

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

T. WILLARD FAIR, *Chairman*

Members

PETER BOULWARE

AKSHAY DESAI

ROBERTO MARTINEZ

JOHN R. PADGET

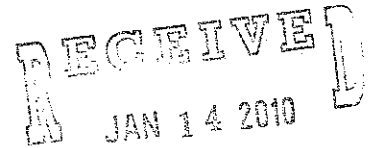
KATHLEEN SHANAHAN

LINDA K. TAYLOR

Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



January 8, 2010



Dr. Eric J. Smith
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1514
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Smith:

In accordance with Section 20.055(5)(h), Florida Statutes, I am submitting the six month follow-up response concerning the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) report number 09-30 *University Students Benefit from Acceleration Courses, But Often Retake Math and Science Courses*

As the report suggested, acceleration programs are beneficial to students in that they help prepare them for college and graduate with fewer excess credit hours. However, some students who earn a "passing" score on some examinations still choose to enroll in those courses (typically math and science courses) for which they should receive accelerated credit. The following will provide information on efforts since the report to ensure that institutions award appropriate credit based on the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) Credit-By-Examination Equivalency List while maintaining student options to enhance their academic success at the postsecondary level.

Recommendation #1:

The Articulation Coordinating Committee should review the math and science course equivalencies for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams and validate these equivalencies with all universities, state colleges, or community colleges. In addition, universities that recommend students retake math and science acceleration courses should provide input about whether the exams are equivalent to the college level courses.

ED W. JORDAN, CIG, CFE, CIA
INSPECTOR GENERAL

Response:

- The ACC, via the Office of Articulation, has developed a schedule for the review of math & science course equivalencies for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations. The schedule includes a review by the Statewide Course Numbering System faculty discipline committees during the Spring of 2010. Proposed changes will be taken to the October ACC meeting for approval and subsequently placed on the agenda for both the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors to grant final approval for the 2011-12 academic year.

Recommendation #2:

The Articulation Coordinating Committee should establish guidelines for state universities and colleges to follow when students retake courses at state universities and colleges for which they received AP/IB exam credits. These guidelines should help students receive appropriate credit hours and use their acceleration credits to meet overall graduation requirements.

Response:

- The ACC will conduct its review of course equivalencies and use the findings to mitigate situations in which institutional practices assume that students who receive credit via examination are not adequately prepared to succeed in the subsequent course or major.
- Institutions advise students on an individual basis regarding the benefit of enrolling in a course for which accelerated credit should be granted. The majority of students who "retook" a course did so on their own. Potential ACC guidelines relating to this issue must ensure that student options are not limited.

Recommendation #3:

Add a statement to the Articulation Coordinating Committee's credit-by-exam guidelines indicating that universities, state colleges, or community colleges may recommend that students retake math and science related courses at the university or college if they are required to take a sequence of courses or pursuing a major in that field. The department should also issue a memorandum to high school guidance counselors alerting them to this practice, so that they can inform high school students.

Response:

- The following statement has been added to the 2010-2011 ACC Credit-By-Examination Equivalency List:

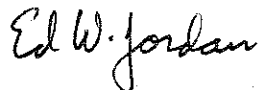
Due to the sequential nature of some postsecondary courses and specific major field requirements, students should be advised that some state universities and colleges may recommend that students enroll in certain math and science courses at the postsecondary institution, rather than

earn credit via examination. For more information, please consult the postsecondary institution in which the student plans to enroll.

- o The ACC Credit-By-Examination Equivalency List is updated on an annual basis. The list is scheduled for review and approval by the State Board of Education at the March 16, 2010, meeting. The proposed changes will also be taken to the Board of Governors for review and approval. Once approved, the updated list will be posted on FACTS.org and communicated to institutions via paperless communication.

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Sherry at 245-9483.

Sincerely,



Ed W. Jordan

hrs/br

c: OPPAGA
Florida Joint Legislative Auditing Committee
Heather Sherry