



Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive

at a glance

Over one-third of Florida's 2001-02 high school graduates participated in at least one acceleration program in high school, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Dual Enrollment courses. Half of these students gained college credit for these courses that they applied at a Florida public postsecondary institution. However, many students did not receive this credit because they did not earn needed grades, did not take or pass required examinations, or did not report the courses to their college.

Generally, accelerated credit hours that students received could be applied to their degree requirements. Students who graduated from college and who earned accelerated credits typically took 14 fewer credit hours at Florida's public universities than other students.

Overall, the state's costs for credit hours earned through the AP and IB programs exceed the costs of providing comparable classes at a state public postsecondary institution. However, while these programs are more expensive, they have many non-monetary benefits. Few other states subsidize AP and IB exams for all students and no states provide as much AP and/or IB incentive funding as Florida. There are several options the Legislature could consider to reduce acceleration program costs.

Scope

This is the first of four reports that examine Florida's educational acceleration programs, which include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Dual Enrollment, and the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). This report summarizes the conclusions and information provided in the other three reports and answers the eight questions below.¹

- To what extent have Florida's high school graduates participated in acceleration programs?
- Do participating students become eligible for college credit?
- How do Florida high school students' participation and performance rates compare to that of other states?
- To what extent have Florida's public postsecondary institutions awarded acceleration credits earned by high school students?
- Have these credits applied to college degree requirements?
- What are the costs and benefits of providing acceleration programs in high schools?
- How do other states fund acceleration programs?
- What legislative measures are used to assess the performance of acceleration programs?

¹ Our review generally excluded the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) program, which was not in effect for the cohort of students we examined.

Background

Florida has established several programs to enable high school students to take accelerated courses in order to broaden their curricular options, increase their depth of study in particular subject areas, and reduce the time it takes to earn a college degree.² Students who pass these courses and exams are eligible to earn college credit that may be used toward degree requirements. Acceleration programs can benefit both students and the state. They provide students the opportunity for broader curricular offerings and more in-depth study. The programs also can reduce the costs of higher education and free classroom space for other students.

Florida offers three categories of acceleration programs (see Appendix A for more information on these programs).

Accelerated high school courses. These courses provide advanced level instruction and require students to take an exam at the end of the course to determine whether they have mastered the material and are eligible to receive college credit. There are three basic types of accelerated high school courses: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE). In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 86,279 Florida high school students were enrolled in AP courses, 8,258 were enrolled in IB courses, and 635 students were enrolled in AICE courses.

Dual enrollment. In this program, school districts partner with colleges and universities to allow high school students to simultaneously take and earn credit for high school and college courses without having to pay college tuition. School districts and postsecondary institutions jointly agree to the dual enrollment courses offered to students within a school district. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 37,657 Florida high school students took dual enrollment courses.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). The CLEP program is administered by community colleges and universities and enables

students to take a college-level exam to demonstrate mastery of selected subject areas. Students who pass the exams earn credit hours without having to enroll in the courses. In Fiscal Year 2004-05, 9,656 students took 11,477 CLEP tests at Florida test centers.³

Program Funding. Funding for the AP, IB, AICE, and dual enrollment programs is provided to school districts through the Florida Education Finance Program. Students who enroll in these programs are included in the school districts' FTE count and the districts receive allocations based on their enrollment. Students who participate in dual enrollment programs with Florida's community colleges and universities also are included in the community college or universities' FTE count for funding purposes. There is no state funding for the CLEP program, as students pay a fee of \$70 to take these examinations.⁴

To encourage districts and schools to provide successful AP and IB courses, the Legislature provides incentive funding based on students achieving a minimum score on subject matter exams.⁵ The Legislature appropriated \$73.5 million in incentive funding for the AP, IB, and AICE acceleration programs for Fiscal Year 2005-06, representing an increase of \$5.8 million from the previous fiscal year.

Questions and Answers

Over one-third (35%) of Florida's 2001-02 high school graduates participated in one or more acceleration programs and half of these participants went on to receive postsecondary credit at a Florida public postsecondary institution. However, as Exhibit 1 illustrates, the number and percentage of students participating in the programs, earning high school credit, and receiving college credit at a Florida public postsecondary institution diminishes with each step and varies among the acceleration programs.

³ CLEP test takers include out-of-state students and students attending private institutions.

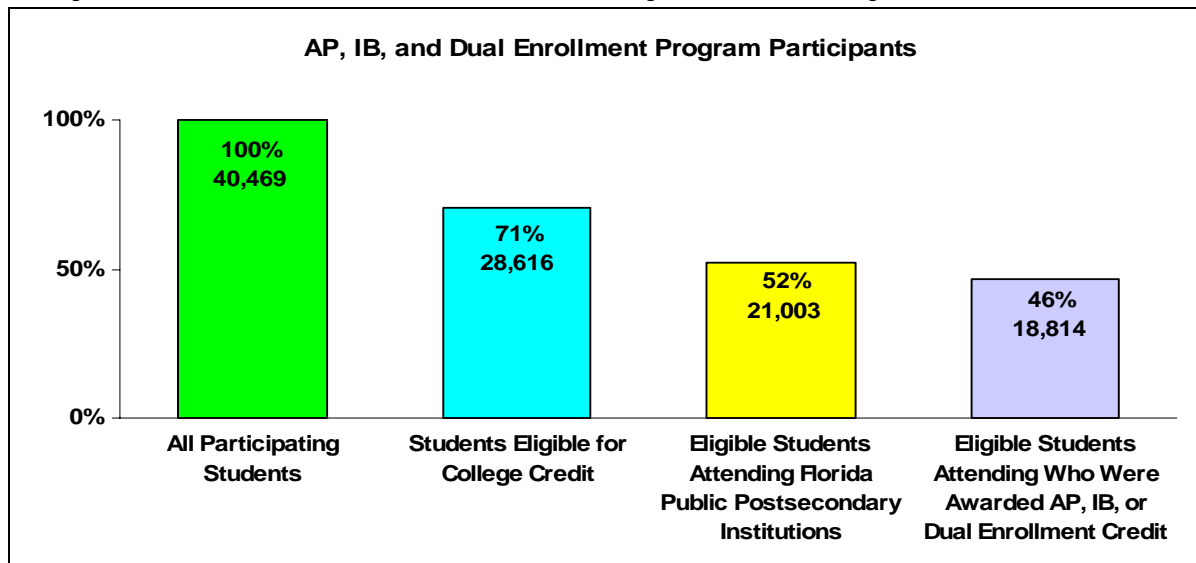
⁴ This fee includes a \$55 examination fee and a \$15 administration fee paid to the community college or university.

⁵ Incentive funding is discussed further in Report No. 06-27.

² Section 1007.27(1), *F.S.*

Exhibit 1

The Number of Accelerated Students Participating, Earning Credit, and Eventually Receiving College Credit Diminishes as Students Move from High School to College



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

Students entering community colleges and universities with acceleration program credits took fewer courses than other students. However, some acceleration programs cost the state more per credit hour passed than if the student earned the credits by completing the course at a Florida postsecondary institution.

To what extent have Florida’s high school graduates participated in acceleration programs?

Of Florida’s 2001-02 high school graduates, 35% participated in acceleration programs. Of the 116,873 high school seniors who graduated in 2001-02, 35% took at least one accelerated course during high school.⁶ More students enrolled in advanced placement than all other high school-based acceleration programs combined—25% of the 2001-02 graduating seniors took at least one AP course. The availability of accelerated courses varies among school districts and schools, and student participation in these

programs also varies among districts. (See page 3 of Report No. 06-25 for a detailed discussion.)

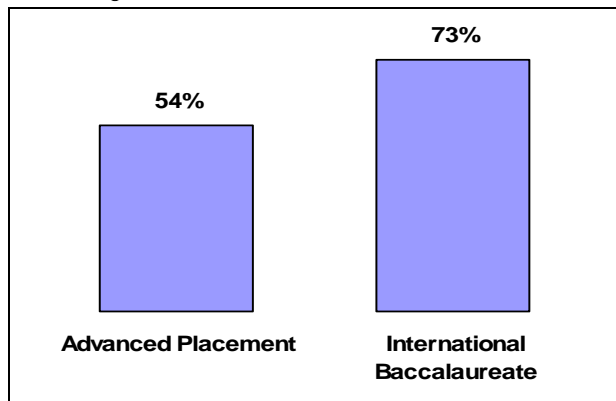
Do participating students become eligible for college credit?

Most students participating in AP, IB, and dual enrollment were eligible to receive college credit. As shown in Exhibit 1, most (71%) of the students in our cohort who participated in high school-based acceleration programs passed examinations and/or achieved the specified course grades needed to receive college credit.⁷ Most students taking dual enrollment courses (86%) earned college credit, while about three quarters of IB students met the standards for obtaining college credit. However, only slightly more than half of the AP students met the standards to earn college credit. (See Exhibit 2.)

⁷ Of 40,469 acceleration students in the 2000-01 cohort, 28,616 (71%) passed examinations and/or achieved the specified course grades needed to become eligible for college credit. For the purposes of this report, students who earned high school credit for at least one dual enrollment course were considered eligible to receive college credit. AP and IB students were considered eligible for college credit if they passed at least one subject area exam with the minimum required score.

⁶ The AP, IB, and Dual Enrollment programs were offered in high school for our cohort. CLEP is a program offered at universities and community colleges and so is not included in these data.

Exhibit 2
At Least Half of Acceleration High School Students Were Eligible for Credit



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

How do Florida high school students' participation and performance rates compare to that of other states?

Florida had the highest AP exam participation rate in the nation in 2004 but was among the lowest in exam pass rates. Florida had the highest AP student participation rate in the nation in 2004, although it was 37th in the percentage of students who passed the exams. This likely reflects the high number of students who participate; in many other states, only the top students participate in the program. (See page 6 of Report No. 06-25 for a detailed discussion.)

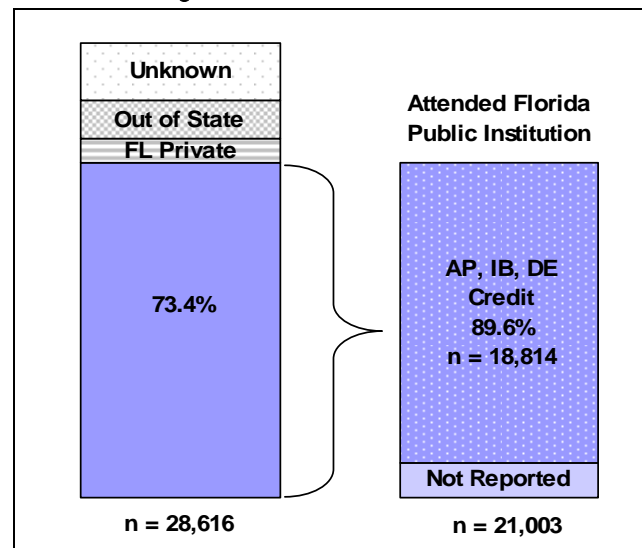
Florida had the highest IB participation in the nation in 2004 as well as high performance levels. Florida was second in the nation in the number of IB diploma-awarding schools, and had the highest number of IB participants nationally. The state also ranks in the top 10 in IB exam passage rates. (See page 7 of Report No. 06-25 for a detailed discussion.)

To what extent have Florida's public post-secondary institutions awarded acceleration credits earned by high school students?

Most students who are eligible for college credit and attend a Florida public postsecondary institution receive that credit. Almost 75% of the students we tracked who took acceleration courses and were eligible for college credit subsequently attended a public postsecondary institution in Florida the year following

graduation (see Exhibit 3). Most (90%) of these students were awarded college credit for their acceleration courses, although the proportion of students who received credit hours varied among the acceleration programs.⁸ Students who participated in the dual enrollment program were most likely to receive the college credit. (See page 4 of Report No. 06-26 for a detailed discussion.)

Exhibit 3
Most Students Who Are Eligible for Credit Receive College Credit



Source: OPPAGA analysis of entry cohort transcript data 1998-2003.

Three-fourths of recent CLEP participants earned college credits, though few students participate in the program. The CLEP program is administered by the community colleges and universities rather than high schools. Students who seek to earn college credit through CLEP take subject matter tests to demonstrate their proficiency.⁹ Few (3%) of our high school graduation cohort who subsequently attended Florida's public postsecondary institutions received CLEP credit. Pass rate information was unavailable for our cohort; however, CLEP participants in 2004-05 passed 76% of their

⁸ As discussed in the prior report in this series, 71% of the high school students who participate in accelerated courses met the standards to be eligible for college credit. See Report No. 06-25. We could not determine whether students who attended a private or out-of-state college were awarded accelerated credit.

⁹ The College Board reported that currently although students are generally eligible for college credit with a score of 50, some colleges require higher scores to receive credit.

exams and met the standard for college credit.¹⁰ (See page 6 of Report No. 06-26 for a detailed discussion.)

Credits earned but not reported to the Florida Department of Education cost the state \$3.4 million. The state paid \$3.4 million in incentive funding in 2002-03 for AP and IB exams of students who met the requisite scores for college credit but institutions never reported college credit to the Department of Education. There are a variety of potential reasons why the credit was not reported. If these students opted to repeat the course(s) at a Florida public postsecondary institution, the state would pay an additional \$1.3 million for these courses on top of the \$3.4 million it paid in incentive monies for the students' high school acceleration courses. (See page 7 of Report No. 06-26 for a detailed discussion.)

Have these credits applied to college degree requirements?

Acceleration credits generally could be applied toward graduation requirements. Most (82%) of the accelerated credit hours earned by the students in our cohort could be applied towards their degree requirements. However, the remaining credits were earned in areas that did not correspond to the students' general education or major requirements and could not be used.

Participation in acceleration programs is successful in reducing the number of courses required by university graduates. The typical university graduate who had earned accelerated credits had earned 14 credit hours in the programs. These students when graduating from Florida public universities in 2002-03 earned a median of 129 credit hours (not including the 14 acceleration program credits). In contrast, the students who had not received acceleration program credit hours earned a median of 143 credit hours while at college. Thus, students who had participated in acceleration programs took approximately five fewer college courses, thereby freeing classroom space for other students.

¹⁰ CLEP pass rates are not available for our cohort because we could not identify students who took CLEP tests but did not pass them. The reported CLEP figures include both in-state and out-of-state students.

What are the costs and benefits of providing acceleration programs in high schools?

State costs are relatively high for acceleration programs. Acceleration programs are relatively expensive to provide at high schools, and the state's costs of generating college credit hours through these programs exceeds the cost of providing comparable courses at postsecondary institutions. Schools receive the same FTE funding allocation for accelerated courses as other high school courses. During 2005-06, the average full-time equivalent state funding for each full-year high school course was \$694.¹¹ In addition, the state provides incentive funds to school districts based on student performance on AP, IB and AICE exams. During 2005-06, the state paid an average of \$904 in incentive funding for each AP exam passed, \$894 for each IB exam passed and \$862 for each AICE exam passed. In addition, the state paid \$1,119 for each IB diploma earned and \$1,082 for each AICE diploma earned.¹²

School districts may use these incentive funds for a variety of purposes. Districts may use these incentive funds to pay for the AP, IB, and AICE exam fees. The AP exam fee is \$82 nationwide, while the fee per AICE exam is approximately \$43. The IB exam fee varies based on a number of factors. Florida statute requires a portion of the AP, IB, and AICE incentive funds to be used to pay teacher bonuses.¹³ Teachers are awarded a \$50 bonus for each student that passes these exams, and a one-time \$500 bonus is awarded to teachers in "D" and "F" graded schools that have at least one student pass an exam. The maximum annual bonus per teacher is \$2,000. In addition, for AP incentive funds, districts must allocate at least 80% of incentive funds to the high school that generates them.

One of the goals of acceleration programs is to reduce the time students need to graduate with a baccalaureate degree and thus reduce the cost to the state. However, during 2002-03, the amount of incentive funding paid to school districts for

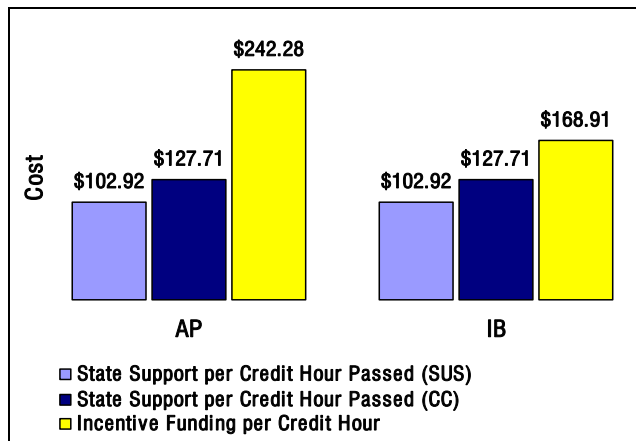
¹¹ One FTE funds 12 high school courses annually, 6 per semester.

¹² While the school district may receive incentive funding for multiple IB or AICE exams per student, it only receives the additional IB/AICE diploma funding once per student.

¹³ Section 1011.62, *F.S.*

AP and IB exam performance exceeded the state cost per credit hour for courses taken at a state postsecondary institution.¹⁴ Exhibit 4 provides a comparison of these costs.

**Exhibit 4
The State Paid More Per Credit Hour in Incentive Funding for AP and IB Credit in 2002-03 Than for Credit Earned in Postsecondary Classrooms**



Source: OPPAGA analysis of 2002-03 FLDOE Expenditures per Credit Hour by Source and 2001-02 FLDOE data on AP and IB Incentive Funding.

Dual enrollment is funded in a different manner and districts do not receive incentive funding for this program. The state provides FTE funding to high schools for students enrolled in dual enrollment courses and, at the same time, funds postsecondary institutions per student enrolled. (See page 4 of Report No. 06-27 for a detailed discussion.)

Acceleration programs have many non-monetary benefits. While relatively costly, acceleration programs provide numerous benefits. Students that successfully complete advanced courses often receive more favorable consideration in the college admission process and, once in college, are more likely to graduate with academic honors, earn higher GPA's, graduate within four years,¹⁴ and be accepted into

¹⁴ For this cost analysis, we compared the incentive funding per AP and IB exam passed with the adjusted state support per credit hour. The incentive funding is based on the average amount of AP and IB credit awarded to 2001-02 high school graduates by Florida universities and community colleges the year following graduation. The adjusted state support per credit hour reflects funding per successful outcome at postsecondary institutions. Approximately 83% of university students and 80% of community college students earn credit for the coursework that they attempt.

a doctoral program. U.S. Department of Education research shows that the students most likely to finish college were those who took the most difficult courses in high school.¹⁵ (See page 5 of Report No. 06-27 for a detailed discussion.)

How do other states fund acceleration programs?

Florida provides substantially higher incentive funding for AP and IB performance than other states. Similar to Florida, most other states fund accelerated high school courses through their funding formula. In addition to providing this basic funding, a few states also provide incentive funds for acceleration mechanism programs. However, few other states provide as much incentive funding for AP or IB programs as does Florida.

Florida provided \$52 million in incentive funding to schools for students' performance on AP exams in Fiscal Year 2004-05, and is one of only five states that provided such incentive funds. However, the other four states paid a flat rate of \$100 or less on a per-student or per-test basis. Florida provided funding at the rate of 0.24 FTE or approximately \$885 in Fiscal Year 2004-05 for each test passed, substantially higher than the level paid by these states. (See page 8 of Report No. 06-27 for a detailed discussion.)

Few other states subsidize exam fees for all students. Unlike Florida, most states do not pay AP and IB exam fees for all students but pay these fees only for low-income students.

Florida school districts pay a fee of \$82 for each AP exam, a fee that is set nationally, with the College Board receiving \$74 of this amount and schools receiving \$8 for their exam administrative costs. Only three states including Florida pay the total AP exam cost for all students who enroll in an AP course. Six additional states cover a portion of AP exam fees for non-low-income students.

Forty-one states, including Florida, pay AP exam costs for low-income students. The College Board provides a \$22 fee reduction and schools are expected to forgo the \$8 administrative fee

¹⁵ Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Examination Results in Texas: 2003-2004.

for low-income students, for a total AP exam cost of \$52 for students from low-income families. Florida pays the reduced fee of \$52 for these students.¹⁶ In 2005, a total of 5,416 low-income students took 8,373 AP exams at Florida high schools. (See page 6 of Report No. 06-27 for a detailed discussion.)

What legislative measures are used to assess the performance of acceleration programs?

Currently, there are no established legislative performance measures that assess the effectiveness of acceleration programs.¹⁷ Useful measures could include acceleration program participation rates and exam passage rates. Given the level of funding provided to these programs (over \$73 million for Fiscal Year 2005-06), such accountability mechanisms should be established to assist the Legislature in assessing program funding and outcomes and determining whether policy or program changes are needed.

Recommendations and Policy Options

Legislature may wish to consider several alternative options for funding acceleration programs. The Legislature could alter Florida's incentive funding formula and/or basis for

¹⁶ Low-income students are determined by the state educational agency or local educational agency. These students are between 5 and 19 years old and are eligible for free/reduced lunch, come from families receiving social security benefits or eligible for Medicaid, or a combination of these factors. The College Board provides a \$22 fee reduction and schools are expected to forgo the \$8 administrative fee for low income students, for a total AP exam cost of \$52 for students from low-income families.

¹⁷ Texas has established participation rate performance measures for both AP and IB.

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Florida Monitor: www.oppaga.state.fl.us

Project supervised by Jane Fletcher (850/487-9255)
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Gary R. VanLandingham, OPPAGA Director

calculating incentive funding. Rather than the current practice of basing incentive funding on successful AP and IB exams, these funds could be based on

- a flat amount paid per student passing exams or per exam passed, and
- actual costs of providing comparable courses at postsecondary institutions.

The Legislature could also consider modifying its current policy of paying AP and IB exam fees for all students regardless of income level. Most other states limit payment to only low-income students.

Each option has a variety of related pros and cons as well as potential additional state costs. (See page 9 of Report No. 06-27 for a detailed discussion.)

We recommend that the Legislature adopt performance measures for acceleration programs (AP, IB, AICE, and dual enrollment) that will assist it in assessing program outcomes and program funding.

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Commissioner of Education to review and respond. The Commissioner's written response is reproduced herein in Appendix B.

Appendix A

Overview of Acceleration Programs

Program	Description	Credits Awarded	Costs
<p>Advanced Placement (AP)</p> <p>Section 1007.27(6), <i>Florida Statutes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AP program is course-based at high schools and provides high-achieving, self-motivated students the opportunity to enroll in advanced courses of study. AP courses are designed to prepare students for subject area exams that measure the students' mastery of curriculum. Students earn high school credits based on AP-related coursework. Students do not have to participate in AP courses to take an AP exam. As many as 34 courses are offered in 19 subject areas through the Advanced Placement Program. The exams are administered by the College Board. Eligibility for postsecondary-level credit is based on student performance on AP exams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school – Students receive high school credit if they receive a passing grade in the course. Certain test scores may apply to Florida Bright Futures foreign language requirements. Postsecondary – Students are recommended for college credits if they receive a score of 3 or higher on a 5-point scale on the corresponding AP exam. The Articulation Coordinating Committee provides minimum guidelines on how many credits to award based on AP exam scores but each postsecondary institution may award higher amounts of credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance-based incentive funding - School districts receive .24 FTE (an average of \$855 per passed exam in 2001-02) for each student who earns a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam. 80% of incentive funds provided to school districts must be distributed to the high school that the student attended. Incentive funds are used to award bonuses to teachers and often used to cover AP exam fees. (During 2005-06, the fee per AP exam was \$82). In 2005-06, statewide AP incentive funding was nearly \$56 million. In addition to incentive funding, the state provides FTE funding to school districts for students taking AP classes as it does for other high school courses. Cost to students - Students are exempt from AP exam fees.
<p>International Baccalaureate (IB)</p> <p>Section 1007.27(8), <i>Florida Statutes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IB program is program-based at the high school level and provides advanced level coursework to meet the needs of highly motivated and academically talented students; allowing them to meet various international university entrance standards. Students participate in the IB program at IB-authorized schools and earn high school credits based on IB-related coursework. To earn an IB diploma, students are required to successfully earn 24 points through coursework and exam performance. The International Baccalaureate program curriculum, adopted by the State Board of Education, is administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization based in Switzerland. Eligibility for postsecondary-level credit is based on student performance on IB exams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school – Students receive high school credit if they receive a passing grade in the course. Postsecondary - Students are recommended for college credits if they receive an exam score of 4 or higher on a 7-point scale. The Articulation Coordinating Committee provides minimum guidelines on how many credits to award based on IB exam scores but each postsecondary institution may award higher amounts of credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance-based incentive funding - School districts receive 0.24 FTE for each student who earns a score of 4 or higher on an IB exam and an additional 0.3 FTE (a total incentive average of \$1,026 per passed exam in 2001-02) is awarded for students who earn an IB diploma. In 2005-06, statewide IB incentive funding was nearly \$17 million. Incentive funds provided to school districts are used to award bonuses to teachers and may be used to cover IB exam fees. IB fees vary by type of IB student and number of IB exams taken. In addition to incentive funding, the state provides FTE funding to school districts for students taking IB classes as it does for other high school courses. Cost to students - Students are exempt from IB exam fees.
<p>Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AICE program is offered at high schools and provides high-quality coursework to highly motivated students. AICE allows students to tailor their studies individual interests, abilities and future plans within an international curriculum framework. Students participate in the AICE program at AICE-authorized schools and earn high school credits based on AICE-related coursework. To be considered for an AICE diploma, students are required to successfully earn six credits by passing a combination of examinations with at least 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school – Students receive high school credit if they receive a passing grade in the course. Postsecondary - Students are recommended for college credit if they receive a score of E or higher on an AICE exam. Exams are graded on a scale of A to E with A equaling a top level passing score and E indicating a minimum passing score. The Articulation Coordinating Committee provides minimum guidelines on how many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance-based incentive funding - School districts receive 0.24 FTE for each student who earns a score of E or higher on a full-credit AICE course AICE exam, 0.12 FTE is awarded for each student enrolled in a half-credit AICE course who earns a score of E or higher. In addition 0.3 FTE is awarded for students who earn an AICE diploma. In 2005-06, statewide AICE incentive funding was \$420,685. Incentive funds provided to school districts are used to award bonuses to teachers and may be

Program	Description	Credits Awarded	Costs
	<p>one course coming from each of the curriculum areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As many as 40 subjects are offered in three curriculum areas (Math and Sciences; Languages; and Arts and Humanities). The exams are administered by the University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), a non-profit department of the University of Cambridge in the U.K. ▪ Eligibility for postsecondary-level credit is based on student performance on AICE exams. 	<p>credits to award based on AICE exam grades, but each postsecondary institution may award higher amounts of credit.</p>	<p>used to cover AICE exam fees. During 2004-05, the fee per AICE exam was approximately \$43.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In addition to incentive funding, the state provides FTE funding to school districts for students taking AICE classes as it does for other high school courses. ▪ Cost to students - Students are exempt from AICE exam fees.
<p>Dual Enrollment Section 1007.271, <i>Florida Statutes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The dual enrollment program is course-based at both high schools and postsecondary institutions. This program allows high school students to receive both high school and postsecondary-level credits simultaneously. ▪ Students earn high school credits based on their performance on dual enrollment-related coursework. In order to enroll in a dual enrollment course students must pass the Common Placement Test and must maintain an unweighted grade point average of at least 3.0 for college credit courses and a 2.0 unweighted grade point average for career and technical certificate courses. ▪ Dual enrollment courses are administered through a cooperative agreement between school districts, vocational technical centers, community colleges, and universities. These agreements should delineate the course grades students must attain to receive college credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High school – Students receive high school credit if they receive a passing grade in the course. ▪ Postsecondary - Students receive college credit if they earn the course grade required by the local cooperative agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At the high school level, school districts receive funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) for 900 hours of instruction, similar to other high school courses. If students take dual enrollment courses beyond the 900 hours districts do not receive FEFP funding for those dual enrollment courses. ▪ At the postsecondary level, the student is also reported for FTE funding based on the proportional share of full-time equivalent enrollment he or she generates. ▪ Cost to students – Dual enrollment public or private school students who attend a Florida public community college or university are exempt from registration, matriculation, or laboratory fees for dual enrollment courses.
<p>College-level Examination Program (CLEP) Section 1007.27(7), <i>Florida Statutes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CLEP is a credit-by-examination program based at the college level that allows students to earn postsecondary-level credit by demonstrating their mastery of subject matter. Students do not earn CLEP credits at the high school level. ▪ There is no CLEP-related high school coursework. Instead, the program is designed to test subject area knowledge regardless of where the material is learned. ▪ College faculty committees develop CLEP exams based on what is typically covered in lower-level college courses and set passing standards for the exams. The CLEP program is administered by the College Board. ▪ Students earn college credit by passing the CLEP exam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High school – Certain test scores may apply to Florida Bright Futures foreign language requirements. ▪ Postsecondary – Students receive credits if they earn certain scores on CLEP exams. The Articulation Coordinating Committee provides minimum guidelines on how many credits to award based on CLEP exam scores but each postsecondary institution may award higher amounts of credit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost to students - Students pay \$55 and an additional administrative fee that varies by institution for each CLEP exam they take at Florida public community colleges or universities. ▪ Florida community colleges and universities pay for the administration of the CLEP program through student fees or institutional funds. No funds are directly appropriated by the Legislature for this program.

Source: OPPAGA analysis.

Appendix B

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



John L. Winn
Commissioner of Education

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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March 13, 2006

Mr. Gary R. VanLandingham
Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis
And Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

Please find attached the response to the preliminary and tentative audit findings and recommendations concerning:

1. *State's High School Acceleration Programs Are Funded Through a Variety of Sources.*
2. *Most Students Received College Credit For Accelerated Courses; Programs Reduce University Class Time*
3. *Most Acceleration Students Perform Well, But Outcomes Vary by Program Type*
4. *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relative Expensive*

If you have any questions, please contact Inspector General John M. Franco at 850-245-0403 or email john.franco@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Winn".

John L. Winn
Commissioner

JLW/jmf/br

Attachment

**Florida Department of Education
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
Preliminary and Tentative Audit Findings and Recommendations
March 10, 2006**

Accelerated Mechanisms (Four Draft Reports)

1. *State's High School Acceleration Programs Are Funded Through a Variety of Sources*
2. *Most Students Receive College Credit For Accelerated Courses; Programs Reduce University Class Time*
3. *Most Acceleration Students Perform Well, But Outcomes Vary by Program Type*
4. *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive*

The Department of Education is committed to providing Dual Enrollment opportunities for students and recognizing credit earned through a wide variety of acceleration programs available to Florida's high school students. In general, we agree with the findings and recommendations presented in the four draft reports. We hope that these will be used to further the important discussions already taking place across the state. However, we do want to take the opportunity to clarify some information that was presented in the draft reports and to forward a proposal regarding incentive funding based on students earning postsecondary credit in all acceleration programs.

AP is not a College-Level Course

In each draft report, a brief description of the AP program indicates that "AP courses are designed to offer college-level instruction and are generally equivalent to college courses." However, that is not the case. The high schools offering AP courses are not accredited for offering college-level courses or granting college degrees. Additionally, high school instructors teaching AP courses are not required to meet the SACS accreditation standard for college faculty (i.e., master's plus 18 hours in the content area). Therefore, it should be specified that "AP courses are advanced high school instruction that may lead to college credit if the student earns the requisite score on a corresponding AP exam."

Incentive Funding Should be Based on All Students Earning Postsecondary Credit

We concur with the recommendation in the draft report *Acceleration Programs Provide Benefits But the Costs Are Relatively Expensive*, which suggests that the Legislature could alter Florida's incentive funding for acceleration programs.

Rather than the current practice of basing incentive funding on successful AP and IB exams, we suggest that there is a need to provide incentives to school districts for college credits earned by high school students in all acceleration programs, including Dual Enrollment. Using current incentive funding levels, a cost figure per accelerated credit hour earned should be determined for all school districts. A performance incentive program should be created to fund school districts based on the number of college credit hours earned by public high school students. This means that AP, IB, AICE, and Dual Enrollment would all be funded in the FEFP (which is current practice) and school districts would receive specific performance incentive funds based on all students who receive college credit through any accelerated program. This is not current practice because no incentive funds exist for Dual Enrollment even though OPPAGA data indicates that these students attend Florida public postsecondary institutions at higher rates than AP and IB students.