

State Notes

TOPICS OF LEGISLATIVE INTEREST

Summer 2014



Postsecondary Enrollment Options By Cory Savino, Fiscal Analyst

Introduction

Nearly 20 years ago, the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act¹ was enacted in Michigan, and the Career and Technical Preparation Act was enacted approximately 14 years ago. These Acts allows schools and colleges to enter into agreements that provide qualified students with the option to take college-level courses while still in high school. The students then can gain both high school and college credit upon successful completion of the courses. Schools cover the registration fees, tuition, and other costs associated with the courses. Section 21b² of the State School Aid Act directs schools to cover the costs for the students' postsecondary courses with general school funds. Districts are not required to pay for transportation, activity fees, or parking under Section 21b. Students who fail or do not complete a course can be required to pay the costs of the course. Different delivery models³ have been developed over the years to operate under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. These are: dual enrollment, enhanced dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, articulated credit, advanced placement, and fifth-year high schools. This article will provide background on postsecondary enrollment, as well as describe each of the different delivery options. [Appendix A](#) provides a brief description of each postsecondary options.

Background

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is required annually to report to the Legislature on the information collected by the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. Since the different delivery models are not defined in the Act, all of the information that is collected under the law is aggregated as "Dual Enrollment". [Table 1](#) shows the summarized data on dual enrollment between the 2001-2002 and 2012-2013 school years.

Over the past 12 years, there has been a significant increase in the number of students who are taking dual enrollment courses. It is important to note that [Table 1](#) does not include students who are taking courses and are being charged by the school for the tuition fee. A growing number of districts have postsecondary agreements in which the parents pay at least a portion of the school's fee. The table also does not include the growing number of students taking articulated credit or Advanced Placement (AP) courses, for which the district is not charged any tuition from a postsecondary institution. This means that the number of students who are enrolled in a course that awards both high school and college credit is greater than what is reported in this table.

Policy enacted by legislation has increased postsecondary education options for high school students. One of the major changes in policy was the introduction of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME)⁴. The MME was the result of Public Acts 592-596 of 2004⁵. These measures removed the

¹ Public Act 160 of 1996, MCL 388.511-388.524; Public Act 158 of 2000, MCL 388.1901-388.1913

² MCL 388.1621b

³ "Earning College Credit in High School" from April 2, 2013. Provided by the Michigan Department of Education

⁴ "The New Michigan Merit Exam" from March 3, 2008. Provided by the Michigan Department of Education. http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MME_article_3.15.07__190607_7.pdf



Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) for high school students and replaced it with the MME. The legislation also changed the qualifying standards for taking postsecondary courses⁶ and provided each student with a free American College Testing (ACT) college entrance exam. The combination of changes made to the qualifications for taking postsecondary courses and the increased number of students taking the ACT, resulted in a 63.7% increase in the number of eligible students and a 17.2% increase in the number of participating students from the time before the legislation was enacted to full implementation.

Table 1

Dual Enrollment						
School Year	Eligible Students	Number of Participating Students	Percentage of Participating Students	Enrollment Fees Paid by Schools	Paid Courses	Percentage of Incomplete Courses
2001-02	87,149	8,526	9.78%	\$5,010,651	13,952	2.85%
2002-03	87,886	9,002	10.24%	\$4,639,027	13,888	4.17%
2003-04	105,059	8,841	8.42%	\$5,524,999	14,946	3.91%
2004-05	117,159	9,343	7.97%	\$5,579,153	16,516	3.05%
2005-06	149,910	10,540	7.03%	\$6,136,677	17,352	2.64%
2006-07	180,244	11,320	6.28%	\$6,707,166	19,292	3.86%
2007-08	191,809	11,058	5.77%	\$7,955,233	21,197	4.59%
2008-09	194,373	13,218	6.80%	\$9,084,183	23,115	3.74%
2009-10	194,357	12,992	6.68%	\$10,558,451	27,382	4.40%
2010-11	188,705	13,451	7.13%	\$12,329,583	50,888	2.61%
2011-12	190,766	15,513	8.13%	\$14,930,187	42,343	3.51%
2012-13	323,095	19,838	6.14%	\$16,150,101	72,718	1.61%

Source: "2012-2013 Dual Enrollment Report to the Legislature" provided by the Michigan Department of Education; does not include Articulated credit, AP courses, and independently funded courses.

Another change in policy occurred through the enactment of Public Acts 131-134 of 2012. This legislation allows all high school students to be eligible to take postsecondary courses if they qualify and requires schools to provide qualifying students with information on postsecondary options. Students qualify to take postsecondary courses if they are in the 9th grade and meet the qualifying score on any of the assessment options that the MDE has approved. This resulted in an increase of 69.4% of eligible students and 27.9% of participating students from the 2011-2012 to the 2012-2013 school years. Even with the placement of a cap on the number of postsecondary courses that a student can take, there was a 71.7% increase in the number of courses being taken over the same time period. This increased the average number of courses being taken per participating student, from 2.7 to 3.6 courses per student. It is noteworthy that the percentage of incomplete courses

⁵ All Public Acts cited in this article may be found through the Michigan Legislature's website: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/>

⁶ Public Act 594 of 2004 directed the State Superintendent to select assessments that can be taken and the qualifying scores for each exam that allows eligibility to take postsecondary enrollment. This increased the assessment options that a student could take in order to qualify for postsecondary enrollment. The list of exams and their qualifying scores can be found on the Michigan Department of Education Website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mde>



decreased during this period, from 3.51% to 1.61%. The large increase in the number of students taking postsecondary courses also may have contributed to a decrease in the average per-course cost, which went from \$352.60 per course in the 2011-2012 school year, to \$222.09 per course in the 2012-2013 school year.

The Legislature also has used the budget for School Aid to further promote postsecondary courses. The fiscal year (FY) 2011-12 School Aid budget included schools' offering postsecondary options as one of the qualifications a district could use to receive a best practices grant (Section 22f). This was the first time the budget was used to encourage schools to offer postsecondary courses. In the FY 2014-15 budget for School Aid, Section 64b includes \$1.8 million to reimburse schools that fully pay for dual or concurrent enrollment. A school can receive up to \$60 per three-credit course that a student successfully passes. This new grant may result in a continued increase in the number of postsecondary courses being taken and a decrease in the rate of incomplete courses.

In the FY 2011-12 School Aid budget, Section 210 created a committee with the goal of improving the transferability of core college courses across the State. The FY 2013-14 School Aid budget updated this section to include legislative intent language that directed the participants to provide a report to the Legislature on the progress made toward implementing the recommendations from the committee. With the increased transferability of college credit, students who desire to go to other postsecondary institutions in Michigan might be more encouraged to participate in dual enrollment, because they will be more likely to be able to transfer the credit to the postsecondary institution of their choice. This may also continue to increase the number of postsecondary courses being taken.

Since the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act does not define a delivery method that a school must use in order to offer postsecondary credit, schools and colleges have been free to develop different delivery options that vary greatly across the State. The various approaches are described below.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment was the earliest developed delivery model that offers postsecondary courses to high school students and is the most common in Michigan. Students are required to take at least one high school course while taking a course at a postsecondary institution, which cannot already be offered at the high school. High school students must have a qualifying score on the ACT, ACT Plan, ACT Explore, Compass, MME, SAT, or PSAT in order to be eligible to participate in dual enrollment. A school also may determine eligibility if it is in the best interest of the student. Courses can be taken at the campus of the partnering college or online. When a student passes the college course, he or she receives high school credit, college credit, or both.

Benefits: Students are able to gain experience taking college courses, which helps prepare them for college after graduating from high school. Students have the ability to enter college with college credit, which results in savings to the students and their families.

Drawbacks: Schools are not required to provide transportation, which therefore needs to be provided by the student or parent. Online courses allow students to avoid the transportation issue, but might not provide students with the "true" postsecondary experience. College credit might not transfer to all colleges in or outside of Michigan. Schools do not provide additional support for students when they take postsecondary courses, so it is entirely up to the students to seek additional resources.



Enhanced Dual Enrollment

Some schools have formalized a system that provides students with additional support while they take postsecondary courses. The requirements for enhanced dual enrollment are the same as for traditional dual enrollment.

Benefits: Schools provide additional resources for students who may have difficulty with their first experience with postsecondary content and course load, especially if they are the first generation in their family to take postsecondary courses. This option may decrease the rate of incomplete courses by providing the additional assistance to students.

Drawbacks: This system places additional costs on the school in order to provide the enhanced services. These costs may be reduced if schools are able to receive reimbursement grants under Section 64b of the budget for School Aid, which requires a student to pass the course in order for the school to receive up to \$60 per successfully completed three-credit course.

Concurrent Enrollment (Direct Credit)

This delivery model allows students to receive high school and college credit for courses taken at their high school. Organizations use either "concurrent enrollment" or "direct credit" interchangeably to define these types of courses. The classes are taught either by a high school teacher who is an adjunct faculty member for the partnering institution and whose salary is paid by the high school or college, or by a professor from the postsecondary institution. If the instructor is a high school teacher, he or she must meet qualifications set by the postsecondary institution in order to be allowed to teach the course. These qualifications could be a master's degree in the subject area being taught as well as professional development prior to and during the time the course is being taught. Because dual and concurrent enrollment are not defined in the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, all schools report the two models as the same expense, so it is difficult to determine how many concurrent enrollment courses are being taught in the State.

Benefits: The concurrent enrollment model removes the travel burden that is on students who take postsecondary courses. This model also may allow schools that are not located near a campus to offer postsecondary enrollment. There can be some savings to schools and postsecondary institutions with the model, though these savings would be minimal. For some students, remaining in the high school environment can make the transition to college easier. Students who struggle with the material might be able to receive assistance from a high school teacher to whom they might not have access in the traditional dual enrollment.

Drawbacks: These courses do not have a mix of college and high school students, which can limit the "true" postsecondary experience for high school students and create a false sense of expectations. Concurrent enrollment courses also might end up being more costly to schools, which may be able to offer limited options only. Traditional dual enrollment has college students in a class with only a few high school students, which offsets the cost. Concurrent enrollment, however, involves only high school students, so college students do not offset the cost, especially if only a limited number of high school students are enrolled in the course. This means that high schools might be more likely to offer only a small selection of courses to ensure that each course has a high enrollment. In addition, transferability of credits might be restricted because different postsecondary institutions might have different qualifications for the high school teacher who teaches these



courses, and some institutions may not accept credit from courses taught by teachers approved by an institution that has a different set of criteria.

Articulated Credit

These courses are typically taught in a career and technical educational program operated by a K-12 district or an intermediate school district. The programs enter into agreements with postsecondary institutions in the technical preparation field where the students can receive either postsecondary credit or course waivers if they pass the program or course. These programs vary with the qualifications that students must meet in order to enroll. Some postsecondary institutions give credit to students once they pay a fee when they register and enroll for class, or the courses are simply waived. This model is relatively new and agreements have been made with only a few postsecondary institutions. Ferris State University is the first institution to offer a statewide articulated agreement with approved career and technical education programs. Funds are provided from the school's general fund, Section 61a of the State School Aid Act, Federal Perkins funds, and, in some cases, vocational education millage dollars.

Benefits: Students can enter a postsecondary institution with a substantial number of introductory courses waived or credits earned, which results in savings for the students and their families. This model can be most beneficial to high students who already know the specific field of work that they want to go into, and can allow them to enter the field at a faster pace.

Drawbacks: Transferability can be very limited in this model, which may reduce the appeal for students to enroll in these programs.

Advanced Placement

These courses are not designed as college courses but are classes that prepare students to take the AP exam, which allows students to earn college credit. These courses are designed by the College Board and can offer college credit if students earn a high-enough score on the AP exam that is taken in May; this is unlike other postsecondary options that allow students to earn credit if they can pass the class. Different institutions have different scores that allow a student to qualify for credit. The scores on the exam are on a 0 to 5 scale. Teachers may be trained by the College Board. Schools set various requirements on how students can take AP courses. Students also have an online option. A unique feature of this model is that students do not have to take an AP course in order to take the AP exam in May. Students pay for the exam but can have part or all of the costs covered if the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The FY 2014-15 budget for School Aid includes Section 94, appropriating \$250,000 that can be used to ensure that students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch only have to pay \$5 for the exam.

Benefits: The AP model has the lowest additional costs to the district compared with the other models, which require higher registration, tuition, and material costs for courses taken in conjunction with a postsecondary institution. Since the College Board is nationally recognized, this model has the highest transferability of college credit across the State and country, which is dependent on the student's exam score. Teachers are able to provide assistance to students who may initially struggle with the advanced material and course load.



Drawbacks: This model might not give students sufficient college experience. The earning of college credit is entirely dependent on one exam score, which might exclude students who do not test well but are capable of handling the advanced material and course load.

Fifth-Year High Schools (Early/Middle College Programs/Schools)

These are schools or programs that have an additional year built into the curriculum, which allows students to receive college credit and earn up to an associate's degree with their high school diploma. These credits or the degree then can be transferred to other postsecondary institutions. Students apply to these schools and programs in order to enroll. Students can begin taking postsecondary courses in the 9th grade and are allowed to take additional postsecondary courses beyond the year limit that is in the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act. Students must still take at least one high school course while attending these schools. The graduation rate and pupil count⁷ are modified for the schools in order to take into account the additional year that is built into the curriculum. These schools and programs generally partner with one institution to design the program and provide the postsecondary portion of the curriculum. The schools and programs report each postsecondary course taken to CEPI, which includes the data in the annual "dual enrollment" report to the Legislature. Traditionally, these programs have been in underserved and disadvantaged communities.

Benefits: By acquiring an associate's degree, students have a greater transferability than they do when trying to transfer individual credits to other postsecondary institutions. The participating schools and programs provide intense support to students while they are taking their postsecondary classes, which increases graduation and completion of courses. This model has the highest savings for the students, because the students enter postsecondary institutions with the most credits, which are paid for by the schools. This option may increase the rate of college completion beyond an associate's degree, because of the high amount of postsecondary exposure in these schools and programs.

Drawbacks: These programs require more funds from the high school than the other models due to the number of postsecondary courses taken by students that are paid for by the school and the support provided. The costs vary depending on the agreements made between the high school and the postsecondary institution.

Conclusion

Since the enactment of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, there has been a significant increase in the amount and variety of postsecondary options in the State. Schools and postsecondary institutions continue to have the flexibility to design methods for delivering these options to high school students. With each option having its own benefits and drawbacks, schools are free to choose the model that best fits their needs. Current trends indicate a continuation of that growth, but that might alter if changes are made to the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act or the budget for School Aid.

⁷ See R 388.151-388.155 from the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs:
http://www7.dleg.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/576_10458_AdminCode.pdf.

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Appendix A

Postsecondary Options				
Name	Description	Location	Instructor	Costs
Dual Enrollment	College-level courses that allow students to earn high school and college credits if they pass the course.	College campus or online	College faculty	Funded by the high school general fund to the partnering college.
Enhanced Dual Enrollment	College-level courses that allow students to earn high school and college credits, with additional student support from the high school.	College campus, online, and high school	College faculty with high school support	Funded by the high school general fund to the partnering college and to provide teacher support.
Concurrent Enrollment	College-level courses taught at the high school that allow a student to earn college credit.	High school	College faculty or high school teacher	Funded by the high school general fund to the partnering college and to the high school teacher if they teach the course.
Articulated Credit	Courses typically taught in career and technology program that allow a student to earn college credit.	High school, career center, college campus, online	High school teacher, college faculty, or career center teacher	Funded by the high school general fund, Section 61a funds, Federal Perkins funds, and, in some cases, vocational education millage dollars to the career and technology programs.
Advanced Placement	High school courses that prepare students for the Advanced Placement exam.	High school or online	High school teacher	Funded by the high school general fund for the teacher and textbooks.
Five-Year High School	High school programs that have an extra year and have a combination of college and high school courses so that a student can earn both a high school diploma and associates degree upon completion.	High school, college campus, and online	High school teacher and college faculty	Funded by the high school general fund for operations and for payments to the partnering college.