



Impact of Dual Enrollment on High Performing Students

DATA TREND #26

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Abstract. High performing Dual Enrollment students graduated from community colleges at higher rates than similar students who did not participate in Dual Enrollment. High performing students, defined as high school students with a 3.0 GPA or above, were tracked for four years following their high school graduation. For each of the 1994 to 1998 cohorts, the college graduation rate for Dual Enrollment students was consistently higher than for non-Dual Enrollment students. The difference in the Dual Enrollment students and non-Dual Enrollment students who completed an Associate in Arts degree was between 12% and 16%. The average number of hours earned as a Dual Enrollment student between 1994 and 1998 ranged from 7.6 to 9.8 hours. The difference in graduation rate between the Dual and non-Dual students implies that the Dual Enrollment program is serving high achievers who can benefit from exposure to college-level courses while still in high school.

Background. Research has shown in many studies that rigorous coursework in high school leads to a better prepared student for college. In Florida, one way of experiencing rigorous coursework is to participate in the Dual Enrollment program. This study looks at how well-prepared Dual Enrollment students are compared to similar non-Dual Enrollment students.

In late 2001, the Division of Community Colleges received a request to create a data set containing information on a very specific group of students. These students were to have achieved at least a 3.0 grade point average in high school. They were enrolled in a community college the fall following high school graduation with the intent of earning the Associate in Arts (AA) degree. They passed all three sections of the entry-level placement test and they had either no acceleration hours recorded or only Dual Enrollment.

The difference in graduation rate between the Dual and non-Dual students implies that the Dual Enrollment program is serving those students it was intended to serve, i.e., high achievers who can benefit from the opportunity of exposure to college-level courses while still in high school.

With the assistance of the Division of Public Schools, files were created that met these criteria for the high school graduates of 1993-94 through 1997-98. These students were then tracked for four years using the Division of Community Colleges Student Data Base to determine graduation rates and hours earned for a degree.

The purpose of this project was to compare the graduation rate and hours to degree of students who had similar high school preparation, college attendance patterns and intents. The major difference between these students was whether or not they had participated in the Dual Enrollment program offered to high school students by Florida's community colleges. In order to participate in the academic Dual Enrollment program, a student needs a 3.0 high school grade point

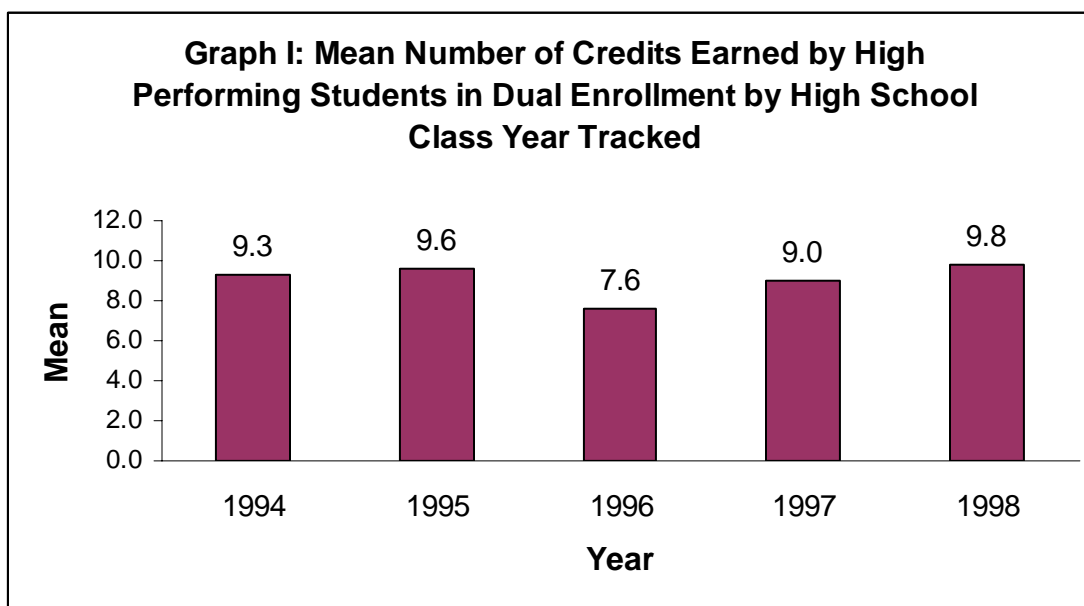
average and to have passed the relevant sections of the entry-level placement test.

Table I
Impact of Dual Enrollment on High Performing Students

	<i>High School Class Year Tracked</i>				
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of Credit Hours Earned as a Dual Enrollment Student					
Mean	9.3	9.6	7.6	9.0	9.8
Median	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	7.0
Number of Students in Each Cohort					
Dual	348	456	624	1,181	1,453
Non-Dual	705	986	1,374	2,141	2,377
Community College Graduation Rate – Earned an AA degree					
Dual	65.2	71.5	68.1	67.5	66.6
Non-Dual	52.8	55.7	53.0	53.8	55.0

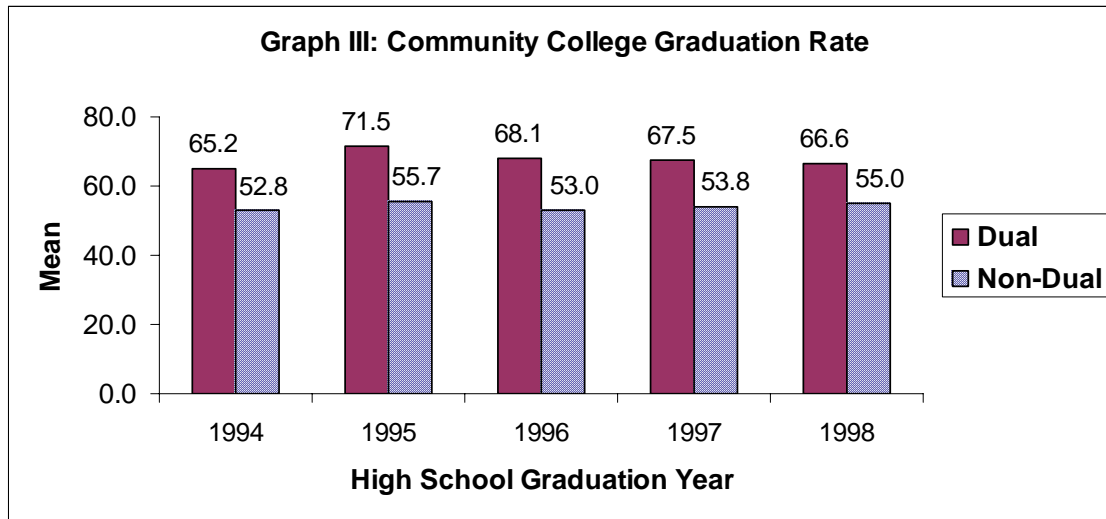
The stringent selection criteria resulted in small cohorts for any given year. This pattern was addressed by developing five different groups of students that were tracked for four years. The final data sets included information on Dual Enrollment status, the number of hours earned as a Dual Enrollment student, degrees earned, and the total hours earned for the degree. Those data are displayed in Table I, above.

Mean number of credits earned in Dual Enrollment dipped in 1996 to 7.6 credit hours but has since rebounded to almost 10. The mean number of credits earned in Dual Enrollment by high performing students was tracked by high school classes 1994-1998 and is shown in Graph I, below.



The average number of hours earned as a Dual Enrollment student for the different cohorts ranged from 7.6 to 9.8. The median number of hours earned was six for the 1994 through 1997 cohorts. The 1998 cohort had a median of seven. Except for the 1994 cohort, there was very little difference between the mean number of hours reported for the degree for the Dual Enrollment students and the non-Dual Enrollment students.

The main difference between the groups was in graduation rate. In essence, both groups move through the FCCS toward graduation in an extremely efficient manner. They had almost no excess hours. Graph III, below, shows the rate at which students in each of the high school cohorts completed an AA degree at the community college. The years shown represent the year the cohort graduated from high school. Students were then tracked for four years. This is the graduation rate that is shown. As can be seen in Graph III, both groups had extremely high graduation rates compared to community college students as a whole. The non-Dual rates were in the 53 to 56 percent range, while the Dual rates were in the 65 to 72 percent range.



Characteristics of Dually Enrolled Students. The selection criteria used in this project produced a cohort of students that had several characteristics of high achievers who would be expected to do well in college. They had at least a “B” average in high school, were academically prepared for college as shown by passing all three sections of the entry-level placement test, and began their collegiate careers immediately following high school.

The impact of this preparation is seen in the high overall graduation rate for the cohort and the ability to earn the Associate in Arts degree with almost no excess hours. The difference in graduation rate between the Dual and non-Dual students implies that the Dual Enrollment program is serving those students it was intended to serve, i.e., high achievers who can benefit from exposure to college-level courses while still in high school.

For more information on the impact of Dual Enrollment on high performing students, please contact Dr. Pat Windham via telephone at (850) 245-9482 or via email at Pat.Windham@fldoe.org.

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