

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT TO TAKE COLLEGE CLASSES -----
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According to the [Community College Research Center](#), students who take college-level courses in high school are more likely to enroll in college, persist, and complete a degree, especially low-income and first-generation students.

I'm writing tonight as both an SPS teacher and a parent to advocate for the continued financial support for high school students who wish to take college-level courses.

When I first joined the Academy of Arts and Academics in 2018, I was excited to become part of a creative, student-centered school and have had zero regrets. One of the most inspiring discoveries I made early on was learning that our school financially supported students who wanted to take classes at local colleges. I didn't fully understand how the system worked, but our students clearly did. They knew it was something they could pursue if they wanted more academic challenge, and they knew their school would support them in doing so.

What really cemented how powerful this opportunity was came at graduation that spring. I was amazed to learn how many seniors at A3 had already accumulated substantial college credit, some even completing the equivalent of an associate's degree while still in high school. It left a strong impression on me. It showed that this district valued student initiative, provided real support for enrichment, and believed in meeting students where they were, even if that meant providing opportunities beyond the walls of our own classrooms.

Things have changed. Starting last year, I heard stories of A3 students who were unable to get the financial support to take college classes that they'd traditionally been granted.

This change has real consequences. We're a small school. We simply can't offer every class a student might want or need. For instance, we often have only five or six students interested in a course like Math 111, not enough to devote FTE to an entire class. With graduation requirements like personal finance and civics added just recently, our flexibility has only decreased. College classes can help fill that gap offering rigor, variety, and relevance that we alone can't provide.

Springfield Public Schools' mission promises to be "welcoming, encouraging and supportive of everyone," and to "deliver an experience that serves every student, every day." I'd like to see that our students have access to opportunities like local college classes to align with this vision. Offering more financial support for high school students to take college classes would send a clear message that we believe in our students' potential and are willing to invest in it.

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