

## Honors/AP Informational Night

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*Pacifica High School  
Garden Grove, California*

Pacifica High School students and their parents spent an evening learning about the opportunities provided by the school's Honors/AP program. Eighth-grade students from feeder junior high schools also attended. Honors and AP teachers formed a panel to explain the program and field questions from parents.

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) planned the event in response to a suggestion made by parents on the team. With over half of Pacifica's students participating in the Honors/AP program, parents wanted more information to better help their students make decisions to prepare for college.

Pacifica's principal opened the event by welcoming parents and students. One of the school counselors reviewed basic information about the Honors and AP classes and discussed the role of the counselor in helping students plan for college. At least one teacher from each department participated in the panel moderated by the speech and debate teacher. As teachers presented, parents wrote questions on forms that were provided for teachers to answer at the end of the evening. Parents included their e-mail addresses in case the questions were better answered one-to-one instead of with a large group. Teachers distributed to parents informational packets, which included a 14-page handout on frequently asked questions about the Honors/AP program. At the end of the evening, attendees provided feedback via evaluation forms and enjoyed cookies and beverages donated by the PTSA.

Parents and teachers on the ATP worked together to plan the event. Teachers

based their presentations on topics parents indicated would be most useful to them. Students in AP or Honors classes contributed information so that teachers could address topics of importance to students. After gathering feedback from parents and students, teachers held two meetings to plan their presentations and clarify the event's focus.

Honors/AP Informational Night was well-publicized, with notices on Pacifica's web site, in the school's bulletin, and on the marquee in front of the building. Parents distributed fliers to area junior high schools and advertised the event in the schools' monthly publications.

The event proved helpful to all involved. College-bound students learned which classes to take in high school, teachers' expectations for those courses, and what to anticipate on AP exams. At the same time, parents learned how they could support their teens in the program. Teachers gained a greater appreciation for Honors/AP programs in other areas of study.

Pacifica High School plans to hold Honors/AP Informational Night earlier next year so that eighth-grade parents and students will have access to the information before registering for ninth grade.

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