

DUAL ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE P-20 COUNCIL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dual enrollment, at its simplest, allows high school students to take college level courses, either for college credit or for both college and high school credit. Having this opportunity can greatly impact a high school student. Dual enrollment programs can give a student greater opportunity for both academic and social growth, better preparation for college or the working world, and increased motivation toward their studies. Nearly all research shows that most dual enrollment programs help students achieve both during and after high school.

However, not all programs are created equal. Serious questions of content standards and rigor, teacher qualifications, student access, and funding are just a few of the challenges faced by dual enrollment programs. State policy is one way to help dual enrollment meet the standards required for maximum student success.

The Dual Enrollment Subcommittee is part of the P-20 Council and was created, to develop state policy for dual enrollment as a part of the National Governor's Association grant to redesign Delaware high schools. The subcommittee is also a natural outgrowth of the Subcommittee on High School Graduation Requirements which recommended increased course rigor and additional credits in mathematics. Providing a framework for dual enrollment expands the learning opportunities for high school students and can encourage students to challenge themselves, earn college credit while still in high school and form tighter linkages between high school and postsecondary secondary institutions.

Of the 70% of students that graduate high school, only 53% will enter college after graduation and of those, only 35% will earn a degree (Lerner & Brand, 2006). This means that only 13% of all high school students will earn a college degree directly after high school. Although many of the students that do not earn a degree right away may earn one later, there is a large difference between the income earned by those with a high school diploma only and those with a degree. Those with a high school diploma earned on average in 2000 \$24,267; those with an associate's degree earned \$30,774; those with a bachelor's degree earned \$40,314 (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). The years spent with only a high school diploma will decrease the overall income that a person generates over their lifetime.

The big question is: why do students not earn a degree? It is not because they do not want to. 88% of eighth graders across the country stated that they wanted to go to college (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). Although paying for postsecondary schooling is an important factor, another more controllable factor is the students' access to quality, rigorous curriculum in high school. If they do not have access to these types of classes,

they will require more remediation. The more remediation a student requires, the less likely they are to graduate (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003).

One way to increase students' access to rigorous course work is through dual enrollment and dual credit programs.

In a survey of Delaware secondary schools, 65% were found to have some sort of partnership with an institution of higher education to provide dual enrollment or dual credit for their students: 84% offered Tech Prep classes, and 85% offered Advanced Placement courses. The similarities stopped there. Many of the dual enrollment and credit programs varied in quantity and potentially quality as there is no unified force guiding the creation of these programs. In an effort to increase access to quality programs for all students and maximize limited resources into a concerted effort, the P-20 Council, in concert with a work plan submitted for a grant provided by the National Governors' Association, created the Subcommittee on Dual Enrollment. The subcommittee worked to create definitions, guiding principles, and funding options to inform policy creation regarding dual enrollment and dual credit. By following the recommendations of the subcommittee, a policy will be created that will benefit Delaware students.

Definitions:

The subcommittee defines dual enrollment and dual credit as follows:

Dual Credit: A course for which a student may receive both high school and postsecondary credit. The course can be taken in a variety of settings such as in a high school, on a college campus or on-line. Examples of dual credit are Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Tech Prep courses.

Dual Enrollment: A course for which a student may receive both high school and postsecondary credit while simultaneously registered at both the high school and the postsecondary institution.

Guiding Principles:

1. All students, especially students who may not traditionally pursue postsecondary education, should have access to and information on dual credit and dual enrollment courses.

This guiding principle is based on the idea that a variety of students can benefit from dual enrollment and dual credit. This can be especially true for students who would traditionally not pursue a postsecondary education. Dual enrollment and dual credit courses can decrease the number of remedial courses a student needs to take by allowing the student to strengthen their skills before reaching postsecondary education. The more remedial courses students take, the less likely they are to finish their postsecondary education. In addition, students who take higher level courses in high school graduate at

higher rates than students who take lower level courses (Venezia, Kirst and Antonio, 2003).

Exposing students to postsecondary education also gives them an idea about what is expected in postsecondary institutions and can make higher education an obtainable goal as further detailed in the third guiding principle. Especially for students who have financial concerns, taking college courses while still in high school can deter some of the later costs by giving them a head start on credits.

2. Admission criteria to dual credit and dual enrollment courses should be based on the student's potential for success. This can be determined by GPA in the content areas of the courses, staff recommendations, student interest and/or test scores.

The goal of this guiding principle is to provide criteria for selecting students for dual enrollment courses. The committee members wanted to make sure that any student who had the potential to succeed in the courses would have a chance to participate. They gave several examples of different methods of selection but wanted to make sure that a student would not be excluded because they met the criteria for one method but not another. Dual enrollment can benefit a wide variety of students and the committee members wanted the admission criteria to allow that variety.

When looking at the literature from the national level, admissions can be decided by high school, college, state or combination thereof (Karp, Bailey, Hughes and Fermin, 2004). In terms of this guiding principle, the decision of admission is left up to the partners in the programs, but their decisions should be guided by whether the student has the potential to succeed in, and therefore benefit from, the courses. Although many institutions of higher education require academic scores as a means of determining eligibility (Kleiner and Lewis, 2005), the committee wanted to provide other types of criteria to capture a portion of the student population that would do well in college courses but may not show that potential in their GPA.

3. No student should be denied access to dual credit or dual enrollment courses due to the family's inability to pay.

Postsecondary education in general can be a financial burden on many families, so much so that some students feel that they cannot attend because of it. In many cases, students and their families overestimate the cost of higher education due to lack of information (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). By exposing them to college courses and giving them information, they may find college to be more affordable than originally perceived.

However, in order to give students who do have a financial burden a chance at higher education, dual enrollment and dual credit courses should be made available to these students with either reduced cost or free. The inability to pay for courses and the costs of books and transportation are related to unequal access for students (Karp et al, 2004).

These courses can also give those students with financial troubles a leg up for higher education by decreasing the number of courses required for graduation and thereby reducing their overall cost. Without financial support for the students who need it, a population of students that could succeed in dual enrollment and credit courses will be left out and may never enroll in higher education.

4. Multiple points of access for dual credit and dual enrollment courses should be encouraged. Examples of multiple points of access include virtual learning opportunities as well as courses offered by a higher education institution on the high school campus as well as the college campus.

This guiding principle was also created to make sure that access to the courses was available to a large number of students. Dual credit and dual enrollment can take on multiple different forms in different places. The courses could be offered in a high school, on a college campus or even online. By encouraging many different points of access, more students can be reached. Students that do not live near a college campus could be able to take college courses at their high school or online. This can be especially important for students in rural areas (Karp et al, 2004). Across the country, higher education institutions offer courses both on their campus and in high schools (Kleiner and Lewis, 2005). In order to ensure that the students are receiving college credit for college level courses, the higher education institution must be accredited. If the courses are taken from a non-accredited school, the students will not have course transferability and the assurance of course rigor.

5. Institutions of higher education should ensure the quality of dual enrollment courses is equivalent to other instruction offered by the institutions. Any dual enrollment course must be from a regionally accredited higher education institution.

The committee members created this guiding principle to address the concerns about program quality and the transferability of credits across Delaware institutions. By allowing the institutions to control the quality of the courses, they can ensure that the courses taken by the students are at the college level and deserving of college credit.

Within the policies of other states, course quality can be determined by the high schools, the colleges, the state or a combination thereof (Karp et al, 2004). Even with this wide range of decision making, 89% of postsecondary institutions said that the courses that high school students take should have the same curriculum as the college level courses (Kleiner and Lewis, 2005).

This principle should also be seen as including teacher qualifications. Institutions should ensure that the person teaching the course meets their standards. Other states have done this in various ways – college professors teach the classes, “qualified” high school teachers (those that would be able to teach at the college level), or “regular” high school teachers (no special qualifications needed) (Karp et al, 2004). However, 86% of

postsecondary institutions that had courses taught by high school teachers required the minimum qualifications of a person on their faculty (Kleiner and Lewis, 2005).

6. Credit earned by high school students who successfully complete a course included in the Delaware higher education credit matrix should be valid in any Delaware higher education institution which would accept the credit for college level students.

This principle was created to help the students who have succeeded in their dual enrollment courses by ensuring the value of their credits. Although the course would be useful for the student without transferability to other institutions, it would not be up to its full value. If a student wishes to attend one institution but his or her school only has courses from another, that student can look at the matrix and plan to take courses that transfer between the institutions. Without this agreement, students may spend time and money on courses that would not count for credit in their pursuit for a degree.

7. AP and IB courses should meet the requirements of their respective program authorizers.

In conjunction with principle number 5, this principle looks to ensure the quality of the programs available to students. Since these programs have their own governing bodies, it is expected that these programs in Delaware follow the goals, expectations and requirements of their governing bodies.

The College Board is currently working on implementing an auditing system to ensure the quality of courses using the AP title. Any course that does not meet their standards will be required to remove the AP title from their course name (College Board, 2006). The IB program has similar requirements for their courses.

8. Teachers in dual credit classes should have the appropriate certification and training to teach the class. They should also be experienced teachers.

This principle is a continuation of the ideas presented in principle 7. Although the governing bodies of dual credit programs may have their own requirements as to who will be teaching their courses, it should be the priority of the schools with these programs to ensure that those persons teaching the courses have the skills, training, and experience to successfully teach the courses. By doing so, the schools are ensuring a greater success rate for their students.

9. Articulated agreements between institutions of higher education and public school districts and charter schools shall specify the competency of the course and the level of student achievement for Tech Prep courses.

Much like principles 5 and 7, this guiding principle is to ensure the program rigor of Tech Prep courses is maintained at the college level and covers the material in the equivalent college course. By doing this, students will not only have college and high school credit but will also have the knowledge needed in more advanced classes.

Transferable Courses:

In addition, the committee members noted that there should be a universal list of transferable courses (Transfer of Credit Matrix) that shows those courses that can be transferred between all higher education institutions in the State and those courses that are transferable among some of the higher education institutions in the State. At the current time the Transfer of Credit Matrix does not specify the universal transfer courses,.

Evaluation/Accountability:

There was concurrence that the Higher Education Data Cube could be expanded to include fields for dual enrollment and dual credit courses in order to track the success of students who matriculate to a Delaware higher education institution. This data base could serve the higher education community in maintaining quality of course content and instruction by measuring the success of matriculated students who participated in dual enrollment and/or dual credit courses. Similarly, the Delaware public high schools can also determine the success of the dual enrollment and/or dual credit courses they offer to their students.

Funding:

Options for funding dual credit/dual enrollment programs were explored. The committee, by consensus agreed that the following options should be further explored and developed as recommendations:

1. Weighted Student Funding could fit into the school finance work that will be conducted by the new LEAD group. The concept might be to allocate additional funds twice a year to those students who qualify for dual credit/dual enrollment status.
2. Advanced Placement Fee support for students could be provided. Federal funds are currently available for low income students. Additional funds should be provided so that all student exam costs are covered, regardless of need, with the caveat that federal funds be used first. Included in this recommendation is also the cost of International Baccalaureate (IB) exams.
3. District ability to access the tuition tax to raise local funds to provide some level of funding for dual enrollment/dual credit as well as shared cost of the exams should be explored.
4. Reduced tuition from the higher education institutions should be considered. Course costs to high schools should be based on the actual cost of delivery.

5. Shared costs with higher education should be explored. Some local share funds would be used to share costs with higher education based on a ratio to be determined.
6. State Set-aside Funds should be explored. Several states are providing funding to assist students and schools with the costs of dual enrollment and dual credit programs.
7. Virtual Schools could provide low to no cost courses. The current plan indicates virtual schooling will be offered initially at state expense and will include AP and perhaps some postsecondary courses. Final funding has not yet been determined for the expansion of the virtual school.
8. Consideration should be given to allow use of Ferguson Scholarship funds for dual enrollment costs while students are still in high school.

Through communication plans aimed at middle and high school students and their families about postsecondary training and education, information should be included about existing programs such as the Hope Credit and Lifetime Learning Credits. The Lifetime Learning Credit is currently up to \$2000 per tax return and is available for all years of postsecondary education as well as for courses to acquire or improve job skills. The student does not need to be pursuing a degree and the funds are available for one or more courses. This is a viable option for high school students. The Hope Credit can only be applied for by matriculated higher education students.

Conclusion

The Dual Enrollment Subcommittee of the Delaware P-20 Council met six times in the course of the 2006-2007 year. The membership of the committee encompassed both higher education and public education representatives, as well as Department of Education Associates. It was chaired by the President of the State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education. Throughout the meetings and discussions, there was acknowledgement that it was important to expand the current offerings and include more students. Dual enrollment offers an avenue for students to continue to challenge their intellect, discover that they can succeed in higher education, and forge stronger connections and transitions between high school and higher education.

The Chairs extend their sincerest thanks to all who participated in the committee process. Following the release of the report, regulations will be drafted as appropriate to require local school districts to adopt dual enrollment policies and regulations reflective of the guiding principles developed by the Committee. In addition, conversations will continue with the college and university provosts on master course lists and course costs to public high schools and districts.

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Committee Members: Dual Enrollment

Co-Chair: Jean Allen, President
State Board of Education

Co-Chair: Valerie Woodruff
Secretary of Education

Ann Case, Policy Analyst
State Board of Education

Maureen Laffey/Alan Phillips
Delaware Higher Education Commission

Judi Coffield
Department of Education

Patty Patterson
Wesley College

Sally Coonin
Office of the Governor

Joe Pika
University of Delaware

Joe DiMartile
University of Delaware

Angela Suchanic
Wilmington College

Julie Harris
Caesar Rodney High School

Lydia Tucker
Tech Prep

Paul Herdman
Rodel Foundation

Julia Webster
Department of Education

Louis Hirsh
University of Delaware

Simone White/Anthony Digenakis
Delaware Technical and Community
College

Mike Kelley
Cape Henlopen School District

Doris Woledge
Delaware State University

Phyllis Kohel
Milford School District

Lynn Wright
Brandywine School District