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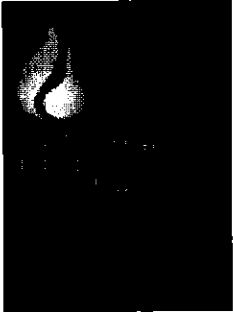
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DUAL FUNDING FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT: AN INDUCEMENT OR AN IMPEDIMENT?

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While the strategy of funding both systems provides an incentive for both school districts and community colleges to participate with dual enrollment, the current fiscal environment has drawn attention to the inefficient use of the dual funding structure. This article highlights the results of a case study on Florida's dual enrollment program documenting how over a 20-year period policymakers offered different financial incentives as an inducement to greater participation among districts and community colleges. The article documents how the current state fiscal condition has altered lawmaker's motivations for supporting dual enrollment. It concludes by describing the implications of this on community college participation with dual enrollment.

Funding presents one of the greatest challenges in implementing P–16 initiatives such as dual enrollment. A total of 27 states allow both the K–12 school district and the community college to count dual enrollment students toward both full-time equivalent (FTE) and average daily attendance (ADA) (Boswell, 2001). David Pierce (2001), former president of the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC), advocates that, “dual-credit programs work best in states where both the college and high school receive full state funding for dual credit students. This policy removes much of the resistance to the program by high school teachers who fear losing both enrollment and state aid” (p. 5). However, this strategy of dual funding is unpopular with some, particularly legislators and taxpayers, who

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dislike the double dipping two systems for one service (Bailey, Hughes, & Karp 2002; Clark, 2001; Education Commission of the States, 2001; McCarthy, 1999).

While this strategy of funding both systems may provide an incentive for both school districts and community colleges to participate with dual enrollment courses, the bleak fiscal environment hitting states across the nation has drawn increased attention to the inefficient use of funding dual enrollment courses. According to Bailey et al. (2002), as dual enrollment courses increase in popularity among students and parents, the question on how to fund dual enrollment courses equitably while making the most efficient use of public monies will become an even more debated topic. This question is currently under debate in the state of Florida. After years of funding both systems, the governor and legislature are exploring other options of funding dual enrollment courses through either decreasing the level of funding for the courses or only funding the sector offering the courses. This strategy presents an interesting twist in Florida's funding policy, a policy that has evolved over the 30-year history with its dual enrollment program.

The context for this article developed out of a larger study that examined the conflicting interests and motives for participation among different stakeholders. A significant finding of the study was the large influence of funding on participation in dual enrollment courses. Because of its significance, this article centers exclusively on the challenges with funding dual enrollment courses.

This funding debate presents the focal point for this article: to what extent does state funding for dual enrollment influence the participation of K-12 school districts and community colleges? Through presenting the results of a case study on Florida's dual enrollment system, this article will answer this question. To do so, the article is organized to explain the different funding strategies that were used by state policymakers in Florida to solicit more statewide participation with dual enrollment among K-12 school districts and community colleges. Accordingly, the article begins by outlining the design of the case study in which the research data was collected and analyzed. Next, drawing from the results of document analysis and interviews, a case history of the funding for dual enrollment courses will be described followed by an overview of the funding debate within the present context. The article will conclude with an analysis of how changing motivations underlying the funding of dual enrollment courses are in danger of serving as an impediment rather than inducement to good policy decisions that best serve the interest of Florida students.

Stake (1995) suggests using issues as the conceptual framework for a study "in order to force attention to (the) complexity and contextuality" of the study (p. 16). This case study was designed around the challenge of getting different policy actors to collaborate toward common goals. At the center of this was the policy challenge of how to motivate different actors to participate in dual enrollment and an examination of the best strategies in which to do so. This examination was focused on the following research question: To what extent does state funding for dual enrollment influence the participation of K-12 schools and community colleges with dual enrollment courses? The results of the study showed not only the influence of financial incentives on statewide participation with dual enrollment but also how different local stakeholders used their influence to shape the design of state policies to their advantage. Stone's (2002) Polis Model served as the conceptual framework for capturing and analyzing this level of political engagement among state policymakers and local implementers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Stone (2002), in her book, *Policy Paradox*, offers a broader framework for analyzing policies that is based on what she terms a "polis" (p. 243), individuals bound together through a larger political community. As described by Stone (2002), policy making under the polis model works to design and implement policies that have both private and collective benefits. Through this intention, state policy makers utilize strategies that offer individual or private benefits as a way to motivate communities to work toward actions that benefit the collective good.

One way this is done is through the theory of inducement, a method used by policymakers to offer incentives to stakeholders to bring the special interests and concerns of these groups in line with broader policy and community goals (Stone, 2002). Using this strategy, state policymakers offer incentives to alleviate conflicting interests among stakeholder groups and to minimize divergence between stakeholder interests and policymaker's goals. In Florida, the collective purpose of accelerated mechanisms is as a mechanism to help meet state educational priorities to reduce time to degree and to broaden the scope and depth of study for high school students. (These are the three purposes for accelerated courses listed in the legislative intent stated in Chapter 1007.01 (1), Florida Statute.) However, this goal can only be accomplished to the extent that all necessary stakeholders at the high school, community college, and

university levels participate with the offering and transfer of credits for dual enrollment courses.

This article provides a historical case study of how state policymakers have offered incentives, primarily financial, to encourage greater participation among school districts and community colleges with dual enrollment courses. As state finances tightened over the last couple of years, though, dual enrollment courses have been used to help Florida policymakers meet other emerging statewide priorities. This finding, which will be discussed later in the article, shows the complexity of placing a fiscal value on a state program that has been used to serve varied policy goals and to save state costs through a variety of different mechanisms.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Within the framework of Stone's Polis Model, this study used a two-phase case study design (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) that consisted of document analysis and semistructured interviewing. During the first phase, a case history strategy was utilized to provide an understanding of the history of dual enrollment policies and decisions throughout the duration of Florida's Accelerated Mechanism program. In collecting the historical data, at least 30 pieces of legislation on the topic of dual enrollment were reviewed. In addition, secondary data through reports done by the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) and educational researchers dating as far back as the late 1970s were read and coded. The collection of these documents helped to frame the analysis of the origin and development of Florida's articulated accelerated mechanism program.

During the second phase, key informant interviews and current documents were used to provide a greater understanding of the conflicting interests and motives for participation in dual enrollment among different stakeholders. Interviews were conducted in Florida over a period of 10 days with 24 stakeholders including school district and community college representatives and state policymakers. In addition, a review of current statewide news articles from a service provided by the University of North Florida's Florida Center for Public Policy was conducted for a year and a half period. Based on the review, over 150 current articles relevant to dual enrollment (dated October 2003 through the present) were read, coded, and saved.

While some of the information collected through key informant interviews is highlighted in this article, the analysis draws primarily

from information obtained through the review of legislation, state reports, and news articles.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY

Triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through the use of multiple methods and a prolonged study were two methods used by the researcher to assure trustworthiness. This study used multiple sources of information—key informant interviews, document analysis of legislation, state reports, news article accounts, and secondary data—to verify the creditability of information collected and test for convergence of information among the sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). Member checking (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995) was also conducted with each of the interview participants to assure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the interview data.

Insight was also given to the level of transferability with the results of this study. With this study the focus was not on generalization of information but instead on the contextualization of information to aid in a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Kvale, 1996). Accordingly, the intent of this study was not to provide generalizable information that would apply to funding and policymaking strategies for dual enrollment courses in all 50 states, but rather to aid in the contextualization and understanding of the complexity involved with gaining statewide support and buy-in with educational initiatives that depend on the participation of multiple sectors. To allow for a contextualization of this, a case history of the funding for dual enrollment in Florida is provided in the following section.

CASE HISTORY

Florida's Accelerated Mechanism Program, established by state statute in 1979 (Chapter 79-222, Florida Law), is one the oldest state sponsored academic acceleration programs in the country. Under the umbrella of the program are a variety of acceleration mechanisms including dual enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) programs and credit by examination (CLEP). The long history of the program allows for the opportunity to study a state dual enrollment program that has evolved over thirty years. As well, this case study shows the level of influence that local stakeholders have had with shifting funding policies for dual enrollment. To do this, this section begins with an overview of the

significant legislation and legislative actions that have shaped Florida's dual enrollment funding policies.

FLORIDA'S DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM—THE BEGINNING

Dual enrollment courses have been in existence in Florida public education since the 1970s, developed largely out of local articulation agreements that already existed between high schools, community colleges, and universities (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1997). However, the first legislative involvement with dual enrollment courses began in 1972 when a legislative order was given by the Florida General Assembly directing the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC), an independent research body, to "examine the effectiveness of advanced placement, dual enrollment, and international baccalaureate instruction and address factors such as cost, average number of hours earned, and impact on the time to degree" (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1997, p. 2).

The primary purpose of the task force; however, was only to document dual enrollment activity already occurring in the state (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1988). Through a survey of public schools, community colleges, and universities, the task force found that dual enrollment in high school and college courses was occurring at four universities and nine community colleges. Although the focus of the task force was to document activity, the report commented on the funding for dual enrollment courses suggesting that the use of different funding formulas and fee structures to allocate resources at the various educational levels impeded the widespread growth of dual enrollment. The report recommended that more widespread growth of dual enrollment would require financial incentives to institutions involved with dual enrollment. (Attempts through both the state archives office and PEPC (now the Council for Education Research and Improvement) were made to locate the 1973 report, but neither agency had record of the 1973 Task Force report. Due to this, interpretations of the finding of the report were based on secondary data provided by later PEPC reports).

FUNDING DUAL ENROLLMENT

In 1974, following the recommendations of the PEPC report, legislation was passed that authorized community colleges, but not school

districts, to receive full-time enrollment (FTE) for dual enrollment students (Florida Board of Education, 2003). Funding only community colleges remained the legislative practice for almost a decade as community colleges were allowed to count dual enrollment students, but school districts were not. This changed in 1983, when the legislature amended the law (Chapter 83-325, Florida Law) to allow both school districts and colleges to receive state reimbursement for these students.

This, however, was not implemented equally across sectors. Community colleges were still allowed to count dual enrollment students toward the full value of the full-time equivalent (FTE) calculation, but school districts were *only* allowed to count the dual enrollment student at one-half of the average daily attendance (ADA) value (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1997). This meant that while community colleges and universities were allowed to receive full state funding for a student participating in dual credit programs, secondary schools only received half the state funding for the student (Bickel, 1986). In addition, community colleges also received an additional .30 FTE to compensate for the fee exemption that dual enrollment students received (Florida Board of Education, 2003).

The result was a lack of buy-in from school administrators. To this extent, school district administrators resisted dual enrollment courses and encouraged students to enroll in AP courses instead of dual enrollment courses. Bickel (1986) noted that in 1982 the number of students enrolled in dual enrollment courses dropped sharply with 42 out of 67 districts reporting declines in enrollment. At the same time, enrollments in AP courses, over which districts and high schools had complete administrative control, increased.

Funding Both Systems

In 1984, restrictions for school districts were lifted when full funding to districts for dually enrolled students was granted through the passage of Chapter 84-336, Florida Law (Bickel, 1986; Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1997). The result was a jump in the enrollment of students participating in dual enrollment, as noted by a 1988 PEPC report. According to the report, "There is no question that (school district's) participation (in dual enrollment courses) is linked to funding. When full funding for the school districts replaced one-half FTE funding in 1984, participation increased significantly" (p. 14).

Further incentives for dual enrollment courses were created in 1987. Chapter 87-212 contained additional incentives for dual enrollment that included a provision that allowed school districts to "conduct advanced placement instruction within dual enrollment courses" (Chapter 87-212, p. 1334). Although students enrolled in a joint dual enrollment and AP course could not be funded through both programs, this law allowed school districts to switch the student's status from AP to dual enrollment. As a result, a student who failed the AP exam could be reclassified as a dual enrollment student, thereby restoring funding to the district and granting college credit to the individual (Crooks, 1998).

The legislation also changed the categorical budget for instructional materials for students in AP and dual enrollment courses (Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1988). Included in the legislation, was a provision that allowed the Florida Department of Education to hold back 5% of each district's appropriation, to then be reimbursed to the districts for their dually enrolled students. According to the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission report (1988), "Because each district receives its allocation based on the previous year's participation, this will result in increased funds for some districts and decreased funds for others" (p. 7). This legislation provided an incentive for school districts to develop dual enrollment courses and penalized those districts that did not.

Dual Funding Increases Student Participation

The hypothesis that funding both sectors allowed for increased participation in dual enrollment courses was also supported by two news articles published right after the passage of the 1987 legislation. An article by McDivitt (1988) in the *St. Petersburg Times* questioned why high school students were "suddenly capitalizing on programs that have been around, in most cases, for 10 years or more" (p. 2D). The answer that McDivitt found was that community college counselors or high school liaisons were more actively promoting the dual enrollment programs to high school students because of the increase in financial inducements through the 1987 legislation.

Another article in the *St. Petersburg Times* by Hegarty (1988) described the intent to "dramatically" expand Pasco/Hernando Community College's (PHCC) dual enrollment program by including vocational, fine arts and music dual enrollment courses that "would be opened up to include high school students identified as potential dropouts who might do well in a less restricted environment" (p. 1).

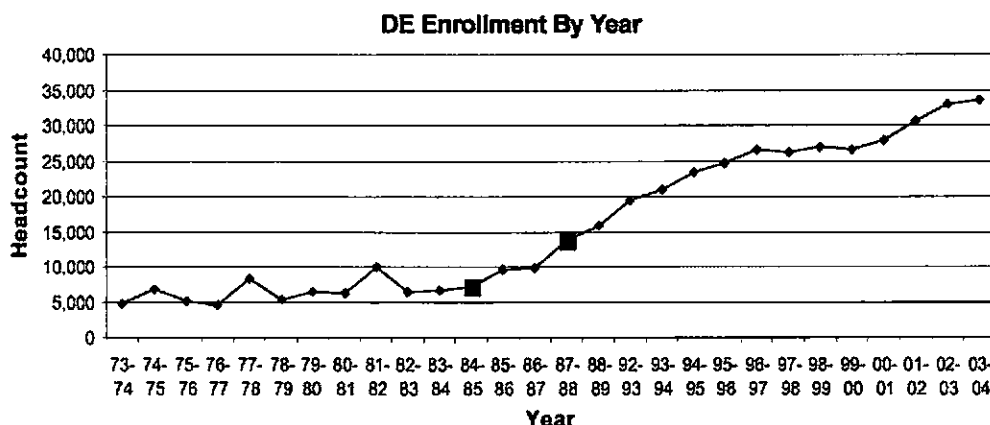


Figure 1. A 30-Year Picture of Dual Enrollment (DE) Participation in Florida: 1973–2003. Note: The two squares on the chart indicate when significant legislation was passed. Following both of these pieces of legislation, dual enrollment activity increased in the state.

In the article, Hegarty explained, “The changes in the dual enrollment programs were triggered by legislation that affected funding for dually enrolled students...the Legislature made it possible for both the school system and the college to factor the students in their student population and to get funding for educating the students” (p. 1).

Figure 1 shows the rate of participation in dual enrollment courses since 1973, when the state first started tracking dual enrollment activity.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

While policymakers have attempted to offer equitable financial incentives to both K–12 schools and community colleges, the different organizational and structural arrangements of K–12 schools and community colleges provide additional disparities to funding. One structural difference between the two sectors exists in the state funding structure for community colleges.

Changes in the State Funding Structure for Community Colleges

Like school districts, community colleges were initially funded through a FTE student-based formula approach (Bureau of Financial and Business Services, 2000). In the 1980s, however, community colleges’ funding formula changed to a “base-plus funding approach”

consisting of incremental funding increases to the previous year's budget as well as funds for special initiatives (p. 1). This remained the funding process until 1994, when Florida's community colleges became the first in the country to implement performance-based funding and incentives as a portion of their state budget (Bureau of Finance and Business Services, 2000; Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1997). Through this new formula, community colleges count dual enrollment students in their FTE calculation through a dual enrollment participation rate based on the prior year's percentage of dual enrollment students divided by the actual number of other fee-paying enrolled students (Bureau of Finance and Business Services, 2000). Dual enrollment participation did not decline following this change in the funding process since community college participation in dual enrollment courses was linked to state priorities aligned with the new performance based funding system.

Instructional Hour Calculation

A different calculation of instructional hours between K-12 schools and community colleges further complicates the allocation of resources for dual enrollment courses. For K-12 schools, FTE funding is based on instructional hours (Florida Board of Education, 2003). However, college courses are not offered using this same daily conversion schedule. A one-credit high school course requires 150 instructional hours; whereas a one-semester dual enrollment course (which usually meets for only 40 instructional hours) equates to only .5 high school credits (Florida Board of Education, 2003).

To add to the complexity, K-12 schools cannot receive state funding for courses taken beyond the typical instructional day even though many dual enrollment courses, particularly those taught at community colleges, are taken after regular school hours. This further complicates the funding of dual enrollment courses as the perceived "double-dipping" of state funds for dual enrollment students is not as simple as it may seem. In fact, most often it is more financially advantageous for school districts to focus more on other accelerated mechanisms (e.g., Advanced Placement courses) and for community colleges to enroll full-paying students.

Incentive Funding for AP Courses

In 2002, lawmakers passed another piece of legislation (Chapter 2002-387, Florida Law) that allows further incentives for school districts to support AP, IB, and AICE courses. The legislation allows for

school districts to receive funding (at .24 FTE or approximately \$871 per student) for each student who receives a score of 3 or higher on the AP, IB, or AICE examination (Committee on Education K-20, 2004). It also allows teachers to receive a \$50 bonus for each student who scores a 3 or higher on the AP, IB, or AICE exam. A teacher who teaches an AP course at a D or F school and who has at least one student who achieves a score of 3 or higher on the AP exam, can receive an additional one-time \$500 bonus (Committee on Education K-20, 2004, p. 307).

While dual enrollment funding is distributed to the school district, the incentive funding for AP, IB, and AICE courses goes both to the school district and to the teacher, if the student passes the exam. Since teachers are often the greatest influence on what type of accelerated mechanism a student may take, this has caused some proponents of dual enrollment courses to claim that this provides the incentive for teachers to recommend students take AP, IB, or AICE courses over dual enrollment. According to a community college dean interviewed, "One of the reasons the school districts (now) like AP and IB over it (dual enrollment courses) is that they get the additional funding for AP and IB that they don't get for dual enrollment". This sentiment was also supported by a community college lobbyist who commented, "there is a bounty a reward in the school districts for students who successfully complete the AP program. That is, an incentive for school districts to push the AP program instead of the dual enrollment program".

REVISITING THE DUAL ENROLLMENT FUNDING DEBATE

Adding to this, in 2003, governor Bush 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 (Florida Board of Education, 2003). The Florida Senate also proposed a change in the manner in which dual enrollment is funded, considering some options such as funding all dual enrollment courses through the FTE funding formula or allowing FTE funding for dual enrollment courses to follow the student; thereby only funding the employer of the instruction for the dual enrollment course (Florida Board of Education, 2003). The Senate proposal, however, also clarifies that school districts could not limit participation in dual enrollment courses due to funding changes threatening to penalize districts if they were caught doing this. (Chapter 2000-225, Florida Law requires school districts to inform students of dual enrollment courses).

Nonetheless, the possibility for the elimination of joint funding for dual enrollment promulgated fear within the educational environment, as evidenced in the minutes from the Articulated Coordinating Committee (ACC) Task Force of Acceleration Policies. According to the December 4, 2002 minutes of the task force,

It is anticipated that dual enrollment funding in the FEFP may be cut during the 2003 Legislative Session. This caused great concern among the group members because it was felt that a cut in funding for school districts could have devastating effects on the participation in the dual enrollment program . . . There is also some concern that if funding for dual enrollment is cut from the FEFP that entire programs may be shut down (ex: a school in Miami-Dade County that is solely dual enrollment) (n.p.).

This excerpt shows what different policy actors perceive as a continuous link between dual funding for dual enrollment courses and participation.

However, rather than act quickly on this issue, the legislature instead passed legislation (Chapter 2003-8, Florida Law) that required further review of dual enrollment and other accelerated mechanisms. The legislation mandated that the State Board of Education conduct a review of the extent to which accelerated mechanisms, including dual enrollment courses, are used in Florida and develop a plan to expand and enhance their use (Florida Board of Education, 2003). As a result, an Accelerated Mechanism Task Force, comprised of educational stakeholders from across the K-20 community, was established. One of the items addressed by the task force was funding policies, in which the task force recommended that the current methodology for funding dual enrollment courses should remain the same (Florida Board of Education, 2003).

The fear of losing state funding for dual enrollment courses also caused two competing lobbying groups to work together to advocate for the continuation of a dual funding structure for dual enrollment courses. In response to possible changes in the funding formula, the Florida Association of Community Colleges (FACC) and the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) conducted a joint study that addressed some of the misconceptions of dual enrollment funding. Through this study, the two organizations identified a variety of different scenarios under which dual enrollment instruction is provided and analyzed each scenario based on the costs associated with each delivery method for both systems.

The results of the cost analysis indicate 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. Instead, 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. According to the study (Florida Association of Community Colleges and Florida Association of District School Superintendents, 2003), "Even though students are double served, the state does not provide adequate funding regardless of the method of delivery to cover the total cost of dual enrollment courses" (p. 18). However, the results of this study also gave the impression that dual enrollment would not be under-funded if the FTE funding was granted to only the institution paying the dual enrollment instructor.

Nevertheless, the two organizations came together to lobby for one outcome: the continuance of the dual funding structure for dual enrollment courses. In fact, a lobbyist for the school district association remarked that, "[the joint funding study] was more a joint effort with community colleges with whom we do not agree on many facts. We battle each other over some issues and so the fact that we worked together on something was a new experience, although we all know each other and are all friends but there are issues." The ability for these two organizations to come together on this project symbolized their commitment to the dual funding structure.

ADDRESSING OTHER EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

Presently, both school districts and community colleges continue to be funded for dual enrollment courses. However, the continuance of the dual funding structure may be more related to the goal of meeting state priorities rather than to enhance the learning experiences for Florida's high school students. The results of this study found that dual enrollment courses in the present context were considered by legislators as a mechanism to save the state money. A prime example of this was the way in which dual enrollment courses were used to accelerate students' time to degree, both in high school and in college, in an effort to save the state costs.

The intent of the legislature to use dual enrollment to save state expenses toward education was described by the K-12 administrator interviewed. According to him:

I understand part of the goals [for dual enrollment] and . . . a lot of it actually gets back to cost. I mean when you have a state where the student population is booming, one of the ways you can save money is helping students exit or graduate from high school early. The other way you can do that is if these students can begin earning college credits before they graduate high school, then when these students go into the community colleges or four-year universities, they will not have to be in those schools for four years. You can also save money in your Bright Future Scholarship Awards (the state's merit based scholarship program) when you only have to fund the student three instead of four years. And the other side of that is if you have students exiting from the community colleges or four-year universities early, you have more room to bring specific students from out-of-state or to serve more in-state students.

This same sentiment was expressed by a private-school lobbyist who described the similar legislative motivations. According to him:

The motivation [of the legislature] is to more expeditiously move children through high school and if you can move children through high school more quickly then these children are going to graduate from college sooner and that is going to save the State of Florida money. So I think that is the motivation from the state perspective. And like I said, I don't want to be overly redundant, that is not a bad thing to save the state some money. But there needs to be a balancing test on saving the State of Florida money and serving the interests of the individual child or student.

The need to save state costs was an issue about which a 4-year college student interviewed was also aware. According to the student, "I would think that the goals (of dual enrollment) would be another program to kind of help students matriculate through (college) faster so the state on the back end doesn't have to pay."

In addition to freeing up funding for both postsecondary and secondary education, dual enrollment courses also help to free up the much needed space at both the state's overpopulated K-12 classrooms and college campuses. In a 2004 legislative analysis of a proposed postsecondary tuition bill, the rationale for accelerated mechanisms, including dual enrollment courses, was stated as follows:

Current law recognizes a variety of acceleration mechanisms. Acceleration mechanisms can serve as a way for students to shorten the time

necessary to complete the requirements of a postsecondary degree thereby reducing the cost to the student and his or her family and providing space to increase access for additional students (Committee of K–20 Education, March 2004).

In another expression of the desire to free up space in state universities and encourage students to matriculate through college more quickly, governor Bush proposed a plan in 2004, endorsed by the Board of Governors, that would require all full-time students to pay the cost of 15 hours of course work per semester regardless of how many credit hours they take. The objective behind this plan was to encourage all students to take a full class load of 15 hours or more each semester, since they would already be paying for it. An editorial in the *Tampa Tribune* (2004) reported on what was really driving the governor's plan commenting that, "The sluggish graduation rate is a concern because Florida is experiencing explosive growth in college enrollments. The demand is taxing limited facilities and costing taxpayers, who subsidize each student to the tune of about \$9,300 a year" (n.p.).

The attempt to free up space in postsecondary institutions echoes a similar effort to alleviate the problem of overcrowded K–12 classrooms. Voters tried to resolve the class size problem by passing a state amendment in November 2002 to require class size limitations by the beginning of the 2010–2011 school year (Committee on Education K–20 Education, 2004). The amendment required that the legislature provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of students in each classroom, which placed fiscal responsibility for class size reduction on the state, not school districts (Florida Board of Education, 2003).

As a result, the state has explored options for reducing class sizes. One of the assignments of the Accelerated Mechanism Task Force was to report on 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" (Florida Board of Education, 2003, pp. 29–30). The intent to reduce state costs at the K–12 level was recognized by another community college dean interviewed who felt that one of the purposes of dual enrollment was to free up space in secondary classrooms. According to him:

Recently I think part of it is related to the class size (amendment) . . . I think that the utilization of the high school resources, teachers, and

everything kind of lends itself to getting those students off campus so that they can focus and have class size on campus that will help them meet that demand.

Attention to these educational priorities has shifted the legislature's recent attention. Focus has changed from saving state funding through eliminating the dual funding policy for dual enrollment courses to, instead, helping to meet other educational priorities. Other priorities include freeing up space and funding for postsecondary and secondary education through increasing the use of accelerated mechanisms. While this preserves the dual funding structure for dual enrollment courses for now, it raises concern for how legislative interest for short-term fixes, like reducing state expenses towards education, prevents good policy decisions. According to a private-school lobbyist interviewed:

I would like to make a distinction that acceleration is good public policy when students are in high school and they can access AP or dual enrollment courses because they want to access those courses and are ready to. They are at a certain level academically. That is good public policy—that is in the best interest of the individual learner. It becomes a dubious policy when we are simply just trying to fast track kids through the system . . . And I think you have to go back and ask yourself—what is the intent of acceleration. Is the intent to provide more courses for students who are achieving well academically so they are better prepared for college or is it more of a fiscal incentive to simply get children through high school more quickly? And that doesn't make it a bad policy that you are getting children through high school. It only becomes a bad policy when that is your sole motivation to do so.

Reflecting on the observation of this individual, this article concludes with an examination of the question, "Does the funding of dual enrollment courses provide an incentive or an impediment to better preparing students academically?"

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE: DUAL FUNDING FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

The shift in focus on funding dual enrollment courses raises the question as to whether dual funding for dual enrollment courses is an inducement or an impediment for preparing students academically.

Or rather, perhaps the question should be reworded to ask whether the underlying motivations for funding dual enrollment courses serve as an inducement or an impediment. Using the context for good public policy provided by the private-school lobbyist interviewed for this study, whether the intent to save the state education costs serves in the best interest of the individual learner is debatable.

For years, dual funding has been an incentive for motivating school districts and community colleges to offer dual enrollment courses for the collective good of providing Florida students with options to a broadened and enriched course of study. This was noted in a 1997 Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission report, which stated, "The most compelling statement of the value of acceleration mechanisms (in Florida) is that the Legislature continues to provide funding for both the secondary and postsecondary sectors for students enrolled in dual enrollment programs and provides enhanced funding for successful participation in the advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs" (p. 42). Yet, rather than asking whether or not funding both systems is the best use of taxpayer money, Florida policymakers have focused for years on what incentives would work toward ensuring successful participation of dual enrollment courses between both sectors. When both sectors received full funding for dual enrollment courses, student participation rates in dual enrollment increased, and they have continued to increase every year since. As evident from the findings of this study, the dual funding structure is an inducement that works with generating interorganizational participation, which is a necessary ingredient for the successful implementation of dual enrollment courses.

More recently, however, the purpose of accelerated mechanisms—in the eyes of legislators—has shifted from providing students with an accelerated but enriched educational opportunity to fast-tracking them through high school and college in order to save the state and taxpayers money. State criticism of the double dipping of taxpayer money has subsided for now as legislators realize the cost saving benefits of dual enrollment courses. While this diffuses the interest of those who want to do away with the dual funding structure, what is not known is to what extent the cost saving benefit of dual enrollment courses detracts from the collective good that the courses provide. This raises the question as to what extent are recent policy decisions based on serving the best interest for Florida students and to what extent are they based on saving the state costs.

While much state attention has been on the short-term costs of double funding for dual enrollment courses, the findings of this study

show that the long-term savings associated with dual enrollment should not be ignored. Accordingly, the long-term savings associated with accelerating students through high school and college and with better preparing students for college (e.g., the decreased costs for remedial education) require further examination. While this cost saving benefit provides an interesting way of looking at the funding policies for dual enrollment, this issue should not be considered without also examining with a critical eye to what extent cost saving strategies provide for the collective good. Decisions made solely to save state costs rather than to better academically prepare students are poor public policy. Such decisions serve as an impediment to enhancing students' learning experiences rather than an inducement.

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