

Student Profile: Anna

Anna, 10th Grader, Chicago Metro

"I try to get A's because I know I'm capable of doing it."



When Anna, an immigrant from Mexico City, first arrived at a Chicago suburb High School for 9th grade, she was placed in all “shelter” classes reserved for students whose native language is not English.

During the first week of her freshman year, one teacher changed that: “One teacher, she told me, ‘You know Spanish, right? You can take AP for that.’”

When her high school partnered with Equal Opportunity Schools, students like Anna were sought out and encouraged to consider AP. After taking a placement exam, Anna enrolled as one of the first freshmen to take AP Spanish. She now has a 4.21 GPA.

Anna’s goal is to earn an advanced degree to become either a civil and environmental engineer or an architect. “I want to do something hard early, so when I get [to college] I’m prepared,” she says.

Anna has glowing reviews of her AP courses. She and her classmates are assigned readings that reflect their culture and identity, and they learn from each other during class discussions. Anna loves her teacher and plans to continue taking AP courses next year. Equal Opportunity Schools helps make this possible.

“It’s good that I took it since freshman year, so I don’t have this feeling of being scared of moving on and trying something else.”

Anna’s high school has done significant work to ensure that all students feel encouraged to pursue the most rigorous courses at their school, especially low-income students and students of color.

Now that she is enrolled in AP for her second year, Anna wants to be an advocate for other students. She was certainly not alone in searching for more challenging courses. Only 11 percent of underrepresented students at her Chicago Suburb high school report they feel challenged in their courses.

“I wanted to be a mentor because I can be the one person like, ‘AP, it’s not hard.’ If a freshman or a sophomore says it, that’s going to make other people be like, ‘Then we should try it too.’”

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**Per FERPA, names and images have been changed to protect students’ identities.*

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