

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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June 2, 2006

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Community College Presidents

**FROM:** Theresa A. Klebacha, Ph.D.

**SUBJECT:** Updated Interinstitutional Articulation Agreements

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Consistent with the state's goal of ensuring "seamless articulation and maximum access," school districts and community colleges are required to annually update their Interinstitutional Articulation Agreements. These agreements "must be completed before high school registration for the fall term of the following school year" (Section 1007.235(2), Florida Statutes).

In the process of finalizing your agreements, articulation committees should be aware of the 2006 legislative revisions relative to dual enrollment to ensure that the following updates are addressed. Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2006-07 school year, the revised language for Section 1007.271, Florida Statutes, requires school districts to

*"weigh dual enrollment courses the same as advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education courses when grade point averages are calculated. Alternative grade calculation or weighting systems that discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited."*

Section 1003.437, Florida Statutes, was also revised to specify that for the purpose of class ranking,

*"district school boards may exercise a weighted grading system pursuant to s.1007.271."*

**THERESA A. KLEBACHA, PH.D.**  
*Director, Strategic Initiatives*

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The Department of Education is required to “review each articulation agreement and certify the postsecondary courses that meet each district's graduation requirements” (Section 1007.235(5), Florida Statutes). To complete this review, your district's agreement should be electronically submitted to Dr. Pamela Kerouac at [pamela.kerouac@fldoe.org](mailto:pamela.kerouac@fldoe.org) by **Friday, August 4, 2006**. Please also send the agreement via fax or mail to:

Dr. Pamela Kerouac  
Office of Articulation  
Florida Department of Education  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1401  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400  
Fax: (850) 245-9542

If you would like assistance, please e-mail Dr. Kerouac or call (850) 245-9558. A sample format of the agreement is attached. The components of the sample agreement are consistent with the requirements of law and will be used as criteria in determining certification/compliance status.

Providing students with maximum access to a broad range of education options is reflected in the agreements you develop. The time and energy you invest in negotiating these agreements is greatly appreciated.

TAK/pka

Attachment

c: Chancellor Cheri Yecke  
Chancellor J. David Armstrong, Jr.

**SAMPLE FORMAT**  
**Interinstitutional Articulation Agreements**  
**Between School Districts and Postsecondary Institutions**

The Interinstitutional Articulation Agreement, as required by Section 1007.235, Florida Statutes (F.S.), should begin with an introductory section that clearly identifies the parties involved, the term (a beginning and ending date) of the agreement, the make-up of the Articulation Committee involved in negotiating and drafting the agreement, and a description of the process by which the agreement is renewed or terminated. Following the introductory information, the components required are:

**1. A ratification of all existing articulation agreements between the community college and the school district.**

This section attests to the ratification and modifications of all other agreements between the community college and the school district. Such agreements might include plans involving career education center / community college transfers, Tech Prep, testing, scholarships, and dual enrollment agreements beyond the scope of this document (such as agreements unique to a specific magnet program, academy or school), to name a few. As provided by law, this section should include a list of these agreements and any additional agreements with state universities or eligible independent colleges and universities.

**2. Courses and programs available to students eligible to participate in dual enrollment, including a plan for the community college to provide guidance services.**

A brief description of the dual enrollment program, including statutory requirements (such as students' exemption from the payment of tuition and fees) is an appropriate introduction to this section of the agreement. The following 2006 legislative revisions should be addressed in district agreements and counselors should integrate the updates in their academic advising. Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2006-07 school year, the revised language for Section 1007.271, F.S., requires school districts to:

“weigh dual enrollment courses the same as advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education courses when grade point averages are calculated. Alternative grade calculation or weighting systems that discriminate against dual enrollment courses are prohibited.”

Section 1003.437, F. S., was also revised to specify that for the purpose of class ranking, “district school boards may exercise a weighted grading system pursuant to s.1007.271.”

When advising students about the courses available, the *Dual Enrollment Course Equivalency List* is a great starting point, because these courses have been approved by the Articulation Coordinating Committee and State Board of Education. This list clearly delineates the high school credits that are awarded and the subject area in which these accelerated courses apply toward high school graduation requirements, but should not be viewed as the limit of dual enrollment course offerings. Each district's agreement should consider local needs including magnet programs, academies, and workforce demands. Courses to be offered beyond the state list should be clearly delineated at this point in the agreement. Limitations on enrollment due to class size restrictions can also be included.

Advising is the key for assisting students in making appropriate selections, and the advising practices that support students' course selection should be clearly articulated in this section. While the community college is responsible for providing guidance services, district guidance counselors and college advisors should coordinate advising services regarding the selection of courses in the dual enrollment program. Each student, preferably through the use of FACTS.org, should develop a plan that includes a list of courses that will result in an Applied Technology Diploma, an Associate in Science or an Associate in Arts degree, or, if the student identifies a baccalaureate degree as the objective, the plan must include courses that meet general education and prerequisite requirements for entrance into the selected baccalaureate degree program. It is not advisable for students to take excessive courses that will meet neither general education nor common prerequisite requirements. The intent is to provide maximum access while guiding students toward a well thought out program of study.

**a. The process by which parents and students are notified of the option to participate.**

This is the point where both district and postsecondary responsibilities are clearly delineated. Who will notify parents and students of the option to participate in the dual enrollment program and how and when will this be done? Be specific.

**b. The process by which students and parents exercise their option to participate.**

Procedures for participation, along with firmly established deadlines, are essential to the agreement. The application/forms for admission to the program, the recommendations/signatures required for participation, the person to whom parents and/or students submit their paperwork, the process by which students register and withdraw from courses, maximum course loads, grade forgiveness, weighting of dual enrollment course grades, and the process by which grades are distributed should all be covered in the agreement. Confusion and frustration often occur when students or parents are given conflicting information about procedures and deadlines from the high school and the college. Without an official resource, parents seek resolution with their school board, the college president, or the Department of Education, none of which has the individual authority to make these decisions. Having these components clearly articulated saves considerable time and inconvenience.

**c. Eligibility criteria for student participation in dual enrollment courses and programs.**

Students must have an unweighted GPA of 3.0 and demonstrate readiness for college coursework through scores on the Common Placement Test to participate in college credit dual enrollment. The specific cut scores required for enrollment (particularly if they vary by discipline) should be listed. Participation in vocational dual enrollment requires a 2.0 unweighted GPA. Any exception to the GPA requirement and/or any additional program admission requirements (such as high school grade level) must be clearly delineated at this point in the agreement.

**d. Institutional responsibilities for student screening prior to enrollment, and monitoring enrolled students.**

The delineation of responsibility for the initial screening and ongoing monitoring of participants must be included in the agreement, either at this point or previously incorporated into “b” and/or “c” above. Requirements for continued participation in the program must be covered. Clearly identifying which GPA is being considered (the college or high school), and how often the GPA’s are reviewed, can help avoid the inevitable dispute when a student is dismissed from the program.

In addition to outlining the academic criteria for continued enrollment in the program, this section is a good place to identify behavioral expectations in dual enrollment courses, and which entity’s code of conduct and consequences will be enforced. Maturity/discipline issues arise regularly, and addressing them in the agreement leaves less room for dispute when these incidences occur.

**e. Criteria by which the quality of dual enrollment courses and programs are to be judged and maintained.**

Dual enrollment courses are college courses with identical content and outcomes as the regular college courses with the same prefixes and numbers. Dual enrollment instructors must meet the teaching credentials established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This agreement must outline the procedures for maintaining the teaching and content integrity of courses. Such procedures should include a plan for recruiting, selecting and evaluating faculty and monitoring of course content.

**f. Institutional responsibilities for the cost of dual enrollment courses and programs.**

The financial challenges associated with dual enrollment can be overcome with a strong agreement that employs cost-sharing and cost-saving measures. Combining resources is a realistic way to cover the costs associated with the program.

Cost-sharing, although not required, is strongly encouraged, particularly for the cost of instruction. Though there are several variations of this model, the key cost-saver is having each entity contribute half of each instructor's salary. The dollar figure, for example, might be based on a college adjunct's pay or the cost of a teacher overload. Whatever the rate decided upon, each entity would be responsible for half that amount for each dual enrollment instructor. If the school district pays the instructor's salary, the community college would pay to the school district half the agreed upon cost of an instructor. Conversely, if the community college pays the instructor's salary, the school district would pay to the community college half the agreed upon cost of an instructor. A good mix of community college instructors and high school teachers will provide for a balance in the funds paid out and those received by each entity. The opportunity for this financial balance provides incentive for both entities to actively recruit instructors who are able and willing to teach dual enrollment.

While school districts are responsible for the purchase of their students' textbooks, the two entities can come to an agreement on a reasonable length of time for the use of "class sets" of dual enrollment textbooks. If, for example, districts can be guaranteed use of a set of textbooks for 3 years from the time of purchase, the enormous cost associated with textbooks can be greatly diminished. With the exception of those areas with rapidly changing technology (which can be specified in the agreement), most academic texts can be used effectively for much longer than they typically are used. Though this may involve compromise on the part of the instructors, it does not compromise the quality or integrity of the course.

Students with disabilities must be accommodated as required by law in dual enrollment classes. Several issues related to this topic should be negotiated and spelled out in this agreement. Which entity covers the cost of accommodations? Whose criteria are adhered to when determining the need for accommodations (school district or community college)? Providing these details in the agreement helps avoid difficult situations that, while rare, arise from time to time. Other costs associated with the program can employ cost-sharing as well, and negotiating these financial arrangements is an important aspect of developing a sound agreement.

**g. Responsibility for providing student transportation.**

This section should clearly outline who is responsible for the cost of transportation for courses taught at locations other than the high school campus. If it is the student's responsibility to provide his/her own transportation, this should be stated in the agreement.

**3. Mechanisms and strategies for reducing the incidence of postsecondary remediation in math, reading, and writing for first-time-enrolled recent high school graduates.**

Though most districts have partnership activities between the community college and school district that serve to lessen the need for remediation when students enter the community college, few interinstitutional agreements adequately address this topic. Examples of mechanisms described in this section might be: federal, state, or local grant programs focused on remediation, CPT testing agreements, co-sponsored after-school or summer tutoring/remediation programs, collaborative teacher-faculty initiatives, etc.

This section should specify the process by which the local articulation committee will: analyze the unique problems that have been identified in this district and develop corrective actions; measure and communicate outcomes; collaborate on the development of strategies for better preparation of students upon graduation from high school; analyze the costs associated with the implementation of postsecondary remedial education and secondary-level corrective actions; and identify the strategies for reducing such costs.

The results of the articulation committee's analysis/assessment must be provided annually and reported to the district school board and community college board of trustees. It is worthwhile to include a realistic plan for such in this section of the agreement.

#### 4. Mechanisms and strategies for promoting “tech prep” programs of study.

Many districts have a separate “tech prep” articulation agreement in place that thoroughly addresses a plan to make students aware of the program, promotes enrollment, and articulates students through a sequential program of study leading to a postsecondary career or technical education degree or certificate. If such an agreement exists, it should be referenced in this section and provided as an appendix to this agreement. Districts that do not have a separate “tech prep” agreement must address the components discussed in the previous paragraph at this point in the interinstitutional agreement.

#### 5. A plan that outlines the mechanisms and strategies for improving the preparation of elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

This section of the agreement must outline a plan for the school district and community college to address the ongoing preparation of teachers in the district. The plan should cover both pre-service and in-service activities developed with the intent of improving teacher preparation at all levels and addressing local critical teacher shortages. Pursuant to Section 1007.235(3), F.S., professional development programs should be developed to include curriculum content and the utilization of new technologies that respond to local, state and national priorities. This would be a great place to align your professional development activities with Florida’s strategic imperatives. The “*Eight to Be Great!*” strategic imperatives can be found on the web at [http://www.fldoe.org/Strategic\\_Plan/](http://www.fldoe.org/Strategic_Plan/).

**The final section of this agreement is the execution, which includes the appropriate signatures of school district and community college representatives.**

##### **Reminders:**

- ✓ The district school superintendent is responsible for incorporating, either directly or by reference, all dual enrollment courses contained within the district interinstitutional articulation agreement within the district school board’s student progression plan.
- ✓ Districts can submit a request to the Office of Articulation, to review Dual Enrollment courses not currently offered on the *Dual Enrollment Course Equivalency List*. This annual review is conducted by faculty committees and evaluated for high school and college credit based on mastery of outcomes determined by the Department of Education in accordance with Section 1007.271(6), F.S.
- ✓ All agreements will be reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the law. Compliance reports will be publicly reported and areas of confirmed non-compliance will be addressed.

*For additional information or assistance in completing your interinstitutional articulation agreement, contact Dr. Pamela Kerouac at [Pamela.kerouac@fldoe.org](mailto:Pamela.kerouac@fldoe.org) or (850) 245-9558.*