Colleges Perform Slightly Better Than School Districts in Career Education; Neither Clearly Outperforms in Adult Education

at a glance

Florida law authorizes school districts and the Florida College System to offer similar types of workforce education programs. These programs include postsecondary career education programs that prepare individuals to work in specific jobs or occupations, and adult education programs that provide training to improve literacy, basic education, or English language skills.

Colleges achieved slightly better outcomes than school districts in postsecondary career education programs. College students were more likely to complete their programs, transition to full-time employment, and earn higher earnings after completing programs.

Performance was mixed for adult education programs. Although teenage students were more likely to stay in school or graduate after leaving school district adult education programs, adult students had similar employment-related outcomes regardless of whether they attended adult education programs offered by school districts or colleges.

Scope

As directed by the Florida Legislature, OPPAGA examined the workforce education programs provided by school districts and the Florida College System. This report answers two questions.

- How do school district and college performance outcomes compare in postsecondary career education?

- How do school district and college performance outcomes compare in adult education?

This report is part of a series on Florida's workforce education programs. Companion reports examine how workforce education programs are funded, the overlap in college and school district responsibilities, the option of consolidating responsibility for workforce education 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. Workforce education programs include postsecondary career education programs that prepare individuals for entry into specific occupations that can require credentials, such as vocational certificates, and adult general education programs that provide training to individuals who need to improve their literacy, basic education, and English language skills.

In general, Florida law authorizes school districts and Florida College System institutions to offer similar types of workforce education programs (see Exhibit 1). However, school districts cannot offer college credit programs such as associate in science degrees.

Exhibit 1
School Districts and Florida College System Institutions Offer a Variety of Workforce Education Programs

| Program Type	Program Description	Florida College System	School Districts
Career Education Programs – Degree and College Credit			
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	
Career Education Programs – Vocational Credit			
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
Adult General Education Programs			
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 (ESOL)	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[1]	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

[1] Formerly 'Vocational Preparatory Instruction'.

Source: Department of Education Glossary of Terms and Acronyms.

School districts served most (81%) of the state's adult education students in 2008-09 and most (73%) of the students in adult vocational certificate, apprenticeship, and applied technology diploma programs (see Exhibit 2). Colleges provide all degree and college credit programs and the remaining adult education, adult vocational certificate, and apprenticeship programs.[1]

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[1] As discussed in a companion report, school districts and colleges tend to specialize in the types of programs they offer at the local level and make local decisions on how to divide their workforce education responsibilities.

Exhibit 2
School Districts Served Most of the State's Adult Education Students in 2008-09; Colleges Focus on Degree and Credit Programs
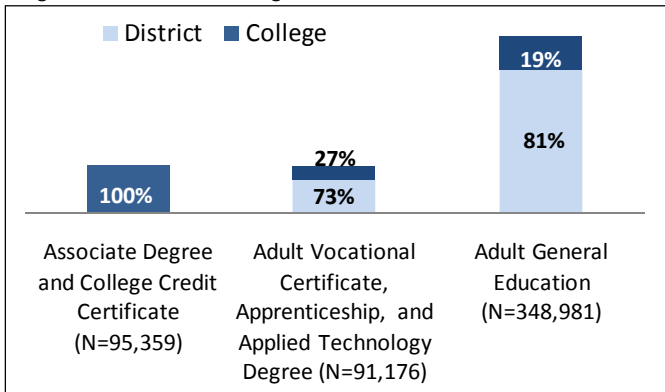
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

To evaluate performance differences between district and college workforce education programs, we compared student performance using data from the Department of Education. These comparisons assessed whether students who left programs had achieved a level of academic or occupational learning gain and improved their employment situations. See Appendix A for more information about our methodology. Appendix B provides performance information on college degree and college credit programs that are not offered by school districts.

Questions & Answers

How do School District and College Performance Outcomes Compare in Postsecondary Career Education?

Students who left college postsecondary career education programs were more likely than school district students to have fully completed a program. Colleges also outperformed districts in having students find full-time employment, and the students who completed college programs tended to earn more than school district students. Although districts served more minority and lower income students than colleges, these differences did not influence performance differences between the two systems.

We compared the performance of school district and college postsecondary career education programs on

two levels. First, we assessed their performance at the 'system' level by averaging outcomes for all adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs offered by the two systems in 2007-08.[2] This included programs that had enrollments in both systems as well as programs that were unique to each system. Second, to account for differences in program offerings between the two systems, we conducted a 'program by program' performance comparison for individual training programs that had enrollments in both systems during 2007-08.

Students in college career education programs were more likely to fully complete a program

Students who left college postsecondary career education programs were more likely than school district students to have completed their full programs.   We evaluated program completion outcomes for district and college career education programs by calculating the percentage of students who left their program in 2007-08 at one of three completion points—after fully completing the program, partially completing (attaining some but not all occupational completion points), or without attaining any documented achievement gains.[3]

As shown in Exhibit 3, a much higher percentage of students who left college career education programs in 2007-08 completed their full program (61%) compared to those who left school district programs (32%).[4] District students were particularly more likely

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[2] Our analysis of career education program included adult vocational certificate and applied technology programs; both colleges and districts can offer these programs. We did not include apprenticeship programs in the performance analysis because the department indicated that apprenticeship programs may be uniquely structured to meet the local needs and do not have a precise way to measure program completion.

[3] An Occupational Completion Point is a state-defined point in a program's curriculum when a student has met a group of competencies or skills needed to become proficient in a specific occupation.

[4] In the 2009-2010 school year, the Department of Education developed courses for each postsecondary adult vocational certificate program. The courses were developed using the competencies identified for each program and were aligned with the appropriate Occupational Completion Points. Additionally, a number of programs were revised and the revisions resulted in shorter program lengths. Further, 32 vocational certificate programs were restructured and divided into shorter programs. Department staff stated that these changes in the structure of the vocational certificate programs and the lengths of a number of programs have the potential to increase the number of students who are able to complete the program.

than college students to leave after partially completing their programs (38% compared to 16%, respectively).

Exhibit 3
A Higher Percentage of Students Who Left College Postsecondary Career Education Programs in 2007-08 Fully Completed a Program
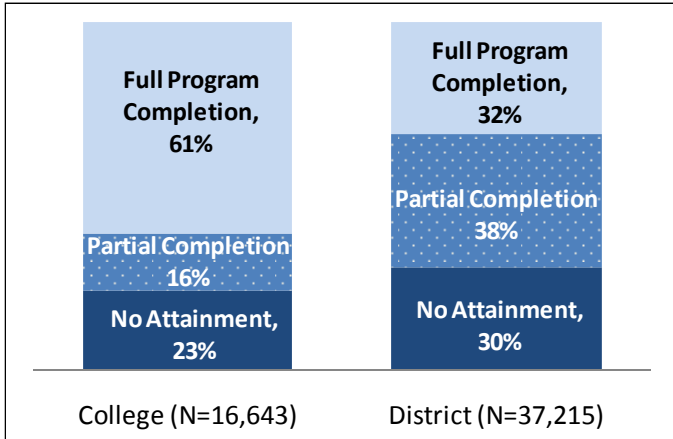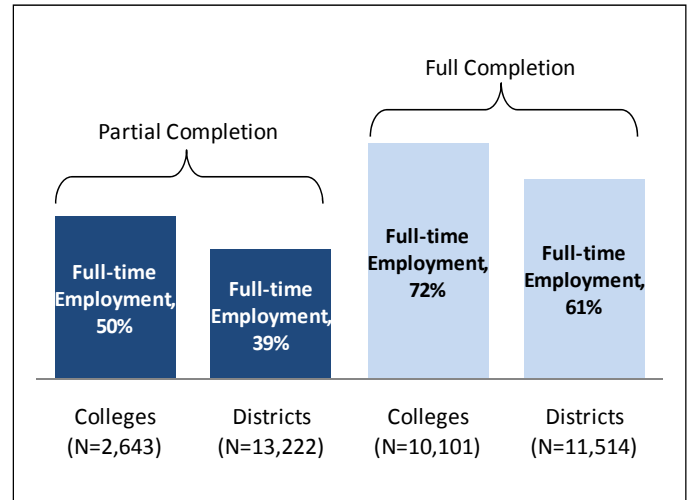

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year.

Students who completed college career education programs had better employment outcomes than district students

College career education students were more likely than school district students to find employment at levels above a full-time minimum wage after completing their programs and to have earnings above the state's high skill/high wage benchmarks.

A higher percentage of students who completed college career education programs were later employed at levels above a full-time minimum wage. We evaluated success in job placement by looking at the extent to which students found a job earning above a full-time minimum wage ($14,123 annually). As shown in Exhibit 4, students who fully completed college career education programs (72%) had higher placement rates than those who completed district programs (61%). For both colleges and districts, students who only partially completed programs were less likely to find full-time employment than those who finished their programs.

Exhibit 4
Students Who Fully Completed College Career Education Programs Were More Likely to be Employed at a Level Above a Full-Time Minimum Wage[1]
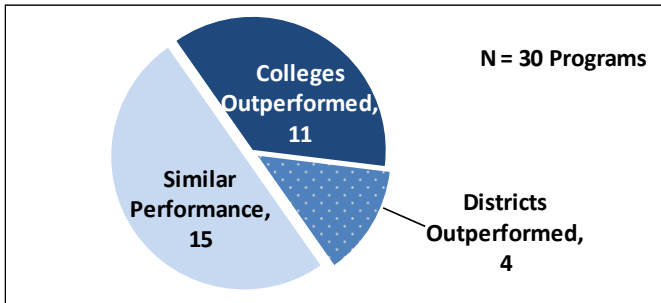

[1] The remaining students either did not find a job or were employed less than full-time.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year.

Colleges also performed slightly better than districts in placement rates for programs that had enrollments in both systems offered in 2007-08. We compared 30 workforce education programs offered by both colleges and school districts; each of these programs served at least 30 students.[5] As shown in Exhibit 5, colleges outperformed districts for 11 of the programs, while the districts performed better for 4 programs; the two systems' performance was similar for the remaining 15 programs. Appendix C provides additional information about this comparison.

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[5] Although districts offered 194 and colleges offered 108 different non-credit career education programs in 2007-08, many of these programs served too few students to allow for a statistical comparison of outcomes. Accordingly, we analyzed only those programs offered by both systems that had at least 30 students, a statistically sufficient population to compare performance.

Exhibit 5
Colleges Had a Slight Advantage When Comparing Placement Rates for Individual Programs Offered by Both Systems in 2007-08

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year.

Students who completed college career education programs were more likely to be employed in high skill/high wage jobs. We examined students' post-completion earnings to determine the extent to which they were employed in jobs with wages at or above the state's high skill/high wage benchmark for 2008-09 ($12.05 per hour or $25,064 per year). As shown in Exhibit 6, 49% of students who fully completed college programs had incomes that met this threshold, compared to only 33% of district students. For both systems, students who left after partially completing a program were less likely to meet the high skill/high wage threshold.

Exhibit 6
A Higher Percentage of Students Who Fully Completed College Career Education Programs Had Incomes Above the State's High-Skill/High-Wage Benchmarks[1]
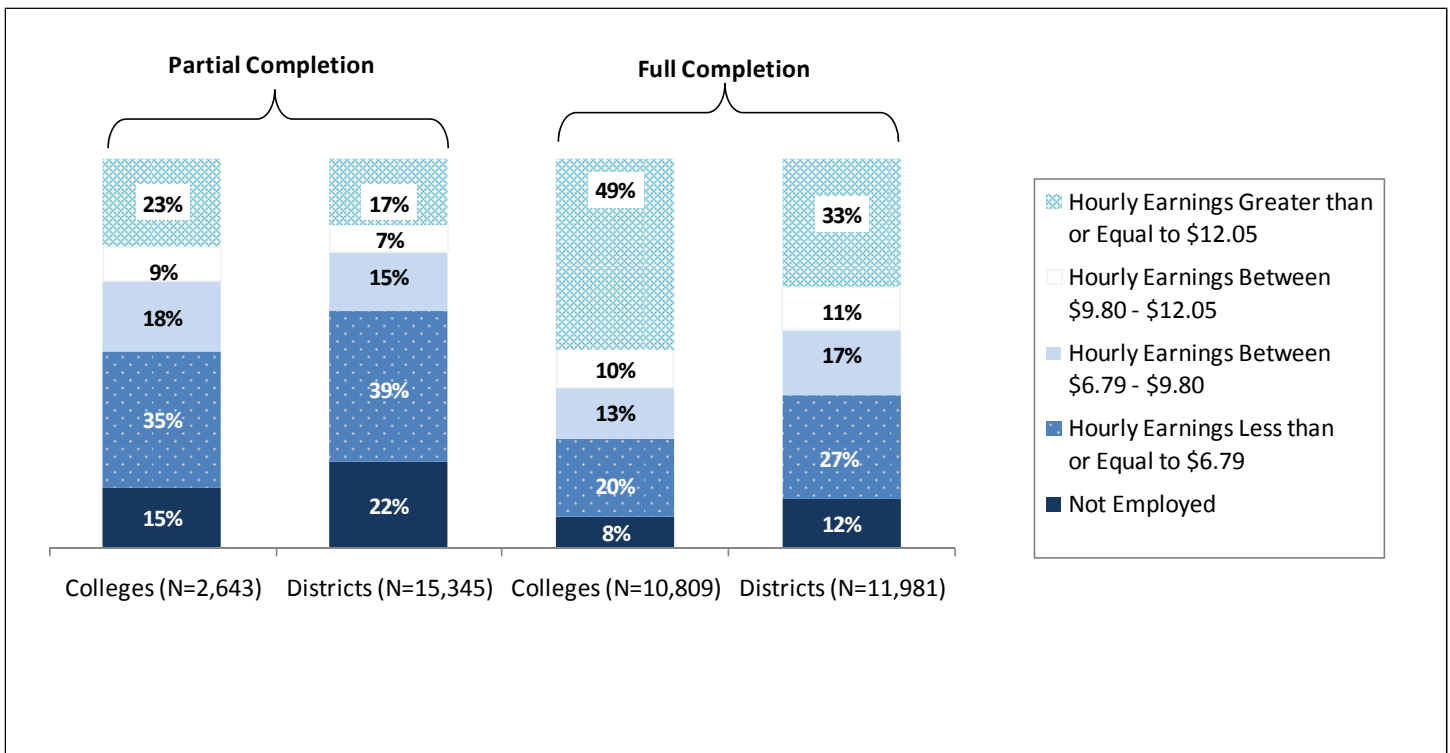
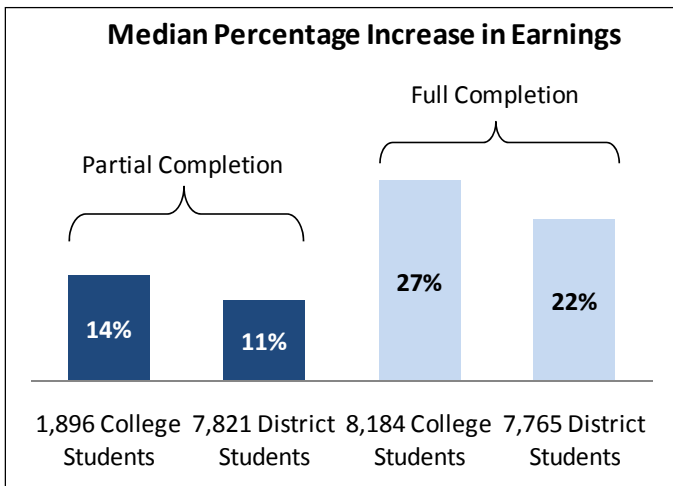[1] We placed students in earning groups based on their annualized earnings divided by 2,080 hours for the year.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year and whether they were found with an employment record in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data system.

Students who completed college career education programs had slightly larger earnings gains

Students increased their incomes at slightly higher rates after completing college postsecondary career education programs than those who completed school district programs. As shown in Exhibit 7, students who completed college programs experienced a 27% median increase in their earnings, compared to a 22% gain for school district students.[6]

Exhibit 7
Students Who Completed College Career Education Programs in 2007-08 Had Larger Earnings Gains Than Those Who Completed District Programs[1, 2]

Median Percentage Increase in Earnings

Partial Completion: 14% (1,896 College Students), 11% (7,821 District Students)

Full Completion: 27% (8,184 College Students), 22% (7,765 District Students)

[1] These figures only include individuals who earned wages both prior to program enrollment and after program completion.

[2] Earnings estimates are based on annualizing average quarterly earnings for each student after leaving the program.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year.

Colleges also had a slight performance advantage for student earnings gains for programs that both systems offered in 2007-08. As shown in Exhibit 8, college students had higher earnings gains for 7 of the 28 programs we examined while district students had higher earnings gains for 6 programs.[7]

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[6] We used constant dollars to measure earnings increases over time and adjusted 2008-09 earnings to 2006-07 levels.

[7] Although districts offered 194 and colleges offered 108 different non-credit career education programs in 2007-08, many of these programs served too few students to allow for a statistical comparison of outcomes. Accordingly, we analyzed only those programs offered by both systems that served at least 30 students and for which data on pre- and post-completion wage data were available. We were able to compare the performance of 28 programs.

Student earnings gains were similar for the remaining 15 programs. Appendix C provides additional information about this comparison.

Exhibit 8
Colleges Had a Slight Advantage When Comparing Earnings Gains for Individual Programs Offered by Both Systems in 2007-08
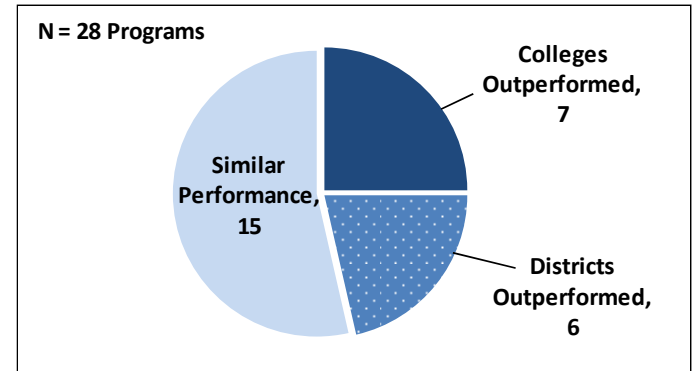
N = 28 Programs

Colleges Outperformed, 7

Districts Outperformed, 6

Similar Performance, 15

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in the 2007-08 school year.

While district and college career education programs serve different populations, these differences do not explain differences in employment-related outcomes

Demographic differences in student populations do not appear to influence performance results for postsecondary career education programs. Although district and college postsecondary career education students were similar in age and gender in the 2008-09 school year, school districts served more minority and low income students (see Exhibit 9). For example, districts served a higher percentage of Hispanic students (25% compared to 15% at colleges) and students who did not have employment records in the quarter before enrolling (37% versus 21% at colleges). District students who were employed prior to starting a program also had a lower median annual income ($12,136) than college students ($15,276).[8]

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[8] Data was not available to compare the entry-level academic skills of postsecondary career education students.

Exhibit 9
School District Postsecondary 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)
Gender		
Female	9,483 (48%)	28,955 (51%)
Male	10,463 (52%)	27,326 (49%)
Race/Ethnicity		
Black	4,387 (23%)	15,043 (27%)
Hispanic	2,815 (15%)	13,949 (25%)
White	11,285 (59%)	25,125 (45%)
Other	500 (3%)	2,164 (3%)
Age		
Median Age	26.1	25.8
Income Prior to Program Entry		
Percentage of Students Who Lacked Prior Employment Records	21%	37%
Prior Median Earnings	$15,276	$12,136

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students enrolled in vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs in 2008-09.

However, student characteristics do not explain district and college differences in employment-related outcomes. To test whether these population differences affected outcome comparisons between school districts and colleges, we performed a logistic regression analysis to examine the career education programs both systems offered in 2007-08. For example, controlling for factors such as prior earnings and minority status, college students were still more likely to be placed in full-time employment than district students.[9, 10] Appendix A provides more information about the statistical analysis we used to control for student characteristics.

How do School District and College Performance Outcomes Compare in Adult Education?

School district adult education programs outperformed colleges in keeping teenage students in school and helping them earn a high school credential. However, the two systems had similar performance results for employment-related outcomes for adult students.

Adult education programs serve two primary groups of students. In the 2008-09 school year, approximately 111,213 of Florida's 322,580 adult education students (34%) were teenagers who were in the program for drop-out prevention and recovery purposes.[11, 12] The remaining 211,367 students (66%) were adults over the age of 18 who needed to upgrade their basic academic or English literacy skills to improve employability. We assessed the performance of these two groups of students.

Teenage students who enrolled in school district adult education programs were more likely to stay in school or graduate

School districts performed better than colleges in achieving positive dropout prevention and recovery outcomes. We assessed the percentage of high school students who stayed in school or earned a high school credential after leaving an adult education program in the 2007-08 school year.[13] We defined *dropout prevention* students as high school students who were simultaneously enrolled (co-enrolled) in adult high school programs and *dropout recovery* students as recent high school dropouts (under the age of 19) who

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[9] We used a logistic regression model to determine the likelihood of a student being placed at full-time employment. Our analysis found that students in college programs were 1.8 times more likely to be placed in full-time employment than district students. The variable of interest, provider type, was statistically significant at the .001 level. The model also controlled for gender, age, minority status, entry age, prior earnings, and college service area.

[10] Data was not available to measure other factors that might influence performance differences between the two systems, such as prior educational attainment and whether students in one system were more motivated than the other.

[11] Both school districts and colleges provide adult education services to teenage students (co-enrollment) who recently dropped out of school or who are still enrolled in high school but lack the credits needed to graduate on time. The goal of these services is to keep students from dropping out or to 'recover' recent dropouts by getting them back on track to earn a high school credential.

[12] Approximately 37% of students enrolled in district adult education programs were in dropout prevention and recovery, compared to 25% of students in the colleges' programs.

[13] We classified students as having left school if they were no longer enrolled in an adult education course.

were enrolled in GED, Adult Basic Education, or Adult High School programs during this same timeframe.[14]

Dropout prevention students in school district programs stayed in school or achieved a high school credential at a higher rate than similar students in college programs. As shown in Exhibit 10, approximately 74% of the school district dropout prevention students who left adult education programs in 2007-08 stayed in high school or obtained a high school credential, compared to only 39% of students in similar college programs.

Exhibit 10
School Districts' Adult Education Dropout Prevention Students Stayed in School or Graduated at Much Higher Rates Than Those Served in Colleges' Adult Education Programs
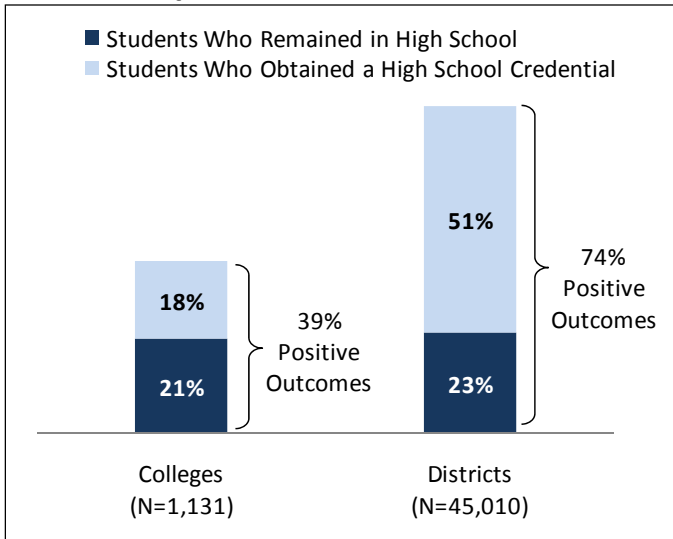
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

Moreover, a slightly higher percentage of school district dropout recovery students (35%) returned to high school or obtained a high school credential after leaving adult education programs compared to similar students in college programs (29%; see Exhibit 11).

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[14] We defined a positive outcome for the dropout prevention students as either continuing their high school education or earning a high school credential. For the dropout recovery students, we defined a positive outcome as earning a high school credential.

Exhibit 11
District Adult Education Dropout Recovery Students Returned to School or Graduated at Higher Rates Than College Students
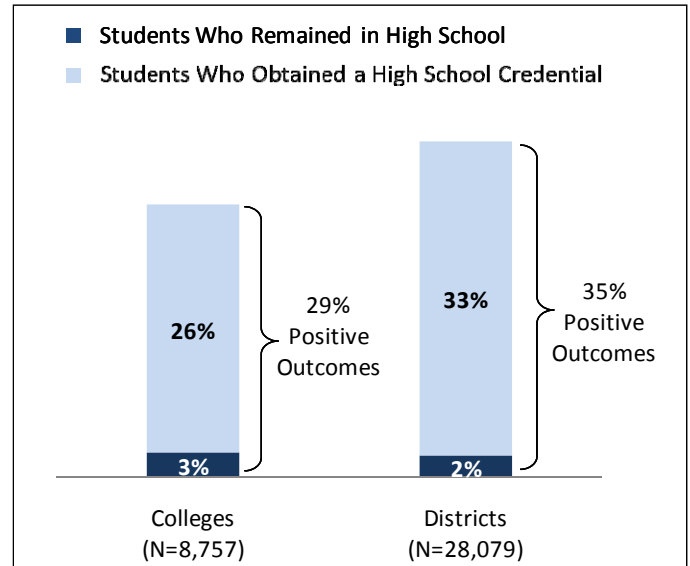
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

Adult students who attended district and college adult education programs had similar employment outcomes

There was little difference in the performance of school district and college adult education programs in helping adults improve their employment outcomes. Most adults who left both types of programs did so without achieving at least one learning gain or a high school credential. Less than half of those who completed these programs had obtained full-time employment or were continuing their education within two years of leaving the program. Although those adults without previous employment who completed school district programs did slightly better at finding jobs, those who completed college programs and were previously employed increased their incomes at a slightly higher rate than those who completed school district programs.

Most adults who left district and college adult education programs did so without achieving at least one learning gain or earning a high school credential. We evaluated employment-related outcomes for adults who left adult education

programs by measuring the extent to which the adult students who left these programs in the 2007-08 school year had achieved at least one learning gain (typically two grade levels, which is considered a Literacy Completion Point) or had attained a high school credential.[15, 16]

As shown in Exhibit 12, school districts and colleges performed similarly on both measures, with the majority of their adult students not achieving these positive outcomes. Only a small percentage of adults who left district and college adult education programs (approximately 11% for both systems) earned a high school credential. Similarly, only 32% of the adults who left district programs and 38% who left college programs achieved at least one learning gain.

Exhibit 12
Most Students Who Left Adult Education Programs Did Not Attain a Learning Gain or Earn a High School Credential
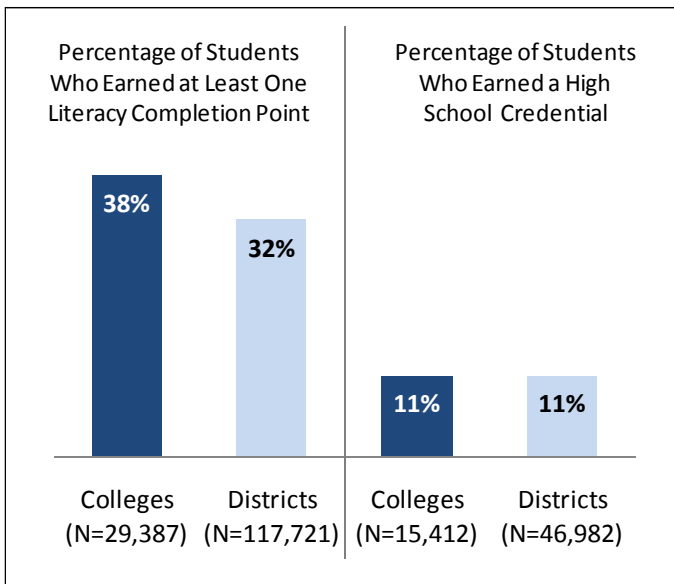
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

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[15] A Literacy Completion Point represents an improvement in basic skills that is typically equal to two grade levels and is measured by a standardized test such as the Test for Adult Basic Education or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (for adult ESOL students).

[16] We did not include adult ESOL students when measuring the percentage of adult students who left with a high school credential because completing the ESOL program does not prepare students to earn a high school credential. Students completing adult ESOL may go on to an adult basic education or GED program to earn a high school credential.

Less than half of adults who completed district and college adult education programs were working full-time or continuing their education. We examined the extent to which adult students who left adult education programs after earning at least one learning gain improved their employability. Specifically, we determined whether these students were employed within two years at a level equivalent to or higher than a full-time minimum wage position or were continuing their education in a postsecondary education program.

School districts and colleges had the same results on this measure. As shown in Exhibit 13, just under half (48%) of the adults who left both district and college adult education programs in the 2007-08 school year were employed full-time within two years or were continuing their education.

Exhibit 13
Less Than Half of Adults Who Completed District and College Adult Education Programs Were Working Full-time or Continuing Their Education[1]
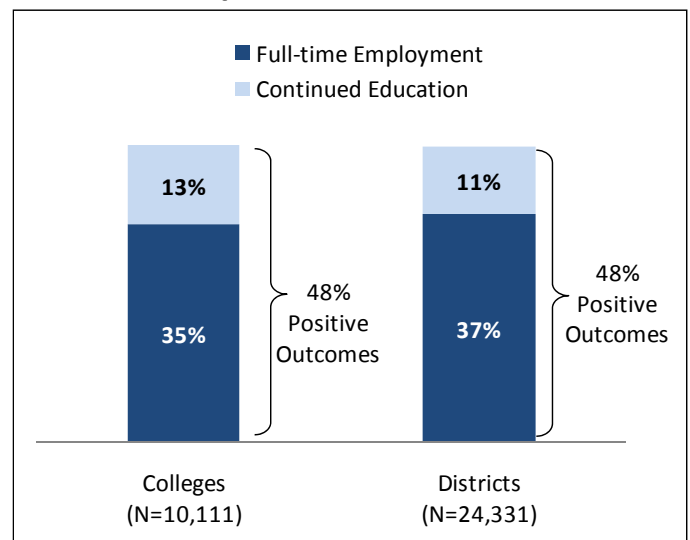
[1] This analysis includes only adults who earned at least one Literacy Completion Point prior to leaving the program.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

Adults without previous employment had slightly better outcomes in finding jobs after completing school district programs, but employed adults who completed college programs tended to earn more. We evaluated the employment experience of adults who completed adult education programs by

measuring whether these students improved their earnings after leaving the program. Our assessment examined two outcomes: (1) whether adults who had no employment records in the quarter prior to entering adult education later found jobs, and (2) what post-completion increases in earnings were attained by students who had an employment record in the quarter prior to entering adult education.

School district adult education programs had slightly better outcomes than college programs in terms of adult students finding jobs after being previously unemployed. As shown in Exhibit 14, approximately 50% of adults who completed district programs later found a job compared to 44% of adults who completed college programs.

Exhibit 14
A Slightly Higher Percentage of Adults Without Previous Employment Found Jobs After Completing School District Programs[1]

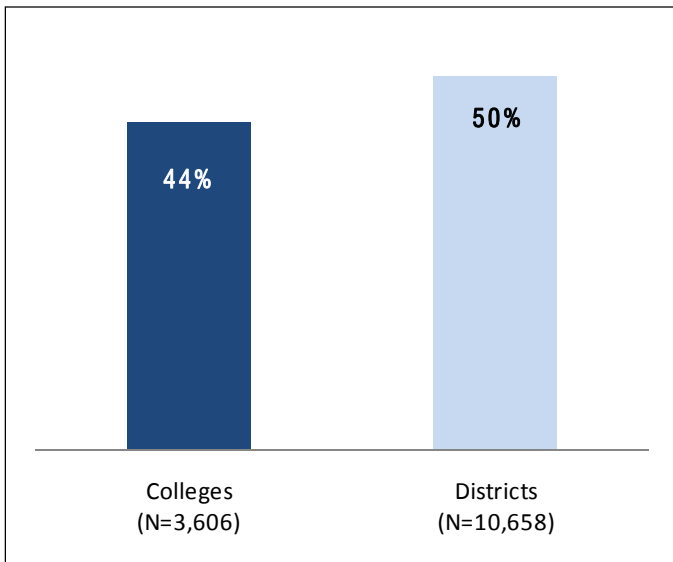[1] This analysis includes only adults who earned at least one Literacy Completion Point prior to leaving the program.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

However, previously employed adults tended to earn more after completing college adult education programs. As shown in Exhibit 15, adults who were employed before completing college programs experienced slightly higher increases in their incomes than adults who completed district programs. For example, adults who had at least one learning gain in college programs increased their earnings by 8% compared to 3% for district programs.

Exhibit 15
Students Who Had Prior Earnings and Completed College Adult Education Programs Had Slightly Higher Earnings Gains Than Those Who Completed District Programs[1]
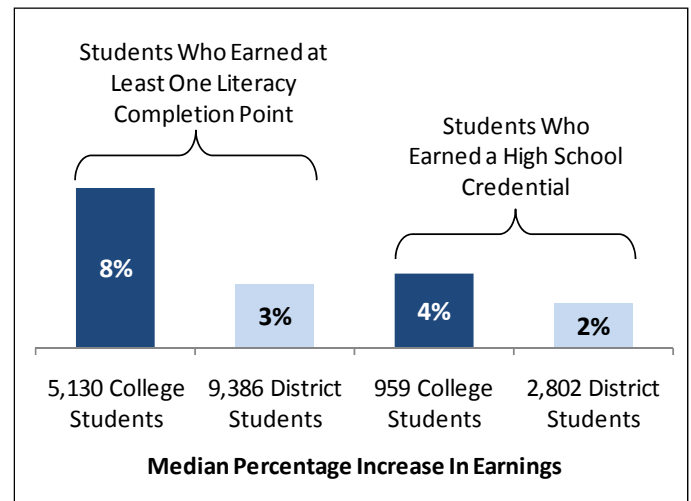
[1] We adjusted earnings increases to account for inflation (constant dollars).

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data on students who left adult education programs during the 2007-08 school year.

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 D.

Appendix A

Methodology

Program Outcome Analysis – Review of Student-Level Data

To evaluate performance differences between district and college workforce education programs, we compared student performance in the two systems using 2007-08 student enrollment and completion data and wage data from four calendar years (2006 through 2009); we obtained these data from the Department of Education.[17] Our comparisons assessed whether students who left programs had achieved academic or occupational learning gains and had improved their employment situations.

Program Completion. To account for variations in program length and how career programs are structured, we analyzed program completions by calculating the percentage of students who left in a given year after fully completing a program, making some academic gains, or without any documented gains. We classified students as having left the program if the student could not be accounted for in the data for at least two consecutive academic terms.[18]

Placement Rates. We calculated job placement rates and determined if students increased their earnings upon leaving a program. To take into account inflation over the four years we examined, we deflated all quarterly wage amounts to the first quarter of 2006 using the Consumer Price Index.[19] We calculated annual earnings for both the time period prior to the student's first academic record and the time period after the student left the program.[20]

Job Placement Rates: We identified the students who left programs who had achieved some level of academic gain to calculate the percentage who had earnings equivalent to full-time employment or continued their postsecondary education. We classified individuals as working full time only if they had annual earnings above the minimum wage.[21]

Earnings: We compared annual earnings for the students who left the career education programs and who had wage records both prior to having an enrollment record and after leaving the program. To do so, we first calculated the percent change between pre- and post-program earnings for each student and then compared the median change between the colleges and districts for similar programs. For adult education programs, we next calculated the percentage of students who left who did not have any pre-program earnings but had earnings after leaving the program.

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[17] We obtained student level workforce data from the Department of Education's Community College and Technical Center Management Information System (CCTMIS) and Workforce Development Information System (WDIS) and wage data from the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) office.

[18] We omitted students from the career education analysis if they did not complete any instructional hours in programs, and from the adult education analysis if they had not completed at least 12 instructional hours in programs.

[19] We used the *Consumer Price Index – All Urban Consumers, Not Seasonally Adjusted* to adjust wages for inflation.

[20] Because students had varying numbers of wage quarter data available both prior to enrolling and after leaving programs, we annualized the average quarterly wages for each student to derive the annual earnings for both time periods.

[21] We excluded students who did not have a valid student identifier (proper length of a Social Security number) from the data, as they could not be matched to employment records.

Statistical Analysis Using Regression

As shown in Exhibit 9 of this report, districts served a higher percentage of minority students (black and Hispanic) and tended to have students with lower prior earnings than college students. We used a logistic regression model to test if the demographic differences between districts and colleges contributed to the differences in postsecondary career education employment outcomes between the two systems. The logistic regression model controlled for characteristics such as minority status, gender, and prior earnings, and showed that college students were more likely to be placed in full-time equivalent jobs.

Job Placement Logistic Regression Analysis

We used a logistic regression model to test if college students were more likely to be placed in full-time equivalent jobs than district students while holding constant student characteristics. The logistic regression model controlled for multiple independent variables including minority status, gender, age, prior annual earnings, program provider type (district or college), geographical region (college service areas), and completion status (full completion, partial completion, and no documented attainment).

The independent variable of interest (program provider type) was statistically significant at the 0.001 level. As shown in Table A-1, after controlling for student characteristics such as minority status, gender, and prior earnings, students from college programs were approximately 1.8 times more likely to be placed in full-time employment compared to students from district programs. Other independent variables that were statistically significant at the 0.001 level included full and partial completion status, gender, and prior earnings.

Table A-1
Variables in the Job Placement Logistic Regression Model

Outcome Tested	Probability Value	Likelihood (Odds Ratio)
Dependent Variable		
Job Placement with Full-time Equivalent Earnings		
Independent Variables of Interest		
Type of Program Provider: College or District	0.000	1.800
Independent Variables in Control Group:		
▪ Full Program Completion Status	0.000	2.849
▪ Partial Program Completion Status	0.000	1.349
▪ Gender	0.000	1.254
▪ Prior Annual Earnings	0.000	1.000
▪ Minority Status (Black or Hispanic)	0.358	0.980
▪ Age Upon Entering Program	0.167	0.999

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Appendix B

College Credit Career Education Programs

Colleges offer additional workforce education programs that are not offered by school districts. These provide college credit and include both degree and certificate type programs (associate in science degree, associate in applied science degree, and college credit certificate). College credit certificate programs are similar in nature to the vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs that can also be offered by school districts, but have higher admissions requirements. To determine if these programs were achieving positive outcomes, we evaluated whether students who left these programs had achieved a level of academic or occupational gain and improved their employment situations.

Program Completion

Performance was mixed for college credit and degree programs in having students earn a certificate or degree upon leaving. As shown in Table B-1, students in associate degree programs were less likely than those in college credit certificate programs to have completed the full program.

Table B-1
Most Students in Associate in Science Degree Programs Did Not Earn a Degree
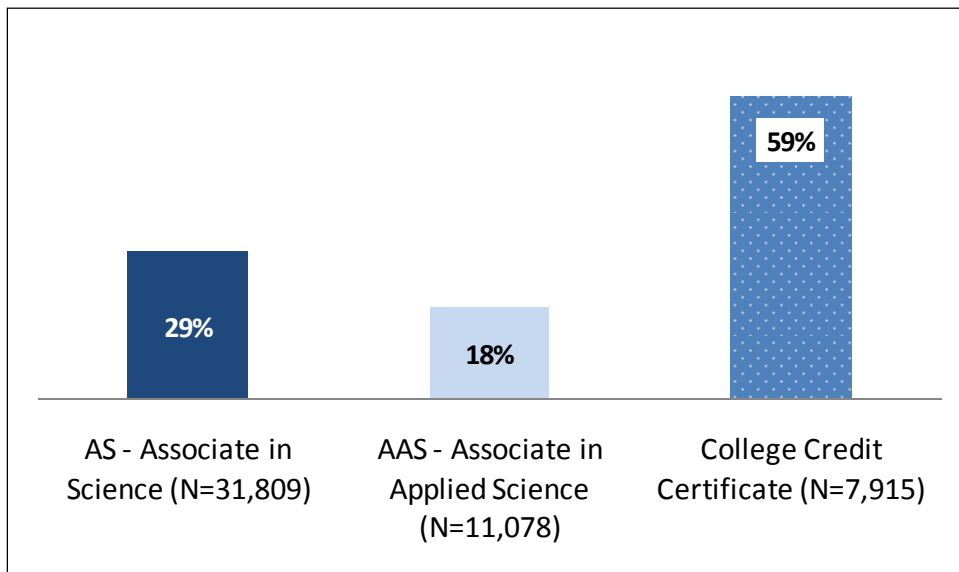
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Placement Rates

All of the college credit programs have similar job placement outcomes. Table B-2 shows that the students who earned associate in applied science credentials were the most likely to find a job with at least a full-time equivalent wage.

Table B-2
Over Two-thirds of Students who Completed College Credit Programs Found Full-Time Jobs[1]
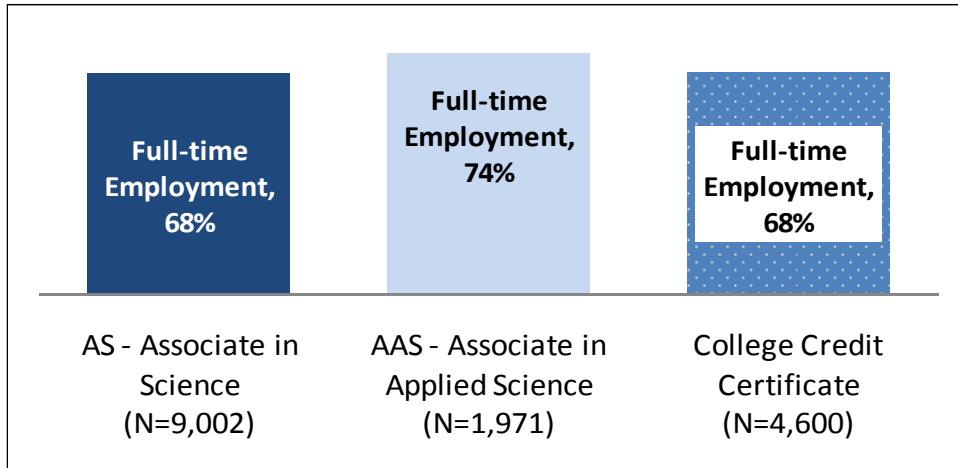
[1] We defined placement as the student having an employment record in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data system after completing the program with annual earnings greater than full-time minimum wage.
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Earnings

The type of college credit credential students earn affects their ability to increase their incomes. As shown in Table B-3, individuals who earned associate in science degrees achieved the highest increase in income.

Table B-3
Students Who Completed Associate of Science Degrees Had the Greatest Gains in Income
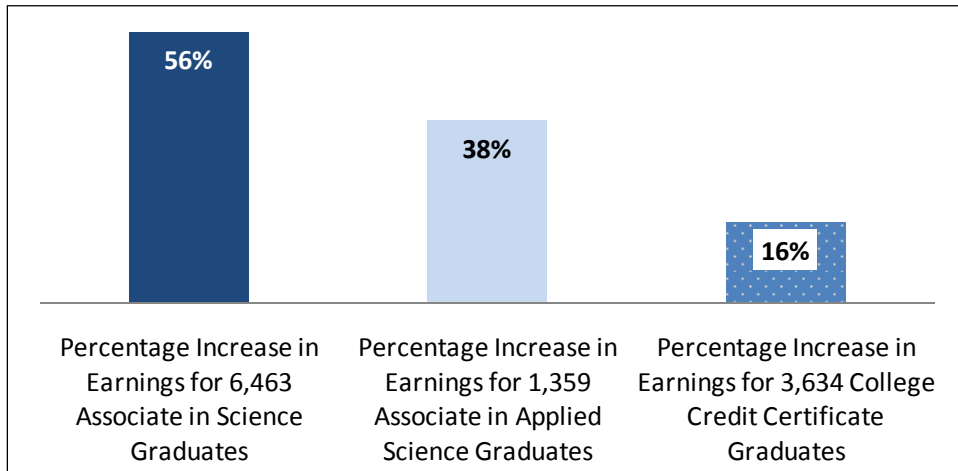
Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Appendix C

Career Education: Program Level Comparison

To account for differences in the mix of career education programs offered by school districts and colleges, we compared district and college performance for individual training programs that the two systems both offered in the 2007-08 school year. This 'program by program' analysis evaluated whether a school district or college program outperformed the other in having students achieve positive outcomes. The number of programs included in these comparisons varies because not all programs had at least 30 students, which is a statistically sufficient number to compare performance. We concluded that one system's performance was materially better than the other if the difference in performance was at least 10 percentage points. This analysis found that colleges performed slightly better than school districts in the number of programs with a positive outcome, but performance was similar for the majority of programs.

Job Placement

Of the 87 adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs colleges and districts both provided in 2007-08, only 30 programs had at least 30 students in both systems who left and earned an occupational completion point or completed the entire program. As shown in Table C-1, colleges outperformed districts for 11 of the programs compared to 4 programs where the districts outperformed the colleges. Performance differences for the remaining 15 programs did not favor either system.

Table C-1
Colleges Slightly Outperformed School Districts in Job Placement Rates for Individual Career Education Programs

2007-08 Training Program		Colleges		Districts		Percentage Point Difference
		Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	
Colleges Outperformed Districts	1. Administrative Assistant	81	40%	698	28%	12%
	Partial Completion[1]	66	36%	585	24%	
	Full Completion	15	53%	113	44%	
	2. Applied Welding Technologies	83	64%	372	49%	15%
	Partial Completion[1]	69	62%	309	48%	
	Full Completion	14	71%	63	56%	
	3. Automotive Collision Repair and Refinishing	95	48%	181	33%	15%
	Partial Completion[1]	45	29%	128	29%	
	Full Completion	50	66%	53	43%	
	4. Dental Assisting	240	74%	146	60%	14%
	Partial Completion[1]	57	51%	66	42%	
	Full Completion	183	81%	183	81%	
	5. Early Childhood Education	683	40%	1,190	28%	12%
	Partial Completion[1]	664	39%	1,084	28%	
	Full Completion	19	42%	106	28%	
	6. Massage Therapy	141	49%	291	36%	13%
	Partial Completion[1]	17	35%	79	35%	
	Full Completion	124	51%	212	37%	

	2007-08 Training Program	Colleges		Districts		Percentage Point Difference
		Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	
Colleges Outperformed Districts (continued)	7. Medical Assisting	149	66%	368	46%	20%
	Partial Completion[1]	48	54%	235	38%	
	Full Completion	101	71%	133	59%	
	8. Nails Specialty	54	33%	277	18%	15%
	Partial Completion[1]	-	-	47	30%	
	Full Completion	54	33%	230	16%	
	9. Practical Nursing	683	87%	2,437	75%	12%
	Partial Completion[1]	62	61%	831	61%	
	Full Completion	621	90%	1,606	83%	
	10. Private Security Officer	559	49%	383	38%	11%
	Partial Completion[1]	356	50%	298	38%	
	Full Completion	203	47%	85	36%	
	11. Real Estate Sales Agent	166	63%	131	43%	20%
	Partial Completion[1]	*[3]	*[3]	*[3]	*[3]	
	Full Completion	157	62%	123	42%	
Districts Outperformed Colleges	1. Commercial Vehicle Driving	187	53%	563	63%	10%
	Partial Completion[1]	*[3]	*[3]	40	63%	
	Full Completion	184	54%	523	63%	
	2. Culinary Operations	80	10%	40	20%	10%
	Partial Completion[1]	74	9%	28	14%	
	Full Completion	*[3]	*[3]	12	33%	
	3. Life Insurance Marketing	486	68%	36	97%	29%
	Partial Completion[1]	17	47%	36	97%	
	Full Completion	469	69%	-	-	
	4. Nursing Assistant (Long-Term Care)	69	39%	806	50%	11%
	Partial Completion[1]	10	30%	56	34%	
	Full Completion	59	41%	750	51%	
Neither System Outperformed the Other	1. Air Conditioning, Refrigeration And Heating Technology (PS)	123	70%	605	62%	8%
	Partial Completion[1]	68	69%	429	59%	
	Full Completion	55	71%	176	72%	
	2. Aircraft Airframe Mechanics	57	74%	93	76%	2%
	Partial Completion[1]	36	64%	55	80%	
	Full Completion	21	90%	38	71%	
	3. Automotive Service Technology	144	46%	693	42%	4%
	Partial Completion[1]	100	43%	562	36%	
	Full Completion	44	52%	131	66%	
	4. Child Care Center Operations	102	55%	554	63%	8%
	Partial Completion[1]	54	44%	113	72%	
	Full Completion	48	67%	441	61%	
	5. Correctional Officer	1,640	95%	499	95%	0%
	Partial Completion[1]	69	88%	229	95%	
	Full Completion	1,571	95%	270	94%	
	6. Cosmetology	494	31%	907	29%	2%
	Partial Completion[1]	130	28%	436	29%	
	Full Completion	364	32%	471	28%	
	7. Crossover from Correctional Officer to Law Enforcement Officer	96	93%	65	95%	2%
	Partial Completion[1]	*[3]	*[3]	*[3]	*[3]	
	Full Completion	91	92%	52	94%	

	2007-08 Training Program	Colleges		Districts		Percentage Point Difference
		Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	Number of Students	Percentage Placed[2]	
Neither System Outperformed the Other (continued)	8. Facials Specialty	153	41%	332	39%	2%
	Partial Completion[1]	4	75%	72	42%	
	Full Completion	149	40%	260	38%	
	9. Family Child Care Training	65	35%	243	35%	0%
	Partial Completion[1]	*[3]	*[3]	226	35%	
	Full Completion	63	33%	17	47%	
	10. Fire Fighter II	791	77%	1,040	74%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	33	73%	173	62%	
	Full Completion	758	77%	867	76%	
	11. Law Enforcement Officer	1,583	90%	402	87%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	162	91%	50	88%	
	Full Completion	1,421	89%	352	87%	
	12. Medical Administrative Specialist	51	41%	264	41%	0%
	Partial Completion[1]	34	35%	178	40%	
	Full Completion	17	53%	86	43%	
	13. Patient Care Technician	186	46%	1,375	40%	6%
	Partial Completion[1]	54	41%	1,130	39%	
	Full Completion	132	48%	245	44%	
	14. Phlebotomy	178	49%	495	45%	4%
	Partial Completion[1]	10	40%	231	42%	
	Full Completion	168	49%	264	48%	
	15. Surgical Technology	157	75%	165	68%	7%
	Partial Completion[1]	30	67%	74	58%	
	Full Completion	127	70%	91	76%	

[1] Students partially completed a program if they earned at least one occupational completion point.

[2] We defined job placement as the student having an employment record in the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program data system after leaving the program with annual earnings greater than the minimum wage.

[3] To protect the confidentiality of students, categories with less than 10 students or greater than 95% are not reported.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Earnings

Of the 87 adult vocational certificate and applied technology diploma programs colleges and districts both provided in 2007-08, 28 programs had at least 30 students who completed the program and had both pre- and post-wage information. As shown in Table C-2, colleges outperformed districts for seven of the programs compared to six programs where the districts outperformed the colleges. Performance differences for the remaining 15 programs did not favor either of the two systems.

Table C-2
Colleges Had Slightly More Programs Where Students Made Higher Gains in Earnings

2007-08 Training Program		Colleges			Districts			Percentage Point Difference
		Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	
Colleges Outperformed Districts	1. Aircraft Airframe Mechanics	44	$15,286	20%	37	$22,324	10%	10%
	Partial Completion[1]	26	15,167	7%	19	24,722	4%	
	Full Completion	18	16,688	42%	18	19,006	47%	
	2. Cosmetology	343	8,103	27%	402	9,131	11%	16%
	Partial Completion[1]	99	9,498	10%	175	9,173	11%	
	Full Completion	244	7,370	34%	227	8,940	13%	
	3. Law Enforcement Officer	1,331	20,270	51%	309	23,956	36%	15%
	Partial Completion[1]	133	23,794	56%	40	22,710	47%	
	Full Completion	1,198	19,858	51%	269	24,332	34%	
	4. Nails Specialty	34	16,073	0%	124	10,522	-14%	14%
	Partial Completion[1]	-	-	-	19	14,668	-28%	
	Full Completion	34	16,073	0%	105	9,893	-14%	
	5. Phlebotomy	129	12,453	12%	365	13,320	1%	11%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	167	11,936	1%	
	Full Completion	120	12,725	8%	198	15,005	0%	
	6. Practical Nursing	555	16,090	65%	1,706	16,208	37%	28%
	Partial Completion[1]	49	15,983	9%	589	16,662	7%	
	Full Completion	506	16,158	71%	1,117	15,965	61%	
	7. Surgical Technology	117	14,287	43%	117	14,427	27%	16%
	Partial Completion[1]	22	12,513	62%	58	15,213	7%	
	Full Completion	95	14,704	37%	59	13,532	68%	
Districts Outperformed Colleges	1. Applied Welding Technologies	59	20,935	7%	231	11,664		11%
	Partial Completion[1]	48	22,270	1%	198	12,795		
	Full Completion	11	16,766	35%	33	10,038		
	2. Dental Assisting	187	10,450	53%	103	9,312		27%
	Partial Completion[1]	46	7,694	67%	45	8,189		
	Full Completion	141	11,865	49%	58	9,975		
	3. Fire Fighter II	694	16,667	24%	787	15,207	38%	14%
	Partial Completion[1]	30	12,818	18%	133	16,370	10%	
	Full Completion	664	16,900	24%	654	14,939	46%	
	4. Life Insurance Marketing	187	10,450	53%	103	9,312	80%	27%
	Partial Completion[1]	46	7,694	67%	45	8,189	39%	
	Full Completion	141	11,865	49%	58	9,975	96%	
	5. Massage Therapy	694	16,667	24%	787	15,207	38%	14%
	Partial Completion[1]	30	12,818	18%	133	16,370	10%	
	Full Completion	664	16,900	24%	654	14,939	46%	

2007-08 Training Program		Colleges			Districts			Percentage Point Difference
		Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	
Districts Outperformed Colleges (continued)	6. Nursing Assistant (Long-Term Care)	367	29,069	-3%	34	28,604	10%	13%
	Partial Completion[1]	12	29,733	-19%	34	28,604	10%	
	Full Completion	355	29,069	-3%	-	-	-	
Neither System Outperformed the Other	1. Administrative Assistant	50	10,032	21%	314	9,422	13%	8%
	Partial Completion[1]	38	10,967	8%	254	9,574	9%	
	Full Completion	12	6,724	45%	60	8,089	57%	
	2. Air Conditioning, Refrigeration And Heating Technology (PS)	98	20,272	12%	348	17,961	11%	1%
	Partial Completion[1]	54	23,916	5%	257	17,533	7%	
	Full Completion	44	18,509	32%	91	19,429	29%	
	3. Automotive Collision Repair And Refinishing	66	8,966	32%	80	9,416	25%	7%
	Partial Completion[1]	30	8,770	18%	56	9,323	18%	
	Full Completion	36	9,326	73%	24	10,568	32%	
	4. Automotive Service Technology	109	9,764	18%	397	9,442	25%	7%
	Partial Completion[1]	79	8,873	15%	325	8,781	21%	
	Full Completion	30	12,503	24%	72	10,025	44%	
	5. Child Care Center Operations	69	19,153	-1%	400	17,756	3%	4%
	Partial Completion[1]	32	17,768	-1%	87	18,234	5%	
	Full Completion	37	20,349	-2%	313	17,360	3%	
	6. Commercial Vehicle Driving	113	18,356	5%	381	24,456	8%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	29	19,947	5%	
	Full Completion	111	18,698	5%	352	24,487	10%	
	7. Correctional Officer	1,537	21,034	43%	439	20,643	46%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	64	21,933	19%	206	19,340	49%	
	Full Completion	1,473	21,017	44%	233	21,073	43%	
	8. Crossover From Correctional Officer To Law Enforcement Officer	95	37,648	2%	58	41,970	5%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	
	Full Completion	90	36,798	2%	50	43,462	4%	
	9. Early Childhood Education	456	12,278	8%	695	9,743	16%	8%
	Partial Completion[1]	445	12,249	8%	645	9,792	16%	
	Full Completion	11	12,891	10%	50	8,560	11%	
	10. Facials Specialty	85	16,096	1%	196	14,672	-2%	3%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	47	14,817	1%	
	Full Completion	81	15,897	1%	149	14,618	-2%	
	11. Family Child Care Training	38	16,527	-2%	140	16,682	-3%	1%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	129	16,581	-1%	
	Full Completion	36	17,520	-2%	11	18,395	-11%	
	12. Medical Assisting	109	10,680	34%	223	8,480	43%	9%
	Partial Completion[1]	33	11,938	17%	141	8,659	33%	
	Full Completion	76	10,370	42%	82	8,119	64%	
	13. Patient Care Technician	139	9,292	18%	940	9,208	13%	5%
	Partial Completion[1]	43	10,914	10%	761	9,413	10%	
	Full Completion	96	9,171	26%	179	8,433	32%	
	14 Private Security Officer	405	11,942	10%	263	9,920	10%	0%
	Partial Completion[1]	264	11,244	11%	216	9,125	13%	
	Full Completion	141	13,055	9%	47	15,119	-2%	

2007-08 Training Program		Colleges			Districts			
		Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	Number of Students	Median Annual Prior Earnings	Median Increase in Earnings	Percentage Point Difference
Neither System Outperformed the Other (continued)	15. Real Estate Sales Agent	108	28,283	0%	75	24,214	1%	1%
	Partial Completion[1]	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	
	Full Completion	101	28,541	0%	69	24,323	1%	

[1] To protect the confidentiality of students, categories with less than 10 students are not reported.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education data.

Appendix D

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Just Read, Florida!

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 *Colleges Perform Slightly Better Than School Districts in Career Education; Neither Clearly Outperforms in Adult Education.* The Department of Education (DOE) appreciates the opportunity provided for collaboration to ensure the accuracy of the report.

The Department appreciates the time and attention that your staff has given to evaluating the performance of postsecondary career and adult education programs. An evaluation of the completion, placement, and earnings gains associated with postsecondary programs must take into account the different types of programs being offered in the system. The impact of program mix, especially on placement and earning gains, is an important factor in this evaluation. In the appendices, when comparing districts and colleges that offer the same program, most performance differences between the systems disappear.

It should be noted that districts offer a wider range of programs and college enrollments tend to be focused on a more limited range. For example, the Department reports that about 14% of college certificate (non-college credit) enrollments are in the Law Enforcement Program. This program structure lends itself to a strong placement rate and earnings gains. Most students completing a law enforcement academy have their course of study paid for by a local law enforcement agency and are guaranteed a job upon completion. Only 1% of district enrollments are in this program. In addition, some restricted access programs have entry standards that are not adequately reflected in your report and these factors tend to have an impact on completion rates.

Dr. Gary R. VanLandingham
December 14, 2010
Page Two

The structure of the statewide career and technical education frameworks may also be affecting the completion rates reported for the programs. Your report noted that the colleges are more likely to have full program completers in non-credit programs; and districts were more likely to have partial program completers. Certificate programs are designed to have specific occupational outcomes and to allow for student progression on a career ladder. Many programs contain multiple exit points that represent occupational outcomes at which students could seek employment at that level. In some cases, districts and colleges may only offer part of the full program without the ability for any student to complete the entire program. In many cases, students obtain the skills they need and leave with marketable skills prior to full program completion. These factors affect completion rates. For example, the Automotive Service Technology program has nine Occupational Completion Points (OCPs) that have been designated as terminal exit points. Many students enter the programs with the expectation of completing some but not all of the competencies for that program. The entire program length is 1800 hours, but the shortest OCP is 150 hours.

Again, we thank you for your analysis and for the opportunity to respond to this report. Should you have any further questions for the Department, please contact Loretta Costin at Loretta.Costin@fldoe.org or Dr. Willis Holcombe at Will.Holcombe@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education

EJS/tgg

FADSS

Florida Association of
District School Superintendents

SUPERINTENDENT
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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
December 8, 2010
Page Two

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.

Mr. Tim Elwell
December 8, 2010
Page Three

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.

Mr. Tim Elwell
December 8, 2010
Page Four

Each individual school district career and technical education training program relies on a program advisory committee comprised of industry representatives to ensure training meets the needs of the specific region within the state. Each individual program advisory committee has a range of anywhere from six to more than a dozen active advisors committed to the school district career and technical education training format. There is a considerable potential for negative industry response to merger proposals.

At a time when resources are scarce and significant cost savings are not identified, consolidation would be disruptive to both systems and, more importantly, to students who desperately need technical training that leads to employment. Both school districts and colleges have a role in delivering workforce and adult education programs. These education systems and local communities are working together to meet the workforce needs at the local level. We need to let them continue meeting the needs of students.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report. If you have any questions, please contact me at 222.2280.

Sincerely,

Joy Frank

Joy Frank
General Counsel and Legislative Liaison

cc: District School Superintendents
        Commissioner Eric Smith
        Chancellor Frances Haithcock
        Chancellor Loretta Costin
        Chancellor Will Holcombe

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