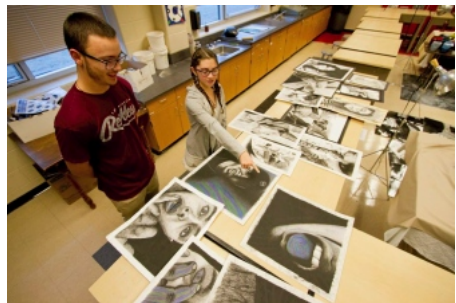




# A passion for learning pays off at North Pocono

BY SARAH HOFIUS HALL / PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 25, 2016

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Seniors Dan Griffith and Kristen Rossignol critique their artwork during an Advanced Placement art class at North Pocono High School. SARAH HOFIUS HALL STAFF PHOTO



SARAH HOFIUS HALL / STAFF PHOTO Senior Marina Topa works with hydrochloric acid to identify ions during an AP chemistry class at North Pocono High School.

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SARAH HOFIUS HALL / STAFF PHOTO Senior Marina Topa, right works with senior Desarae Bolish to identify ions during an AP chemistry class at North Pocono School.



COVINGTON TWP. — In chemistry class, students used hydrochloric acid to identify ion solids. In calculus, students tried to find values during a lesson on linearization. In art, classmates critiqued one another's work for portfolio submissions.

Throughout North Pocono High School last week, students sat down to learn in nearly two dozen Advanced Placement courses. The offerings have led to the College Board naming North Pocono to the AP District Honor Roll for the sixth straight year — a feat accomplished by only one other school district nationwide.

Districts named to the honor roll have increased access to AP courses while maintaining or increasing the percentage of students who earn scores of 3 or higher on AP exams. No other Lackawanna County district made the list this year.

Last year, 399 seats were taken in AP courses at North Pocono, an increase from 109 in 2010. Most students take multiple AP courses. Depending on the score earned on AP exams, which ranges from 1 to 5, students can earn college credits and bypass entry-level courses — saving both time and money. Some students start college with enough credits to bypass an entire year of classes.

This year, North Pocono added AP statistics and art history to its course list, which also includes classes such as economics, English literature, Spanish, music and world history. Next year, the district plans to add AP computer science.

"The curriculum prepares students for college-level courses and success," Superintendent Bryan McGraw said.

The high school now must add another banner to its lobby, to go with the previous honor rolls and lists of students who pass the AP exams each year.

Chemistry teacher Maria Semidei Barrett said she regularly hears from recent graduates about the benefits of taking AP courses.

"They go to college knowing they can do well," she said. "That confidence is everything. ... They go into these great majors and stay in the major."

Students said taking AP courses is worth the extra effort.

"I feel like I'm really prepared to do (college) freshman-level courses," said senior Desarae Balish, who has taken seven AP courses and plans to major in pre-med or nursing.

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