Hire committed, subject-matter experts. Look for candidates who have degrees in their subject matter and demonstrate a commitment to stay for an extended period of time.

Acknowledge that teaching AP requires additional training. Send teachers to off-site or external training or provide in-house sessions that allow them to learn from certified experts about the level of rigor demanded in AP.

Identify mentor teachers. Allow new AP teachers the opportunity to co-teach with a veteran AP teacher, so they can receive real-time feedback and training.

Re-define what it means to have “AP potential.” Historically, students have been selected for AP courses based on previous academic performance, but this creates an unnecessary barrier for students who have the interest and passion (but not the grades) to pursue AP.

Create a master schedule and supports catered to students. The school’s schedule should have enough AP options to meet student demand; it should also include regular time for extra help or exam prep for students who need it.

Build curricula that usher students toward AP. Courses in freshman and sophomore years (and earlier, if possible) should be aligned and paced in such a way that students develop the independent problem-solving and critical-thinking skills needed in AP.

The bottom line is this: The more systematic and purposeful a school is about promoting access, the more likely it is to achieve high levels of success. With a strong teaching staff that is trained and supported, a master schedule that promotes AP enrollment for everyone, a school culture that roots for all students to succeed, and extra tutorials and interventions for students who need help, access becomes much more than just an opportunity; it becomes a pathway to success.