



New York State Board of Regents
Dr. John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner of Education
The State Education Department
The University of the State of New York / Albany, NY 12234
Office of Communications



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STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES VIRTUAL LEARNING INITIATIVE

**\$17.3 Million in Federal Race to the Top Funds Will Provide Low-Income Students
Better Access to Advanced Placement (AP) Courses**

State Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr. today announced 17 school districts and local consortia of districts have been awarded grants under New York State's virtual learning initiative, the Virtual Advanced Placement (VAP) Program. VAP is targeted to improve access to online and blended Advanced Placement (AP) courses for low-income students. King said the program is part of the Board of Regents' strategy to ensure that all New York students graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

"New York already has a good percentage of students taking AP classes and tests," King said. "But, unfortunately, low-income students don't always get the chance to take AP courses. And those courses are crucial for admission to and success in college.

"New York is a national leader in the use of federal Race to the Top funds to provide high quality, college level courses using available technologies. VAP will open the door to virtual classrooms that will let students take courses on their own schedule and learn at their own pace. We want every student to be ready for college and careers, not just those who live in districts that can afford to offer AP classes."

King said the federal funds will enable students and teachers statewide to participate in Advanced Placement (AP) and pre-AP classes and exams. Seventeen VAP Program grants worth a total of \$17,359,098 will be distributed to individual school districts and consortia of school districts led by Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to develop online and blended courses (which combine online and traditional classroom instruction). These 18-month grants will also provide professional development for teachers learning to teach these courses.

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The grants also can be used for other activities including: the purchase of needed technology resources to register and track student enrollment and performance on AP courses; computers for students to access the courses; and support for the cost of AP exams taken at the end of the course.

For a list of the districts and consortia receiving VAP awards, please visit <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/sa-08/awardees.pdf>. For more information on the VAP Program and other State Education Department programs funded through Race to the Top, please visit <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/>.

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