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Report No. 10-62

# Consolidating Workforce Education Would Bring More Uniformity; Mixed Results on Whether Evidence Supports Other Stakeholder Arguments

## *at a glance*

Currently, school districts and Florida colleges share responsibility for workforce and adult education programs. In recent years there have been proposals to give colleges responsibility for all postsecondary career education programs and school districts responsibility for all adult education programs.

Such a reorganization could have advantages and disadvantages. It could produce more uniform policies and practices, provide better alignment and articulation of postsecondary career education programs, and increase students' access to financial aid. However, it could also limit availability of open entry and open exit training programs and reduce resource sharing between districts' secondary and postsecondary career education programs. Consolidating adult education programs under school districts could help school districts' efforts to address dropout prevention and recovery.

## Scope

As directed by the Florida Legislature, OPPAGA examined the workforce education programs provided by school districts and the Florida College System. This report evaluates the option of consolidating all postsecondary career education programs under the Florida

College System and consolidating adult education programs under the school districts.

This report is part of a series on workforce education. Companion reports address the funding system for workforce education programs, overlap in college and school district responsibilities, the performance outcomes of workforce programs, and the state's system for providing adult education programs. A final report summarizes this series of reports and provides recommendations.

## Background

Florida's workforce education programs help individuals attain skills that will enable them to become or remain economically self-sufficient. The programs provide training designed to meet local and state workforce needs and help Florida compete in the global economy by building a broadly based, highly skilled, and productive workforce.

Workforce education programs include both postsecondary career education and adult education programs. Postsecondary career education programs prepare individuals for specific occupations and award various credentials upon completion. Adult general education programs provide literacy, basic education, and English language training that help individuals improve their job performance and/or move into higher paying jobs.

School districts and Florida College System institutions expect to receive state, local (student tuition and fees), and federal funds for workforce education programs totaling approximately \$1.0 billion in Fiscal Year 2010-11.<sup>1</sup>

Responsibilities for workforce education programs are shared by school districts and colleges. Florida law authorizes school districts and Florida College System institutions to offer similar types of workforce education programs (see Appendix A). However, only colleges offer programs that lead to college degrees such as associate in science degrees.<sup>2</sup> In addition, school districts offer career education programs and courses for high school students.

As discussed in a companion report, school districts and colleges tend to specialize in different types of programs at the local level. As a result, there is relatively little duplication in programs within individual counties. We identified 40 career education programs that were offered by both school districts and Florida colleges within a single county.

In recent years, some stakeholders have proposed reorganizing Florida’s workforce education programs and establishing a clear division of responsibility between colleges and school districts. These proposals would give colleges sole responsibility for delivering postsecondary career education programs, and would consolidate all adult education programs under the school districts.

To assess this option, we analyzed information on Florida’s current career education programs

and contacted stakeholders to gain their perspectives on the potential advantages and disadvantages of reorganizing these programs. We conducted phone interviews with school district superintendents and state college presidents, or their designated staff.<sup>3</sup> We also conducted in-depth assessments of how workforce education programs are currently delivered in 11 regions of the state; these regions are the service areas of 11 state colleges and are also served by 24 school districts.<sup>4</sup> In our case studies, we conducted site visits and interviewed adult education and secondary and postsecondary career education administrators and staff as well as representatives of regional workforce boards. We also analyzed Department of Education data on enrollment in workforce education programs. See Appendix B for more information on our methodology.

## Findings

Consolidating career education programs under colleges and consolidating adult education programs under school districts could produce benefits. It could help provide more consistent policies and practices for workforce education programs, provide better alignment and articulation of postsecondary career education programs, and make it easier for some students to access financial aid. Consolidating adult education under districts could help their efforts to address dropout prevention and recovery.

However, these reorganizations could produce drawbacks as well, including limiting the availability of some open entry and open exit training programs and reducing resource sharing between school districts’ secondary and postsecondary career education programs. Some stakeholders raised additional potential

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education’s Division of Career and Adult Education is primarily responsible for state-level governance of both school district and college workforce education programs, including the development of curriculum frameworks, management of federal funding, and providing technical assistance. The department’s Division of Florida Colleges works collaboratively with the Division of Career and Adult Education to help colleges and districts implement workforce education programs, and the two divisions develop and submit separate budget requests for college and district programs, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1011.80(2), *F.S.*

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<sup>3</sup> We contacted all 67 school district superintendents and 28 Florida college presidents, and obtained information from 56 districts and 23 colleges.

<sup>4</sup> Each of the 28 Florida College System institutions has a service area that includes one or more counties, with all 67 counties covered by one of the 28 service areas.

benefits and concerns with reorganizing workforce education programs, but we found limited evidence to support their assertions.

## Part 1 – Postsecondary Career Education Programs

### *Consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges would have advantages and disadvantages*

As shown in Exhibit 1, the stakeholders we contacted identified both potential advantages and potential drawbacks of reorganizing

Florida’s postsecondary career education programs. We assessed these perspectives by examining state and local data, visiting colleges and school districts throughout the state, and discussing the potential advantages and disadvantages with state and local program officials. We concluded that existing information supports some of the cited advantages and disadvantages of consolidating responsibility for career education programs. However, evidence does not support some cited benefits and concerns, and is unclear in other cases.

#### Exhibit 1

#### Evidence Supported Some Stakeholder-Cited Advantages and Disadvantages to Consolidating Postsecondary Career Education Programs Under the Florida College System

Argument	Results of OPPAGA Evaluation
<b>Cited Advantages</b>	
<b>Uniform Policies</b> – Would make it easier to have uniform policies and practices for postsecondary career education programs across the state.	Supported
<b>Create Better Program Alignment</b> - Would make it easier to develop, align, and articulate a series of related postsecondary career education programs, which could ease students’ transition to higher levels of education and employment.	Supported
<b>Additional Financial Aid Opportunities</b> - Would benefit students in district technical center programs because students in college programs have access to more financial aid options.	Supported
<b>Eliminate Unwarranted Duplication</b> - Would eliminate unwarranted program duplication and reduce administrative costs.	Evidence Unclear
<b>Comprehensive Student Support Services</b> - Would benefit students in district programs because colleges have more comprehensive support services to assist them in achieving their educational goals.	Evidence Unclear
<b>Flexibility to Open and Close Programs</b> - Colleges have more flexibility to open and close programs and to hire and fire faculty, which makes it easier for them to align their program offerings with local area workforce training needs.	Not Supported
<b>Cited Disadvantages</b>	
<b>Eliminate Resource Sharing</b> - Would eliminate some current operational efficiencies that exist because districts often share resources (i.e., faculty, facilities, and equipment) between their secondary and postsecondary career education programs.	Supported
<b>Reduce Availability of Open Entry and Open Exit Programs</b> - Would reduce the availability of open entry/open exit vocational certificate programs, which provide better student access and save the state and students money.	Supported
<b>Negatively Affect Student Choice</b> - Would negatively affect student choice and potentially reduce the number of students enrolling in career education programs because there would be fewer training provider options for students and employers.	Evidence Unclear
<b>Reduce High School Student Access to Postsecondary Career Education Credit</b> - Would reduce opportunities for high school students to earn postsecondary credit in career education programs.	Not Supported
<b>Reduce Availability of Non-credit Training Programs</b> - Would reduce the availability of short to moderate length programs that train for entry level or trade-type jobs because colleges are less likely to offer these types of programs, especially as they expand their bachelor’s degree offerings.	Not Supported

Source: OPPAGA case studies of selected Florida school districts and state and community colleges.

## Advantages to Consolidating Postsecondary Career Education Programs Under Colleges

Available evidence indicates that merging career education under colleges would result in more consistent statewide policies for these programs, create better program alignment for postsecondary programs, and provide additional financial aid options for some students. It is unclear whether this option would produce significant costs saving by eliminating unwarranted duplication or contribute to comprehensive student support services. The option is unlikely to result in more flexibility to align program offerings with local area workforce needs.

### UNIFORM POLICIES

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Consolidating program responsibilities would provide more uniform postsecondary career education policies, procedures, data reporting, and budgeting. Available evidence supports this argument. The current split in governance of the postsecondary career education system, with both colleges and school districts offering programs, creates a barrier to developing and implementing uniform career education policies.

For example, while both colleges and school districts provide workforce programs, until the 2010-11 school year, only colleges were subject to statutory requirements governing how residency is to be determined for tuition purposes.<sup>5,6</sup> School districts followed different residency policies across the state, with some having no requirement for students to provide evidence of being a Florida resident for a specified period of time to receive lower in-state tuition rates. In contrast, statutes specified that colleges were to require students to have one year of residency to obtain residency status for tuition purposes.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 1009.22(3)(a), *F. S.*, requires that student tuition and fees charged to nonresidents must offset the full cost of their instruction. For more information, see *Funding Model for Career and Adult Education Is Reasonable but Needs Some Improvements*, OPPAGA [Report No. 10-24](#), February 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Consistent with an option noted in OPPAGA [Report No. 10-24](#), the 2010 Florida Legislature revised the statutes related to residency to include school districts.

Consolidating workforce education responsibilities would also improve data reporting. Currently, school districts and colleges use different processes and data systems to collect and report critical information on their workforce education programs, which can make it difficult for policymakers to compare the two systems. For example, a likely predictor of students' success in career education programs is their level of academic preparation prior to entering the programs. Colleges report students' level of educational attainment prior to entering a program (i.e., high school graduation status) while the districts do not report this data, making it difficult to assess how this factor affects student performance.

In addition, state budgeting processes and policies for workforce education programs would be more uniform under a consolidated system. As discussed in a companion report, school districts and the Florida College System develop and submit separate budget requests for state funding to support their workforce education programs. Their requests are based on different models and policies for determining the amount of funding needed for specific programs.

### PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

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Consolidating postsecondary career education programs under the colleges should make it easier to develop, align, and articulate related training programs. Many stakeholders (colleges, districts, and regional workforce boards) we contacted stressed the importance of structuring career education programs around a series of related training programs that enable individuals to find employment within a specific occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector.<sup>7</sup> This planning and alignment also provides

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the series of nursing programs includes the Nursing Assistant vocational certificate, Patient Care Technician vocational certificate, Practical Nursing vocational certificate, and Nursing associate in science degree.

local industries a supply of qualified workers at different skill levels.

Some stakeholders argue that it is easier to create this structure when one entity is responsible for all postsecondary career education programs. In addition, as students can continue their education within an institution and environment with which they are already familiar, they may be more likely to continue their education and transition from one program to the next.

Available evidence supports these arguments. Four colleges we examined had full responsibility for postsecondary career education programs in their areas.<sup>8</sup> Our site visits, interviews, and reviews of course catalogs and enrollment data showed that these colleges structured their vocational certificate, college credit certificate, and associate in science degree programs to complement each other and provide a series of training opportunities. For example, Seminole State College offers both an Automotive Service Technology vocational certificate program and an associate degree program in Automotive Service Management. Palm Beach State College similarly offers both a Dental Assisting vocational certificate program and a Dental Hygiene associate degree program.

In addition, some colleges reported that they shared resources (faculty and equipment) between their vocational certificate programs and associate in science degree programs, which can result in cost savings and increased efficiencies. For example, some faculty at Seminole State College teach in both its nursing associate's degree and nursing vocational certificate courses.

In contrast, the colleges and school districts we examined that shared responsibility for postsecondary career education programs had weaker linkages between district certificate and college associate in science degree programs.

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<sup>8</sup> The four colleges were Brevard Community College, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Palm Beach State College, and Seminole State College.

In these instances, the districts and colleges generally developed and designed their programs independently. While some looked for opportunities to link their programs, others did not structure their programs in complementary ways.

## **FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES**

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Consolidating postsecondary career education programs could give students access to more financial aid options. Available evidence indicates that merging programs under the Florida College System could improve access to financial aid in two ways. First, students who are U.S. veterans and who attend district adult vocational certificate programs are precluded by federal law from using their Post-9/11 GI Bill financial aid benefits. In contrast, students who attend these same programs at a college may use these benefits.<sup>9</sup> Second, students at some district postsecondary career education instructional sites cannot access federal financial aid such as Pell Grants because the sites are currently not accredited.<sup>10,11</sup> As all college vocational certificate programs are accredited, students attending their programs do not face this barrier.

## **DUPLICATION**

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Consolidating postsecondary career education programs may reduce some administrative costs, but potential savings are unclear. Some stakeholders argue that consolidating responsibilities for the programs could

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<sup>9</sup> Per *United States Code* [Title 38, Chapter 33, Section 3313(b)], the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits may only be used at a school that is authorized to grant an associate's degree or higher. Thus, district technical centers do not qualify. In December 2010, the U.S. Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, which removes the requirement that the Post-9/11 GI Bill only be used at schools that are authorized to grant an associate's degree or higher. If the president signs the bill into law, this change would take effect in October 2011, and students would be allowed to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits at district technical centers.

<sup>10</sup> Institutions must be accredited by a federally approved agency for their students to be eligible to receive federal financial aid.

<sup>11</sup> According to the department, seven school districts that offer postsecondary adult vocational certificates are currently not accredited (DeSoto, Dixie, Gadsden, Gulf, Monroe, Sumter, and Wakulla), and approximately 240 students are affected by this issue.

eliminate duplicative programs and reduce administrative overhead, thus reducing overall system costs.

Available evidence indicates that consolidation could produce savings, but the fiscal impact would likely be relatively minor. As discussed in a companion report, program duplication is relatively minor because districts and colleges typically avoid offering the same postsecondary career education programs within the same counties. Thus, consolidation would not likely produce significant long-term savings through an overall reduction in duplicative program offerings. Consolidation could result in some administrative and support cost savings; however, the amount of savings would depend on the operational structure in place in each college service area. Savings would be achieved only if a college's administrative and support structure could absorb a district's programs without having to retain all of the district personnel who were providing similar types of services.

We identified a college service area where a merger could produce some savings as well as an area where savings are unlikely. In the Tallahassee Community College service area, Leon County School District's technical center is located next door to the college's main campus. Both the college and the technical center have separate financial aid offices, registration, student services and advisors who serve workforce education students. Consolidating the two systems would eliminate the need for two sets of these offices. In contrast, it appears that consolidating workforce education programs in the North Florida Community College service area would not generate savings. The college's campus is located in a different county than the two school district technical centers in the service area.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the college would likely need to maintain much of the existing administration and support services for the

technical centers if it continued offering programs at these sites.

Some stakeholders expressed concerns that consolidation could create significant transition costs if school districts retain the facilities they currently use for postsecondary career education programs and colleges needed to build or renovate new facilities to house these programs. These costs could be avoided if the Legislature specified that facilities and equipment were to be transferred with the programs. Otherwise, such costs could be significant.

### **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

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While colleges we examined typically offer more comprehensive student support services than school districts, it is unclear how often vocational certificate students would need these services. Some stakeholders argue that consolidation would be beneficial because colleges typically have more robust support services to help students successfully navigate postsecondary education.

Available evidence is mixed on this issue. The college and district postsecondary programs we examined generally provided similar student services, such as financial aid assistance and guidance and academic advising staff. Both college and school district programs typically helped program graduates find jobs through industry connections, internships, co-op opportunities, and industry representatives on program advisory committees.<sup>13</sup>

However, we noted that many of the colleges we examined have more robust student support centers than do school districts. The colleges have centralized student support centers that provide a wide range of services for all enrolled students. For example, Northwest Florida State College has a career resource center and an academic support

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<sup>12</sup> Suwannee-Hamilton Technical Center is located approximately 30 miles from the college's campus, and Taylor Technical Institute is approximately 40 miles from the college's campus.

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<sup>13</sup> Career education programs often have advisory committees made up of the program's faculty and members of the related local business community that ensure the program is meeting industry and business needs.

center.<sup>14</sup> The career resource center maintains a frequently updated jobs database that students can use to find current employment opportunities, and it provides career exploration and counseling services, helps students create resumes, and holds free workshops on issues such as successful job interviews. The academic support center provides tutoring services, writing assistance, and computer labs. In contrast, the school district technical centers we examined typically did not have separate student support centers that provided these services.

However, it is unclear whether the students who attend school districts' postsecondary education programs have unmet needs for these support services. Districts have staff that provide some of the services offered by college support centers, such as guidance services. Also, since districts do not offer degrees that require general education coursework, their students would typically not need access to academic tutoring centers geared toward helping students with these subjects.

#### **FLEXIBILITY TO OPEN AND CLOSE PROGRAMS**

Neither districts nor colleges have a clear advantage in flexibility to hire and fire faculty in order to open and close programs. Some stakeholders assert that consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges would provide more flexibility for them to change programs and faculty in response to local workforce needs. Central to this argument is that school district faculty employment is subject to collective bargaining agreements, while college employees are not subject to union agreements.

Available evidence provides a mixed assessment of this argument. Five of the 11 colleges we examined had collective bargaining agreements that covered their career education faculty, so those colleges face similar restrictions to school districts in hiring and firing their program instructors. However, the

colleges use more adjunct faculty for many of these programs, and these staff are typically hired on a semester-by-semester or course-by-course basis rather than under long-term contracts.<sup>15</sup> On average, 59% of career education instructors at the colleges we examined were adjuncts, compared to 37% of the instructors in the school districts we examined.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, in some cases school districts may have more flexibility to change instructors because they can use local teacher certification processes to hire faculty who lack a postsecondary degree but have at least six years of work experience in their respective industry. The colleges we examined had less flexibility; most (9 of 11) typically did not hire career education faculty who lacked a postsecondary degree due to accreditation requirements. A prior OPPAGA report noted that both colleges and school districts make relatively frequent changes to their career education program offerings in response to business needs and student demand.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Disadvantages to Consolidating Postsecondary Career Education Programs Under Colleges**

Available evidence indicates that there are also potential disadvantages to consolidating career education under colleges. Notably, this option could preclude resource sharing within school districts and could limit the availability of open entry and open exit vocational certificate programs. It is unclear whether consolidation would negatively affect student choice of programs. Consolidation would be unlikely to

<sup>15</sup> While school districts typically do not use the term 'adjunct', they have instructors that are hired in a similar manner. Accordingly, we used the term for both colleges and school districts.

<sup>16</sup> The colleges and school districts we examined had wide variation in their use of adjuncts. For example, 76% of the postsecondary career education instructors in Lake County School District were adjuncts, compared to none in Taylor County School District. Similarly, 83% of the career education instructors at Miami Dade College were adjuncts, compared to 40% at Tallahassee Community College.

<sup>17</sup> *School Districts and Florida College System Institutions Frequently Change Their Career Education Programs*, OPPAGA [Report No. 10-34](#), April 2010.

<sup>14</sup> The college also has a women's educational resource center.

limit high school students' opportunities to earn postsecondary career education credit or reduce availability of non-credit training programs.

**RESOURCE SHARING**

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Consolidation could preclude operational efficiencies currently gained when school districts share resources between secondary and postsecondary programs. Some school district stakeholders argue that consolidation would increase state costs because they could no longer share faculty and equipment between their secondary and postsecondary career education programs.

Available evidence indicates that this concern is valid. Some districts we examined reported that they have achieved savings in this manner. For example, Atlantic Technical Center in Broward County houses a technical high school that enables students to take both regular academic courses and secondary career education courses using the same facilities, equipment and often the same instructors as the center's postsecondary programs. Miami-Dade County School District also has a technical high school located on a technical center campus that is structured in a similar manner. These shared resource arrangements could be lost in a consolidation because it would be more difficult for colleges to share faculty and facilities with school districts.

**AVAILABILITY OF OPEN ENTRY AND OPEN EXIT PROGRAMS**

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Consolidation could limit access to open entry and open exit training programs that benefit students and reduce state costs. Open entry vocational certificate programs allow students to enroll on an ongoing basis throughout the school year instead of only during certain time periods such as the start of a new semester. This feature can benefit prospective students who wish to immediately begin training rather than waiting until the next semester. Open exit programs are self-paced and competency-based, meaning they allow students to complete the programs in varying amounts of

total contact hours as long they can demonstrate required competencies. This is cheaper for both students and the state because some students will not have to complete the same predefined number of contact hours.

Available evidence indicates that consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges would restrict the availability of open entry and exit programs. Five of the school districts we examined operate open entry programs compared to three colleges. Similarly, seven districts operate open exit programs compared to only one college.<sup>18</sup> Consolidating programs under colleges could thus reduce access to these programs unless the colleges were directed to utilize these program attributes.

**STUDENT CHOICE**

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While consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges would remove school districts as an educational option, the overall effect on student and employer choice is uncertain. Some colleges and districts argue that the current workforce system provides students and businesses with choice in training providers and that the two systems serve different types of students. Several districts noted that some students may be intimidated by colleges and feel more comfortable at a district technical center. Some stakeholders also noted that having the current system creates a competitive environment that can improve program quality.

Available evidence is mixed on these issues. While student demographic data (gender, race/ethnicity, age, and income) shows that school districts and colleges serve somewhat different types of students, this does not

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<sup>18</sup> One college that does not offer open entry or open exit options indicated that having a semester-based enrollment process provides students with more structure and focus, which they argue leads to better student completion rates. Because college credit programs are based on semester-length courses, those programs are generally not eligible for an open entry or open exit format. Similarly, open entry or open exit is not an option for many regulated programs that lead to state licenses (such as Practical Nursing or Law Enforcement Officer) because these have specific requirements.



necessarily mean that consolidation would reduce student and businesses choice in providers.<sup>19</sup> As shown in Exhibit 2, school districts’ programs served more minority and low income students than did college postsecondary career education programs in 2008-09. Districts also served a higher percentage of Hispanic students than colleges (24% versus 16%) and a higher percentage of district students did not have employment records in the quarter before enrolling in the career education program (36% versus 19% at colleges). Also, district students who were employed prior to starting a program had a lower median annual income (\$13,853) than the college students (\$17,417).

**Exhibit 2  
School Districts’ Career Education Programs Served More Minority and Low Income Students Than College Programs in 2008-09**

	Colleges	Districts
	Number of Students (Percentage of Total)	Number of Students (Percentage of Total)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	9,687 (40%)	30,456 (45%)
Male	14,361 (60%)	36,519 (55%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	5,091 (22%)	17,656 (26%)
Hispanic	3,564 (16%)	16,313 (24%)
White	13,707 (60%)	30,534 (46%)
Other	566 (2%)	2,472 (4%)
<b>Age</b>		
Median Age	26.4	26.3
<b>Income Prior to Program Entry</b>		
Percentage of Students Who Lacked Prior Employment Records	19%	36%
Prior Median Earnings	\$17,417	\$13,853

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students enrolled in postsecondary career education programs in 2008-09.

However, the relationship between school populations and program access is not clear. School districts and colleges do not typically offer the same training programs within the

same county. Accordingly, students and employers in most areas of the state cannot currently choose between a college and school district for the same training program. Also, private entities provide postsecondary career education programs in many areas of the state, and would not be affected by consolidation of school district and college programs. Accordingly, student and employer choice in providers would not appear to be substantially affected by consolidation.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CAREER EDUCATION CREDIT**

School districts can offer high school students opportunities to earn college credit without providing postsecondary career education programs. Some stakeholders assert that consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges would restrict high school students’ ability to earn college credits. Available evidence does not support this contention.

High school students have three options to earn postsecondary credits in career education programs: (1) by participating in technical dual enrollment through a college or district technical center, (2) through statewide articulation agreements that enable students to obtain college credit for industry certifications earned while in high school, and (3) through local articulation agreements between district secondary programs and college or district postsecondary programs that award credits for completing a prescribed sequence of secondary career education courses. Some stakeholders argue that consolidation would hamper district efforts to provide high school students with postsecondary career education credit options because districts can more readily offer technical dual enrollment and establish articulation agreements through their technical centers. Districts without technical centers need college approval to offer these options, and the colleges may not always agree.

However, our review of statewide dual enrollment data and local articulation

<sup>19</sup> We excluded college credit and degree programs from our analysis of demographic data.

agreements indicated that school districts can and do work with state colleges in their service areas to provide high school students with opportunities to earn postsecondary credits in career education programs.<sup>20</sup> For example, some districts that do not offer postsecondary career education programs had relatively high numbers of students participating in technical dual enrollment programs in the 2008-09 school year, including Brevard (1,453 students), Highlands (893 students) and Volusia (953 students). In comparison, some districts that provide these programs reported no or few students in technical dual enrollment, such as Escambia (25 students), Hillsborough (36), and Pinellas (no students).

Moreover, districts can establish local articulation agreements with colleges that enable high school students to transfer credit from secondary programs regardless of whether the district offered postsecondary programs. For example, the Brevard County School District, which does not operate postsecondary programs, has 18 local articulation agreements with Brevard Community College. Districts with postsecondary programs also have local articulation agreements with both the colleges in their service areas and their own technical centers, including the Lake County School District, which has 17 local articulation agreements with Lake-Sumter Community College and 15 with its own technical center.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF NON-CREDIT TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Colleges that are the primary providers of postsecondary career education for their service areas have relatively high percentages of students in non-credit training programs. Currently, school districts provide most non-credit training programs (adult vocational certificates and apprenticeships), while colleges tend to focus more on college credit and degree programs. Some

stakeholders assert that consolidating postsecondary career education programs in colleges would reduce student access to non-credit training programs because colleges would concentrate their efforts on degree programs.<sup>21</sup>

Available evidence does not support this concern. Statewide enrollment patterns show that the colleges that currently provide most postsecondary career education programs in their service areas have not reduced vocational certificate or apprenticeship programs. We examined nine colleges that are the primary providers of postsecondary career education programs for their services areas. These colleges typically had a higher proportion of career education enrollment in non-credit training programs than the 19 colleges that share these responsibilities with school districts. As shown in Exhibit 3, eight of the nine colleges with primary responsibility for career education had more than 20% of their career education enrollments in vocational certificate, Applied Technology Diploma, and apprenticeship programs; only seven of the other 19 colleges had more than 20% of their enrollment in such programs in the 2008-09 academic year. Thus, colleges appear to offer non-credit programs when school districts do not provide such programs in a county.

<sup>20</sup> We did not examine statewide articulation agreements because these are made at the state level and are mandatory statewide.

<sup>21</sup> In 2001, the Legislature began authorizing select Florida College System institutions to provide bachelor's degree programs. Prior to this, only universities could offer bachelor's degree programs. Currently, 18 of the 28 colleges are offering bachelor's degree programs.

## Exhibit 3

**The Nine Colleges that Were the Primary Providers of Postsecondary Career Education Programs for their Service Areas Typically Had Higher Percentages of Students Enrolled in Non-Credit Training Programs<sup>1</sup>**

College	Vocational Certificate, Applied Technology Diploma, and Apprenticeship Enrollment	Percentage of Total	College Credit and Degree Enrollment	Percentage of Total	Total Career Education Enrollment
<b>Primary Providers of Postsecondary Career Education</b>					
South Florida Community College	621	61%	402	39%	1,023
Palm Beach State College	2,959	45%	3,680	55%	6,639
Indian River State College	2,319	42%	3,153	58%	5,472
Florida Gateway College	446	39%	697	61%	1,143
Florida State College at Jacksonville	3,312	29%	8,137	71%	11,449
Brevard Community College	1,336	27%	3,526	73%	4,862
Seminole State College	1,237	22%	4,413	78%	5,650
Daytona State College	1,557	21%	5,914	79%	7,471
Santa Fe College	254	6%	3,828	94%	4,082
<b>Total for Nine Colleges</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>33,750</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>47,791</b>
<b>Not Primary Providers of Postsecondary Career Education</b>					
North Florida Community College	198	55%	159	45%	357
Chipola College	333	53%	290	47%	623
Pasco-Hernando Community College	659	37%	1,143	63%	1,802
Pensacola State College	771	29%	1,909	71%	2,680
Hillsborough Community College	1,478	28%	3,800	72%	5,278
College of Central Florida	461	27%	1,276	73%	1,737
Gulf Coast Community College	340	22%	1,237	78%	1,577
Tallahassee Community College	666	20%	2,707	80%	3,373
Florida Keys Community College	100	19%	420	81%	520
Miami Dade College	1,798	18%	8,304	82%	10,102
Northwest Florida State College	442	15%	2,592	85%	3,034
Polk State College	310	15%	1,752	85%	2,062
Broward College	878	14%	5,548	86%	6,426
St. Johns Community College	437	14%	2,789	86%	3,226
Valencia Community College	755	5%	13,244	95%	13,999
St. Petersburg College	278	4%	6,315	96%	6,593
Edison State College	6	0%	4,499	100%	4,505
State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota	0	0%	4,140	100%	4,140
Lake-Sumter Community College	0	0%	1,055	100%	1,055
<b>Total for the Other 19 Colleges</b>	<b>9,910</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>63,179</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>73,089</b>

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, colleges were considered primary providers of postsecondary career education programs if their career education enrollment in 2008-09 accounted for at least 90% of their service area's postsecondary career education enrollment that year.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education 2008-09 enrollment data.

## Part 2 – Adult Education Programs

### *Consolidating adult education programs under school districts may benefit their dropout prevention and recovery efforts*

Stakeholders have also proposed consolidating adult education programs under school districts, and we examined four stakeholder-cited potential benefits and two potential

disadvantages of this move (see Exhibit 4). Our assessment of this option concluded that it would create more uniform adult education policies and may benefit districts’ dropout prevention and recovery efforts. It is unlikely to result in more access to instructional locations or affect student choice. It is unclear whether it would produce savings by eliminating duplication or hinder transitions from adult education to postsecondary programs.

#### Exhibit 4 Evidence Does Not Clearly Support Most Stakeholder-Cited Arguments Regarding Consolidating Adult Education Programs Under the School Districts

Argument	Results of OPPAGA Evaluation
<b>Cited Advantages</b>	
<b>Uniform Policies</b> – Would make it easier to have uniform policies and practices for adult education programs across the state.	Supported
<b>Connections to K-12 Programs</b> - Would provide better program alignment because both adult education and the K-12 system are focused on providing students (young children through adults) basic academic skills instruction.	Partially Supported
<b>Eliminate Unwarranted Duplication</b> - Would eliminate unwarranted program duplication and reduce administrative costs.	Evidence Unclear
<b>More Access to Instructional Locations</b> - Would make it easier to offer adult education services throughout the community because districts have more instructional sites through their existing K-12 facilities.	Not Supported
<b>Cited Disadvantages</b>	
<b>Hinder Adult Education Transition</b> - Would separate the delivery of adult education programs from postsecondary career education programs, which could make it harder for adult education students to transition into further education opportunities.	Evidence Unclear
<b>Negatively Affect Student Choice to Attend Classes on College Campuses</b> - Would negatively affect student choice and potentially reduce the number of students enrolling in adult education because there would be fewer training provider options for students.	Not Supported

Source: OPPAGA case studies of selected Florida school districts and state and community colleges.

### Potential Advantages to Consolidating Adult Education Under School Districts

#### UNIFORM POLICIES

Consolidating program responsibilities would create a more uniform adult education system. Similar to consolidating postsecondary career education programs under colleges, consolidating adult education programs under school districts would provide more consistency in policies, procedures, data reporting, and state budgeting.

### CONNECTIONS TO K-12 PROGRAMS

Consolidating adult education could benefit dropout prevention and recovery because school districts could more readily link these programs to the K-12 system. Some stakeholders asserted that adult education programs are a better fit with school districts because both adult education and K-12 education focus on teaching basic academic skills. They argue that some services provided by district-level staff to support K-12 programs (i.e., curriculum development and support)

should also support adult education programs due to their similarity in instructional content.

Available evidence gives partial support to these assertions. District adult education administrators we interviewed in our case studies generally did not identify how K-12 instructional support services directly benefitted their programs. However, we did see close operational connections between districts' adult education programs and other K-12 programs in the area of dropout prevention and recovery. For example, in the Martin County School District, high schools notify the district's adult education coordinator within 48 hours when students drop out, and adult education staff contact the students to encourage them to continue their education in the adult education program. Similarly, Leon County School District adult education staff are included in monthly meetings of district principals to discuss educational issues. Principals alert adult education staff to struggling students who may benefit from their adult education services. In contrast, college adult education programs we examined generally did not have such connections with district K-12 programs to address dropout prevention.

### **DUPLICATION**

Consolidating adult education programs may reduce some program duplication and administrative costs, but potential savings are unclear. Some stakeholders argue that consolidating adult education programs under school districts would eliminate duplicative programs and reduce administrative overhead, thus reducing overall system costs. Available evidence indicates that consolidation could produce savings, but the fiscal impact would likely be relatively minor.

As with postsecondary career education programs, there appear to be relatively few instances of local duplication in adult education programs.<sup>22</sup> Thus, consolidation

would not likely produce significant long-term savings through an overall reduction in duplicative program offerings. Consolidation could result in some administrative and support cost savings, however the amount of savings would depend on the operational structure in place in each college service area. Savings would be achieved only if a school district's administrative and support structure could absorb a college's programs without also absorbing the personnel who currently provide these services.

In some cases, consolidation could generate savings by eliminating administrative positions responsible for the college programs. For example, the Miami-Dade County School District has seven district-wide administrative positions managing all of its workforce education programs including adult education. Miami Dade College has two college-wide administrative positions specifically to oversee the college's adult education programs and four administrative positions to oversee the programs at its branch campuses. If the college's adult education programs were transferred to the school district, savings would be achieved if the district could manage the programs without having to maintain all of the administrative positions previously associated with the college's programs. We could not estimate potential statewide savings as it would depend on the situation in each of the 67 school districts.

### **ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL LOCATIONS**

Consolidation would probably not improve access to adult education programs because both school district and college adult education programs provide services at multiple locations throughout their local communities. Some stakeholders have asserted that school districts are better able to offer accessible community programs because they have more local facilities than do colleges. Ready access can be important for adult education programs as participants generally have low incomes and may not have transportation to attend programs outside of their home communities.

<sup>22</sup> As discussed in a companion report, districts and colleges generally avoid offering the same adult education programs within the same counties.

Available evidence does not support this contention. While most districts we examined provide adult education throughout their communities, colleges also offer the programs at multiple locations. For example, the Brevard County School District offers adult education programs in 3 standalone adult education centers, 10 high schools, and a regional workforce board office. However, Indian River State College, which is the only provider of adult education in Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties, offers adult education at its campuses in both counties as well as at a local elementary school, two middle schools, and several other community locations. While it may be somewhat easier for a district to offer adult education at its facilities, colleges can work out agreements with districts to use their classrooms.

**Potential Disadvantages to Consolidating Adult Education Under School Districts**

**ADULT EDUCATION TRANSITION**

Consolidation would be unlikely to significantly reduce transition to postsecondary programs because students who complete adult education typically do not continue on to postsecondary education regardless of the local delivery model for adult education programs. With many jobs requiring education beyond a high school credential, helping adult education students transition into a postsecondary education program is increasingly important. Some stakeholders assert that adult education completers are more likely to transition to postsecondary education if they can continue at the same institution (whether a district or college).

Available evidence is unclear on this issue. We compared adult education transition rates for districts and colleges that provided both adult and postsecondary career education programs to the transition rates for districts that provided only adult education programs.<sup>23</sup> The transition rate for the first group included students who transitioned within the same entity (i.e., district adult education to district technical center or college adult education to

college postsecondary program) as well as those who transitioned to other institutions (district adult education to college postsecondary program).

We found that the first group had a slightly higher transition rate for adult education program completers; however, both groups of providers had relatively low transition rates. Districts and colleges that provided both career and adult education programs had a 23% transition rate compared to 14% for the districts that only provided adult education programs. Because both types of providers had relatively low transition rates and there was not a great difference between the two, it is unclear if consolidating adult education programs under school districts would significantly reduce postsecondary transition rates.

**STUDENT CHOICE**

Consolidating all adult education programs under districts could affect student choice to attend classes on college campuses, but collaborative arrangements between districts and colleges could mitigate this effect. Some stakeholders assert that the ability of colleges to provide adult education programs provides more choice for students, and that some adult students may prefer going to a college campus rather than attending the program at a public K-12 school. However, other stakeholders assert that some students may be intimidated by a college campus and would feel more comfortable in the K-12 setting with which they are familiar.

Available evidence does not support either contention. While merging adult education programs under school districts could affect student choice to attend classes at college campuses, some school districts currently offer adult education programs at these campuses. For example, the Pinellas County School District offers adult education programs on all of St. Petersburg College’s five campuses as well as at other community locations. The district and college have established an agreement that enables students to choose between taking adult education in either a district or college setting.

<sup>23</sup> We calculated a transition rate by measuring the percentage of adult education completers (GED or high school diploma) who continued to any kind of postsecondary education program.

## **Agency Response** ———

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education. The department provided a draft of the report to the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. Their responses have been reproduced in Appendix C.

## Appendix A

# School District and College Responsibility for Workforce Education Program

Florida law authorizes school districts and Florida College System institutions to offer similar types of workforce education programs (see Table A-1). However, school districts cannot offer college credit programs such as associate in science degrees.<sup>24</sup>

**Table A-1  
School Districts and Florida College System Institutions Offer Workforce Education Programs**

Program Type	Program Description	Florida College System	School Districts
<b>Postsecondary Career Education Programs – Degree and College Credit</b>			
Associate in Science Degree	A two-year technical degree that prepares students for employment; some associate in science degrees are transferrable toward bachelor’s degrees	X	
Associate in Applied Science Degree	A two-year technical degree indicating that a student has trained in a particular field and is prepared for employment; the coursework is more applied than an associate in science degree, and the degree is not intended to transfer to a bachelor’s degree program	X	
College Credit Certificate (PSV Certificate)	A short-term college credit career education program that is part of an associate in science or associate in applied science degree, consisting of the technical courses required for these degrees but not the general education courses	X	
<b>Postsecondary Career Education Programs – Vocational Credit</b>			
Applied Technology Diploma	A short-term program that is part of an associate in science or associate in applied science degree that leads to employment in a specific occupation; may provide either vocational credit or college credit	X	X
Adult Vocational Certificate	A vocational credit program that trains students in technical skills that enable them to attain and sustain employment and realize economic self-sufficiency. Adult vocational certificate programs do not require students to have high school diplomas to enroll in the program, but students must attain a specified score on a basic skills exam to complete the certificate program.	X	X
Apprenticeship	A relatively long (up to five years), highly structured program that provides vocational skill training in a given job through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction	X	X
<b>Adult Education Programs</b>			
Adult Basic Education	Basic literacy and life skills training for adults who are performing below the ninth grade level in reading, mathematics, and language arts	X	X
Adult High School	Instruction that prepares adult students to successfully complete credits leading to a high school diploma. Coursework is at the high school grade level (9th through 12th grade levels).	X	X
Adult High School (co-enrollment)	Instruction that provides high school students who lack the credits necessary to graduate with their high school cohort class with the opportunity to obtain those credits	X	X
General Educational Development	Instruction that prepares students to obtain the necessary skills required to pass the Official GED Test and be awarded a State of Florida High School Diploma; for students who are performing at the ninth grade level or above	X	X
Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages	Instruction in the English language for adults who need to increase their ability to communicate in English for a variety of purposes including employment, education, and life in the United States	X	X
Citizenship	Instruction that prepares students for success in the naturalization process required for all who have United States Citizenship as a goal	X	X
Applied Academics for Adult Education <sup>1</sup>	Non-credit remedial instruction for students enrolled in Adult Vocational Certificate programs, whose results on the Test for Adult Basic Education indicate a need for remediation	X	X

<sup>1</sup> Formerly ‘Vocational Preparatory Instruction’.

Source: Department of Education.

<sup>24</sup> Section 1011.80(2), F.S.



## Appendix B

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# Methodology

We evaluated the service delivery structure of Florida's workforce education system using three primary approaches. These included phone interviews with each superintendent and college president to gain their perspectives on the state's workforce education structure and how their local programs work to meet area needs, case studies of workforce education programs provided in 11 college service areas throughout the state, and analyses of statewide and local workforce education enrollment data.

### ***District Superintendent and College President Interviews***

We conducted telephone interviews with district school superintendents and state college presidents. The interviews addressed the history of their institutions' workforce education programs, the strengths and weaknesses of the current state and local program structures, and recommendations for changing how workforce education programs are delivered. We contacted each of the 67 school districts and 28 colleges, and obtained information from 56 school districts and 23 colleges.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Case Studies***

We conducted case studies of workforce education delivery systems in 11 college service areas. These case studies examined how workforce education programs are delivered and the potential to consolidate these programs under colleges and districts. In our case studies, we examined information provided by the colleges and school districts relating to workforce education organizational structure, program offerings, facilities, instructors, hiring practices, articulation agreements, and program delivery. We also conducted site visits and phone conference calls in each area to interview college, district, and regional workforce board staff, tour facilities, and examine local program data.

### ***Selection of Case Study College Service Areas***

We used several criteria to select the case study areas, including how the colleges and school districts structured workforce education delivery systems, the perceived level of cooperation between the colleges and districts, characteristics of service delivery areas (geographic location and rural versus urban settings), and recent efforts to consolidate programs. As shown in Table A-1, we selected 11 college service areas and their respective school districts (total of 24 districts) to include in the case studies. These colleges and districts represented 46% of the students enrolled in postsecondary career education programs statewide and 62% of the students enrolled in an adult education programs statewide in the 2008-09 school year.

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<sup>25</sup> In some cases, participating district superintendents and college presidents referred us to another administrator to interview.

**Table B-1  
Case Studies Consisted of a Variety of College Service Area Types**

College	Service Area Districts	Service Area Model Type: Programs Provided
1. Brevard Community College	Brevard	The college provides all postsecondary career education programs. The district provides all adult education programs.
2. Broward College	Broward	Both the college and district provide postsecondary career education programs, while only the district provides adult education programs.
3. Florida State College at Jacksonville	Duval, Nassau	The college provides all postsecondary career education programs. The Nassau County School District provides adult education within its own county and the college provides adult education in Duval County.
4. Indian River State College	Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie	The college and the Indian River County School District provide postsecondary career education programs. The college and both the Indian River County and Martin County school districts provide adult education programs.
5. Lake-Sumter Community College	Lake, Sumter	The college and both school districts provide postsecondary career education programs. The two districts provide all adult education programs.
6. Miami Dade College	Miami-Dade	Both the college and the district provide career and adult education programs.
7. North Florida Community College	Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor	The college and the Suwannee County and Taylor County school districts provide postsecondary career education programs. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, only the districts provide adult education programs.
8. Northwest Florida State College	Okaloosa, Walton	The college and both districts provide postsecondary career education programs. Only the college and the Walton County School District provide adult education programs.
9. Palm Beach State College	Palm Beach	The college provides all postsecondary career education programs. The district provides all adult education programs.
10. Seminole State College of Florida	Seminole	The college provides all career and adult education programs.
11. Tallahassee Community College	Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla	The college and all of the districts provide both career and adult education programs.

Source: Department of Education.

## Appendix C

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# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Dr. Eric J. Smith  
Commissioner of Education

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December 14, 2010

Gary R. VanLandingham, Ph.D., Director  
Office of Program Policy Analysis &  
Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA)  
Claude Pepper Building, Room 312  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Dr. VanLandingham:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report entitled *Consolidating Workforce Education Would Bring More Uniformity; Mixed Results on Whether Evidence Supports Other Stakeholder Arguments*. The Department of Education (DOE) appreciates the opportunity provided for collaboration to ensure the accuracy of the report.

This report examines a listing of advantages and disadvantages associated with a proposal to give colleges responsibility for all postsecondary career education programs and school districts responsibility for all adult education programs. The report summary does not adequately reflect the number of areas where uniformity does exist, but rather focuses on two issues that have been or could be easily addressed by a change in law or procedure. Those areas where uniformity does exist include:

- Standard program lengths
- Standard identification of occupational completion points
- Use of the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS)
- Standard federal performance measures
- Standard identification of technical skill assessments
- Standardized data elements for required state and federal reporting

Dr. Gary R. VanLandingham  
December 14, 2010  
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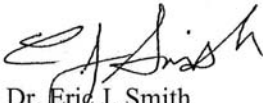
For data reporting, the division and the agency's management information system work closely together to ensure consistency of data reporting for both districts and colleges. The examples on data systems cited in this report do not reflect a systemic problem with data reporting for postsecondary career and adult education programs. While the examples cited involve additional information that would be nice for research purposes, it is the Department's position that data requirements for districts and colleges should be based on requirements in state or federal law. In addition, one example of a lack of uniformity cited involved the law on residency for tuition purposes. In this case, any difference that existed between the systems was based in the statutory language and any disparity in policy was addressed by the 2010 Legislature.

In a separate report, your agency conducted extensive research that school districts and college programs generally are not competing for the same students by providing duplicate program offerings, unless there is sufficient demand for programs. The Department works with school districts and colleges to ensure the public sector offers rigorous and relevant postsecondary career and adult education programs.

Should you have any further questions for the Department, please contact Loretta Costin at [Loretta.Costin@fldoe.org](mailto:Loretta.Costin@fldoe.org) or Dr. Willis Holcombe at [Will.Holcombe@fldoe.org](mailto:Will.Holcombe@fldoe.org).

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to this report.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eric J. Smith  
Commissioner of Education

EJS/tgg



**FADSS**

Florida Association of  
District School Superintendents

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**Florida Association of District  
School Superintendents**

December 8, 2010

Mr. Tim Elwell  
Education Policy Area Staff Director  
Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability  
Claude Pepper Building, Room 312  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475

Dear Mr. Elwell:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the report on workforce education on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents. The report is comprehensive and well-researched. You and your staff are commended for the extensive interviews and meetings that were held with all the stakeholders.

As you discovered, workforce education is delivered by two educational systems – school districts and community or state colleges. While the relationship between the two systems was at one time contentious, school districts and colleges have worked through those issues and developed educational programs that meet the needs of adult students on the local level. Your report provides ample evidence of this collaboration and response to local needs. As you noted in the report, the two systems are authorized to offer similar programs, but districts and colleges typically avoid duplicating local training programs. Your report goes on to note that districts and colleges tend to offer different types of programs rather than providing the same programs within a county. Colleges tend to offer long-term programs and districts offer short- to moderate- length programs that train for entry-level positions. This is in response, I think, to the student populations served by each entity. School districts serve a different population than college postsecondary career education programs. Districts serve more minority and low income students; a higher percentage of Hispanic students; and a higher percentage of district students did not have employment records before enrolling in a career education program.

**Mr. Tim Elwell**  
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I would like to highlight examples of how districts and colleges work together to address the needs of students in their communities. Okaloosa County Schools and Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC) have had a long and strong partnership in working together to provide workforce education and adult education. Northwest Florida State College offers Adult General Education programs in English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and GED testing, vocational preparatory and job readiness skills. At the Okaloosa Applied Technology Center (OATC) the school district offers Adult Certification programs in technical skills and industry certification programs in NCEER, OSHA, ASE, Adobe and other IT programs. OATC also offers applied academics for adult students who need remediation based on TABE results. There is no duplication within programs and is economical for both the college and the school system. Several of the school system programs articulate to NWFSC providing students the opportunity to earn college credit hours by completing programs first at the school district's Applied Technology Center. One great example is the LPN program at Okaloosa Applied Technology Center and the RN program at NWFSC. The school district LPN program articulates to one year of credit toward the RN program at the college.

The college and Okaloosa County Schools work together to target occupations and local workforce demands to determine the programs that will be offered in career and technical education. Currently OATC serves 350 adults and 375 high school students in career and technical education programs. OATC provides programs to students from Choctaw, Niceville, and Fort Walton Beach high schools during the day that would be cost prohibitive to establish at every high school. Adult education students use these same labs in the evenings. These courses are very popular, particularly with young adults such as the airmen from the local military bases and retirees. For high school students, earning college credit and industry certification is important for their future job success and a cost savings for families.

Many high school students begin learning job specific skills in HVAC, cosmetology, etc. and then attend NWFSC to learn the business aspects of accounting and management to become self employed by opening their own business. There is a great partnership in Okaloosa County between the local school system and Northwest Florida State College which provides high school and adult education students programs to prepare them for the workforce while reducing the cost of operation for each educational entity.

In Taylor County, the school district and North Florida Community College have recently worked together to expand programs in response to employer and student needs. The school district has an excellent welding program at the tech center. The college needed a welding program. Therefore, the district is sending teachers to teach welding on the college campus. In turn, the school district needed an LPN program. The college is sending faculty to the district tech center in order for the district to offer an LPN program.

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**December 8, 2010**  
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In addition, in the Taylor County School District both auto mechanics and welding are two popular programs. Students leave the program in which they are enrolled because they may only need training in certain components (e.g. brakes in auto mechanics). Once they have received training in specific programs, they are hired. One of the major employers in Taylor County hires these students and then sends them back to school and pays for it. Many of these students are low income and need employment as soon as they have some technical training. As they progress in their employment, many return for additional training.

There is an inaccurate assumption that statewide articulation agreements represent a comprehensive list of all agreements. Surprisingly, in some regions local articulations exceed the listed statewide articulations. This is the case in Orange County. Valencia Community College has approved a considerable number of articulation agreements after extensively researching Orange County Public Schools career and technical center offerings and working collaboratively with the Orange County Public Schools Career and Technical Education department to develop these agreements, validating the quality and value of the education provided by the school district tech centers.

#### **General Comments**

Completion of and certification in industry certification programs are elements included in 50% of the school grade calculation for high schools. Elimination of this opportunity would create a disadvantage for those school districts that have provided numerous programs for students to succeed in industry certification areas. This is an area in which students succeed year after year, and to remove this from secondary offerings would have a negative effect on comprehensive high schools as well as the business partnerships that have been created.

Furthermore, school district technical centers and community/state colleges are accredited via different accrediting bodies with differing standards. Attempting to merge the two delivery systems could potentially eliminate many needed training programs that colleges will not have the resources to take over, due in part to the accreditation differences. This assumption is validated by the relatively limited number of Applied Technology Degrees (ATD) offered by school district tech centers which requires instructors to be certified in a manner more aligned with community/state colleges. The accreditation requirements are different and necessary to successfully meet training needs.

The OPPAGA report establishes the capability for community/state colleges to provide PSAV programs. However, it cannot be presumed (with diminishing resources) that community/state colleges currently not providing PSAV programs would make the transition to open new training opportunities in this instructional category. This would reduce the opportunity for more challenging students to gain employable skills.

# *The Florida Legislature*

## *Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability*



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