country	Bronze
Miller Place High School	Miller Place	Silver
Mineola High School*	Mineola	Platinum
Mount Sinai High School	Moutn Sinai	Silver
Academy Charter School*	New York State Department of Education	Gold
North Babylon High School	North Babylon	Bronze
North Shore High School	North Shore	Platinum
Northport High School	Northport-East Northport	Silver
Oceanside High School	Oceanside	Silver
Oyster Bay High School	Oyster Bay-East Norwich	Gold
Patchogue-Medford High School**	Patchogue-Medford	Bronze
Plainedge High School*	Plainedge	Silver
Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School	Plainview-Old Bethpage	Platinum
Earl L. Vandermeulen High School*	Port Jefferson	Platinum
Paul D. Schreiber High School	Port Washington	Gold
Roslyn High School	Roslyn	Platinum
Sachem High School East**	Sachem	Bronze
Sachem High School North	Sachem	Bronze
Sayville High School	Sayville	Silver
Seaford High School	Seaford	Gold
Elmont Memorial Junior-Senior High School	Sewanhaka	Silver

School	District	Overall tier
Floral Park Memorial High School	Sewanhaka	Gold
H. Frank Carey High School	Sewanhaka	Gold
New Hyde Park Memorial High School	Sewanhaka	Gold
Sewanhaka High School*	Sewanhaka	Gold
Shelter Island High School	Shelter Island	Gold
Shoreham-Wading River High School	Shoreham-Wading River	Silver
Smithtown High School East	Smithtown	Gold
Smithtown High School West	Smithtown	Gold
Bellport High School**	South Country	Silver
Walt Whitman High School	South Huntington	Silver
Southampton High School	Southampton	Bronze
Syosset High School*	Syosset	Platinum
Ward Melville High School	Three Village	Silver
Uniondale High School**	Uniondale	Bronze
Valley Stream Central High School	Valley Stream Central	Silver
Valley Stream North HS	Valley Stream Central	Silver
Valley Stream South High School	Valley Stream Central	Silver
Wantagh High School	Wantagh	Gold
West Hempstead High School	West Hempstead	Silver
West Islip High School	West Islip	Silver
Westhampton Beach High School	Westhampton Beach	Gold
Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School for Boys	N/A	Gold
Friends Academy	N/A	Platinum
Grace Christian Academy	N/A	Platinum
Hebrew Academy of Nassau County	N/A	Silver
Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway	N/A	Gold
Long Island Lutheran Middle and High School	N/A	Silver
MDQ Academy	N/A	Platinum
Mesivta Ateres Yaakov of Greater Long Island**	N/A	Bronze
North Shore Hebrew Academy High School	N/A	Gold
Rambam Mesivta	N/A	Silver
Ross School*	N/A	Silver
Schechter School of Long Island*	N/A	Platinum
Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls*	N/A	Gold
The Knox School	N/A	Bronze
The Stony Brook School	N/A	Platinum