2014 AP Chemistry Results Commentary (6/26/2014)

The AP results are in, though as of today I have not yet seen individual scores, only the aggregate totals. I will have access to Nordonia scores on Sunday, July 6th, and you (if registered to receive them electronically) will have access to your score on Tuesday, July 8th. I wanted you to have the aggregate results (and a few comments) so that you could reflect when you receive your own results.

Needless to say, there has been an enormous outcry among AP Chemistry teachers nationally with regard to this year’s exam. We did not discuss the exam afterward too much in class, and so I have been somewhat on the fence. The overwhelming concerns with the exam stem primarily with two items:

1. The historic “cutoff” to achieve a “5” on the exam has been in the 63-66% range. This year, the “cutoff” was 72%. In recent years, only in 2012 was the percentage this high. The sense among AP teachers is that the AP College Board was using the new exam (and curriculum) this year to make adjustments to performance levels and rigor Colleges are seeking. When the AP Biology exam and curriculum were changed last year, a similar increase in “cutoff” percentage was also observed.
2. There is a sense that tremendous time pressure was incurred on the Free Response portion of the exam. Over 70% of all exams received ZERO points on the last Free Response problem (it was #7 if you remember it), and feedback from graders indicate that most of these exams were left completely blank (i.e. due to apparent time constraints). Many feel that the College Board, in its efforts to write a good exam under the new curriculum, failed on the length of the exam. I don’t recall our talking afterwards about whether you had such time constraints.

Taking these two into account, the score distribution this years changed significantly. Below are the aggregate totals for AP Chemistry. Historically, Nordonia students have done remarkably well on the exam, and I’m confident that this year you also performed well. However, with such drastic changes in the percentages, we can only wait until July 6th and 8th to confirm. Enjoy the rest of your summer.

2014 “Cutoff” 2014 % 2013 %

5 72% 10.1% 18.9%

4 58% 16.6% 21.5%

3 42% 25.7% 18.8%

2 27% 25.8% 14.9%

1 < 27% 21.8% 26.0%