

High School-to-College Advisory Committee

A Policy Study of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate & Dual Credit Programs in Indiana

Background Briefing for January 22, 2008 Meeting

This is the inaugural meeting of the High School-to-College Advisory Committee for a policy study of three methods of transitioning students from high school to college in Indiana: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and Dual Credit. The study will examine policy at both an institutional and state level and will include advocacy for improvement of such policies to benefit Indiana high school and college students.

Rationale

Over the past several years, high schools, colleges, and community leaders have increasingly understood the advantages of providing students with opportunities to experience college-level work while in high school. Schools that provide more of these opportunities seek to motivate students by offering more rigorous courses and creating more seamless transitions for students to enroll and succeed in college. Indiana has the opportunity to create a more favorable policy environment in this area (1) to increase rates of high school graduation, college matriculation, and college success, (2) to serve the economic development of the state by preparing future workers in 21st Century skills, and (3) to provide more equitable opportunities for students to transition into successful college experiences leading to enhanced career earnings and quality of life.

Types of Credit-Based Transition Programs

Advanced Placement. Created by committees of college professors and high school teachers, the College Board offers 37 Advanced Placement (AP) courses. For each AP course, the College Board publishes a Course Description which details the goals and expected content of a college-level course in this subject. High school AP teachers each develop their own specific syllabi to teach this content. College Board administers an examination for each course in May, which is scored by teams of high school teachers and college faculty. Students receiving high scores typically earn credit and/or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities. In Spring 2006 there were 18,517 students in 369 Indiana high schools who took at least one AP exam.

International Baccalaureate. The International Baccalaureate Diploma was originally created as a common curriculum and diploma that universities around the world would accept for entrance. The program emphasizes the development of the intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills necessary for success in a rapidly globalizing world. IB Diploma students must write an extended essay on an independent research topic and complete one course in each of six academic areas. Three of these classes must be at the "higher level" which requires more class time and in-depth study. At the end of each IB Diploma course, students take an exam which is externally marked by teachers from other IB schools around the world. The International Baccalaureate Organization has approved 12 public and 3 private schools to offer the IB diploma in Indiana.

Dual Credit. As used for this project, Dual Credit includes all opportunities for high school students to complete a single course that simultaneously counts for credit towards both a college degree and high school diploma. The course may be offered in the high school, on a college campus, or through distance learning, and may be taught by a regular high school teacher, a regular college instructor, or an adjunct college instructor. A number of different high school programs in Indiana feature dual credit as a key component, including Tech Prep, Project Lead the Way, and Early College.

Major Policy Drivers Affecting Credit-Based Transition Programs

Advanced Placement. Two statutes have led to an increase in the number of schools offering Advanced Placement classes. Indiana's Advanced Placement statute (IC 20-36-3-5) has required since 1994 that all school corporations provide AP science and math classes for qualifying students. The Core 40 statute (College Preparation Curriculum, IC 20-30-10-4) mandates that all high schools provide at least two courses of Advanced Placement, as well as at least two courses of Dual Credit. Both of these statutes require that the courses to be offered to "students who qualify." Some schools and corporations may be quietly opting out of teaching the classes, if they find that no students qualify or demand the courses.

As more students pursue the Core 40 with Academic Honors degrees, there will also be an increased demand for Advanced Placement courses, as one of the options for advanced coursework is to take two year-long AP classes and exams (511 IAC 6-7.1-6.f).

Since 1994 the General Assembly has provided funding to cover the cost of all AP math and science exams taken by Indiana students (IC 20-36-3-8). The statute allows excess funds to be used for AP program development, including professional development, instructional materials, and lab equipment. Indiana has successfully received federal funds through the Advanced Placement Test Fee Program, which are used to cover the cost of AP exam fees for low-income students in other subjects.

Another means by which the General Assembly encourages school corporations to offer Advanced Placement courses is through the requirement to publish Annual Performance Reports (IC 20-20-8) which must contain information on the percentage of students taking AP tests and the percent receiving high scores (3 or above).

A new College Board policy to improve the quality of AP classes is likely resulting in a decrease in the number of AP classes offered. In response to college concerns about the consistency of AP course content, in 2007 the College Board implemented a course audit. For schools to use the AP label to describe a class, each teacher of an AP class must submit a syllabus to the College Board for review by an external college professor in the appropriate subject area. Nationwide, approximately 2,000 fewer schools are offering classes described as AP this year, presumably many due to the audit requirements.¹

International Baccalaureate. The General Assembly has passed only two statutes which specifically address schools' offerings of International Baccalaureate. Completing an IB diploma is one of the options for advanced coursework to fulfill Core 40 Academic Honors diploma requirements (511 IAC 6-7.1-6.f). The IB diploma requires six courses, three of which must be at the Advanced Level. To inform the public,

¹ Cech, Scott J., "Number of Schools Offering AP Falls After First Audit of Courses", *Education Week*, November 14, 2007.

the General Assembly requires every school corporation to report the number of students receiving IB diplomas in their Annual Performance Report (IC 20-20-8).

There is little public funding for schools interested in starting International Baccalaureate programs, although some schools have been successful at competing for federal magnet schools and other grants to cover start-up costs.

This year, the IDOE has applied to the USDOE to use federal Advanced Placement Test Fee Program to also cover the costs of IB exam fees for low-income students. IDOE expects to receive approval, although the amount of funds available is uncertain.

Dual Credit. Indiana's 1987 Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO) encourages students to take dual credit classes. 2005 revisions encouraged more students to enroll, by eliminating the requirement that students receive permission from the school corporation and other barriers. The PSEO also establishes that school corporations do not lose ADM funding for dual enrolled students.

The Core 40 statute (College Preparation Curriculum, IC 20-30-10-4) also encourages dual enrollment by mandating that all high schools provide at least two courses counting for dual credit, as well as at least two courses of Advanced Placement.

In 2005, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) adopted regulations on dual credit courses taught by regular high school faculty. They specify that colleges are to ensure that the course content is equivalent to college courses, ensures that dual credit taught by high school teachers will transfer as ordinary college credit does, and requires colleges to obtain accreditation for dual enrollment programs. It generally limits each student to earning 15 college credit hours through dual enrollment, unless their school has an articulation agreement, Early/Middle College program, or if the college specifically gives an exemption to an individual student.

In 2006 the General Assembly modified the PSEO by creating the Double Up Program (IC 21-43-5). The Double Up Program specifically encourages secondary schools and public colleges and universities to establish collaborative programs featuring extensive use of dual credit. The law mirrors CHE's regulations, but extends them to programs where classes are taught by college faculty at either high school or college locations.

At the same time it passed Double Up, the General Assembly also established the Fast Track program, which allows Ivy Tech, Vincennes, or any public university to offer a program that allows older students to earn a high school diploma by attending classes at the college or university. Intended for high school dropouts, students can enroll in college courses and receive credit for missing high school credits. After completing all high school diploma requirements, the Indiana Department of Education issues students high school diplomas (IC 21-43-6, 21-43-7, and 21-43-8).

Thanks to a grant from the National Governors Association (NGA) Honor States Grants Program, the Indiana Governor's Office has provided 18 grants to schools, school corporations, and colleges to develop Early College High Schools. Each of these schools will feature an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) where students earn an associate's degree or two years of college credit toward the baccalaureate while in high school.