

Learning Power



Essential Information for Students and Parents

Funded by the National Math and Science Initiative through support from Exxon-Mobil, the Learning Power program makes cash incentives available to South Dakota students who take online Advanced Placement math, science, and English courses and score 3 or higher on the College Board end-of-course exams. Here are nuts and bolts about the program.

Eligibility

- Public high school students (or home-school or private school high school students accessing the Learning Power program through a public high school) are eligible to participate in Learning Power. The Learning Power AP coursework will be challenging so a solid academic background in the identified content area will be essential. Having students enrolled in AP courses via distance learning is NOT new; however, offering students cash awards for high scores on College Board end-of-course exams IS new!

Learning Power Courses

- Via the South Dakota Virtual School, the Learning Power program offers seven online courses:
 - AP Calculus AB
 - AP English Literature & Composition
 - AP English Language & Composition
 - AP Biology
 - AP Physics B
 - AP Statistics
 - AP Chemistry

Registration and Participation Process for 2008-2009

- 1) The student contacts the guidance counselor, principal, or other designated high school official to indicate their interest in the Learning Power program. The school official confirms the student's eligibility. With the support and assistance of the school official, the student is registered for the Learning Power course or courses via the South Dakota Virtual School website. The student participates in the online course or courses throughout the school term.
- 2) The student takes the College Board end-of-course exam or exams in the spring upon completion of the course or courses.
- 3) In mid-July, the local high school is notified of student's score on the course exam.
 - a. If the student scores 3 or higher on College Board exam, the school issues a cash award in the amount of \$100 payable to the student. The award is paid in August.
 - b. If the student scores lower than 3, the student does not receive a cash award.

Costs Associated with Learning Program Courses and Awards

Students do NOT incur costs for participating in the Learning Power program:

- Enrollment and participation in Learning Power courses is provided at NO COST to students.
- College Board end-of-course exam fees are covered by the Learning Power program.
- Cash awards for students are covered by the Learning Power program.
- Textbooks and related materials are to be provided by the local school district.

Considerations for Assessing Students' Potential for Success

Many students will be attracted by the opportunity of earning cash awards for excelling in the Learning Power program. Thus, it is important that students possess an accurate perception of their readiness and the significant effort required for successful participation in online AP courses in math, science, and English. To that end, the following considerations are offered as data points and guidance for assessing students' potential for success and engaging students in meaningful discussions about Learning Power participation. The probability for success is heightened if a student:

- Possesses a strong knowledge base in subject matter content, that is, math, science, or English, as appropriate.
- Demonstrates personal responsibility and study skills necessary for a more-independent learning experience.
- Has access to supports such as a local teacher or mentor when needing a sounding board or direction about course assignments.
- Has access to an adequate technical configuration at school and/or home for participating in an online course effectively.

To determine if the students are academically prepared for AP courses, investigate the appropriate course syllabus posted at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/subjects.html>.

Technical Requirements for Learning Power Participation

Successful student participation in online AP courses should be supported by access to high speed internet.

Contact Persons for Learning Power Program

- Dr. Jim Parry, Learning Power program director, or MaryLou McGirr, Learning Power program coordinator, are available to answer questions by phone at (605)394-1876 or via email at jparry@tie.net or mmcgirr@tie.net, respectively. The mailing address for Learning Power is 1925 Plaza Blvd., Rapid City, SD 57702.