



A-FREE EXAMS

Costly AP exam fees should be subsidized the school

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The highest level classes offered at Lawrence High almost always fall under the same illustrious and fear-striking designation: AP.

Touted as the ultimate way to prepare oneself for college — by taking what are virtually college courses themselves — Advanced Placement courses are a chance to academically challenge oneself. And those who do well enough in the courses have the opportunity to distinguish themselves, and if they are lucky, get college credits at a premium discount.

Teachers at Lawrence High encourage students to take exams, and more importantly, prepare us to score well on these tests. Nearly all of the AP Exams offered by the College Board are offered at Lawrence High and in many cases, if they are not, there is flexibility for students to structure their own curriculum and take them on their own.

The academic focus is excellent and the tools required to do well are all here, so where is the disconnect? Far too often, the excessive exam fee required at registration becomes a deterrent.

Lawrence High is home to a diverse group of students coming from a variety of economic backgrounds, and in an attempt to mitigate differences, there is a fee reduction for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. I believe this is a great approach and goes a long way toward allowing students of academically high achieving but low income backgrounds the same chances to demonstrate their abilities.

However, the cost for each AP exam still stands at \$94 or \$55 for students qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunches. Multiply this by three or four exams for particularly ambitious students, and students are faced with the proposition of paying upwards of \$300 to take a test.

Even for families where this is financially feasible, it becomes a

question of whether or not it is worth the price of admission.

For a school that is so clearly for students taking these challenging exams, this should never be a question. If the school financially backed the great emphasis it places on AP, more students would take more exams, and in many cases, students would be surprised with how well they do.

Lawrence High School must take steps toward funding our AP exams, because despite all the encouragement staff can provide, any initiative can be shaken from its foundation if money is allowed to make the ultimate decision. This would serve as an investment in the students of the Lawrence High as it would save them the worry, save them the money, and prepare more students to do well at the college level.

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