



Framingham's Keefe Tech offers first-ever AP courses

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FRAMINGHAM – Students go to Keefe Technical for its career and technical training, but Superintendent Jon Evans said that doesn't have to be at the expense of a solid academic education. The school is backing up that claim with its first-ever Advanced Placement courses, officially launched during a Wednesday morning ceremony.

In a partnership with Mass Insight Education, an organization dedicated to helping public high schools close the achievement gap, Keefe Tech kicked off its first Advanced Placement courses, inviting school and elected officials to congratulate the more than 30 students enrolled in the college-level classes. With the courses added to the roster, Keefe Tech students will join more than 49,000 of their counterparts statewide in getting a jump on college classes.

AP courses are run by the College Board, giving high school students an early shot at college classes. The curriculum is the same across the country, and conclude with a standardized test that can qualify students for college credit if they earn a certain score. The test is scored on a 1-to-5 scale, with 5 being the best score. John Somlenski, of Mass Insight, said AP courses are a way of leveling the playing field so students can compete for university spots.

"If you get a 3 on the AP English test here at Keefe, it's the same as getting a 3 at the Boston Latin School that has graduated presidents and Supreme Court justices," Smolenski said. "It is incumbent upon you to be competitive, to make yourself competitive."

Keefe Tech is now offering two AP courses, one in English and another in computer science. Mass Insight helped train teachers, set up study sessions for students, and support the new classes. The classes, Evans said, prove Keefe Tech isn't only for students looking to enter careers straight out of high school.

“People outside the community know about us when we talk about our career and technical education,” he said. “We also want to take this opportunity to remind people about the academic programs as well. As we provide great career and technical education to our students, it’s important for people to understand our students are not closing doors academically.”

Even if students don’t intend to move on to college, state Sen. Karen Spilka, D-Ashland, said AP courses will help prepare students for whatever challenge they take on.

“You made the right decision,” Spilka said to the around 30 students gathered on Wednesday. “Your hard work in the AP classes will help prepare you for the rest of your life. This will help with your careers, whether you go on to college or not. This will help with your success.”

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