



# How Coupling AP Seminar and English 10 Is a Win-Win for These Texas Students

A common challenge students face is finding time in a packed academic schedule to take Advanced Placement® courses without sacrificing time for electives. Alvin Independent School District (Alvin ISD) has found a solution. The district discovered a way to stack AP Seminar and English II (English 10), boosting AP® enrollment and providing more students with access to AP Seminar without sacrificing an elective credit.

## IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITY

In our 30,000-student school district located south of Houston, we recognized that the sophomores who did take AP Seminar saw both their PSAT/NMSQT® and AP scores improve. However, due to graduation requirements, students often couldn't fit the class into their schedule until junior or senior year.

We asked ourselves, "Would it make a difference if the course could be combined with an existing required course?"

## TURNING OPPORTUNITY INTO ACTION

One of our AP Seminar teachers and some advanced academics specialists recognized how the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills could be easily integrated into the English II curriculum, which is taught to all 10th-grade students. To demonstrate satisfactory learning in English II (English 10), our students must take an end-of-course state exam to fulfill a graduation requirement. We discovered that by combining AP Seminar with English II, we could enable sophomores to meet a graduation requirement, prepare for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end-of-course exam, and give students the advantage of taking an Advanced Placement course.

The AP Seminar teacher worked in partnership with the English Language Arts curriculum coordinator to develop the new scope and sequence, and they adjusted the existing offerings into a combined model. Many of our English teachers would be teaching AP for the first time, so we needed to train them.

The state of Texas provides funding support for AP teachers via the Teacher Training Reimbursement program, which helped to cover the cost of sending our teachers to AP Summer Institutes.

We showed students how this combined class provides room in their schedule to take another elective. Students got most excited when they learned that in this stacked/combo class they conduct a study or investigation about a topic of personal interest and propose solutions to real-world problems. Some of the topics students have examined are 3D printing in the medical field, big data, and the impact of fast fashion.

Additionally, we wanted to get our parents involved and excited. So, we presented the opportunity during the community event at our Advanced Academics Night. Parents were able to learn more about the class and examine student samples of AP Seminar work from current and past classes.

### DISTRICT

**Alvin Independent School District**

### LOCATION

**Alvin, TX**

### DEMOGRAPHICS (2024-25)

**30,047**

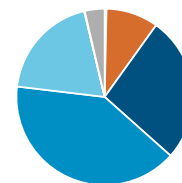
Total district enrollment

**9,579**

Grade 9-12 enrollment

**51%**

Low income



40% ■ Hispanic  
27% ■ Black  
19% ■ White  
10% ■ Asian  
4% ■ Two or more

### AP PROGRAM (2024-25)

**6,825**

Total enrollments in AP classes

**2,961**

Individual student enrollments in AP classes

**326**

Grade 10 students enrolled in English 10: AP Seminar

**29**

Number of AP courses offered

Parents and families of our AP students are an important aspect of positive student outcomes, and we wanted to share the excitement about this opportunity.

## EVALUATING THE OUTCOMES

The results speak for themselves: Since 2022, AP Seminar participation increased 186%.

Additionally, students who took the AP Seminar exam in 2024 outperformed other Texas students, with 85% in Alvin ISD scoring a 3 or higher.

We are often asked how well students do in the end-of-course exam to fulfill the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills graduation requirement. In addition to increasing student participation with AP classes, we are thrilled to report 100% passed with Approaches Grade Level, 98.73% passed with Meets Grade Level, and 35.87% passed with Masters Grade Level.

Overall, student outcomes have improved significantly, and this combined course approach meets many of our goals:

- Students are better prepared for state-required learning and exams.
- Students who may not have otherwise considered AP classes can do so while following a routine path to graduation and potentially earn college credit.
- Offering AP Seminar early in the student's high school career can positively impact PSAT/NMSQT and AP exam performance.
- Students save time in their schedule for treasured electives.
- Students are receiving AP course grade weight for both courses.

Our advice to administrators considering a similar formula: Go for it and don't ever look back.

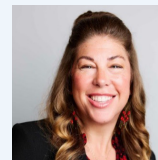
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## PRACTICAL POINTERS

On growing your AP Program:

- **Beyond the Classroom:** Build relationships with students through different partners, like counselors, to find out their interests.
- **Peer-to-Peer:** Leverage other students as ambassadors to share their success in AP classes. They can be valuable influencers.
- **Opportunity for Growth:** Help your faculty realize that teaching AP courses is a chance to become better educators as they learn to adapt their teaching methods.
- **Expect a Learning Curve:** Students will discover that college coursework is hard and requires better time management and tenacity than high school classes. Be prepared to encourage them.
- **Be Supportive:** We offer a campus administration support meeting each year with associate principals to discuss how administrators can support AP teachers and students.

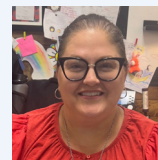
## EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES



**Amanda Smith, EdD**

Director of Advanced Academics

“The combined class is beneficial for students because it frees up an elective space. Additionally, the students are excited to receive AP course grade weight for both courses. Plus, we have more students in AP courses while supporting the belief that AP Seminar is the best class to prepare students for college.”



**Amber Stevener**

AP Seminar and English II Teacher

“AP Seminar as English 10 not only teaches the core skills of researching, writing, collaborating, and presenting, but allows educators to broaden its connection to all genres of the written word. Teachers find AP Seminar students' skills—from writing to presenting—so far above the rest. The relevance of its content puts it in a class of its own. If students only take one AP course, this should be it.”

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