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## EFP Takeaways

The Effects of Delivering Personalized Course Recommendations at Scale on Advanced Placement Participation and Performance

### *Background*

Despite the prevalence of advanced high school coursework, gaps persist in participation by socioeconomic status and geography, even among students with the ability and access to succeed in them. Zachary Mabel, Michael D. Hurwitz, Matea Pender, and Brooke White examine the outcomes of a large-scale experiment designed to increase Advanced Placement (AP) participation among underrepresented minority students and students attending rural high schools. Their work is published in vol. 18 issue 1 of *EFP*.

### *The Study*

The large-scale experiment examined in this study randomly assigned students and parents to treatment and control groups. Those assigned to the treatment group received personalized outreach via multiple communication channels, including letters, e-mails, phone calls, and text messages, about AP classes offered at their high school in which they demonstrated potential to succeed. The researchers considered whether this intervention affected AP course participation and subsequent scores on AP exams.

### *Findings*

Outreach increased the probability of AP Exam participation in subjects in which students demonstrated potential to succeed by 1.1 percentage points, a 2.5 percent increase over the control group rate. This, in turn, increased the probability that students scored 3 or higher on those AP Exams by 0.5 percentage point, a 1.4 percent increase over the control group rate.

Intervention effects were concentrated among underrepresented minority students attending nonrural schools and relatively less academically prepared students.

The findings indicate that personalized course recommendations can increase equity in advanced high school course participation; however, designing outreach campaigns at scale that engage students is a crucial challenge to their efficacy.

#### **For more details:**

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in \*Education Finance and Policy\*](#).
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- Summary of:  
Mabel, Z., Hurwitz, M., Pender, M., & White, B. (2023) The Effects of Delivering Personalized Course Recommendations at Scale on Advanced Placement Participation and Performance. *Education Finance and Policy*, 18 (1): 74-96.