

Study on Acceleration Mechanisms in Florida

**December
2003**

**Submitted to the Governor and the Legislature in fulfillment of the
requirements in Section 1007.27, Florida Statutes**



Submitted by:

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1. Statutory Requirements for the Report

During the 2003 Regular Legislative Session, the Legislature passed House Bill 1739 which mandated the State Board of Education to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature on acceleration mechanisms in the state. Specifically, the bill amended Section 1007.27, Florida Statutes, and required the State Board of Education to “conduct a review of the extent to which acceleration mechanisms authorized by this section are currently utilized by school districts and public postsecondary educational institutions.” The legislation further stipulates that “the report must include a summary of ongoing activities and a plan to increase and enhance the use of acceleration mechanisms as a way to shorten the length of time as well as the funding required for a student, including a student with a documented disability, to obtain a postsecondary degree.”

There are seven general areas that the bill required the review to address. These include:

- **Advising** regarding the availability of accelerated mechanisms options;
- Availability of acceleration mechanisms options to eligible students;
- **Grading Practices**, including weighting of courses, with regard to credit earned through acceleration mechanisms;
- Applicability of accelerated credit to postsecondary **general education** requirements;
- Extent to which **class size reduction** issues could be alleviated through the use of acceleration mechanisms;
- **Funding** for instruction associated with accelerated courses;
- Feasibility of providing students with **credit-by examination** opportunities upon completion of dual enrollment courses;

The report is arranged in a manner that addresses each of these seven areas individually, although overlap is unavoidable. The required summary of activities and plan for increasing and enhancing the use of acceleration mechanisms is divided into issue areas as well.

2. Process for Completing the Report

Articulation Coordinating Committee

The Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) was established by the Commissioner of Education as an oversight group for K-20 articulation policy. The primary mission of the group is to ensure articulation and seamless integration of the K-20 education system by building and sustaining relationships among K-20 public organizations; between public and private organizations; and between the educational system as a whole and Florida’s communities. The purpose of building and sustaining these relationships is to facilitate the efficient and effective movement of students and to allow students to proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their abilities and circumstances permit. Since student acceleration has been identified as an articulation issue, the State Board of Education charged the ACC with the task of developing the initial report.

The ACC consists of representatives from the various K-20 educational sectors including state universities, community colleges, public school districts (including home education programs), and independent secondary and postsecondary institutions. In addition to the general membership, a number of Task Forces were established to address specific issues that fall within the purview of the ACC. One of these groups is the ACC Task Force on Acceleration Policies.

This group consists of ACC members as well as additional representatives from the various sectors that work closely with acceleration programs.

The Task Force on Acceleration Policies was charged with the primary task of fact finding and was asked to gather information and identify issues related to acceleration mechanisms for review by the ACC. The Task Force held several meetings which focused on the issues to be addressed in the study. In addition, two subgroups relating to the areas of access/advising and grading practices were created to focus on specific issues and each met once separately via conference call.

Statewide data was requested and received from the Department of Education and a survey of school district superintendents was distributed electronically to all 67 districts requesting more specific information not previously collected by the Department. Forty-seven school districts responded to the survey resulting in a 70 percent response rate. Once the data from the survey was gathered, a follow-up qualitative survey was conducted via telephone by Department staff to obtain additional information relating to advising practices.

On October 15, 2003, the ACC held a full day workshop to review the data and address the acceleration issues identified by the Task Force. The ACC approved the final recommendations on November 19. The State Board of Education approved the recommendations of the ACC and the report at the December 16, 2003 meeting. The final report was submitted to the Legislature and the Governor.

3. Statutory Definitions of Acceleration Mechanisms

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is defined as “the enrollment of an eligible secondary student or home education student in a postsecondary course creditable toward a career and technical certificate or an associate or baccalaureate degree” (Section 1007.271, Florida Statutes). Vocational-preparatory instruction, college-preparatory instruction, and physical education courses that focus on the execution of a physical skill rather than the intellectual attributes of the activity are ineligible for inclusion in the dual enrollment program.

Student eligibility criteria for participation in dual enrollment include passage of the Common Placement Test (CPT) as well as achievement of a 3.0 un-weighted grade point average for college credit courses and a 2.0 un-weighted grade point average for career and technical certificate courses. Eligible students are permitted to enroll in dual enrollment courses that are conducted during school hours, after school hours, and during the summer term.

Students who meet the eligibility requirements are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition and laboratory fees. Instructional materials for dual enrollment courses shall also be available to Florida public high school students free of charge. Private school and home education students may also be provided with instructional materials, but it is not required by statute.

Early Admission

Section 1007.27(5), Florida Statutes, defines early admission as “a form of dual enrollment through which eligible secondary students enroll in a postsecondary institution on a full-time basis in courses that are creditable toward the high school diploma and the associate or

baccalaureate degree.” These students are treated in the same fashion as regular dual enrollment students.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement is “the enrollment of an eligible secondary student in a course offered through the Advanced Placement Program administered by the College Board” (Section 1007.27(6), Florida Statutes). Students enrolled in AP courses are eligible to receive postsecondary credit only if they obtain a minimum score of 3, on a 5-point scale, on the corresponding Advanced Placement Examination. However, public school students in Florida are exempt from the payment of any fees associated with the administration of the examinations regardless of whether they achieve a passing score. Postsecondary course equivalencies are determined by the Articulation Coordinating Committee and approved by the State Board of Education.

Credit by Examination

Section 1007.27(7), Florida Statutes, defines credit by examination as “the program through which secondary and postsecondary students generate postsecondary credit based on the receipt of a specified minimum score on nationally standardized general or subject-area examinations.” Passing scores and course equivalencies for CLEP are determined by the ACC (scores and equivalencies for other national or international examinations are recommended). Community colleges and universities may also develop their own examinations and award credit based on student performance. This option does not require the student to enroll in the course for which credit is being awarded. Credit by exam, such as CLEP and departmental examinations, typically result in students earning credit only toward their postsecondary degree or certificate. Credit earned via these examinations does not apply toward high school graduation.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate Program is “the curriculum in which eligible secondary students are enrolled in a program of studies offered through the International Baccalaureate Organization Program administered by the International Baccalaureate Office” (Section 1007.27(8), Florida Statutes). IB is an advanced, comprehensive program of study that is designed to meet various international university entrance standards. The program is offered only on selected high school campuses in Florida (through an application process) and administered by the International Baccalaureate Office based in Switzerland.

Students enrolled in an IB program are eligible to receive postsecondary credit only if they obtain a passing score on the corresponding IB Examinations. However, public school students in Florida are exempt from the payment of any fees associated with the administration of the examinations regardless of whether they achieve a passing score. Cut off scores and postsecondary course equivalencies are determined by the Articulation Coordinating Committee and approved by the State Board of Education. Students may be awarded a maximum of 30 semester credit hours earned via the International Baccalaureate program.

Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)

Section 1007.27(9), Florida Statutes, defines the AICE Program as “the curriculum in which eligible secondary students are enrolled in a program of studies offered through the Advanced International Certificate of Education Program administered by the University of Cambridge

Local Examinations Syndicate.” Students enrolled in an AICE program are eligible to receive postsecondary credit only if they achieve a passing score on the corresponding AICE examination. However, public school students in Florida are exempt from the payment of any fees associated with the administration of the examinations regardless of whether they achieve a passing score. Cut off scores and postsecondary course equivalencies are determined by the Articulation Coordinating Committee and approved by the State Board of Education. Students may be awarded a maximum of 30 semester credit hours earned via the AICE program.

4. Florida Policies designed to make acceleration mechanisms more “student friendly”

Statewide Course Numbering System

Concern over unnecessary repetition of courses by transfer students led the Florida Legislature to require the development of a statewide course numbering system to facilitate the transfer of credit for equivalent courses among the state's public vocational schools, colleges, and universities. Today the system maintains course information, identifying numbers and prefixes for more than 120,000 courses offered at participating institutions. Faculty discipline committees, institution coordinators, and Department of Education employees maintain this system.

ACC Credit-By-Exam Guidelines for Postsecondary Institutions

In 2001, as part of Senate Bill 1162 relating to education governance reorganization, the Legislature required the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) to establish passing scores and course and credit equivalencies for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. The DANTES/DSST and Excelsior College exam equivalents were not required by the bill, but recommendations were made for these exams as well under the authority of State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024.

The ACC Standing Committee on Alternative Ways of Earning Credit, a group consisting of postsecondary faculty and academic administrators, reviewed each examination and determined the appropriate course(s) for which postsecondary credit should be granted. These course equivalencies and associated credit were presented to the ACC for review and adoption. The ACC recommendations for course and credit equivalencies were then adopted by the State Board of Education on November 14, 2001.

In addition to the AP, IB and CLEP examination equivalencies required in 2001, the ACC also determined equivalencies for Advanced International Certificate in Education examinations in 2003 after the program was added to section 1007.27, F.S., as an acceptable acceleration mechanism during the 2002 school code rewrite process.

State universities and community colleges are now required to grant students who earn a specified score on an AP, IB, AICE, or CLEP exam credit for the specific postsecondary courses identified by the ACC. This credit is guaranteed to transfer across all public postsecondary institutions. Institutions may award more credit than the minimum listed by the ACC, but not less. There are also restrictions on the course numbers that can be used. In addition to the increased transferability of courses, the ACC guidelines allow for students to have met the general education, common prerequisite, and Gordon Rule requirements as if they had taken the course at the receiving institution.

Dual Enrollment

Articulation Agreements

Florida requires every school district to enter into an articulation agreement with a community college for the purpose of facilitating articulation and acceleration. These agreements must include a delineation of courses and programs available to students eligible to participate in dual enrollment. In addition, the agreements must outline the institutional responsibilities for assuming the cost of the dual enrollment program. These policies on dual enrollment contribute to Florida leading the nation in providing students with a comprehensive dual enrollment program. In 2001, Education Commission of the States (ECS) found Florida to be one of four states that provide tuition for high school students interested in taking postsecondary classes.

Dual Enrollment Course List

The Articulation Coordinating Committee, as mandated by the Legislature (HB 2105 – Chapter 2000-225, Laws of Florida), established an Ad Hoc Dual Enrollment Committee in September of 2000 to examine several aspects of the dual enrollment program. The committee consisted of representatives from school districts, community colleges, state universities, one nonpublic institution, and Department of Education staff. The charge of the committee was to:

- ◆ Identify postsecondary courses and credits completed through dual enrollment that will satisfy high school graduation requirements;
- ◆ Determine the number of high school credits that will be awarded for completion of each dual enrollment course;
- ◆ Develop a statement on transfer guarantees for dual enrollment courses, including information relating to students' rights and responsibilities; and
- ◆ Establish a procedure for annual review of inter-institutional articulation agreements.

Faculty committees, consisting of school district, community college, and university faculty, were established in the general subject areas required for high school graduation. These included: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Practical Arts/Career Education, Performing Fine Arts, and Physical Education/Life Management. Rather than looking at the entire universe of postsecondary courses, the committees focused only on those courses that had been offered as dual enrollment courses in the previous two years. This limitation made the task manageable and it was agreed that any course not included in the discussion could be offered through dual enrollment as an elective.

The faculty committees, facilitated by Department of Education staff, met at Hillsborough Community College and made recommendations regarding specific dual enrollment courses in their discipline areas. Each course was examined to assess whether it would meet a high school graduation requirement or serve only as an elective. Also, postsecondary courses were evaluated to determine the number of high school credits for which each one should be equated. Previously, all three credit postsecondary courses equated to .5 high school credits. The Ad Hoc Committee considered the recommendations of the faculty committees and determined that there were several postsecondary courses (particularly in the areas of foreign language, math, and science) that should equate to 1 full high school credit.

After the passage of Senate Bill 30-A (2003), which created a three-year accelerated graduation option, the ACC convened another faculty committee to re-examine the amount of high school credit that should be awarded for dual enrollment courses in the English/language arts subject

area. The committee recommended the receipt of one full high school credit for a few specific postsecondary composition and literature courses. The ACC accepted this recommendation in August 2003, and the State Board of Education later approved it in September 2003.

The Florida Partnership

Florida has partnered with the College Board to promote equity for all students in Florida. Through the Partnership, resources are dedicated to initiatives such as: familiarizing students with college admission tests such as the PSAT/NMSQT® and the SAT®; building rigorous academic curriculum, including more access for all students to AP® classes and other challenging courses; and encouraging parental involvement to help inspire more students to challenge themselves academically, and prepare for college and careers. Through these efforts, Florida has seen growth in the number of students identified for and participating in Advanced Placement courses. According to the 2003 Florida AP® report, Florida had the second greatest increase in the number of AP Test-takers in the nation.

5. Access to Acceleration Mechanisms

Student Eligibility Criteria

Student eligibility criteria for acceleration mechanisms vary across different types of courses and different school districts. For example, in order to participate in dual enrollment courses, students must meet the statutorily defined requirements of a 3.0 minimum GPA and passage of the appropriate section of the Common Placement Test.

There is no such statutory requirement for AP, IB, or AICE courses. Districts set their own eligibility requirements for student participation. The chart below provides an overview of student eligibility requirements, teacher preparation requirements, and the manner in which high school and college credit is earned for each type of accelerated/advanced course (high school honors courses included):

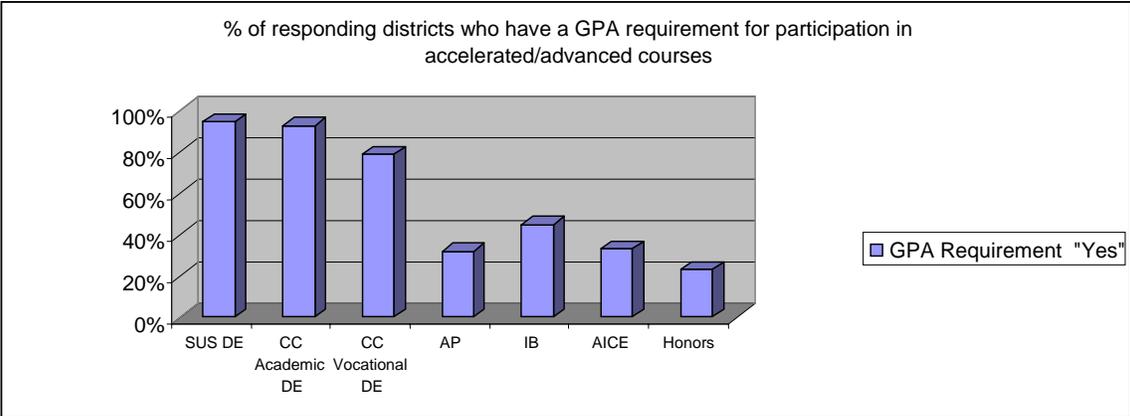
<u>Type of Course</u>	Student Eligibility Criteria	Teacher Qualifications	Manner in which HS credit is earned	Manner in which Postsecondary credit is earned
Dual Enrollment	<i>Section 1007.271, F.S.</i> - 3.0 un-weighted GPA (2.0 for vocational) - Must pass <u>appropriate</u> section of the CPT - Colleges may also set additional admissions criteria – outlined in interinstitutional articulation agreement	Must meet SACS criteria for college faculty (Master's degree + 18 graduate credit hours in subject area)	Receive a passing grade in the course	Receive a C or better in the course (per ACC). Statewide Course Numbering System
Advanced Placement	<i>Section 1007.27(6), F.S.</i> - No eligibility criteria specified in statute or by College Board. - Districts may set own eligibility criteria	No statutory requirement, determined by district. - College Board provides summer teacher training & curriculum guides – <u>NOT required.</u>	Receive a passing grade in the course	Pass standardized exam (scores set by ACC) ACC determines college course equivalencies
International Baccalaureate	<i>Section 1007.27(8), F.S.</i> - No eligibility criteria specified in statute or by IBO. - Districts may set own eligibility criteria	No statutory requirement, determined by IB school. - IBO <u>requires</u> all teachers to receive IBO training in the subject area (school must document this in the application process) – IBO also provides web support and curriculum guides	Receive a passing grade in the course	Pass standardized exam (scores set by ACC) ACC determines college course equivalencies

AICE	Section 1007.27(9), F.S. -No eligibility requirements specified in statute or by Cambridge. -Districts may set own eligibility criteria.	No statutory requirement, determined by the registered Cambridge Center school. Cambridge provides strongly recommended, but not required, annual face to face teacher training conferences. Cambridge also provides free on-line support including syllabuses, sample examinations and mark schemes, and lesson plans.	Receive a passing grade in the course.	Pass standardized exam (scores set by ACC) ACC determines college course equivalencies
Honors (*high school)	No eligibility requirements specified in statute. Districts/schools set own eligibility criteria.	No statutory requirement, determined by district –	Receive a passing grade in the course	There is no college credit earned for high school honors courses

For purposes of this study, the ACC surveyed all 67 school districts in an effort to obtain information on various district policies and practices as they relate to accelerated courses. Forty-seven of sixty-seven school districts responded, making the response rate just over 70 percent. The districts were asked specific questions related to student eligibility requirements, teacher credentials/training, and GPA calculation policies (which will be discussed in detail later in the report). Each district was asked to identify high schools within their district, if any, that they believed have exemplary advising practices. Practitioners from the identified schools were then interviewed by DOE staff to establish best practices. The results of the interview process will be discussed in the advising section.

GPA Requirements

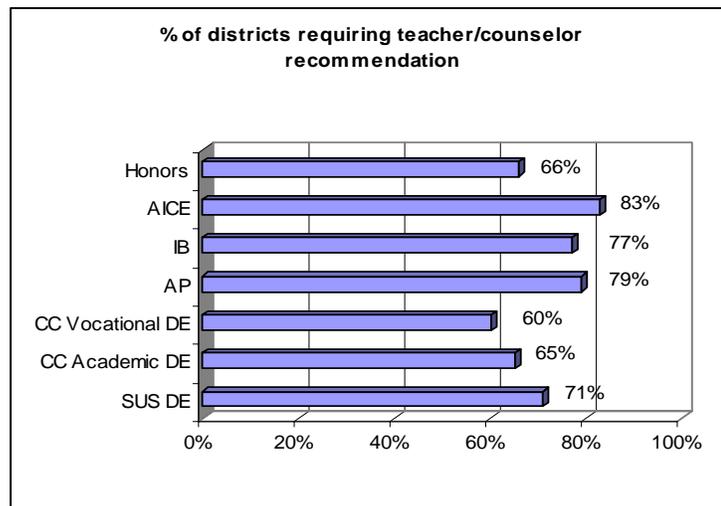
As illustrated in the chart below, the number of districts who require students to meet minimum GPA requirements before allowing them to participate in advanced courses varies across course type. The majority of districts who have a minimum GPA requirement use “un-weighted” GPA to determine student eligibility, however, some do use a “weighted” GPA. There is a statutory GPA requirement for dual enrollment courses (3.0 un-weighted for academic courses & 2.0 un-weighted for career & technical courses), which explains why the number of districts with GPA requirements for dual enrollment is very high. However, there is also a provision for exceptions to the GPA requirement if it is agreed upon by both educational entities and contained within the interinstitutional articulation agreement, so the number is not 100 percent.



Teacher/Counselor Recommendations

Although there are no requirements in statute for students to obtain a teacher or guidance counselor recommendation prior to enrolling in an accelerated/advanced course, a majority of school districts require a recommendation on the local level. There are exceptions to this requirement in many districts on a case-by-case basis. These include obtaining a recommendation from the principal; parental requests (in some cases); a review of the student's overall grades and test scores; and individual circumstances.

The percentage of school districts that have a teacher or counselor recommendation requirement, when broken down by the type of accelerated advanced course, reveals that teacher/ counselor recommendations are most commonly required for AICE (83%), AP (79%), and IB (77%) courses. However, a majority of districts also require recommendations for state university dual enrollment (71%), high school honors (66%), community college academic dual enrollment (65%) and community college vocational dual enrollment (60%).



Testing Requirements

The only acceleration mechanism that has a statutory testing requirement is dual enrollment. Section, 1007.271, Florida Statutes, stipulates that students must "demonstrate readiness" for college-level or career and technical-level coursework if they are to be enrolled in the respective type of dual enrollment course. This demonstration of readiness includes passage of the Common Placement Test (CPT) in conjunction with a specified GPA (3.0 for college-level; 2.0 for career and technical-level). The CPT requirement is necessary because students are prohibited from enrolling in college prep courses through dual enrollment.

However, the statute is not specific regarding what portions of the CPT are appropriate for admission into specific dual enrollment courses. Common practice has been to require a student who wants to dually enroll in a math class to pass the math portion of the CPT. The same holds true for English courses and the English portion of the CPT. The policy becomes less clear in subject areas that do not fall easily into a math or English category. There are several issues that need clarification:

- Should dual enrollment in a course that is not a math or English course (i.e. psychology, speech, humanities, etc.) require passage of the English or reading portions of the CPT?
- Should admission to a dual enrollment science course require passage of the math portion of the CPT? What about the reading portion?
- Do any dual enrollment courses require passage of the reading portion of the CPT? Should ALL of them? What is the reading portion of the CPT measuring?

- How should career & technical dual enrollment students demonstrate readiness (TABE?)?

These questions should be clarified so that the determination of the eligibility of students for dual enrollment courses is consistent across districts.

Additional Eligibility Requirements

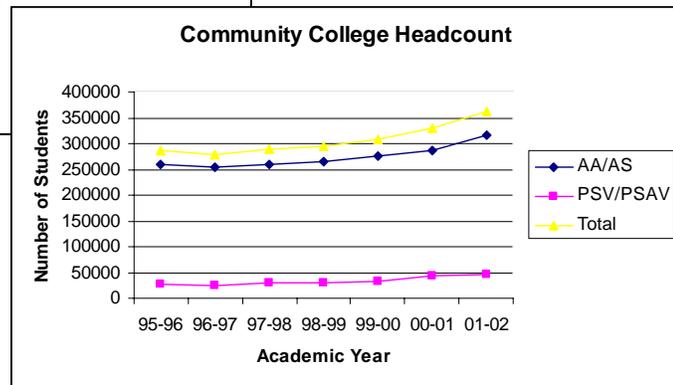
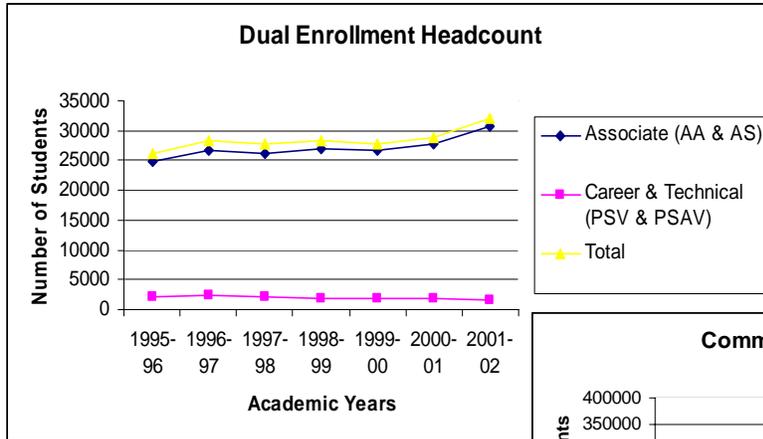
In addition to GPA, teacher/counselor recommendations, and CPT requirements, 57 percent of school districts reported having some additional eligibility requirements for students who wish to participate in accelerated/advanced courses. Some of these additional criteria include: course prerequisites; previous grades in same subject area courses, FCAT reading scores; PSAT, SAT, ACT scores; and specified grade level (e.g. 10th grade or above). In addition, some districts limit the number of accelerated courses that a student can take. Fifteen percent of school districts reported placing a restriction on the number of accelerated courses that students can take. Most of these districts limit the number of dual enrollment courses that can be taken *per semester* to 12 or 15, while one district reported limiting the total number of dual enrollment courses that a student can take to 30 hours. One responding district also reported restricting student participation in accelerated courses to only those that are offered through the district.

Student Participation

Dual Enrollment/Early Admission Participation at Community Colleges

All 28 community colleges participate in the dual enrollment program. Participation in community college dual enrollment has significantly expanded over the last 10 years as evidenced by a growth of 110 percent in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) student enrollment. In 2001-02, 32,960 high school students enrolled in a total of 98,045 dual enrollment courses at community colleges (637 of those students were classified as early admission). Community colleges with the largest dual enrollment programs in 2001-02 included: Valencia Community College (2,612 students); Indian River Community College (2,511 students); Brevard Community College (2,207 students); Gulf Coast Community College (2,085 students); and Palm Beach Community College (2,048 students).

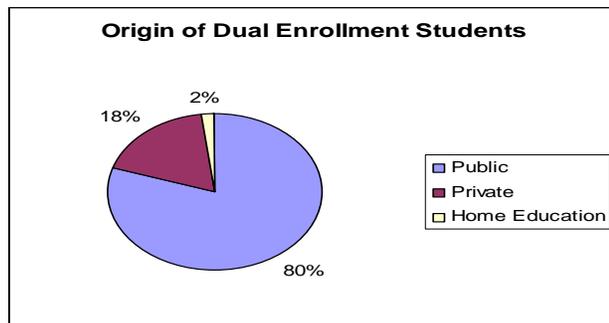
Although the number of courses taken per student per year ranged from 1 to 20 (median = 2), the average number of courses taken per year was 3.1 per student. Ninety-nine percent of dual enrollment students took 11 or fewer courses and 90 percent took 6 or fewer courses. The mode, or most common number of courses taken, was two. Seventy-five percent of dual enrollment students took 4 courses or less per year.

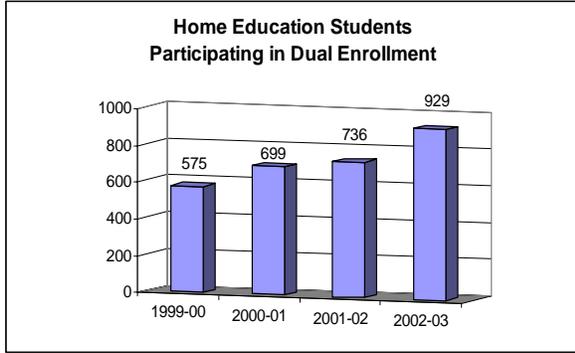


In addition to an increase in the number of courses taken by some dual enrollment students (110% FTE increase), the number of high school students participating in the community college dual enrollment program has also increased by over 56 percent. All growth has occurred in academic (AA/AS) dual enrollment, while career and technical (certificate) dual enrollment has remained relatively constant (see above chart).

With a success rate of 80 percent, students earned a total of 226,215 postsecondary credit hours through participation in dual enrollment programs. For the Community College System, academic dual enrollment accounted for 6,579.9 FTE, and 91 percent of credits earned through dual enrollment. Career and technical dual enrollment accounted for an additional 625.5 FTE and 9 percent of credit earned through dual enrollment. Student participation in dual enrollment courses offered at vocational technical centers will be addressed in the next section.

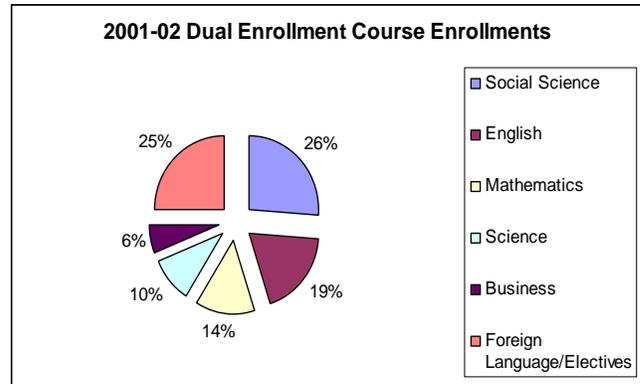
In 2001-02, close to 80% of dual enrollment courses in community colleges were taken by public school students. 18% of the students and course enrollments came from private schools. Home education students comprised the remaining 2% of students and slightly more than three percent of course enrollments.



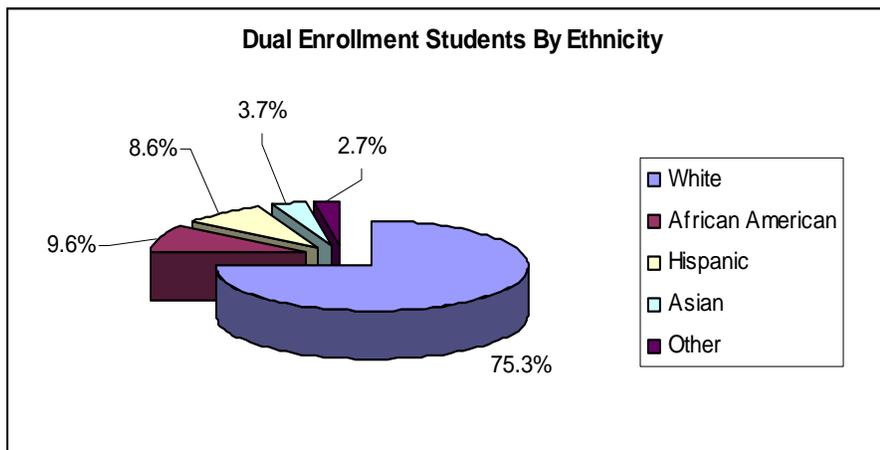


Trend data indicates that home education students are taking advantage of dual enrollment opportunities in increasing numbers. Over the last four years, home education student participation in dual enrollment has increased by 38 percent and many students complete an AA degree through the dual enrollment program.

In 2001-02, students most commonly enrolled in dual enrollment courses in the following subject areas: Social Science (26% of courses), English (19% of courses), Mathematics (14% of courses), Science (10% of courses), and Business (6% of courses). The remaining enrollments were comprised of foreign language courses as well as both academic and vocational electives.



Almost 61 percent of students who participated in dual enrollment in 2001-02 were female. This male/female ratio mirrored that of the general community college student population. However, only 25 percent of dual enrollment students were minorities, which was significantly less than the proportion of minority students in the general community college student population (37%). African-American students represented 9.6 percent of the dual enrollment student population, while Hispanic and Asian students represented 8.6 and 3.7 percent respectively. It is important to note, however, that a comparison between dual enrollment students and the general community college student population may be somewhat misleading because dual enrollment students must meet entrance requirements (GPA and pass the CPT) prior to enrolling while the general community college student population benefits from an open door admissions policy.



Students with documented disabilities were also underrepresented in the dual enrollment program. Between 1.8 and 2.0 percent of the students who were enrolled in community colleges in 2001-02 had a documented disability. However, students with documented disabilities comprised only 0.27 percent of the academic dual enrollment and 0.64 percent of the career and technical dual enrollment population.

Success Story: Community College Dual Enrollment

- FTE enrollment in community college dual enrollment has increased by 110% over the past decade.
- 80% of students who participate in community college dual enrollment earn postsecondary credit.
- Dual enrollment students have successful experiences in subsequent courses taken at a state university.

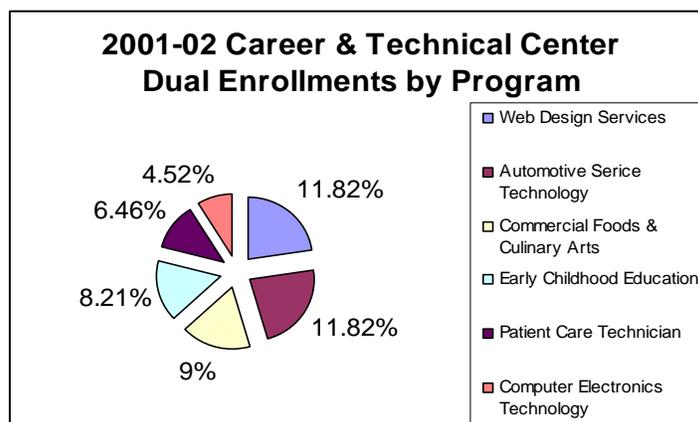


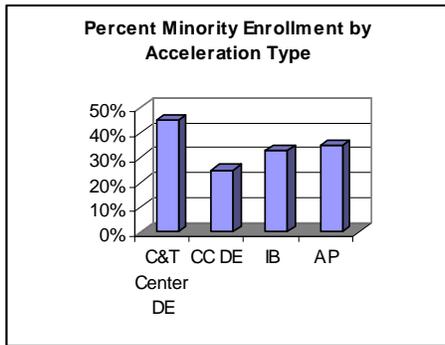
Dual Enrollment Participation in District Technical Center Vocational Programs

Florida has district-operated career and technical education centers in 36 counties. High school students may attend a career and technical education center as a dual-enrolled student to obtain non-college credit career and technical education instruction. This credit counts toward both high school graduation and a postsecondary certificate. In 2001-02, the range of programs in which dual enrollment students enrolled at career and technical education centers was wide, ranging from a single program in some districts to 61 programs in another district. As with other acceleration mechanisms, urban districts had significantly more technical center programs involved in high school dual enrollment than rural areas.

Student participation in dual enrollment courses offered at career and technical education centers also varied widely in 2001-02. There were districts with a single student enrolled and others with as many as 2,129 students participating in a technical program for high school and postsecondary credit.

Although students took courses in 125 different career and technical programs, over 51 percent of career and technical center dual enrollment students enrolled in 6 programs. These included a new program in Web Design Services (11.82%) as well as programs in Automotive Service Technology (11.82%); Commercial Foods and Culinary Arts (9%); Early Childhood Education (8.21%); Patient Care Technician (6.46%); and Computer Electronics Technology (4.52%).





Of the 8,231 students enrolled in programs in 2001-02, 59 percent were male. Minority enrollments accounted for a greater percentage of the total enrollments at technical centers than they did the enrollments in other acceleration mechanisms. Minority enrollments totaled 45 percent of all technical center dual enrollments, as opposed to 35 percent of AP enrollments, 33 percent of IB enrollments, and 25 percent of community college dual enrollments.

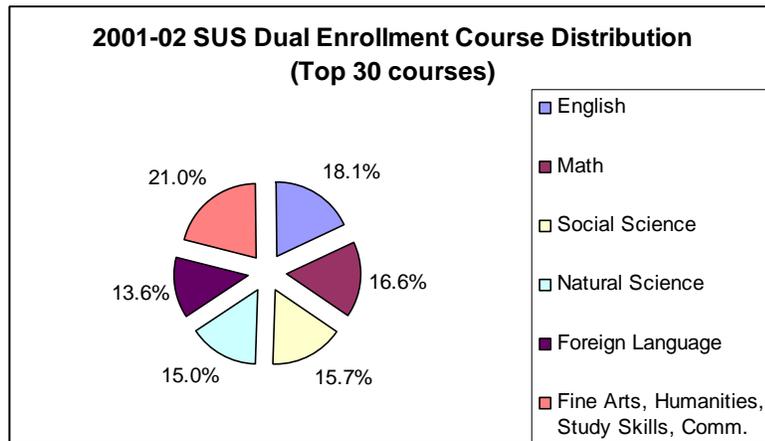
Students with documented disabilities made up 7.5 percent of enrollments in technical center dual enrollment in 2001-02. This is a significantly larger percentage than was

enrolled in other acceleration mechanisms (AP, IB, community college dual enrollment), which, in each case, accounted for less than 1 percent of enrollments.

Dual Enrollment Participation in State Universities

While far less common than community college and technical center dual enrollment, it is possible for high school students to enroll in state university courses as dual enrollment students. In 2001-02, 1,975 students statewide took advantage of this opportunity. The 1,975 students enrolled in 630 different courses for a total of 5,684 enrollments. Half of all enrollments were in just 30 courses.

Of the 30 courses with the highest enrollments, 21.6% were English; 20% were social science; 15.2% were math; 11.5% were natural science; and 9.7% were foreign language; 7% were Orientation; and 6.8% were Engineering. Humanities and communication courses combined for 8.3% of the 30 courses with the highest enrollments.



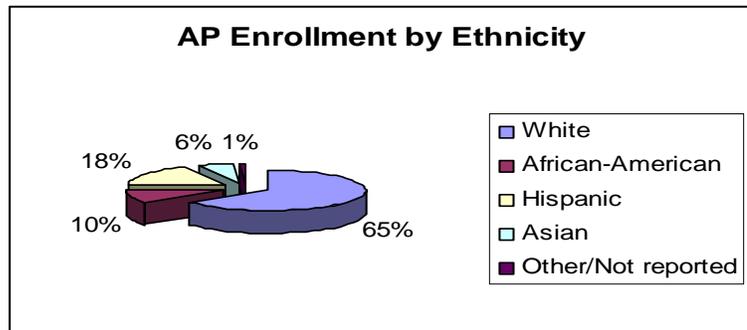
Advanced Placement (AP) Participation

The Advanced Placement Program, sponsored by The College Board, offers motivated high school students the opportunity to enroll in rigorous college-level coursework while still in high school. There are 34 different AP courses in 19 subject areas. Courses are taken for high school credit only; however, scoring well on the optional exam can earn a student college credit at many postsecondary institutions.

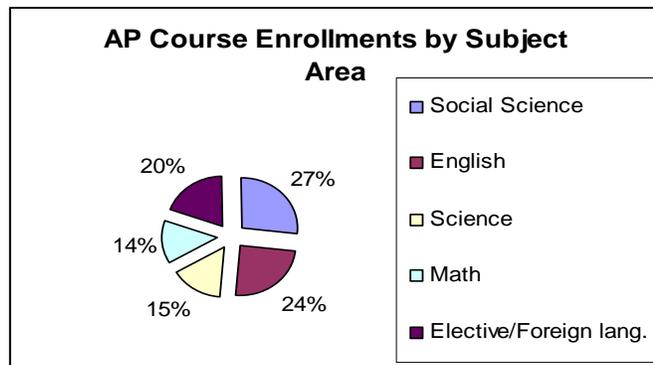
In 2001-02, 55 of Florida's 67 school districts offered AP courses to their public high school students. Courses were not offered in Baker, Calhoun, Desoto, Gilchrist, Glades, Jackson, Lafayette, Liberty, Sumter, Taylor, Union or Walton Counties. The range of course offerings in participating districts was wide, with some districts offering a single AP course district-wide and others offering as many as 26 AP courses at a single high school. Seminole County led the state in AP offerings with an average of 21 AP courses offered per high school.

Student participation in AP courses in 2001-02 also varied widely around the state, with those districts that offered courses having as few as one student enrolled, to districts with as many as 939 participants in a single high school. Student participation was strongest in urban districts, particularly in areas with close proximity to a state university.

Of those students enrolled in AP courses in 2001-02, 65 percent were white; 10 percent were African American; 18 percent were Hispanic; and 6 percent were Asian. All others combined made up 1 percent of the participants.

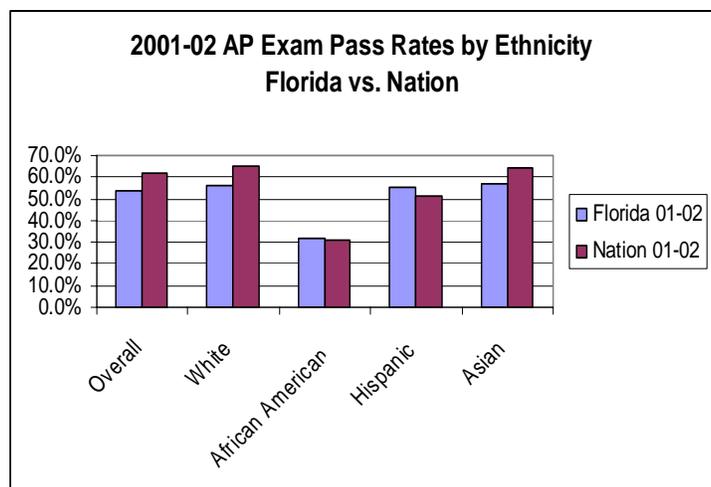


The College Board encourages students with disabilities to participate in the AP program by offering a wide range of accommodations for eligible students during testing. During the 2001-02 academic year, 498 public high school students with documented disabilities enrolled in a total of 557 AP courses. These students represented 44 school districts, and accounted for less than .008 percent of the total AP participants.



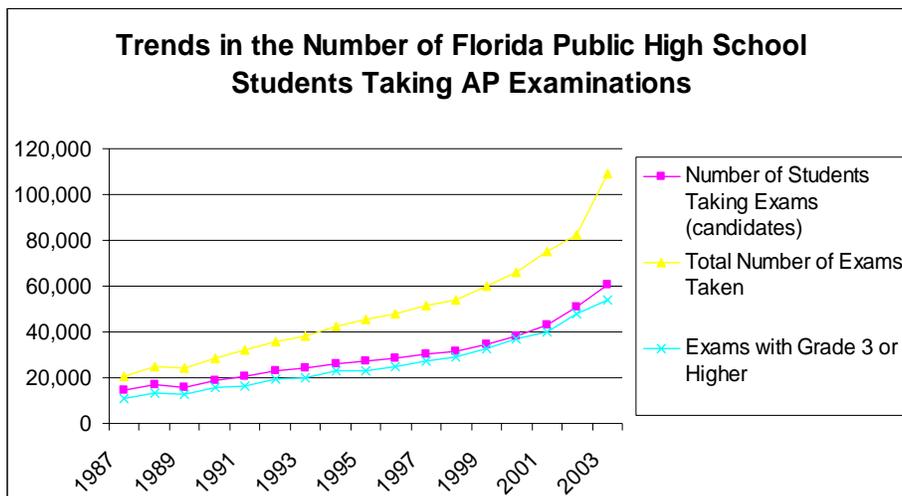
For 2002 high school graduates, students most commonly had enrolled in high school AP courses in the following subject areas: social science (27% of courses); English (24%); science (15%); and math (14%). The remaining enrollments were comprised of electives, foreign language and performing and fine arts courses.

For an Advanced Placement course to truly be considered an acceleration mechanism, students must earn college credit by scoring at or above a level 3 on the corresponding AP exam. At the close of the 2001-02 academic year, 56,272 public school students statewide had taken at least one AP course. At the close of the 2001-02 academic year, 56,272 public school students statewide had enrolled in a total of 97,933 AP courses. Ninety-one percent (88,930) of the enrollments resulted in students taking the



corresponding AP exam. Of those 88,930 exams taken, 47,821 (53.8%) were scored at level 3 or above, allowing students to earn college credit at many institutions.

White students scored at level 3 or above at a rate of 55.9 percent; African American students at a rate of 31.6 percent; Hispanic students at a rate of 55.7 percent; and Asian students at a rate of 56.7 percent. Students in all other groups combined (including no response) scored at level 3 or above at a rate of 49.6 percent. Fifty-nine percent of AP test-takers were female.



The number of Florida public school students who take AP exams has increased significantly over time. Although the number of Florida high school graduates increased by only 3 percent in 2003, the number of AP test takers increased by 19 percent. Nationwide, the number of AP test takers increased by only 10 percent.

Success Story: Advanced Placement 2003

- Florida led all states in the percentage increase in the number of AP Exams taken - - 22%
- Florida had the second greatest increase in the number of AP Exam-takers.
- Florida had the third greatest increase in the U.S. in the number of 3-5 grades received.

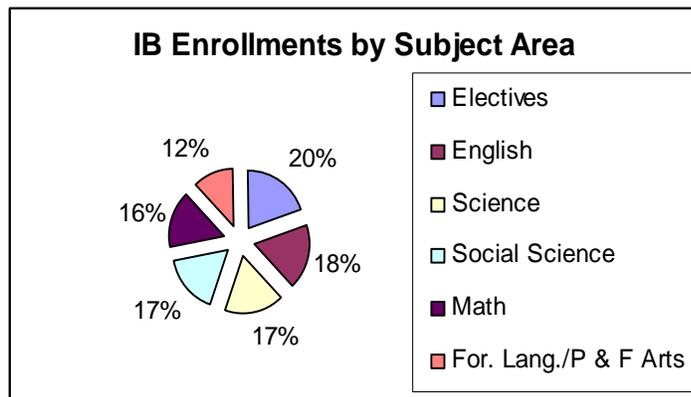
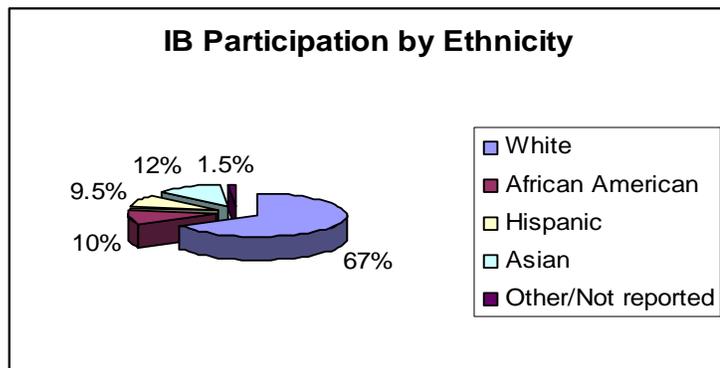


International Baccalaureate (IB) Participation

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program is a rigorous pre-university course of study, leading to internationally standardized examinations and the awarding of an IB certificate or diploma. The program is designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum that allows its graduates to fulfill the requirements of many different nations' education systems. Many school districts that offer IB courses offer Pre-IB to 9th and 10th graders in preparation for the rigor of IB courses and exams.

In 2001-02, 30 of Florida's 67 school districts offered IB and Pre-IB programs to their public high school students. The range of course offerings in participating districts was wide, with some districts offering as few as two courses district-wide and others offering as many as 42 courses at a single high school. Junior and senior participation (IB courses) in 2001-02 also varied widely around the state, with those districts that offered courses having as few as one student enrolled, to districts enrolling as many as several hundred students at a single high school. As with other acceleration mechanisms, IB participation was strongest in urban districts, particularly in areas with close proximity to a state university.

In 2001-02, 67 percent of IB and Pre-IB participants in Florida were white, 10 percent were African American, 9.5 percent were Hispanic, 12 percent were Asian, and less than 2 percent made up all other ethnic groups. Of the 30 school districts with IB programs in 2001-02, 22 districts enrolled a total of 60 students with documented disabilities in a combined 96 IB and Pre-IB courses. This accounted for only .006 percent of the total IB participants.



For 2002 high school graduates, students most commonly had enrolled in IB courses in the following subject areas: electives (20%); English (18%); Science (17%); social sciences (17%); and math (16%). The remaining enrollments were comprised of foreign language and performing and fine arts.

For an International Baccalaureate course to truly be considered an acceleration mechanism, students must earn the opportunity for college credit by

scoring at or above a level 4 on the corresponding IB exam. Of the 10 high schools in the United States taking the greatest number of IB exams in 2002, 8 of the schools (80%) were in Florida. Even more impressive, of the 20 schools in the world taking the greatest number of IB exams in 2002, 8 of the schools (40%) were in Florida. During the 2001-02 academic year, there were a total of 26,399 enrollments in IB courses in Florida public schools. A total of 15,538 exams were taken, which was 23 percent of all IB exams administered in the United States that year. An outstanding 86 percent of the exams were scored at a level 4 or above, allowing students to earn college credit at many institutions.

Success Story: International Baccalaureate 2003

- Florida was 2nd in the nation in the number of schools participating in IB.
- Florida was 1st in the nation in the number of students who took IB Exams.
- Florida was 1st in the nation in the number of exams taken.
- Florida was 1st in the nation in the number of IB diplomas awarded.



AICE Participation

The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma program is an international pre-university curriculum and examination system, which emphasizes the value of broad and balanced study for academically able students. Its strengths lie in the flexibility and structure of the curriculum encouraging in-depth, working knowledge of each subject, and in essay-based examinations as assessment of that knowledge. The courses are the equivalent to those offered at US university freshmen level or beyond. AICE is administered and assessed by the University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), a non-profit department of the University of Cambridge in the U.K.

Within AICE, there are over 40 subjects from three curriculum areas: Mathematics and Sciences; Languages; and Arts and Humanities. Most subjects may be studied at either the Advanced (A) Level, which has been offered worldwide for over 50 years, or at the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level. A-Level examinations generally require two years of study in a subject while AS level examinations cover the first year of the two-year A-Level syllabi.

The AICE program was piloted in three Florida school districts for a four-year period and was subsequently approved as of July 1, 2002 for use in any Florida school district looking for an inexpensive, flexible advanced academic program for grades 11 and 12. Schools wishing to offer these and other CIE assessments must register with CIE as Examination Centers.

Because the AICE program had not yet been approved statewide, there were only two schools in Florida with students taking AS or A-Level examinations in 2001. Of the 320 AS or A-Level examinations taken, 186 (58%) received a passing score. Since funding for the AICE program became available to all Florida school districts in 2002, the number of Florida schools registered as Cambridge Centers has tripled. It is anticipated this number will double again in the coming year.

CLEP Participation

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) provides students of any age with the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college courses. Students are eligible to earn college credit, but not high school credit, for achieving a passing score on specific CLEP examinations. The ACC has determined the equivalent postsecondary course (if any) and the minimum amount of credit that must be awarded for passing scores on each examination.

Since CLEP does not have an associated high school curriculum and students cannot currently earn high school credit simultaneously with college credit, the participation in the CLEP

program will be discussed in further detail later in the report in the section related specifically to credit by examination.

Student Outcomes

Student Success Upon Completion of Various Acceleration Mechanisms

Several research studies have been conducted in Florida evaluating student success and performance as it relates to enrollment in various acceleration mechanisms. In 1999, the State University System presented a study at a forum of the Association for Institutional Research entitled *Students on the Fast Track: Evaluating Acceleration Mechanisms* (Goodman & Howat, 1999). This study compared the academic performance of students (1996 FTIC cohort) in the state university system after earning various types of accelerated credit.

Acceleration mechanisms were broken down in the following categories: AP; IB; CLEP; CC Dual Enrollment; Departmental Exams; and other university determined methods. The predominant methods of acceleration were community college dual enrollment and Advanced Placement. The data indicated that for every type of accelerated mechanism except community college dual enrollment, the average credit earned for males exceeded that of females. While females were more likely than males to have some accelerated credit, males who earned credit had higher average amounts in almost all acceleration mechanisms. Males were more likely to have received IB credit and females were more likely to receive dual enrollment credit.

The study found that students who earned accelerated credit prior to enrolling in college performed better (i.e. achieved a higher SUS GPA) than students who did not earn accelerated credit. This can be partially attributed to the fact that the mean SAT scores and high school GPAs for accelerated students were higher than those who did not earn accelerated credit. However, retention rates for students with accelerated credit were also higher than for those without credit. Students with a mixture of accelerated credit, including dual enrollment, had the highest retention rate (84.5%). This compares favorably with the overall FTIC retention rate of 70.3 percent. Students who earned credit via CLEP (71.4%) or departmental exams (72.8%) had the lowest retention rates of those earning accelerated credit.

Findings indicated that, of the 7,800 students who earned accelerated postsecondary credit, only 7 students were reported by the universities as requiring remediation in the area in which they received credit. Some students (376 duplicated headcount) did repeat courses for which they had earned accelerated credit. Most of the students who repeated courses had previously earned credit in AP (212) and IB (111) courses. It is unknown whether students chose to repeat the course or if they were required to do so by the university.

Dual Enrollment

A joint study, conducted by the Florida Community College System (FCCS) and the State University System (SUS) in 2001, tracked dual enrollment students through the next course in the sequence to assess their success in subsequent coursework at the postsecondary level. The report, entitled *Dual Enrollment as an Acceleration Mechanism: Are students prepared for subsequent courses?* (Perkins & Windham 2002), indicates that dual enrollment students succeed in next level (subsequent) courses at or above the level of non-dual enrollment students. In comparison with other state university students, dual enrollment students were statistically more successful in the “subsequent course.” Only 3.31 percent of dual enrollment students

repeated a dual enrollment course at a state university. It is not known whether these students chose to repeat the course or were required by the state university to do so.

SAT Scores and Student Success in Various Acceleration Mechanisms

Research conducted by the Division of Community Colleges (Fast Facts, February 2001) shows that SAT scores are correlated with successful completion of various acceleration mechanisms:

SAT Scores -

1300 or Above - Likely to be successful in either AP, IB, or DE

1150 to 1300 - More likely to succeed in DE than in AP or IB

Below 1150 - Unlikely to succeed in AP or IB – DE most suitable option

These findings indicate that each student should consider all available acceleration options. It is important that students, parents, and guidance counselors understand the different requirements for earning college credit via acceleration mechanisms and be aware of how well they perform on nationally standardized tests. All of these options provide thousands of high school students the opportunity to accelerate their college careers and to enrich their high school course offerings. Access to complete information will allow each student to make the appropriate choice.

6. Advising Practices

FACTS.org – Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students

FACTS.org is Florida's central web resource for postsecondary education advising. The 1995 legislature mandated the establishment of "a single, statewide computer-assisted student advising system, which must be an integral part of the process of advising, registering, and certifying students for graduation" (Section 1007.28, Florida Statutes). The system was developed with input from representatives of the community college and state university systems. Practitioners, as well as students, were consulted in order to gain perspective on how the different system functions could work to best serve its users.

Currently, FACTS.org is available to assist users in determining their career objectives, choosing the major and institution that are best suited for them, applying for admission and financial aid online, and tracking their progress toward a degree or certificate. They can also plan their courses and access their grades and transcripts online.

Advising Manuals

FACTS.org is the official repository for several manuals and documents related to student advising and articulation. The following list represents the advising manuals available online:

- **Counseling for Future Education Handbook** - The *Counseling for Future Education Handbook* is updated annually for the purpose of providing school counselors with a comprehensive reference to postsecondary education in Florida. In addition to information on how to access one of Florida's postsecondary institutions, the Handbook also serves as a resource on support services for minority and low-income students, counseling for students with disabilities, college credit programs for high school students, and financial aid.

- **Common Prerequisite Manual** – Common prerequisites are required components of the degree programs within the State University System. The *Common Prerequisites Manual* is the centralized compilation of these program prerequisites. Updated annually, the manual provides students and advisors with current information regarding the courses that are required for admission to an upper division program. All Florida public institutions must accept the common prerequisites.
- **Statewide Articulation Manual** – The *Statewide Articulation Manual* identifies the current agreements for articulation from an associate in science to a baccalaureate degree. Included are the Career Ladder agreements and the Interdisciplinary Capstone agreements. The manual also includes information on articulation from an Applied Technology Diploma to an Associate in Science degree.
- **Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida Agreement** – Florida's community colleges have an articulation agreement with the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF). The agreement establishes the provisions for the transfer of Associate in Arts degree students into private colleges and universities. It guarantees that community college Associate in Arts degree students will enter as juniors, receive at least 60 credit hours toward their bachelor's degree, and receive recognition for the general education core taken at the community college.
- **ACC Credit-by-Exam Guidelines** – State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 directs the Articulation Coordinating Committee to maintain a list of examinations, minimum scores for guaranteed transfer, and recommended course equivalents for all credits earned by examination. These guidelines include the College Board College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Excelsior College Examinations, Defense Activity of Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE).
- **Dual Enrollment Information** – The State Board of Education approves dual enrollment courses that meet high school subject area graduation requirements. In addition, the Board also approves dual enrollment courses eligible for accelerated high school credit. A current listing of the approved dual enrollment courses and credit is maintained on the FACTS.org website.

High School Planning

FACTS.org is driven by a single mission to help students make more informed decisions. As such, several tools have been developed for high school students to increase graduation rates and preparedness for postsecondary education.

- **Earning College Credit in High School** – This menu item provides information on accelerated options such as Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Enrollment, Tech Prep, the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program, and the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Program. The information is adapted from the Counseling for Future Education Handbook on an annual basis or as policy changes affect content. The dual enrollment section includes hotlinks to a list of dual enrollment courses that receive one full high school credit, as well as a complete list of dual enrollment courses and high school equivalencies.

- **High School Academic Evaluations (HSAEs)** – Florida is the first state to provide high school students and parents with direct access to transcript information. With this information, high school students can access their actual academic coursework and grades to compare it with requirements for Bright Futures Scholarships as well as state university admissions.

The evaluations are designed to show students their progress. For example, an evaluation may show that four English classes are required and the student has taken two. This tells the student they are missing requirements. At the same time, students are able to use the Comprehensive Course Table to determine which courses will meet the requirements, including dual enrollment courses.

In November 2003, the HSAEs will include 3 new evaluations that compare a student's coursework to the requirements for the 18-credit college prep, 18-credit career prep, and the 24-credit standard high school diploma options. Again, students will be able to access the Comprehensive Course Table to determine which courses will meet the requirements, including dual enrollment courses.

- **High School Planner** – In Spring 2004, FACTS.org will add a comprehensive planner so students may pick courses from a drop-down box and click/drag them into their high school planner. The list of courses will include dual enrollment courses as well.

Postsecondary Planning

Currently enrolled students attending state institutions can also access their transcripts and grades directly. With transcript information available, FACTS.org provides college advising degree audits that compare the student's completed academic coursework and grades to degree requirements. This provides students with information on which courses are needed to complete a particular degree at either their current institution or a different one. This is especially useful for transfer students as they prepare to articulate from a community college to a university. FACTS.org provides five degree audits:

- Institutional Degree Audit
- Degree Shopping
- Remote Degree Shopping
- Degree Planning
- 2+2 Transfer Evaluation (Coming Soon)

Knowing exactly what courses are required and comparing them to what courses students have completed is likely to reduce excess hours and facilitate a seamless transition between institutions. FACTS.org also provides information on Florida's 2+2 transfer policies. In 2004, automated transient admissions applications for currently enrolled college students registering for courses at another institution on a temporary basis will be added to the system.

Students with Disabilities

Currently, students with disabilities are advised of the availability of acceleration mechanism options as inclusive members of the overall student body. No special techniques or methods are used to inform or recruit students with disabilities for participation in acceleration mechanisms. Students with disabilities may choose selected acceleration options whether they have chosen a

Special Diploma or a Standard Diploma option for high school graduation. The method of acceleration most frequently chosen by students with disabilities is dual enrollment. Students participate in both academic and vocational dual enrollment.

Some students with disabilities require accommodations in order to participate in the acceleration mechanism options. Reasonable accommodations are provided by the local school districts or the participating postsecondary institution. The funding for accommodations and services necessary for students with disabilities to participate in acceleration methods is provided by the school districts or the participating postsecondary institutions. The costs of accommodations and the assistive technology provided as accommodations are negotiated between the school districts and the participating postsecondary institution.

Recommendations to increase and enhance the use of acceleration mechanism options by students with disabilities should consider the following:

- Developing guidelines for academic advisement which include:
 1. Methods of informing and encouraging eligible students with disabilities to participate in acceleration mechanism options.
 2. Information to the student on potential differences in requirements for documentation of disability by the participating postsecondary institution.
- Expanding the curriculum of life skills management classes at the middle and high schools to include a module that teaches students with disabilities to self-advocate regarding their needs.
- Ensuring that parents of students with disabilities are informed of acceleration mechanisms as are parents of non-disabled students. Provide a sample letter to districts so that uniform information is provided to parents across the state.
- Ensuring that all guidance counselors have access to paperless communication and receive updated and current advisement information relative to acceleration mechanism options.
- Including discussion of acceleration mechanisms by the team on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) checklist.
- Including pictures of students with disabilities on brochures, handbooks and other printed ads to inform parents about acceleration mechanism options.
- Reviewing existing rules and policies to clarify agency responsibility for funding the costs of accommodations. Clarify cost-sharing in local interagency agreements.
- Authorizing funding and management strategies which are flexible and supportive of access and availability of acceleration mechanism options by students with disabilities.
- Increasing availability and access to technology by ensuring that computer software, web pages and electronic information is usable by students with disabilities (i.e. all videotapes to carry captions and all web pages to provide text alternatives that can be read by speech and Braille outlet systems).
- Developing policies and procedures that allow transfer of technology with the student from K-12 to postsecondary.
- Developing strategies to complement the provisions of 30A.

Current District/School-Level Advising Practices

As part of the online survey conducted with school districts, each district was asked if it had a high school with exemplary advising practices, and if so, to provide contact information for follow-up with that school. Of those districts responding to the survey, eleven provided contact

information for a high school with exemplary advising practices. Each of the eleven schools was contacted by telephone, and eight schools were able to participate in a telephone interview related to advising. The participating schools were: West Shore Jr./Sr. High in Brevard; Coral Springs High in Broward; Riverview High in Hillsborough; Tavares High in Lake; Martin County High in Martin; Boone High in Orange; Gulf Breeze High in Santa Rosa; and Bartram Trails High in St. Johns.

Communication and Training for Guidance Counselors

Guidance counselors in each of the eight schools emphasized the use of the paperless communication system for keeping current with policy changes and technical assistance from the Department of Education. Several schools said they often had information before their districts disseminated it, because they received it directly from the state. Guidance chairs said they printed key correspondences, placed copies in each counselor's mailbox, and discussed the information at the weekly guidance staff meeting. All eight schools also reported that district meetings for guidance supervisors were extremely useful, particularly for discussing new information. Each school felt adequately informed on most issues, and said excellent communication within the school and beyond was one of the keys to success.

Most of the schools rely heavily on outside agencies for training opportunities for guidance counselors. Counselors regularly attend workshops sponsored by the College Board, ACT, local community colleges, SUS, mental health agencies, etc. Staffing constraints prohibit attendance by all counselors, and most of the schools rotate participation in workshops, having the attending counselor report the information at a staff meeting. Several schools said they weigh how a workshop will improve academic and test performance before they make the decision to participate. Each school said there is also in-service training available from the district, as well as the ability to attend a limited number of conferences each year. Most felt the availability of training was adequate, but said time constraints often made it impossible to take advantage of the opportunities.

Communication with Parents and Students

Each of the eight schools reported at least three methods of communicating information about acceleration mechanisms with parents and students. These methods include the following:

- All of the schools publish a curriculum guide/bulletin annually. This document discusses all curricular options at the school. Every student receives this document and is encouraged to take it home for parents to review.
- Guidance counselors present information on acceleration options in English classes. The presentations include handouts that students can share with their parents.
- Academic departments within the school advertise acceleration options in honors classes.
- Many of the schools have a periodic newsletter that is mailed directly to students' homes. These newsletters regularly contain information on acceleration options, the process for participating, and important deadlines.
- Each school reported holding large-group parent meetings, which include extensive information about acceleration options. The time of year, and grade-level to which the meetings are directed, varied from school to school. Most schools had small-group break out sessions as well, so parents could ask questions about specific programs.
- A number of the schools hold formal parent conferences, where parents and students receive individual advising about the options that would be most appropriate.

- Several schools reported that the community college mails all eligible students (3.0 GPA) information about dual enrollment, including the course offerings, program application, and procedures for participating.
- Most schools post information about acceleration options on their school Website.

Advising for Students with Disabilities

Most of the schools participating in the interviews reported have a full-time specialist, counselor, or team leader that worked specifically with advising students with disabilities. They all suggested that disabilities did not stand in the way of enrolling students in the appropriate courses. Advising is based on academic performance, and accommodations are made, as needed, if students meet program prerequisites. Most schools said that relatively few students with disabilities participate in acceleration mechanisms. The most common accelerated placement is dual enrollment at a career and technical center.

Innovative Ideas and Practices

Schools participating in the interviews each suggested a best practice that was particularly successful in the advising process. These practices include the following:

- Community college advisors meet with students on the high school campus for dual enrollment advising.
- An advising office is set up adjacent to the cafeteria to handle general guidance functions (transcripts, grades, scholarship applications, FAFSA questions, etc.) without an appointment during the lunch hours. This frees up the remainder of the guidance staff to meet with students for individualized academic counseling/advising.
- A computer program was developed to provide early identification for counselors of students at risk for failing any class. Intervention can then take place before it's too late for the student to catch up.
- Counselors hold large-group information sessions to disseminate general information so there is more time for personalized service in individual advising sessions.
- The guidance department conducts an annual needs assessment with faculty, students, and parents. An annual plan is created from that assessment, and all guidance activities and dates are published on the school calendar at the beginning of the school year.
- One counselor is devoted strictly to "services." Other counselors can then spend more time on academic advising/counseling.
- Counselors go into all 10th grade classrooms and encourage ALL students to take the PSAT. Results are used in academic advising.

7. Grading Practices

Purpose of Weighting Courses in Calculation of Grade Point Averages (GPA)

In order to ensure adequate academic preparation for postsecondary education, students are encouraged to take the most rigorous courses available to them during high school. Recommended courses for capable students include International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate in Education (AICE), dual enrollment, and high school honors courses. These types of courses are expected to be more rigorous and challenging to students than other high school courses. In addition, all of these courses, excluding high school honors courses, provide students with an opportunity to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school.

Additional GPA weighting for these courses provides an academic incentive for students to enroll in and succeed in advanced courses. Since there is an increased academic challenge associated with advanced courses, the GPA weighting given to these courses encourages students to enroll in difficult courses rather than to simply enroll in easy courses in which they may be able get better grades. Given that admission to postsecondary institutions has become more selective and competitive over the last several years, this boost to the GPA associated with taking more difficult courses is beneficial to students.

Purpose of GPA Calculation	State Policy	Local Policy
State Graduation Requirements	✓	
Talented 20		✓
Valedictorian/Salutatorian		✓
Bright Futures Initial Eligibility	✓	
State University Admissions		✓

High School GPA Weighting Practices

State GPA for High School Graduation

4-Year/24 Credit Option

A student who selects the four-year graduation program must achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent in the courses required for graduation as identified in Section 1003.43(1), Florida Statutes (General requirements for high school graduation.). Section 1003.43(5)(e), Florida Statutes, requires that any course grade not replaced according to the district school board forgiveness policy be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation via the four-year graduation program. This includes all course grades earned by a student and all courses, even if “forgiven,” must be listed on the student’s high school transcript.

3-Year/18 Credit Option

Section 1003.429(5)(b), Florida Statutes, relating to accelerated high school graduation options, requires that students must achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent only in the courses required for high school graduation (18 credits). Any additional courses taken beyond the 18 required credits are not calculated in the GPA. This policy is inconsistent with the 4 year/24 credit option which considers ALL courses taken in the calculation of GPA.

School District GPA Calculation Policies

In addition to the state GPA that is calculated to determine if a student meets high school graduation requirements, school districts calculate a number of different grade point averages (GPAs) for various reasons, including Talented 20 calculation and determination of valedictorian/salutatorian. Not only are GPAs calculated for different purposes within a district, but there are also variations between districts with regard to their policies for calculating GPAs.

Seventy-four percent of the districts that responded to the ACC survey indicated that they use a weighted GPA to determine Valedictorian/Salutatorian, while 13 percent use an un-weighted GPA (remaining 13% = a combination). For purposes of calculating Talented 20, 72 percent of responding districted reported using weighted GPA, while 21 percent reported using un-weighted GPA (remaining 7% = a combination). Although the majority of districts do not exclude any courses from GPA calculation, some districts reported that some dual enrollment courses and other courses that do not apply toward high school graduation requirements are not included in GPA calculation when determining class rank.

Weighting of Accelerated/Advanced Courses

Section 1007.271(16), Florida Statutes, specifies that “*school districts and community colleges must weigh college-level dual enrollment course the same as honors course and advanced placement courses when grade point averages are calculated. Alternative grade calculation or weighting systems that discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.*” This language was intended to protect dual enrollment students from discriminatory practices by school districts in the calculation of GPA. However, the language is unclear because many districts do not weigh AP and high school honors courses the same. Therefore, the language stating that dual enrollment courses must be weighed the same as honors *and* AP courses is problematic. Common practice has been to interpret that language to mean honors *or* AP.

A survey of school districts found that, for the purposes of GPA calculation, accelerated courses (Dual Enrollment, AP, IB, AICE) and high school honors courses receive varying weights across districts. The table below indicates the frequency of various GPA calculation policies as reported by districts:

Type of Advanced Course	> 1.0 Q-Point	1.0 Q-point	0.5 Q-points	< 0.5 Q-Points	No Additional Weighting	% of responding districts who offer course type in at least 1 high school
Academic Dual Enrollment	9%	63%	11%	11%	6%	98%
Vocational Dual Enrollment	2.5%	25%	2.5%	2.5%	67.5%	85%
Advanced Placement (AP)	16%	55%	11%	13%	5%	81%
International Baccalaureate (IB)	9.5%	71%	10%	9.5%	0%	45%
AICE	0%	75%	0%	0%	25%	8.5%
Honors	3%	58%	13%	7%	9%	96%

* Some districts (approximately 30%) also provide some additional weighting for certain Level 3 courses.

State University GPA Weighting Practices

State universities calculate high school GPA during the admissions process. Common practice among state universities (9 of 11) has been to provide AP, IB, AICE, and high school honors courses with 1 additional quality-point in the calculation of GPA. Dual enrollment courses did not receive any additional weighting. The remaining two state universities (University of Florida and New College of Florida) provided AP, IB, and AICE courses with 1 additional

quality-point and assigned .5 additional quality-points to both high school honors and dual enrollment courses.

At the July 23, 2003 meeting of the state university admissions directors and registrars, the group recommended a new statewide policy on GPA calculation for purposes of state university admissions. This recommendation does not require statutory change. This change will constitute the first time that all 11 state universities will follow the same policy for calculating GPAs and will reduce students' confusion about how their GPA will be calculated for purposes of state university admissions. The recommended new policy is as follows:

For academic courses only (with a grade of C or better) –

- AP, IB, and AICE courses = 1 additional quality-point
- Dual enrollment courses and high school honors courses = .5 additional quality-points

Bright Futures GPA Weighting Practices

For the purposes of determining Bright Futures initial eligibility, the GPA calculated by the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program evaluation system is based on the weighting of certain courses. Section 1009.531(3), Florida Statutes, addresses which courses must be weighted in determining GPA for initial Bright Futures eligibility. The following courses are weighted .25 per semester course and .50 per year course:

- Courses identified in the Course Code Directory as Advanced Placement, Pre-International Baccalaureate, International Baccalaureate, or Honors;
- Courses designated as academic dual enrollment courses in the Statewide Course Numbering System; and
- State university approved courses identified in the Course Code Directory as Level 3 in the subject areas of mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. These are listed in the Counseling for Future Education Handbook (Note: All level 3 courses are not weighted).

This policy differs from the GPA calculation utilized by state university admissions officers. However, the policy is consistently applied for all students.

8. General Education/College Graduation Requirements

The state's 36-hour general education program is designed to introduce college and university students to the fundamental knowledge, skills, and values that are essential to the study of academic disciplines. Each institution established its own general education requirements. General education requirements include courses within the subject areas of communications, mathematics, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The statewide general education agreement stipulates that public universities and participating ICUF institutions cannot require students to take additional general education courses if they already have successfully completed a general education sequence at a community college. However, if a student does not complete the general education core prior to transfer, the general education requirement becomes the responsibility of the new institution.

Common prerequisites are lower-division courses that students must successfully complete for a specific bachelor's degree. Section 1007.25 requires the Department of Education to identify common prerequisite courses and course substitutions for degree programs across all

institutions. The identified prerequisites and substitutions are contained in the *Common Prerequisites Manual*. Common prerequisites listed in the manual must be accepted by all state universities and applied toward the degree. The ACC approves common prerequisites.

Community College Dual Enrollment

In 2001-02, high school students enrolled in 1,901 different dual enrollment courses with their local community colleges. Of those 1,901 courses, there were just 120 courses that had 100 or more enrollments statewide. Enrollment in these 120 courses accounted for 68,985 (70%) of the 98,045 dual enrollments that year. Narrowed still further, 50% of all dual enrollments were in just 25 courses. All but one of those 25 courses met a postsecondary general education requirement. Sixty percent of the top 25 courses met a general education requirement at 23 or more of the 39 public colleges and universities. Fifty-six percent of the top 25 courses also met a common prerequisite requirement.

State University Dual Enrollment

Two hundred ninety-eight (47.3%) of the 630 state university dual enrollment courses met general education requirements for at least one public institution in Florida and 41 (6.5%) of the courses met general education requirements for at least half of the public colleges and universities in the state. One hundred twenty-three (19.5%) of the courses met a common prerequisite requirement. Fifty percent of enrollment was in 30 courses. Of the 30 courses with the highest enrollments, 20 (66.7%) of the courses met general education requirements at a minimum of one public institution, and 14 (46.7%) of the courses met general education requirements for at least half the public institutions in Florida. Thirteen (43.3%) of the 30 courses with the highest enrollments met a common prerequisite requirement.

SUS Graduates and Accelerated Credits Counted Toward Graduation

An important aspect of acceleration mechanisms is the ability to count credits earned toward college graduation requirements. Though the Statewide Common Course Numbering System facilitates the transfer of credits, ensuring that credit will be granted, there are no guarantees that the credits will be counted toward graduation requirements. The institution attended (Courses meeting general education requirements vary from institution to institution) and the choice of major, both impact the usefulness of credits earned through acceleration mechanisms.

State University System graduates for the year 2002 were awarded a total of 92,118 credits for their combined 32,655 enrollments in acceleration mechanisms. These acceleration mechanisms included IB, AP, dual enrollment, departmental exams, CLEP, and Nursing Mobility Exams. The most widely earned credits were those earned through dual enrollment, with 2002 SUS graduates earning 41,075 credits through this mechanism. AP also earned students a significant number of credits, with graduates earning 38,447 credits through this mechanism. Dual enrollment and AP credits accounted for 79,522 or 86 percent of all accelerated credits earned by 2002 SUS graduates. IB earned students 7,730 credits; departmental exams earned students 2,245 credits; CLEP earned students 2,569 credits; and Nursing Mobility exams earned students 53 credits.

Of the 92,118 credits earned through acceleration mechanisms, 78,301 credits (85%) counted toward the students' college graduation requirements. Nursing Mobility Exam credits counted toward graduation requirements 100 percent of the time; departmental exams – 98 percent of

the time; IB - 87.5 percent of the time; dual enrollment - 87.4 percent of the time; AP - 82.6 percent of the time; and CLEP - 62.9 percent of the time.

The 92,118 credits that 2002 SUS graduates earned through acceleration mechanisms were awarded for 1,509 different courses. The vast majority of the credits (56,328 credits or 61%), however, were earned in just 30 courses. These 30 courses were in the following areas: Social Science (32.5%); English (27.5%); Math (19.2%); Foreign Language (11%); and Natural Science (9.8%). Eighty-five percent of the credits earned in these top 30 courses were earned through dual enrollment and AP. Ninety percent of the top 30 courses met a general education requirement for 1 or more institutions, and 63 percent met general education requirements for at least half the public institutions in Florida. Fifty-seven percent of the top 30 courses also met a common prerequisite requirement.

The data indicates that most students are taking and earning credit in accelerated courses that apply toward their graduation. This enables students to accelerate through their postsecondary education by getting a head start on meeting graduation requirements. However, credit earned through CLEP examinations applies toward graduation at a significantly lower rate than credit earned through other acceleration mechanisms.

9. Class Size Reduction

In November 2002, Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution was amended by the voters of Florida. The amendment required that, by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, the number of students in core-curricula courses assigned to a teacher in each of the following three grade groupings will be *no more than*: (1) 18 students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 3; (2) 22 students in grades 4 through 8; and (3) 25 students in grades 9 through 12. Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the Legislature is required to provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of students in each classroom by at least two-students-per-year until the number of students per classroom does not exceed the maximum. Payment of the costs associated with reducing class size to meet these requirements is the responsibility of the state and not of local school districts.

In 2003, the Legislature enacted SB-30A to assist in the implementation of the class size amendment. The bill specified that, if a district's class size does not meet the required maximum, the district must reduce to the constitutional maximum in each of the three grade groupings or the average number of students in each of the three grade groupings by at least two-students-per-year as follows:

- 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 at the district level
- 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 at the school level
- 2008-2009 at the classroom level

District flexibility is a key principle outlined in Senate Bill 30-A. The "Toolbox" for implementation provides a wide range of options to assist all districts with meeting the class size reduction requirement. Two of these options are specifically related to this study, including: 1) Adopting policies to encourage qualified students to take dual enrollment courses at community colleges; and 2) Adopting policies to encourage students to enroll in courses from the Florida Virtual School.

House Bill 1739 required an examination of the extent to which "secondary instruction associated with acceleration mechanism options could be offered at sites other than public K

through 12 school sites to assist in meeting class size reduction needs.” These needs may be addressed by a variety of “non-traditional” ways in which high school students can earn credit towards high school graduation, including dual enrollment on community college campuses, increased participation in the Florida Virtual School, and the possible establishment of a statewide dual enrollment articulation agreement with the Distance Learning Consortium/Virtual Campus.

Dual Enrollment on Community College Campuses

Approximately 56.5 percent of dual enrollment courses taught in 2002-03 were taught on community college campuses, with the remaining 43.5 percent taught at the high schools. Since dual enrollment instructors must meet the faculty qualifications for an adjunct instructor at the community college (master’s degree and 18 graduate hours in the subject area to be taught), the majority of instructors for dual enrollment courses are community college faculty. In approximately one half of the dual enrollment courses that are taught on a high school campus, the community college pays the salary of the instructor.

Increasing the number of dual enrollment students who travel to the community college campus may have some impact on class size reduction at the high schools, but there are other variables that must also be considered, including:

- Community colleges have been unable to meet current enrollment demands and may not have the capacity to add additional sections for dual enrollment students;
- Seat time (hours in the classroom) for dual enrollment courses taught on a college campus is less than for those courses taught at a high school, which may impact school district (FEFP) funding. (This issue will be discussed in more detail in the funding section.);
- Many high school students will need transportation to the community college campus.

Florida Virtual School

The Florida Virtual School (FLVS) provides online learning opportunities for students throughout the state of Florida, and beyond. Course offerings range from FCAT and GED prep to Honors and AP courses. Currently, the Florida Virtual School offers 75 different courses and serves grades 7 through 12. There is no cost for Florida students to enroll in the Florida Virtual School and the credits earned are transferable.

During the 2001-02 school year, 4,992 students from 64 districts took courses with the Florida Virtual School totaling 7,977 enrollments (Hamilton, Lafayette, and Liberty Counties did not have any enrollments.). Enrollments varied from district to district, with some districts having a single participant to one district with 514 students enrolled. Seventy-eight percent of participants were white; African American students accounted for 7 percent; Hispanic students 7 percent; and Asian students 4 percent. All others (including those who did not report ethnicity) combined to make up 4 percent of the participants. A significant number of students withdrew from their online courses because they were failing - - 15.6 percent of all participants withdrew-failing, with 21.9 percent of African American participants, 16.9 percent of Hispanic participants, and 7.2 percent of Asian participants withdrawing due to failure.

The Florida Virtual School provides students the opportunity for acceleration by offering online Advanced Placement courses. In 2001-02, ten different AP courses were offered through the Florida Virtual School. There were a total of 573 enrollments in the 10 AP courses. Students

most often enrolled in Social Science AP courses (54.8% of enrollments), followed by Computer Science (20.2%), English (10.8%), Natural Science (7.3%), and Math (6.8%).

For an AP course to truly provide acceleration, students must take the corresponding exam and score at level 3 or above. This score allows students to earn college credit at many institutions. Of those enrolled in the online AP courses, 44 percent actually took the corresponding exams. Of those who took the exams, 55.6 percent scored at level 3 or above. This pass rate is comparable to that of students taking their AP courses in a traditional environment. The percent of scores of 3 and above in the various subject areas were 70% for Computer Science, 68% for Math, 55% for Natural Science, 50% for English, and 46% for Social Sciences.

Success Story: Florida Virtual School

- Students in Florida schools that have limited AP course offerings can now enroll in 10 different AP courses through the Florida Virtual School.
- The percent of students scoring at a level 3 or above on AP Exams following courses taught through the Virtual School is comparable to the rate of those from a traditional classroom setting.

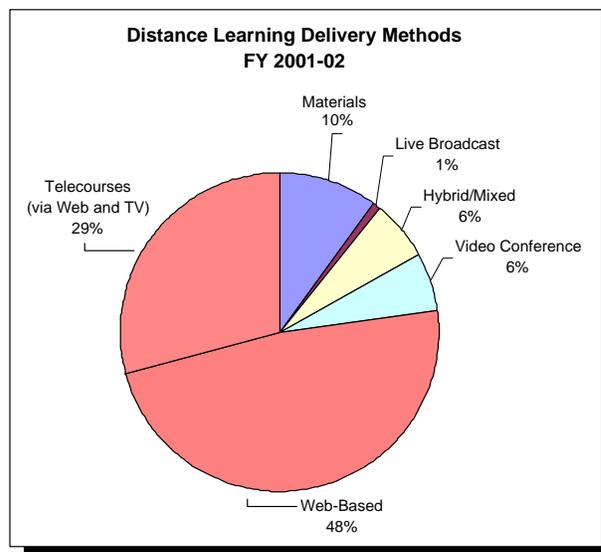


Florida Distance Learning Consortium

The Florida Community College Distance Learning Consortium (FCCDLC) and the Florida Virtual Campus (FVC) were consolidated as of July 1, 2003 to create a single entity, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium (Consortium), that is responsible for providing strong distance learning leadership for the K-20 system. As a result of statewide leadership and coordination, post-secondary distance learning enrollments have grown by 161 percent in the last six years, with Web-based courses at most institutions reaching full capacity before on-campus classes.

Technology savvy students expect to find distance learning opportunities listed in one central place, accessible via the Internet. To support this student expectation, the Consortium has created a Web site where higher education institutions can list their distance learning courses and students can easily find them. The current online catalog lists 5,706 courses for FY2002-03, and it receives more than 32,000 “hits” per week. In the last year alone, the FCCDLC has experienced a 41 percent growth in users accessing its Web site, www.distancelearn.org.

Having a single site that lists all statewide post-secondary distance learning courses offered by all institutions is convenient for the students and saves them time in locating needed instruction. In addition, the Consortium can offer an ideal mechanism to further enhance distance learning efforts by providing a one-stop site for supportive student services or by making it easy for students to access the virtual library provided by the community college’s College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) or the



university system's Florida Center for Library Automation (FCLA).

In a survey conducted by the Florida Distance Learning Consortium, several community colleges reported that they offer *dual enrollment courses* to high school students within their service area via distance learning. The extent to which distance learning courses are offered to and utilized by dual enrollment students varies throughout the state. Some community colleges allow dual enrollment students to register for any approved dual enrollment course that is offered via distance learning. Other colleges offer only specific dual enrollment courses at specific high school sites.

The reported number of students participating in distance learning dual enrollment courses is relatively small compared to the number of students who participate in dual enrollment overall. Some colleges and high schools do not encourage dual enrollment students to take courses online and limit participation to students who are in need of alternative scheduling. It does not appear that the potential to serve dual enrollment students in distance learning courses has been fully explored. Currently, a majority (if not all) of the courses on the approved state dual enrollment course list are offered by at least one community college or state university in a distance learning format.

Distance Learning Opportunities at Community Colleges

Community colleges in Florida offer just over 1,100 *credit* courses through distance learning. Many of these courses provide excellent opportunity for high school students with accessibility issues (such as transportation, proximity to a community college, or unusual schedules) to enroll as dual enrollment students. Two hundred fifty-three of the distance learning courses offered meet a general education requirement at one or more public institution in Florida, and 50 of the courses meet general education requirements for at least half of the public colleges and universities in the state. Eighty-five of the courses meet a common prerequisite requirement.

Distance Learning Opportunities at State Universities

Much like the community colleges, the state universities offer a wide variety of credit courses through distance learning. They also offer 1,100 courses that could help close the accessibility gap by allowing a student to enroll in courses that might otherwise be unavailable in his district. One hundred eighty-nine of the distance learning courses offered meet a general education requirement at one or more public institution in Florida, and 27 of the courses meet general education requirements for at least half of the public colleges and universities in the state. Sixty-six of the courses meet a common prerequisite requirement. See chart below.

*Applicability of Distance Learning Courses to
General Education and Common Prerequisite Requirements*

Institution offering DL course	# of courses meeting gen. ed. requirements at 1 or more public institutions	# of courses meeting gen. ed. requirements for at least 1/2 of public institutions	# of courses that meet a common prerequisite requirement	Total # of Distance Learning Courses
Community College	253	50	85	1,101
State University	189	27	66	1,099

10. Funding for Acceleration Mechanisms

FEFP Funding for Acceleration Mechanisms

School districts receive full FTE funding for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) courses in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). School districts also receive full FTE funding for dual enrollment in the FEFP, but since FTE funding is based on seat time/instructional hours, dual enrollment courses taught on community college campuses do not generate the same FTE as those taught on high school campuses. A course taught for 1 full high school credit on a high school campus requires 150 instructional hours (a.k.a. seat time). One half of a high school credit requires 75 hours of seat time. Typically, a one semester dual enrollment course equates to .5 high school credits, but a 16 week semester course meets for only 40 instructional hours (a 35 hour difference). For those dual enrollment courses that now count as 1 full year of high school credit, the difference in seat time is 110 hours.

Aside from seat time conversion issues, courses taken beyond the 300 minute instructional day do not receive FTE funding in the FEFP. This can be problematic because many dual enrollment courses, particularly those taught at community colleges, are taken outside of regular school hours in addition to a full high school schedule. These courses cannot be reported for FTE purposes by school districts.

Incentive Funding for Acceleration Mechanisms

In addition to receiving full base FTE funding, school districts also receive incentive funding for AP, IB, and AICE courses. According to Section 1011.62(n), Florida Statutes, *“a value of 0.24 full-time equivalent student membership shall be calculated for each student in each advanced placement course who receives a score of 3 or higher on the College Board AP Examination for the prior year and added to the total full-time equivalent student membership in basic programs for grades 9 through 12 in the subsequent fiscal year.”* Eighty percent of the incentive funds provided to a school district for advanced placement instruction must be distributed to the high school that generates the funds. A value of 0.24 full-time equivalent student membership is also assigned to IB students who earn a score of 4 or higher and AICE students who earn a score of 2 or higher on their respective subject examinations (ss. 1011.62(1)(l) & 1011.62(1)(m), F.S.). An additional value of 0.3 full-time equivalent student membership is calculated for students who earn an IB or an AICE diploma.

School districts use these incentive dollars to award teachers \$50 for every one of their students that pass an AP, IB, or AICE examination in order to earn postsecondary credit. An additional one-time \$500 bonus is awarded to teachers in “D” and “F” schools who had at least one student pass an AP, IB, or AICE examination. Bonuses shall not exceed \$2,000 in any given school year and shall supplement any regular wages or other bonuses that the teacher may be eligible to receive.

In 2001-02, the total amount of incentive fund for AP, IB, and AICE programs was \$40,670,257. This figure does not include the regular FTE funding that was also provided for each program. The incentive funding was broken down by program in the following way:

- AP = \$30,379,000 [9,210 FTE]
(includes 0.24 FTE per exam for school districts + teacher bonuses)
- IB = \$10,158,460 [3,079.74 FTE]
(includes 0.24 FTE per exam and 0.3 FTE per diploma for school districts + teacher bonuses)
- AICE = \$132,797 [40.26 FTE]
(includes 0.24 FTE per exam and 0.3 FTE per diploma for school districts + teacher bonuses)

Dual Enrollment Funding

Career & Technical Center Dual Enrollment

Career and technical centers are funded as part of the public school system through the FEFP. This means that dual enrollment students enrolled at career and technical centers are funded twice in the FEFP, since the FTE is counted for both the high school and the career and technical center.

State University Dual Enrollment

The small number of students who take dual enrollment courses at a state university are calculated in the state university FTE. State universities are allocated funds based on these enrollment figures.

Community College Dual Enrollment

As previously stated, school districts receive FTE funding for dual enrollment students. However, there are no additional incentive funds associated with the dual enrollment program. Community colleges do not receive direct FTE funding for dual enrollment students because they are not funded based on enrollment, but they do count dual enrollment students in their FTE calculation. The FTE is currently used as one of many factors in determining the distribution of new dollars to each college in the Community College Program Fund (CCPF).

Funding History
Community College Dual Enrollment

1973-74	Dual enrollment FTE authorized for community colleges. Community colleges are funded for FTE, but not school districts. Funding provided for instructional materials in K-12 budget.
1983-84	Dual enrollment FTE funding authorized for both community colleges and K-12. An additional 0.30 FTE is provided for each dual enrollment FTE to compensate for fee exemption.
1988-89	Additional FTE for fee exemption reduced to 0.25
1991-92	Three year average FTE enrollment changed to prior year FTE for funding purposes.
1992-93	FTE enrollment no longer used to allocate funding for community colleges.
1998-99	Additional 0.25 FTE for dual enrollment fee exemption eliminated.
2000-01	An amount of \$4 million added to the Community College Program Fund (CCPF) for dual enrollment. Allocation is based on public school 12 th grade enrollment in college district.
2001-02	Resource Allocation Funding Model utilized by the Legislature to allocate a portion of new CCPF funds to colleges. Three year average dual enrollment FTE and recognition of the fee exemption were incorporated into the model.

Recent Proposals for Dual Enrollment Funding

In 2003, the Governor recommended reducing the amount of FTE provided to school districts for dual enrollment from 1 to 0.5 of an FTE for the hours of instruction provided. The Florida Senate also proposed a change in the manner in which dual enrollment is funded. Neither of these recommendations was incorporated into the 2003 General Appropriations Act (GAA). The Senate proposal included the following key points:

- Funded all dual enrollment through the FEFP
- Addressed the issue of seat time/credit conversion for FTE in the FEFP
 - .5 high school credit = 75 membership hours
 - 1 high school credit = 150 membership hours
- Specified that FTE funding earned through dual enrollment would be distributed to the *employer* of the instructor of the dual enrollment course (community college or school district)
- Ensured that school districts could not restrict/limit participation in dual enrollment as a result of changes in funding – provided a penalty if school districts decreased participation (denied access to AP, IB, AICE incentive pot)
- Ensured that school districts meet the statutory requirement of informing students about dual enrollment options by requiring the commissioner of education to perform

compliance audits and the State Board of Education to withhold discretionary lottery dollars from school districts that are not in compliance.

- Provided language stipulating that school districts may negotiate with community colleges in their local articulation agreements to cover the administrative costs associated with record keeping, guidance, and instructional materials (when the community college provides the instructor and receives the FTE).

Joint Study of the Funding and Costs Associated with Dual Enrollment

The Florida Association of Community Colleges (FACC) and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) recently collaborated in an attempt to address what the two groups believe to be misconceptions regarding the funding of dual enrollment programs. A committee of college presidents, school superintendents, and business officers from both the public school and community college systems was convened to identify the different scenarios under which dual enrollment instruction is provided and the costs associated with each delivery method for both systems.

The results of their cost analysis indicated that there is no scenario for the delivery of dual enrollment instruction in which the total funding provided to the community college and the school district is greater than the total costs associated with the instruction for both systems. These findings suggest that the common perception that dual enrollment is “double-funded” (funded for both the school district and the community college) is incorrect. In fact, their analysis concluded that dual enrollment is actually “under-funded” because, in every scenario examined, the total costs were greater than the total appropriations to both systems.

The group recommended that “both a short-term and a long-term solution to the funding of dual enrollment programs be developed to ensure that the dual enrollment program remains a viable acceleration option for students to pursue.” In addition, the group purported that any long term funding methodology that is developed should “provide for the actual costs of text books as well as tuition, matriculation, and discretionary fees which dual enrollment students are exempt from paying.”

In the short term, the group asked for recognition by state lawmakers that:

- Dual enrollment courses are *not* “double funded”;
- It is in the best interest of the state and students to offer dual enrollment as a viable acceleration option;
- Dual enrollment programs actually save the state money in the long run; and
- Flexibility in designing and delivering dual enrollment courses is necessary, in light of inadequate funding to fully cover all of the associated costs.

In addition to requesting that state lawmakers continue to provide at least the current level of support for dual enrollment programs, the analysis pointed out that dual enrollment courses taken beyond the 300 minute instructional day do not receive any FTE funding. This results in additional costs that are not covered by the current appropriation in the FEFP. Therefore, the group recommended that dual enrollment courses taught beyond the 300 minute instructional day be eligible to receive FTE funding in the FEFP. This recommendation would have a fiscal impact because it would increase the amount of funds appropriated to school districts in the FEFP.

Delivery of Dual Enrollment Instruction

The FACC/FADDS study mentioned above suggests that the percentage of the cost borne by each system is in direct correlation with which system pays the instructor of the dual enrollment course. Invariably, the entity (community college or school district) which pays the instructor expends more for the delivery of a dual enrollment course than it receives in funding.

A recent survey, conducted by the Division of Community Colleges, found that 56.6 percent of dual enrollment courses are taught on community college campuses, while 43.4 percent are taught at high schools. Regardless of where the course is taught, community colleges pay the dual enrollment instructor 74.5 percent of the time. More specifically, the community college pays the dual enrollment instructor for 96 percent of the instruction offered on community college campuses and 47 percent of the instruction offered on high school campuses.

Dual Enrollment Text Books

Instructional materials for dual enrollment courses have been an issue for some time. The Legislature appropriates funds in the FEFP for the purchase of instructional materials, including text books. There is a 6 year cycle for text book replacement in the K-12 system. Students are not required to pay for text books and the same books are re-used by districts to serve different students for a number of years.

Students use community college text books for dual enrollment courses, which are chosen by community college faculty and updated more frequently than K-12 textbooks. The textbooks used by community colleges usually have a much higher cost associated with them than those used by school districts for regular high school instruction. Since dual enrollment students are not required to purchase their own text books, as are regular college students, the school districts must pay for these books. This cost can be prohibitive for school districts that have a limited budget for instructional materials. In some instances, the community colleges share some of the cost for instructional materials with the school districts, but community colleges do not receive any funding to cover these costs.

11. Credit-By-Examination

Credit by Examination differs from other acceleration mechanisms because a student is allowed to earn credit toward a postsecondary degree, but no credit is granted toward high school graduation. The most commonly used type of credit by examination is the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). The CLEP program is administered by the College Board and has a statewide guarantee of credit based on the ACC Credit-by-Exam equivalency chart. In addition, the ACC determined equivalencies for two other examinations, including DANTES and Excelsior, but the granting of credit is not guaranteed. The ACC has made recommendations for credit equivalencies, but individual institutions have the authority to make their own decisions regarding whether to grant credit.

In addition to credit that is granted for passing scores on nationally standardized examinations, individual institutions also offer students opportunities to earn credit through departmental exams. These examinations are developed by faculty within each department and are administered to students who can demonstrate competencies in specific subject areas. These examinations are also used for placement and there is no statewide regulation of such exams.

CLEP Examinations

During the 2001 Legislative Session, the CLEP program received a great deal of attention in Florida. Senate Bill 1162 established the Florida Bright Futures Testing Program which required all initial Academic and Merit Scholarship recipients to complete up to 5 CLEP examinations by the end of their first semester in college. The testing program was optional in 2001-02 and required of students in 2002-03. Students could substitute credit earned via another acceleration mechanisms as an attempt. The legislature appropriated \$7.9 million to pay for the administration of the examinations and colleges increased their capacity to offer CLEP examinations. The program resulted in a large increase in CLEP participation, but the pass rate for Bright Futures students was very low and the program was repealed in 2003.

In 2001-02 (through July), 2,504 CLEP examinations were taken by Bright Futures recipients in 35 different subjects. The majority of exams were taken in the areas of College Algebra (14.7%), American Government (10.7%), English Composition with Essay (9.6%), Biology (8.6%), and Introductory Psychology (8.6%). The overall pass rate for Bright Futures students was 27.4 percent.

Non-Bright Futures recipients took 7,635 CLEP examinations in 2001-02. The vast majority of exams were taken in Spanish Language (36.5%). The subject area in which the next largest number of exams was taken was College Mathematics (4%). The overall pass rate for non-Bright Futures students was 76 percent.

12. Summary and Recommendations

Student Eligibility

- 1. Develop state guidelines that address minimum requirements for participating in acceleration mechanisms. Specify that these guidelines are only a minimum and that additional eligibility criteria may be added by participating entities.
** Exceptions to the established minimum requirements are permissible, but should be granted only on an individual basis (no blanket exceptions).*
- 2. Review the CPT requirement for admission to academic dual enrollment courses and clarify the state policy guidelines relating to "readiness" for certain dual enrollment courses.*
- 3. Review the requirements for career & technical dual enrollment students and determine how students can appropriately "demonstrate readiness."*

Student Participation

- 4. Define what is meant by "successful participation."

** There are 2 levels of successful participation to consider:
1) passing the course
2) earning postsecondary credit*
- 5. Identify schools/programs that have demonstrated success in encouraging the participation of underrepresented populations in acceleration mechanisms. Identify specific strategies to increase the successful participation of these students across the state.*

Advising

6. *Develop a sample Parental Notification document to be used by school districts when informing parents of accelerated options.*
7. *Develop (re-create) the Student Bill of Rights in relation to acceleration mechanisms.*
8. *Develop a sample format for local articulation agreements as well as a review process for the DOE.*
9. *Increase the utilization of the FACTS system in advising students regarding acceleration options.*

Grading Practices

10. *Align the state GPA weighting policies for high school graduation across the various graduation options (traditional – 24 credit vs. accelerated – 18 credit).*
11. *Endorse the State University Admissions and Registrars recommendation to standardize GPA calculation for purposes of state university admissions and amend the Board of Governors Rule 6C-6 to reflect the proposed change.*

*** Endorsement is made with the provision that research be conducted to demonstrate a sound academic rationale for the proposed policy that is supported by empirical data.*

General Education

12. *Develop a program of study for accelerated courses that includes suggested “modules” for students to complete on their way to earning a postsecondary degree.*

These modules should be based on courses that are most commonly accepted as general education courses and common prerequisites by postsecondary institutions. Students should be strongly encouraged to complete these modules as they are most likely to transfer to any public institution.

Class Size Reduction

13. *Explore the feasibility of increasing access to dual enrollment courses via distance learning.*
 - Step 1. Establish a pilot agreement between selected school districts and the distance learning consortium that is limited to a few courses that are most likely to count toward general education and common prerequisite requirements.*
 - Step 2. If students who participate in the pilot are successful in earning postsecondary credit, work toward developing a broader statewide articulation agreement between the 67 school districts and the Florida Distance Learning Consortium.*

14. Increase academic standards by raising eligibility requirements for the 18 credit accelerated graduation option. Standards should include:

- *Minimum level 3 score on grade 8 FCAT*
- *3.0 Un-weighted GPA*
 - *To ease implementation, it was suggested that students who choose the 18 credit/3 year option be required to maintain a 3.0 GPA through their sophomore year. If they do not maintain a 3.0 GPA in the first 2 years, then they will be required to switch to the 24 credit option prior to beginning their junior year.*
- *Requirement that at least 3 of the 18 credits be in dual enrollment, AP, IB, or honors courses.*
- *Requirement that the 3 social science include American history, world history, economics, and American government*

Funding

15. Continue funding student participation in dual enrollment courses using the current methodology until further study determines a more appropriate method. It is the position of the Articulation Coordinating Committee that the Legislature should not take action to reduce funding for dual enrollment courses.