Credit-Based Transition Programs: Strategies to Improve Postsecondary Access and Success

Office of Vocational and Adult Education
October 2004

Economic Drivers for High School Transformation & Challenges in Today’s High Schools

- Changing skills needed in the U.S. workforce
- Fastest growing jobs require some education beyond high school
- Many high schools have not changed at the core
- Extensive college remediation
- Disconnect between student aspirations and high school preparation – CTE, academic, career, and postsecondary planning
### Losing Our Edge?

**Students Enrolled in Postsecondary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>+15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>+258%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>+92%</td>
</tr>
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UNESCO, 2003

### Remediation at Colleges/Universities

- Any remedial reading: 10.2%
- No remedial reading, but more than 2 other remedial courses: 18.7%
- No remedial reading, but 1 or 2 other remedial courses: 20.4%
- Total, some remedial: 49.3%

Answers in the Tool Box by Clifford Adelman, June 1999

### U.S. Population Projections

- The *white, non-Hispanic* population is projected to decrease, comprising just **50.1 percent** of the total population in 2050, compared with 69.4 percent in 2000.
- Individuals of *Hispanic* origin are projected to grow from 35.6 million to 102.6 million. Their share of the nation’s population would nearly double from 12.5 percent to **24.4 percent**.
- The *African-American* population is projected to grow from 35.8 million to 61.4 million, increasing their share of the country’s population from 12.7 percent to **14.6 percent**.

U.S. Census Bureau News, U.S. Department of Commerce, March 18, 2004
The Shared Vision for High School Transformation

“Every American youth will complete high school with the academic knowledge and skills needed to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or training without needing remediation.”

Preparing America’s Future High School Initiative (PAF:HSI)

The three goals are to:

1. Equip state and local education leaders with current knowledge
2. Develop the expertise and structures within the Department of Education to provide effective technical assistance
3. Facilitate a national dialogue
Preventing America’s Future
Key Principles

- High expectations for all
- Innovative learning structures that fully engage students
- High-quality teaching and leadership, and
- Accelerated transitions to work or additional education.

www.ed.gov/highschool
Send questions and comments to:
OVAE@ed.gov
HighSchools@ed.gov

Accelerating Student Success Initiative
Questions

• How many students participate?
• What constitutes a high quality transition program?
• How do these programs function/operate?
• What are the long-term postsecondary outcomes?
• How can programs serve at-risk populations?
  Which types of programs are better suited for mid- to low-achieving students?

Accelerating Student Success Initiative

• Literature review
• Two national surveys conducted by NCES
  ✓ High school level
  ✓ Postsecondary level
• Accelerating Student Success Project
  ✓ Focus groups and interviews
  ✓ Case studies
  ✓ Policy analysis

Dual Enrollment Programs and College Courses for High School Students
  (Postsecondary Survey)

• Prevalence of dual enrollment programs
• Enrollment in dual enrollment programs
• Characteristics of dual enrollment programs
  Location of program
    Type of instructor
    Type of curriculum
    Academic eligibility requirements
• Dual enrollment programs for at-risk students
  Prevalence
  Program focus
  Enrollment patterns
  Support services
Dual Credit and Exam-Based Courses
(High School Survey)

- Exam-based course offering and courses for dual credit
  - Prevalence
  - Enrollment
- Location & educational focus of courses for dual credit
  - Location
  - Educational focus
- Characteristics of courses for dual credit
  - Course structure
  - Core instructors
  - Student composition
  - Awarding of postsecondary credit
- State policy and legislation
- School requirements

Accelerating Student Success
Project
Credit-Based Transition Programs: Strategies to Improve Postsecondary Access and Success for Middle- and Low-Achieving Students

Thomas Bailey, Katherine Hughes & Melinda Mechur Karp
Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

Community College Research Center
• Established in 1996 by the Sloan Foundation
• Conducts research on many topics
• www.tc.edu/ccrc

Overview
• What are credit-based transition programs?
• Why is there increased interest in these programs?
• What is the Accelerating Student Success Project?
  – What did we learn during our focus groups with practitioners?
  – How do state policies address dual enrollment?
  – What issues are emerging from our case study research?
Credit-Based Transition Programs
- Allow high school students to earn college credit while still in high school
- Include:
  - Dual enrollment/Dual credit
  - Tech Prep
  - Middle College High School/Early College High School
  - Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate
- Many programs were traditionally targeted toward high-achieving college bound students
- Growing strategy for middle- and lower-performing youth

Categorization
- Programs can be categorized by their intensity and purpose:
  - Singleton
  - Comprehensive
  - Enhanced comprehensive
- Categorization is dependent upon individual program characteristics

Participation
- Numbers are not precise
- 7,400 high schools currently offer at least one Tech Prep program
- Middle college high schools are currently receiving significant funding to expand
- Dual enrollment legislation exists in 38 states
- Over 13,000 students in New York City (2002-2003)
- 14,000 students in Washington’s Running Start Program (2002-2003)
- Over 20,000 in Illinois (2001-2002)—4,000 (97-98)
Focus on Broad Group of Students

- Policy and reform interest is not directed primarily at traditionally "college bound" students
- Federal government, many states, and certainly the foundations are interested in transition programs as reforms for low-income and lower and middle achieving students

What accounts for this growth in interest and activity?

- Growing importance of postsecondary education
- Problems with access to college and retention and completion in college
  - Especially for low-income students
- Fiscal pressures
- CBTP offers possible solutions

Educational Access and SES
Experience by 2000 for HS Class of 1992

Source: NELS
Financial Pressures

- If CBTPs are more effective in preparing HS students, then no need to "pay twice"
- Many students complete most HS requirements by the senior year—"senioritis"
- If students simultaneously earn HS and college credit, someone saves money—student, parents, or taxpayers

Evidence of Program Impact

- Need more outcomes research on credit-based transition programs
- Evidence suggests that enhanced comprehensive programs are more likely to succeed, especially with low-income or lower-achieving students
- Difficult methodological problems
- See Promoting College Access & Success (Bailey & Karp, 2001)

Accelerating Student Success Project

- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education
- Exploring program features that might contribute to the successful secondary-to-postsecondary transition of lower- to middle-achieving students
- Three parts
  - Case Studies (5 diverse sites)
  - Focus Groups
  - State Policy Report
Focus Groups

• Practitioners were asked about:
  – The characteristics of high-quality programs
  – How programs can support the transition of middle- and low-achieving students
  – Data collection for outcomes measurement

Characteristics of High-Quality Programs

• Outstanding faculty, and professional development for faculty
• A strong curriculum
• An emphasis on non-academic factors
• Communication between the high school and the college
• Thorough dissemination of information about the program to students and parents

How Programs Can Support the Transition of Middle- and Low-Achieving Students

• A sequential, developmental curriculum
• Individualized attention
• The provision of general information about college
Data Collection for Outcomes Measurement

• Participants understand the need for data collection but lack capacity
• Short-term program completion data are usually collected
• However, college enrollment and persistence not tracked

What are the implications of state policy for programs and practices?

• Dual enrollment policies for all 50 states collected and analyzed
• Analysis limited to dual enrollment policy; did not include AP, IB, Tech Prep
• Defined policy as legislative statutes, executive orders, or regulations from state government education entities

Credit-Based Transition Programs Vary along a Range of Features

• Target population
• Admissions requirements
• Location
• Student mix
• Instructors
• Course content
• Method of credit earning
• Program intensity
• Funding
• Mandatory or optional nature of the policy
• 39 states have policies addressing dual enrollment
• Most common aspects addressed are funding and student admissions
• Least common aspects addressed are those of program structure, such as location, program intensity or model, or course content

Funding

• Multiple aspects
  – Tuition, fees, and books
  – ADA
  – FTE
• Funding arrangements vary widely, with implications for institutions and individuals

Admissions

• Over half of the states address admissions requirements
  – Of these, 10 explicitly leave admissions criteria up to the institutions
• Tension between broad access and limiting college courses to those who are ready
Credit Earning—An Emerging Issue

• Dual Credit or Not?
• Credit Earning
  – Articulated credit or credit-in-escrow
  – Students may have to enroll in a specific postsecondary institution and/or declare a specific major to access their credit
  – This is often unclear to students and parents
• Credit Transfer
  – As with any credit, credit earned through a CBTP may not be applicable to a degree program at institutions other than where it was earned

Outcomes Measurement—An Emerging Issue

• What is an appropriate outcome?
• Lack of data coordination between secondary and postsecondary sectors
• Lack of resources for data collection