

The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio's Early College Access Policy

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KnowledgeWorks Foundation is Ohio's largest public education philanthropy. KnowledgeWorks provides funding and leadership for education initiatives throughout Ohio and is focused on furthering universal access to high-quality educational opportunities. KnowledgeWorks' method is simple—to fund, facilitate and do. The Foundation believes the approach of investing, supporting and actively participating maximizes the results of improving education in Ohio.

KnowledgeWorks Foundation is working to create partnerships that will produce measurably better educational results throughout the state and is committed to sharing knowledge gained and lessons learned with others in Ohio and across the nation to help inform public policy.

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Credits

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Executive Summary

In a time when education serves as the currency of an information-based economy that is transforming the workforce needs of both new and old industries, dual enrollment offers a 21st-century approach to removing traditional education boundaries and increasing the number of Americans ready to compete in a global economy.

Researchers and political leaders of all stripes have benchmarked the success of a state by its adaptability in today's knowledge economy, where information is the key to individual and institutional advancement. This has led states to reexamine their investments and to focus on increasing the number of a state's population prepared for postsecondary education. Allowing students to earn early college credit is an innovative policy to expand a state's role in ensuring postsecondary education access for more students.

In 1989, Ohio established the Post Secondary Enrollment Options (or PSEO) policy to allow 11th- and 12th-grade students the opportunity to enroll in college courses and receive both high school and college credit at no cost. The policy was expanded in 1997 to include students in grades 9 and 10. The intent of PSEO, as described in one handbook, was to "provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level."¹

¹*Post Secondary Options Area Coordinators Handbook*. Ohio Department of Education Center for School Finance, 2006.

Ohio's PSEO policy has allowed thousands of high school students to earn college and high school credit at the same time, with no cost to them. Between 1998 and 2004, more than 55,000 students earned credit that could be applied to college degrees.

Recent calls to expand participation in the PSEO policy prompted several questions: What do we know about the success of this policy in Ohio? Is it bringing us closer to the promise of increased college access and participation for more Ohioans? Who is taking advantage of this opportunity across the state? What does it cost? Does PSEO participation have an impact on college-going or college-completion rates in Ohio?

This report examines the progress of Ohio's Post Secondary Enrollment Options policy towards offering early college access to Ohio high school students by analyzing data on **participation, access, success** and **cost**. It also provides a comparative review that examines the policy in contrast to dual enrollment policies in other states.

Key Findings

Does the PSEO policy make a difference in the lives of Ohio high school students? Does it contribute to providing the skilled workforce that is necessary for the state to compete and succeed in a knowledge economy? No definitive answer to those key questions is possible. The evidence that is available hints at some successes – indicating that at least some groups of students who earn college credit through PSEO may be more likely to go to college, less likely to need remediation, and on average get their degrees faster. However, current data doesn't allow us to determine whether students who participate in PSEO are those who are already college bound or if the policy encourages students who

would not otherwise have been college bound to attend and successfully complete higher education.

Data Limitations

Perhaps the most significant finding of this research is the extent to which data limitations restrict a full analysis of the PSEO policy. On almost every measure reviewed, data were incomplete or were not broken down in ways that allow for a comprehensive analysis.

- Tracking of students between Ohio's K-12 and postsecondary systems is not consistent and data is not easily shared. This makes it impossible to track students from one system to the other – though it is precisely at the juncture between the two systems, students' transition from high school to higher education, that this policy aims to have an effect.
- In addition to the problems of coordinating information across systems, some potentially telling data is not collected. For example, data on PSEO from the Ohio Department of Education is not broken down by individual students or easily coordinated with demographic data on factors such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, native language, and socioeconomic status. Also, data is limited or nonexistent for students who enroll in PSEO at private institutions or those who go on to college outside of Ohio.

Participation

- Although participation has increased every year since the policy began, the percentage of Ohio's high school students taking advantage of PSEO in recent years has remained at well below 5 percent.

Between 1998 and 2004, more than 55,000 students earned credit that could be applied to college degrees.

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The percentage of Ohio's high school students taking advantage of PSEO in recent years has remained at well below 5 percent.

More than half of the participants take more than six credit hours a semester.

Nearly 9 out of 10 PSEO participants are white and two out of three are female.

Nearly 71 percent of PSEO participants who graduated from high school in 2003 enrolled in Ohio public colleges, substantially more than the 58.7 percent of Ohio high school graduates who went to college anywhere in 2002.

- Those who participate tend to take classes in arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, or natural science and mathematics, contrary to some reported impressions that PSEO students do not pursue rigorous studies. More than half of the participants take more than six credit hours a semester.

Access

- Students do not access PSEO equally across geographic regions or demographic classifications. Nearly 9 out of 10 PSEO participants are white and two out of three are female. Participation rates overall are lower around Cincinnati and Columbus and in rural areas than in the northern part of the state.

Success

- Early data indicate that students who participated in PSEO may be more likely than other students to attend college. Nearly 71 percent of PSEO participants who graduated from high school in 2003 enrolled in Ohio public colleges, substantially more than the 58.7 percent of Ohio high school graduates who went to college anywhere in 2002.
- Among first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students, those with PSEO backgrounds are more likely to get a degree and tend to graduate sooner. The median time to get an associate's degree is 2.7 years for PSEO students, compared to 3.8 years for all students. For bachelor's degrees the difference is 3.8 years for PSEO students as opposed to 4.3 years for all students.

- However, because this analysis cannot account for student self-selection, it would be inappropriate to say that PSEO is the *cause* of the improved outcomes.

Cost

- **To the state:** In 2004-05, the state redirected \$17.8 million in state foundation funds from local school districts to postsecondary institutions to pay for courses taken by PSEO students. These are not additional expenses in the budget, but funds that would have been expended at the high school and now are going to support dual credit. Additional costs to the state in 2004-05 included a set-aside of \$1.5 million for PSEO classes taken by students in nonpublic high schools. Additionally, the State Share of Instruction (SSI) allocation, which is the state funding to public postsecondary institutions based on average enrollments, amounted to \$10.9 million for PSEO students. The state's costs for administering the policy and paying transportation costs for qualifying students are unknown.
- **To colleges:** PSEO reimbursements from the state do not appear to replace the total revenue postsecondary institutions usually generate through student payments for tuition, books and fees. While Ohio paid \$19.3 million in PSEO reimbursements in 2004-05, institutions reported that the expected revenue for tuition, books and materials for those students totaled \$28.6 million, leaving a gap of \$9.3 million. At public colleges, costs not covered by tuition and fees is covered in part by SSI allocations, but an undetermined amount is absorbed by the institutions.

- **To local school districts:** Local school districts lose state foundation funds for every PSEO course students take – in 2004-05, that amount was \$17.8 million. (Districts may be reimbursed a portion of that by students who do not successfully complete the course, though that amount is not known.) Potential additional costs such as administrative overhead and expenses for meeting the policy's communication and counseling requirements are not reported.
- **To students and families:** Students and their families pay for courses when students seek only college credit or don't complete the course successfully; most also pay for transportation to and from campus. In a few cases, institutions may require additional fees. None of these costs can be established.

Ohio's Policy Compared to Other States'

- Of the 47 states with policies on dual enrollment, Ohio is one of only six states that specifically open dual enrollment to 9th and 10th graders, and it has stronger requirements than most states for communicating and counseling families about PSEO options. Ohio also differs from the majority in that it pays tuition costs only for students who successfully complete the course.

Options to Consider

Based on the data review and comprehensive comparison of Ohio's dual enrollment policy with those across the nation, this report offers potential policy revisions and options for PSEO. These options were developed with the following observations in mind:

PSEO is the only statewide policy that offers *all* students the opportunity to gain early college access and encourages schooling beyond high school – a 21st-century reality for self-sufficiency.

Clear policy direction is needed for PSEO in Ohio. This is the first comprehensive collection and examination of the data even though the policy has been in place for years.

Ohio can no longer afford to offer early college access to a select few and current trends demand that all Ohioans are encouraged to continue beyond high school – across all socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and regional sectors of the state.

PSEO is a policy – not a program with a system of supports. To transform access and use PSEO as a lever, the state may need to consider what supports are needed to encourage participation from students, families, and institutions.

PSEO is the only statewide policy that offers all students the opportunity to gain early college access.

Options

Ohio could

Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compile data or use databases on participating students that includes key characteristics of family background and create linkages that allow the state to track those students into the public postsecondary system.• It also could collect data on all accelerated learning options, including AP, IB, early college high schools, and Tech Prep.
Participation and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the relevance of additional eligibility criteria created by individual institutions and clarify criteria statewide.• Explore ways to prepare and engage low-income and minority students and broaden district and university participation.
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Require public institutions to issue <i>and</i> accept all PSEO credit.• Review counseling and other supports currently in place to evaluate which encourage student success.• Coordinate with existing college access programs with proven track records.• Create a more interconnected approach to PSEO as part of a P-16 strategy and reinforce the approach across K-12, higher education, and workforce to build a more seamless transition to higher education.
Cost and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore cost mechanisms of other states to ensure efficiency and relieve funding burden on local districts and/or institutions.• Require annual reports from K-12 and higher education agencies on all accelerated learning options, including data on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Rates of participation, college going, degree completion, time to degree– Race/ethnicity, income, location– Costs to state, students and institutions, estimated savings to state

Any effort to utilize PSEO to help the state achieve a more competitive workforce will require a focused effort by the state to create a more interconnected approach to PSEO by bringing together government leadership, K-12, higher education, business and civic groups around this issue, and by targeting its communications and policy revisions to areas of the state and populations where increased access is *essential*.

Introduction: The Promise of Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment offers a 21st-century approach to remove traditional boundaries to college access and to potentially increase the number of Americans with credentials or degrees ready to compete in a global economy.

Researchers and political leaders of all stripes have benchmarked the success of a state by its adaptability in the “knowledge economy,” where information is a currency for individual and institutional advancement. This has led states to reexamine their investments and to focus on increasing the number of a state’s population prepared for postsecondary education. Allowing students to earn early college credit is an innovative policy to expand a state’s role in ensuring postsecondary education access for more students.

Dual enrollment policies have developed across the United States as a way to offer high school students the opportunity to complete college credit early. Forty-seven states have some type of dual enrollment policy.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 70 percent of U.S. high schools offered courses for dual credit in the 2002-2003 school year, with 51 percent of schools offering coursework with a career and technical or vocational focus and more than 90 percent offering courses with an academic focus. Most of these courses enroll postsecondary and high school students in the same course together. As this policy differs from state to state, so does the implementation of dual enrollment. Some schools offer college faculty to teach a college class to high school students or certify high school teachers to teach the course. Others allow

students to complete courses on a college campus.

These policies were created for many reasons, from fostering relationships between higher education and K-12 schools to improving college preparation and increasing opportunities for more rigorous curriculum access for all.²

The U.S. Department of Education recently reported that college credits earned prior to graduating high school can reduce the average time to complete a degree and increase the likelihood of graduation.³ Dual enrollment, or Post Secondary Enrollment Options in Ohio, is thought to be one of the more promising methods to increase these numbers.

While implementation varies and controversy exists over the quality of these courses and access to these opportunities, dual enrollment remains a popular option to the public and political figures alike. The 2006 *Ohio Education Matters* Poll found that about 40 percent of Ohioans favor requiring all high school students to take college courses for credit while in high school.⁴ A recent Education Commission of the States policy brief found that student and high school participation in dual enrollment had more than doubled in some states over the last five years.⁵

In recent years, policymakers have increasingly called for the expansion of early college access options. This includes the National Governors Association and new state efforts to establish and expand dual

A recent Education Commission of the States policy brief found that student and high school participation in dual enrollment had more than doubled in some states over the last five years.

² Carl Krueger, *Dual Enrollment: Policy Issues Confronting State Policymakers*, Education Commission of the States, March 2006.

³ U.S. Department of Education, *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Institutions 1970-2000*, Washington, D.C.: US Department of Education, 2004.

⁴ *Ohio's Education Matters: Public Priorities for the Future of Ohio Education. 2006 Poll*. KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

⁵ Carl Krueger, *Dual Enrollment: Policy Issues Confronting State Policymakers*, Education Commission of the States, March 2006.

enrollment. For example, former Governor Mark Warner of Virginia championed a 2005 state agreement called the “Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment Between Virginia Public Schools and Community Colleges” that provided a statewide framework for dual enrollment arrangements between Virginia public schools and community colleges. Additionally, last year, the state of Utah developed a concurrent enrollment program that supports 22,384 students at a cost of just more than \$5 million a year.

Nationally, as part of the No Child Left Behind reauthorization, the Bush administration has called for the expansion of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, as well as the training of teachers to teach these courses, to ensure that “students are learning the skills they need to compete in the global economy.”⁶ Under this proposal, low-income students who complete a rigorous high school course of study are eligible for an Academic Competitiveness Grant to help with college costs.

The Vision for Ohio’s Post Secondary Enrollment Options

In 1989, Ohio established the Post Secondary Enrollment Options (or PSEO) policy to allow 11th- and 12th-grade students the opportunity to enroll in college courses and receive both high school and college credit at no cost to them. The policy was expanded in 1997 to include students in grades 9 and 10. The intent of PSEO, as described in a handbook for PSEO coordinators, was to “provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level.”⁷

Gov. Ted Strickland made expanding PSEO part of his 2006 campaign platform and has included \$5.7 million in new state investment in PSEO in his first state budget. The budget executive summary states that the new funding will “allow over 3,800 students to earn college credit while still in high school” and will help to “remove the existing disincentive to school districts to participating in PSEO” by providing supplemental funding.

Ohio’s political and education leaders have made other efforts to reinforce the state’s commitment to PSEO and expand these options in recent years. One such effort has been the State Board of Education’s Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities, which aimed to help the state’s education policy leaders rethink the rules, roles, and relationships that define the high school, including the recommendation to implement PSEO as a way to help bridge the gap between high school and postsecondary education.⁸ Additionally, the Governor’s Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE) examined issues of higher education, including promoting access and opportunity for higher education for all students.⁹

Another effort to improve access and success in postsecondary institutions has been the Early College High Schools (ECHS) program, which creates high schools that also offer up to two years of college credit. These schools seek to expand educational opportunities for underrepresented populations, including low-income students, first-generation college goers, English language learners, and students of color. Students are expected to graduate in four to five years with a high school diploma and

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *Building on Results: A Blueprint for Strengthening the No Child Left Behind Act*, Washington, D.C., 2007.

⁷ *Post Secondary Options Area Coordinators Handbook*. Ohio Department of Education Center for School Finance, 2006.

⁸ *High-Quality High Schools: Preparing All Students for Success in Postsecondary Education, Careers and Citizenship*. State Board of Education’s Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities. November 2004.

⁹ *Building on Knowledge, Investing in People: Higher Education and the Future of Ohio’s Economy*. Governor’s Commission on Higher Education and the Economy. April 29, 2004

two years of college credits. Such schools are currently located in Dayton, Toledo, Lorain, Youngstown, Canton, and Columbus and are serving just more than a thousand students.

Recent legislation has also emphasized the importance of PSEO and dual enrollment policies. Passed in December 2006, the Ohio Core legislation prescribes a new minimum high school curriculum for public and chartered nonpublic schools. The Core includes requirements that each school district, community school, and chartered nonpublic high school offer students in grades 9 to 12 the opportunity to participate in a dual enrollment program to earn college credit. It also requires the Partnership for Continued Learning to make legislative recommendations to improve the operation of the PSEO policy and other dual enrollment programs.

Calls to move forward with policy revisions prompt several questions: What do we know about the success of this policy in Ohio? Is it bringing us closer to the promise of increased college access and participation for more Ohioans? Who is taking advantage of this opportunity across the state? What does it cost? Does PSEO participation have an impact on college going or college completion rates in Ohio?

This study seeks to answer these questions and inform public discourse on Ohio's current dual enrollment policy.

The intent of PSEO, was to “provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level.”

Background: What is PSEO and How Does It Work?

Ohio's PSEO policy has allowed thousands of high school students to earn college and high school credit at once, with no cost to them. Between 1998 and 2004, more than 55,000 students earned credit that could be applied to college degrees under the policy. Most often these students enrolled in a course at a college near their home, traveled to campus, and studied side by side with full-time college students. In some cases, colleges established special sections of courses that were taught on campus but composed of high school students, or they offered college courses at the high school. Some students have taken courses online.

Eligibility

Students in grades 9-12 are eligible to participate if they have a 3.0 grade-point average (GPA) in the subject area of the PSEO course they wish to take. However, colleges have the discretion to impose more restrictive grade-point requirements and some have done so.

Enrollment Process

All school districts are required to provide information about PSEO to students and parents by March 1 each year. Students who want to participate generally seek out the courses they wish to take independently. They must provide the school written notice of their intent to take part for the following school year by March 30.

Counseling

By law, counselors have to meet with each student who plans to take a PSEO course and that student's parent or guardian to discuss issues associated with PSEO, including the risks/benefits and the potential impact on GPA, extracurricular activities, and graduation, among other factors. At the end of the session, the parent and student sign a form verifying that they received counseling.

Course Credit

Students can choose to take a course either for both high school and college credit, or for college credit only. The state will pay for the course only if it is applied to both college and high school credit. While the majority of PSEO students seek dual credit, some choose to receive only college credit and pay the costs themselves so that the grade for the college course isn't averaged into their high school GPA.

In a few cases, students may receive both college and high school credit without asking the state to pay for the course because tuition is paid by another funding source, such as when a parent gets free tuition at the postsecondary institution as an employee benefit.

In Ohio, the decision whether to accept PSEO course credits is left to the discretion of the individual institutions of higher education. There is no uniform approach across the more than 600 districts and numerous institutions of higher education.

Payment

The PSEO policy provides payment for dual-enrollment courses by transferring a portion of the state per-pupil allotment for public schools – the district’s state foundation payment – to the college.

For students who take the course for high school and college credit, the college initially bears the cost of tuition, books, and fees. At the end of the school year, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) reimburses the institution a portion of the tuition, books, and fees cost for these courses. The reimbursement amount is based on what portion of the student’s education took place at the institution. The state then deducts that amount from the local district’s state foundation payment.

The formula for determining the amount of the state funds to be redirected to the college for PSEO courses is:

Per-pupil basic state aid

x % of school day spent in PSEO courses

= Amount subtracted from district’s state funds and paid to postsecondary institution

Students who fail or don’t complete the course must reimburse their local districts the amount deducted from the foundation payment. Students who take the course for college credit only are responsible for paying the full cost of tuition, fees, and books themselves.

For students who do not attend public high schools, no state foundation money is available to direct toward the college costs. To cover PSEO participation for nonpublic students, the Ohio General Assembly designates a sum of money at the beginning of each two-year budget cycle out of a set-aside from the state’s Auxiliary Services Program. Nonpublic schools that wish to participate must notify ODE annually. Their students must then submit an application to ODE indicating how many college hours they intend to take. If ODE approves the application, money is set aside from the fund to pay for the students’ courses. Because demand is greater than the money available, students are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. (At the time of this report, ODE was considering possible changes to that system to take effect for 2007-08.) For nonpublic school students who are approved, ODE reimburses the college using the same formula as it uses for public school districts.

The state also reimburses the school district for a portion of the transportation costs of up to \$172 a year for students who qualify for the national Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

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Paying for PSEO Courses: An Example

To more fully understand how state foundation funds (the per-pupil aid to high schools) is transferred to colleges to pay for PSEO courses, it may be helpful to consider the case of one hypothetical PSEO student. Assume that Student A attends a high school with 7 periods in the day and is taking 4 one-credit courses at her high school. She would like to take two courses worth a total of six credit hours at a local university that runs on semesters.

1. Convert high school class periods to college credit hours.

Because high schools and colleges operate on different units of measure, the first step is to convert the high school day into the college unit, which in this case is semester hours.

Student A's high school has 7 periods

1 Period = 5 semester hours or 7.5 quarter hours

So Student A's day is equivalent to 35 semester hours (7 periods x 5 semester hours).

2. Calculate percentage of day spent in PSEO.

Out of the possible 35 semester hours for her high school, Student A will take 6 semester hours of college credit. The calculation to figure what portion of her day this represents is:

$6 \text{ semester credit hours} / 35 \text{ semester credit hours} = 17.14\%$

This is the percentage of the state aid that will go toward her tuition, fees, and books for the PSEO courses.

3. Multiply the per-pupil amount by that percentage.

At the time Student A enrolls in PSEO (2006-07), the annual per-pupil allotment from the state is \$5,403.

$\$5,403 \times 17.14\% = \926

The amount subtracted from the school district's state funds to pay the college for the two courses is \$926.

Potential Benefits of PSEO

The Post Secondary Enrollment Options policy was introduced to give “qualified” high school students a chance to try college work. While the original language hints that those who established the policy may have had a limited audience in mind, changing demands of the workplace in the 18 years since have broadened the field of those who could share in its benefits. With experts predicting that 60 percent of new jobs in Ohio over the next decade will require some level of education beyond high school, the need has grown for all students to prepare for, attempt, and succeed in postsecondary education.

PSEO is just one of a number of policies and programs that can help ensure that Ohio’s workforce is equipped to meet the demands of the new knowledge-based economy. Of the programs that aim to give high school students a head start on college, it is the only statewide policy that doesn’t depend on a particular institution – in theory, at least, any eligible high school student could earn credits through PSEO, no matter where he or she lives.

As such, it offers a number of potential benefits to students and their families, school districts, postsecondary institutions, and the state.

Students

For students and their families, the possible benefits of participating in PSEO are many. The policy allows students – even those who might not otherwise consider continuing their education – to get a taste of college while still in high school, which could help them make better decisions for their futures.

Those who decide to pursue a degree can get a jump on college coursework without having to pay for tuition, fees, or

books, reducing the cost of their college education. Dual credit can reduce duplication between high school courses and introductory college courses, helping students get degrees more quickly.

PSEO also can provide more challenging and varied coursework for high schools students. Even students who choose not to pursue a degree can use the opportunity to explore interests that are not offered at the secondary level or to seek out more advanced offerings.

School Districts

School districts and high schools also could benefit from PSEO in several ways. Additional courses that make high schoolers’ studies more challenging, varied, and efficient can help ensure that each school is able to meet the individual needs of every student. Local schools also benefit if PSEO encourages students to attend college, creating higher college-going rates that can make those schools more attractive to potential students and families.

PSEO also promotes efficiency of learning as there is reduced repetition of courses in grades 11-14 when students can take introductory college courses for dual credit. The need to communicate around credit questions also opens dialogue and collaboration between the high school and college faculty. The policy supports the goal of providing a more seamless transition between high schools and postsecondary institutions.

Colleges

Postsecondary institutions – including community and technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and branch campuses – may benefit from PSEO as well. The PSEO experience exposes students to a particular institution, giving that institution

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Additional courses that make high schoolers’ studies more challenging, varied, and efficient can help ensure that each school is able to meet the individual needs of every student

If more students stay in college and get degrees and do so more quickly, the state will have a better-prepared workforce to meet the needs of a changing economy.

the chance to convince them to enroll after high school.

Students who have taken PSEO courses and later attend college may be more likely to stay in college and may need less remediation, as they're likely to be more academically prepared and more familiar with some aspects of college life. As with the high schools, the opportunity for more dialogue and cooperation between secondary and postsecondary institutions has the potential to enhance both systems.

The State

While the potential benefits for students, districts, and colleges are also pluses for Ohio, some additional considerations apply from the perspective of the state. If more students stay in college and get degrees and do so more quickly, the state will have a better-prepared workforce to meet the needs of a changing economy.

PSEO also could reduce the costs for providing instruction by decreasing redundancy in coursework between high school and the postsecondary level.

Other Accelerated Learning Options

Ohio's PSEO policy is one of several options students have for advanced coursework leading to college credit while in high school. Other options, referred to as "accelerated learning options," include Advanced Placement (AP), the International Baccalaureate program (IB), and Tech Prep. AP and IB are other options that allow students to take advanced coursework. In general, students complete specially designated high-level courses in high school, then take an examination to establish their

proficiency. The exam results determine whether they are eligible to receive college credit for the course. Once the students enroll in college, the institutions have the right to decide whether they will accept the AP or IB credit.

The Tech Prep program offers college-equivalent courses in high schools to qualified students who are interested in technical careers. Students prepare for a specific field of work, such as information technologies or the health field, and the program is structured so that they attain at least an associate's degree. (In some cases, students may access Tech Prep courses through the PSEO policy.)

By the time they graduate from high school, some students may have participated in multiple college credit programs. Each of these programs confers different potential advantages in accessing higher education and succeeding once there, but PSEO offers some unique benefits.

When compared to AP and IB classes, for instance, PSEO courses give students greater certainty about how their college credits will transfer, since credit for AP or IB classes depends on the student's score on the advanced placement test. In addition, PSEO courses usually are offered on college campuses, exposing students to a wider experience of college life.

High schools have to select to offer AP, IB, and Tech Prep programs, limiting their reach to some students who may benefit from advanced courses. AP, for example, generally is offered to only a small and select group of students. PSEO is not dependent on a particular institution and is available to all Ohioans.

In contrast to Tech Prep, PSEO is open-ended, allowing students to select any college course, not only those specific to a particular career path.

For schools, PSEO has the advantage that the courses generally do not require additional teacher training or certification at the high school level because they are taught by college instructors.

Because dual enrollment is defined as being enrolled in a high school and a postsecondary institution *at the same time* and receiving credit simultaneously at *both*, PSEO is Ohio's only dual enrollment policy.

Questions about PSEO

While PSEO has many supporters, the policy also has generated some questions and concerns. The most significant of those – does PSEO benefit students and the state? – are among those that prompted this research.

Less global concerns also have been identified. A 2006 report found widespread support for PSEO but substantial variation in how it was implemented across the state.¹⁰ The report listed several commonly mentioned concerns on the part of educators and policymakers, including:

- PSEO may encourage some students to consider college who might not otherwise, but is more likely to be viewed as an option for the traditionally college-bound, high-achieving student.

- Insufficient oversight of PSEO course-taking may allow some students to avoid rigorous, college preparatory programs.
- Access to PSEO is highly variable. Students are not provided with the same information and guidance about PSEO or the same ability to participate across the state.
- Because eligibility is determined by each postsecondary institution beyond the state mandate, high school students are often unclear about their options.
- Problems were reported in transferring credits from one college to another and in being granted dual credit at both the high school and college for coursework that was recognized at the college level.
- The current method of funding PSEO places undue burden on participating high schools, in particular.

The data compiled in this report explores the perceived benefits and addresses many of the concerns about PSEO in Ohio.

Because dual enrollment is defined as being enrolled in a high school and a postsecondary institution *at the same time* and receiving credit simultaneously at *both*, PSEO is Ohio's only dual enrollment policy.

¹⁰ *Postsecondary Enrollment Options for High School Students: Directions for Policy and Practice in Ohio* (unpublished document, Jobs for the Future and KnowledgeWorks Foundation, May 2006).

Measuring PSEO Progress

Any comprehensive examination of Ohio's Post Secondary Enrollment Options policy should include a thorough analysis of who is participating and potential downstream effects, such as whether participants are more likely to enroll in college and earn a degree. To ensure that the policy is fair and equitable, the analysis should also focus on whether PSEO is available to all students on an equal basis and whether the benefits of PSEO participation are shared equally by all. Finally, a comprehensive review would consider whether the policy is an effective use of taxpayer dollars. The knowledge generated would inform policymakers and the education community about ways in which the PSEO policy might be improved.

Attempting to answer questions such as these, this report used four primary criteria to assess the progress of PSEO in Ohio:

- **Participation.** What are the trends in participation in PSEO? What kinds of courses are students enrolling in? *This includes state data on enrollment trends over time, enrollment as a percentage of the total high school population, enrollment in college afterwards, and course participation.*
- **Access.** Who is taking college classes through PSEO? What kinds of students take part and where do they live? *This includes reviewing distribution of PSEO participation across Ohio, as well as across gender, racial, and income groups.*
- **Success.** What portion of PSEO students go on to college? How do they perform in college? How many finish college? *This section looks at data on degree attainment, persistence in education, time to degree, and remediation rates.*
- **Cost.** What does it cost to offer this policy? Who bears the costs? *This section tracks available data about direct and indirect costs and raises questions about the costs for families, districts, higher education institutions, and the local, state, and federal levels of government.*

In each of these four areas, this report examines the data that can be analyzed now and explores gaps in the available data that might provide useful evaluative information in the future.

Data Limitations

Perhaps the most significant finding of this research is the extent to which data limitations restrict a full analysis of the PSEO policy. On almost every measure reviewed – from complex questions such as whether getting a jump start on college allows students to be more successful after graduation, to seemingly straightforward ones such as how many students successfully complete their courses – data were incomplete or were not broken down in ways that allow for a complete analysis.

Ideally, an evaluation of PSEO would begin with the identification of at least one entire cohort of high school graduates. Data on each individual in this group would include demographic information such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and native language, as well as data (or a proxy) for income. Information on the number and nature of PSEO courses each student took and passed would also be available. After graduating from high school, these students would be tracked to whatever postsecondary institutions they attended, and data would be collected on the number of credits awarded to them for PSEO courses they took, the terms they enrolled, the number and subject of any remedial coursework they took, the degrees they completed, when they completed them, and the number of credits they had amassed at graduation.

Such data for individual students would allow for a complete evaluation as to whether students from all sectors of the population are taking advantage of the policy and what effect participation has on their educational futures. Without such data, no absolute conclusions about the effectiveness of PSEO can be drawn.

One of the most debilitating limitations for Ohio is that data is not easily shared between the state's governing systems for K-12 education (Ohio Department of Education) and postsecondary education (Ohio Board of Regents, the only institution charged with collecting and reporting any data on PSEO). This makes it impossible to track individual students from one system to the other – though it is precisely at the juncture between the two systems, students' transition from high school to higher education, that this policy aims to have an effect.

In addition to the problems of coordinating information across systems, some potentially telling data is not collected. For example, data is limited or nonexistent for students who enroll at private or out-of-state institutions. Additionally, the ODE is unable to provide information at the level of single identifiable students and the OBR is unable to isolate the high school grade or graduation year of students who took part in PSEO on its campuses.

Another limitation of the data is that it is not adequate for examining the patterns of participation in other college-credit programs such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. As a dual enrollment policy, PSEO may compete with these other options and PSEO participation likely is influenced by the availability of those options. Students with access to AP or IB may not choose PSEO if they perceive the costs—both in terms of dollars and effort (i.e., if travel is required for PSEO but not AP)—to be higher for PSEO. Without the ability to study these alternatives alongside dual enrollment, even a thorough examination of PSEO provides an incomplete picture of the educational opportunities available to students.

On almost every measure reviewed – from complex questions such as whether getting a jump start on college allows students to be more successful after graduation, to seemingly straightforward ones such as how many students successfully complete their courses – data were incomplete or were not broken down in ways that allow for a complete analysis.

SOURCES FOR PRIMARY DATA	
Ohio Department of Education	Ohio Board of Regents
Data on public school students who participated in PSEO at public or private postsecondary institutions.	Data on students who took PSEO courses at Ohio's public postsecondary institutions.
2003-2004 data	Primarily 2004-2005 data, with some 2005-2006 data
Limitations: Unable to provide data for single identifiable students. Data broken down only to building level.	Limitations: Unable to isolate the high school grade and graduation year of students who took part.

Table 1. Description of primary data used, by source.

Figure 1 shows the universe of students tracked with each of the primary data sources and clearly illustrates the gap in data for students from private high schools taking PSEO courses at private postsecondary institutions. Additionally, there is no tracking of students who participated in PSEO and continued education outside Ohio.

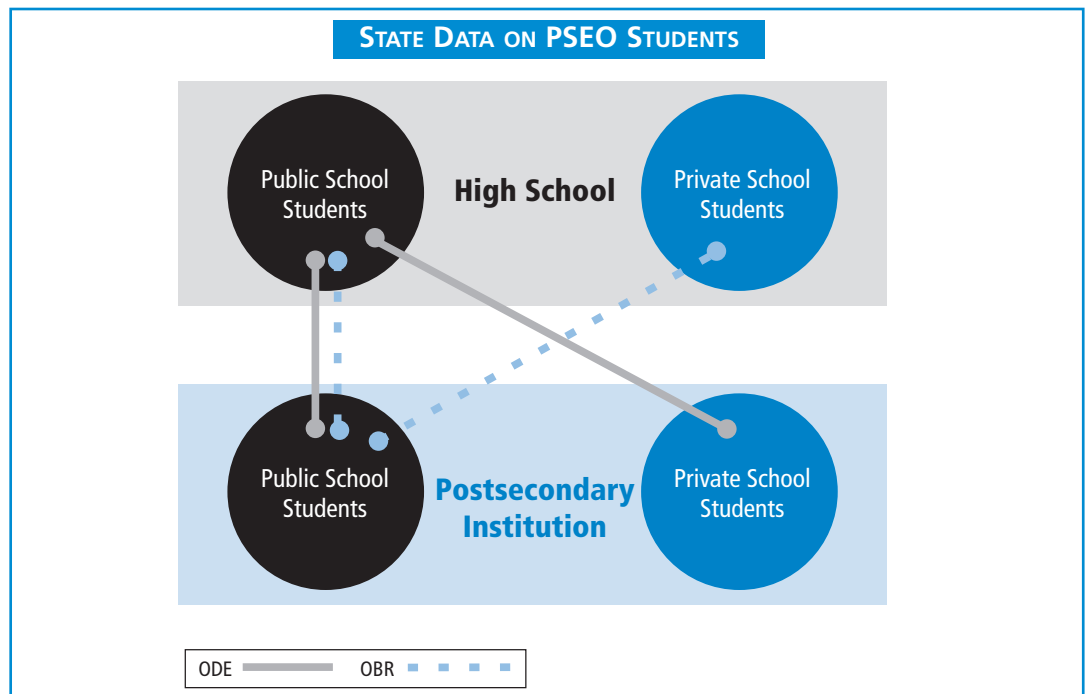


Figure 1. Available data from Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents.

Data on Costs

Assessing the cost of the PSEO policy requires yet a third data set with its own limitations. The ODE was able to provide current information about how much state funding goes to reimburse colleges for PSEO courses and to correlate those costs to enrollment. However, those numbers do not represent complete PSEO participation because they do not include students who took courses for college credit only or paid for the courses themselves or through another program. The totals also do not include administrative and overhead costs on the part of the state, colleges and school districts; costs for transportation; or costs for communicating and counseling students about PSEO.

Concluding Observations

Ohio has data to provide some answers to questions about participation, access, success, and cost but evaluating the state's PSEO policy is hampered by significant gaps in the data.

The available data were unable to provide a credible estimate of the share of PSEO participants that come from low-income backgrounds. Nor were there data to describe the characteristics of students who take multiple PSEO courses and to examine whether they were different from their peers who took one or none.

As with many other states that have enacted dual enrollment or other accelerated learning policies, little information is available on the costs of the program to the state. While Ohio does have data on reimbursements disbursed to students who have participated for high school credit, that amount does not accurately approximate total costs to the state.

Also, the databases the state maintains to answer the important questions concerning whether PSEO is related to improved rates of access and success in postsecondary education are limited. In particular, the data is not broken down by background student characteristics such as socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity. Furthermore, data on college-going rates are imprecise, especially given the paucity of data concerning students enrolling out of state or at a private institution.

Currently available data were unable to answer the following questions.

Are students earning full credit for the PSEO courses they passed while they were in high school? Are those credits useful in satisfying postsecondary degree requirements?

Are there differences in the measures of success in postsecondary education, based on race/ethnicity and income?

Do students from different racial/ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds who participate in PSEO benefit similarly/equivalently from their exposure to those courses?

Participation in PSEO

Most public policy seeks to reach a state's population or a targeted part of the population in order to address a public need. Measuring participation is way to begin determining if a law has had any impact. It is the launching point for deeper questions on what factors impact participation and on who has access.

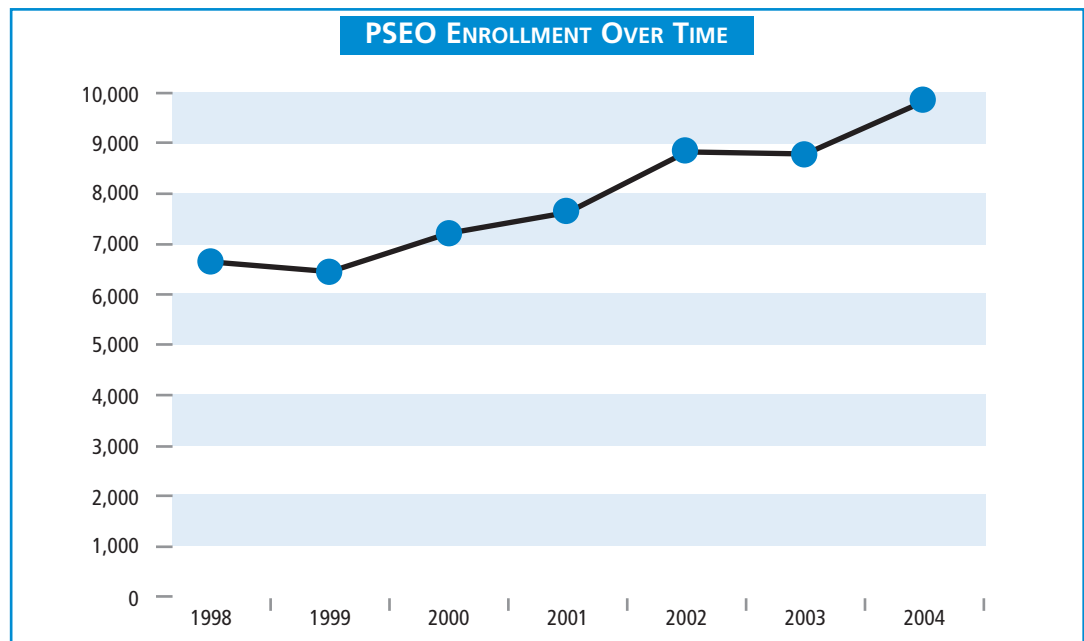
On PSEO, essential questions on participation include: Has participation increased, decreased, or stayed stagnant in Ohio? At what kinds of institutions are students enrolling? At what level are students participating? What kinds of courses are Ohio's students taking?

Statistics indicate that far less than 5 percent of Ohio students participate in PSEO. However, because each of the sources for participation excludes some segments, it is not possible to know the exact level of PSEO participation.¹¹ The most

recent enrollment figures from each data source offer varying counts based on the populations followed, but taken together they give a sense of current participation levels: According to ODE, a total of 10,819 public school students took PSEO courses in 2003-04, while OBR shows that 12,635 students from public and nonpublic schools took courses at public institutions in 2004-05. Financial records from ODE indicate that in 2004-05 reimbursements were made for 11,669 students, including both public and nonpublic students who enrolled in courses at public and nonpublic institutions.

Enrollment Trends

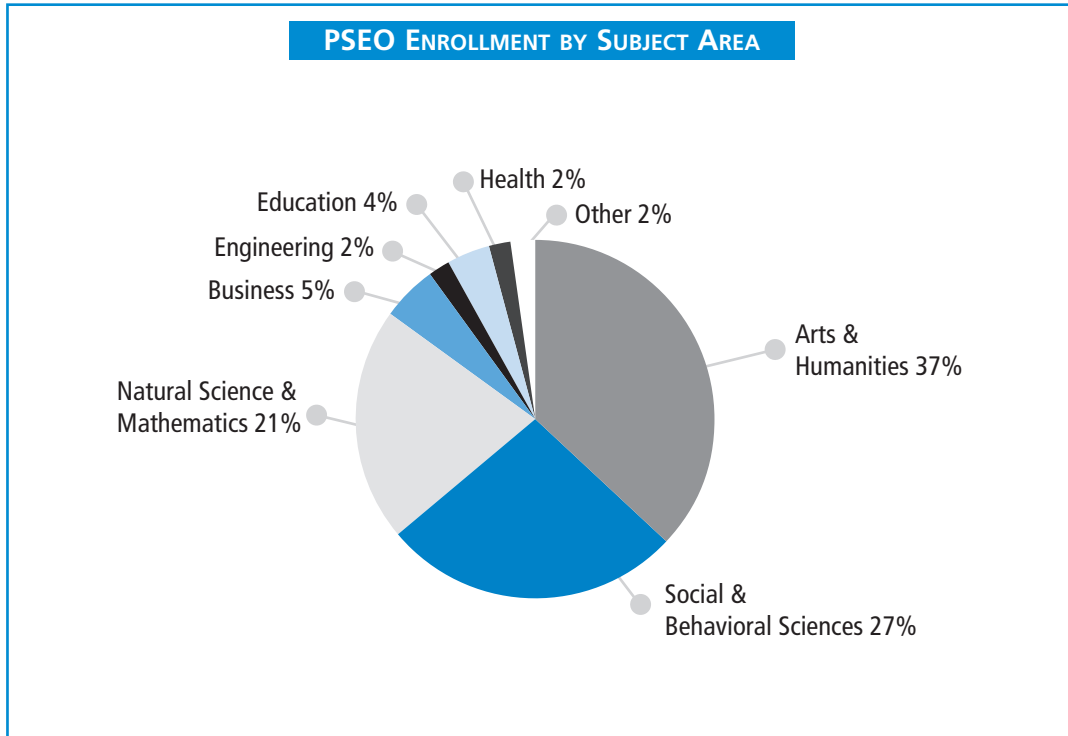
Participation in PSEO has increased, while the rate of participation seems to be stable. The number of students taking PSEO courses at Ohio's public postsecondary institutions has increased annually since the



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 2. Enrollment in PSEO over time. Fall enrollments for public school students. Data does not include Career Tech students who took courses under PSEO.

¹¹ Another useful metric of the growth of PSEO would be changes in the share of a high school graduating class who participated in PSEO. Unfortunately, the data at hand cannot provide that information since they do not identify participants by their graduating cohort.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 3. PSEO enrollment by subject area, 2005-06.

policy began. The only enrollment data over time available – that for a portion of the fall term enrollments at public institutions between 1998 and 2004 – show an increase of 48 percent. The rate of participation remained almost constant, going from 1.2 to 1.7 percent of public high school students. PSEO students had an increasing presence in colleges, going from 1.8 percent to 2.4 percent when measured as a proportion of all public undergraduates.

Course Taking

In what kinds of courses are PSEO students enrolling? According to language guiding PSEO policy, college courses must either contribute to or supplement the broad academic preparation needed for high school students and should not substitute for important broader content college preparatory courses.¹²

Earlier surveys identified a perception that PSEO students were not taking academically rigorous classes. However, statistics show that students are enrolling in a wide spectrum of classes that would potentially satisfy core academic requirements.

The majority of courses in which students enrolled fell into three broad subject groups with Arts and Humanities encompassing the most at 37 percent, followed by Social and Behavioral Sciences (27 percent), and Natural Science and Mathematics (21 percent). The remaining course categories – Business, Engineering, Education, Health, and Other – added up to no more than 14 percent of the total courses in which students enrolled.

¹² *Post Secondary Options Area Coordinators Handbook*. Ohio Department of Education Center for School Finance, 2006.

Each PSEO student took an average of 1.89 college courses a year.

PSEO ENROLLMENT: TOP 15 COURSES	
Course	Students
Composition	2571
Psychology	1847
Sociology	1314
Government	1103
Literature	805
Other Social Studies Course	605
Speech	589
Spanish	586
Introduction to Dance	541
Visual Arts	540
Other English Language Arts Course	540
Music	520
Algebra I	407
Chemistry	392
Biological Sciences	391

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Table 2. Top 15 courses in which PSEO students enrolled, 2006.

Of the top PSEO courses in which students enrolled in 2006, more than half of the enrollment (6,692 students) was in an Arts and Humanities course.¹³ Social Sciences was the second largest area with 4,869 students taking classes in psychology, sociology, government, and other social studies, while Natural Science and Mathematics courses came in third with 1,190 students enrolling in algebra I, chemistry, and biological sciences classes.

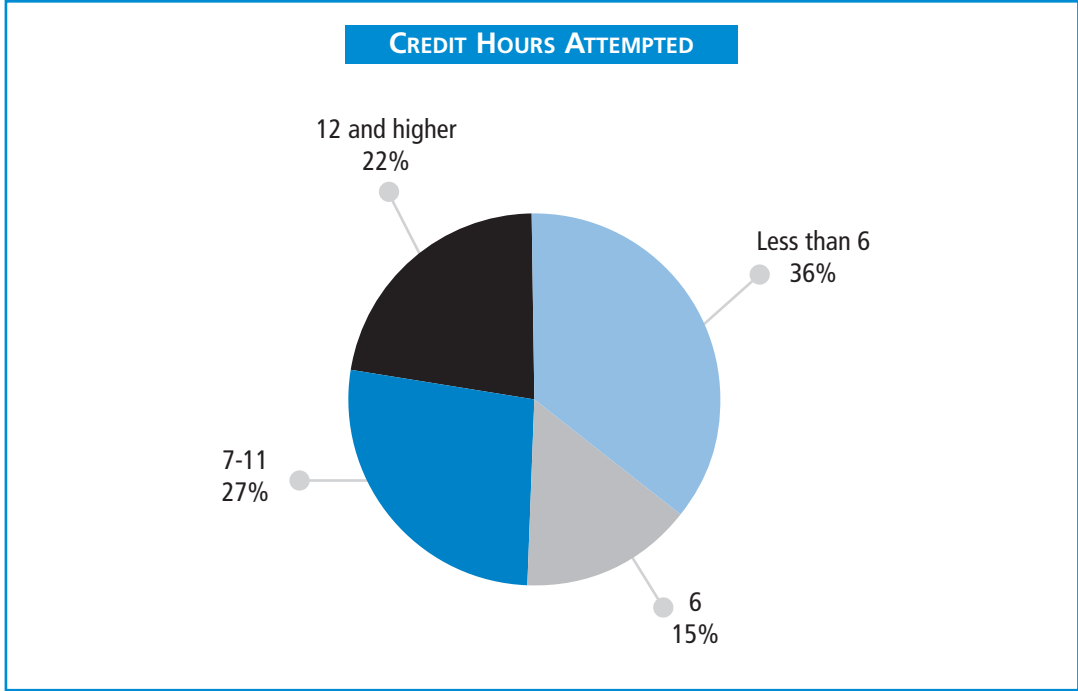
In addition to taking core academic classes, most students took more than one PSEO course at a time. According to the ODE, in 2003-04 (the last year for which both data elements were known) 20,427

PSEO courses were offered to 10,819 students, which means each student took an average of 1.89 college courses.

In the fall 2004 semester about half of PSEO students took more than six credit hours and half took six or less. The majority of college courses earn students three semester hours.

This breakdown has remained relatively consistent over recent years, with the portion of students taking more than six credit hours per semester stable at 48 or 49 percent from fall 1998 to fall 2004.

¹³ This table reflects course data as provided and verified by the districts relative to courses being offered by postsecondary institutions.



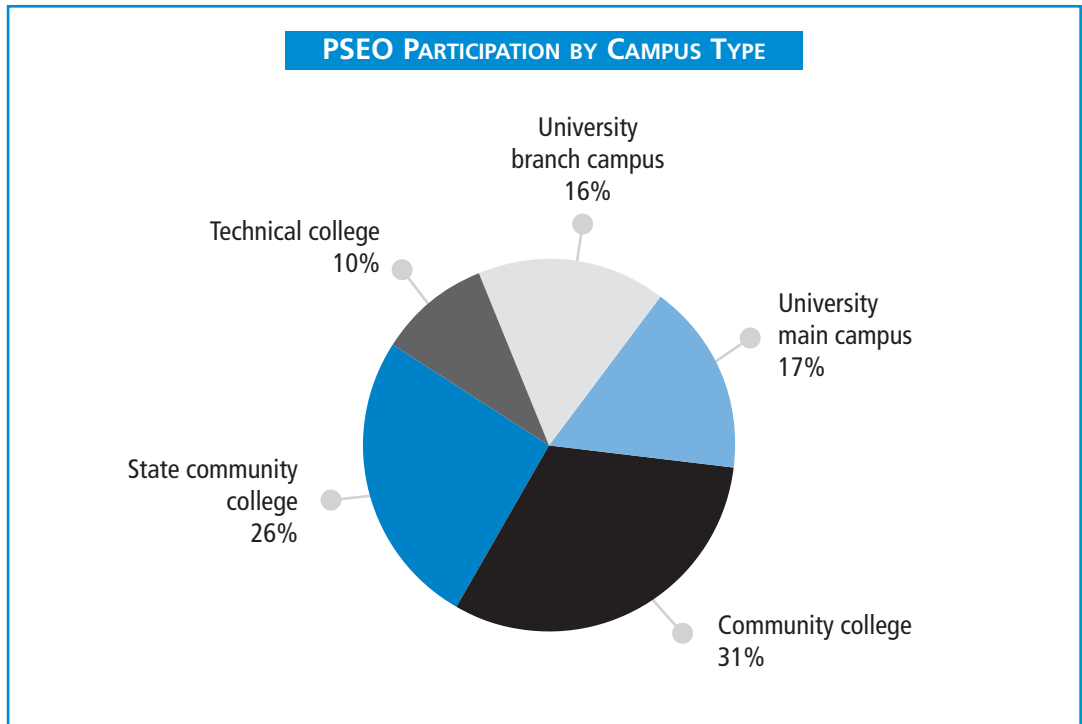
Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 4. PSEO students by credit hours attempted, fall 2004.

Credit Hours	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004
Less than 6	40%	41%	41%	39%	40%	38%	36%
Six	11%	11%	12%	13%	12%	14%	15%
7 to 11	25%	24%	25%	26%	26%	27%	27%
12 and Higher	24%	24%	23%	22%	22%	21%	22%

Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Table 3. PSEO students by credit hours attempted per fall semester, 1998-2004.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 5. PSEO participation by campus type, 2004-05.

College Participation

Students who participated in PSEO courses were enrolled at all types of campuses throughout the Ohio public postsecondary system in 2004-05. However, the vast majority, 83 percent, took courses at two-year institutions, including community colleges, state community colleges (which receive no revenue from local levies), and technical colleges.

No data was available to ascertain how widespread online course delivery is for PSEO in Ohio.

Access to PSEO Opportunities

While participation numbers offer an indication of the general impact of PSEO, measuring access across student groups would allow policymakers to look deeper into whether the policy makes early college available to all students equally. However, the ability to examine access to PSEO by groups of students is limited. No information is available on individual students, so analysis must rely on data by school building. That data indicates how widely distributed participation in PSEO is across the state, but it potentially masks inequality. For example, it is impossible to determine whether those taking advantage of PSEO within a particular school represent the full range of students or a disproportionate

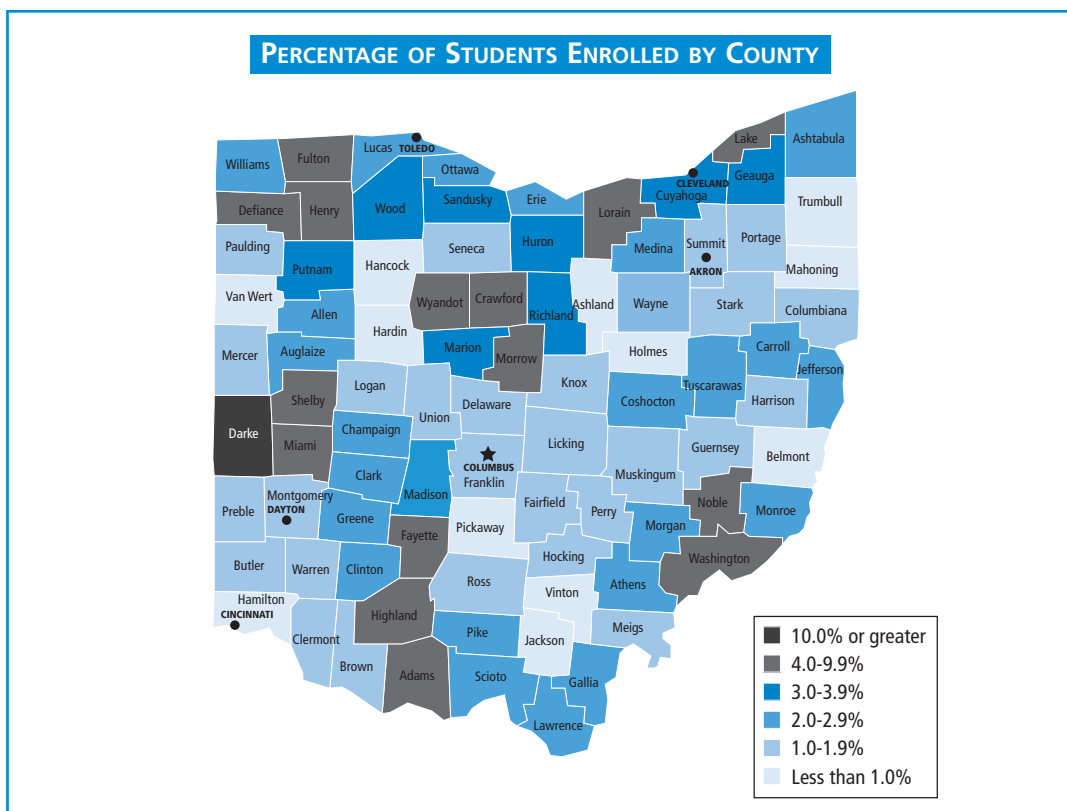
number are those who are traditionally well represented in higher education.

To measure access, we examined geographic participation in PSEO, as well as demographic categories of age, gender, income, and race. Data was not always available over time but a snapshot of the most recent class of PSEO students begins to examine this issue.

PSEO participation is not evenly distributed across the state. A higher portion of students take PSEO courses in and around northern Ohio, as well as in counties on the west side of the state.

Geographic Distribution

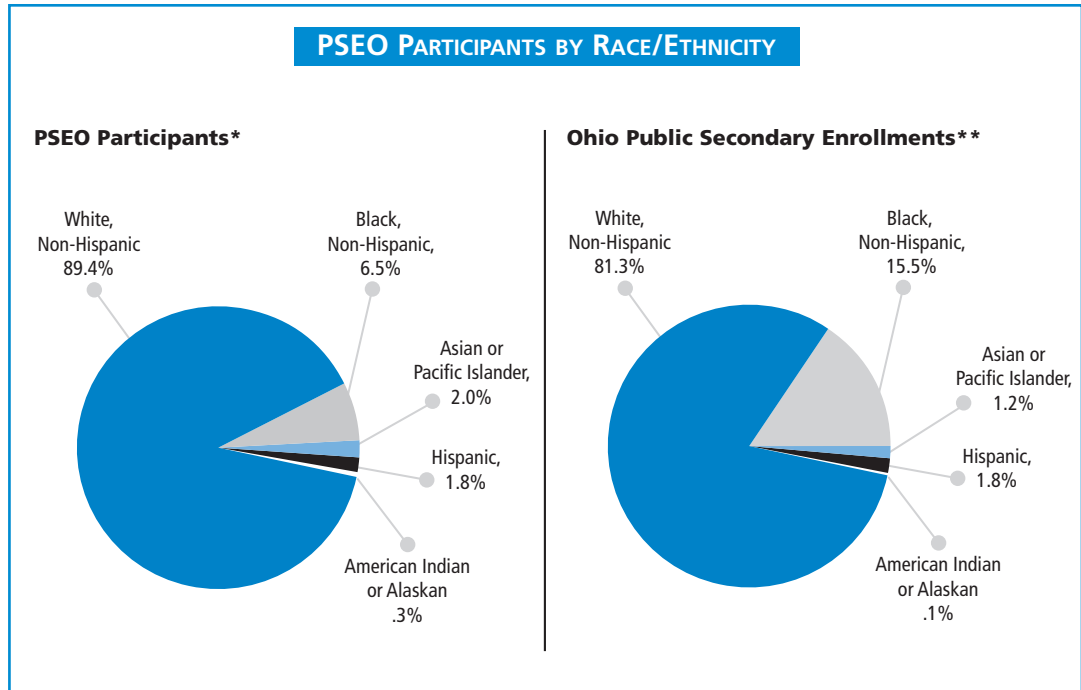
PSEO participation is not evenly distributed across the state. A higher portion of students take PSEO courses in and around northern Ohio, as well as in counties on the west side of the state.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents, KnowledgeWorks Foundation; NCES Common Core of Data (2003-04)

Figure 6. PSEO participation as a share of secondary enrollment by county, 2003-04.

Nearly 9 out of 10 PSEO participants were white non-Hispanic students, well more than their proportion of the general high school population.



* Note: Data are from 2004-05, race/ethnicity unknown and nonresident aliens not included. Source: Ohio Board of Regents

** Note: Data are the sum of 2003-04 grades 9-12. Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data.

Figure 7. PSEO participants by race/ethnicity, compared to Ohio public secondary enrollments.

¹⁴ As reported by the Ohio Board of Regents Performance Report for Ohio's Colleges and Universities, total enrollment at private, not-for-profit colleges and universities totaled 137,437 in 2005.

¹⁵ Windham, Patricia. High School and Community College Dual Enrollment: Issues of Rigor and Transferability. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State Board of Community Colleges, 1997. Mortenson, Thomas. "What's STILL Wrong with the Guys?" Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY #152, 2005.

When PSEO participants are viewed as a proportion of all high school students, it is possible to discern patterns in the rates of participation. The densest concentrations occurred in the northern part of the state, while participation was noticeably lower around Cincinnati and Columbus and in rural areas. Counties serving as suburbs for the major cities were more likely to have high PSEO participation levels than the counties in which the cities themselves sit. This analysis does not capture students who participate in PSEO at private postsecondary institutions.¹⁴ As a result, it may underestimate the participation levels and rates in some areas, particularly wealthy counties and perhaps counties in which a private institution is located. Furthermore, while it provides some useful information about the geographic distribution of PSEO enrollments, it may not reveal differences in

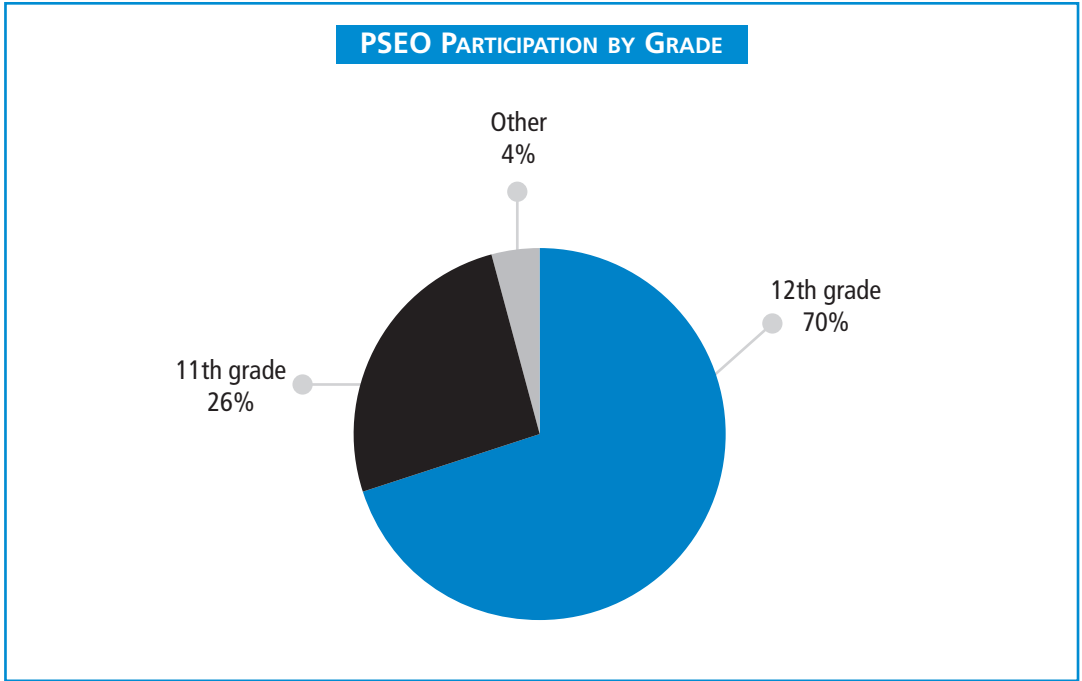
the availability of opportunity along the traditional fault lines of income and race/ethnicity.

Gender Distribution

In 2004-05, 64.6 percent of the students who took part in PSEO at public institutions were female, while 35.4 percent were male. This nearly 2:1 ratio is high, but generally consistent with recent, well-documented trends that show females are more likely to enroll in dual enrollment courses (and higher education generally) than males.¹⁵

Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Comparing the racial/ethnic breakdown of PSEO participants to that of public high schools in general reveals some disparities. Nearly 9 out of 10 PSEO participants were white non-Hispanic students, well more



Seniors comprise the wide majority of students who take part in PSEO.

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Figure 8. PSEO participation by grade level.

than their proportion of the general high school population. Asian or Pacific Islanders were also much more likely to participate in PSEO than their proportions in the student population would suggest. By contrast, black non-Hispanic students represented only 6.5 percent of all PSEO participants, while they represented 15.5 percent of the total public high school population. Hispanic students accounted for roughly the same proportions of PSEO participants and public high school students. The disparities in some racial/ethnic groups may indicate the possibility that the opportunity to participate in PSEO is not equitably distributed.

Even greater disparities in racial/ethnic participation were reported in 2004-05: 93.7 percent white non-Hispanic; 2.7 percent black non-Hispanic; 1.5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander; 1.3 percent Hispanic; 0.2 percent American Indian; and 0.6 percent Multiracial.

In addition, of PSEO participants in 2005 for whom ODE had income data, only 5.4 percent were economically disadvantaged. It is probable that if information on the whole cohort of PSEO students, including those from private schools, was available that percentage would be even lower.

Distribution by Grade Level

Although PSEO was opened to 9th and 10th grades in 1997, seniors comprise the wide majority of students who take part in PSEO and relatively few students participate prior to entering 11th grade.

Success of PSEO Participants

A real test of accelerated learning options such as PSEO is whether participation leads to improved access to and success in education beyond high school. Unfortunately in Ohio, as in many states, it is difficult if not impossible to obtain meaningful and reliable answers to questions such as these. Only a select few states have built the capacity to link student-level records between data systems at the K-12 and postsecondary levels and run the required analyses, and Ohio is not among them.¹⁶

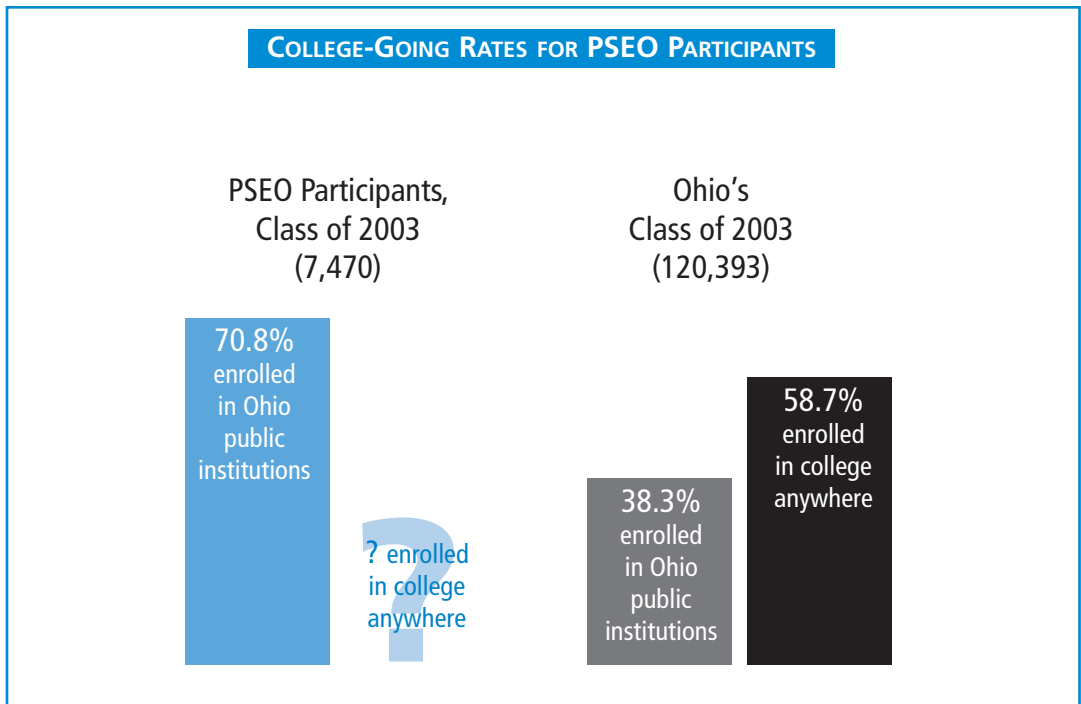
Data that is available indicates that PSEO students may be more likely to attend college, remain in college, require less remedial help once they get there, and graduate sooner. These are all outcomes supporters of PSEO hope to see the policy

generate. However, it is not correct to say on the basis of this evidence alone that these differences are due to students' involvement in PSEO. Because the same attributes that might lead a student to enroll in PSEO courses influence academic motivation and educational success more broadly, analyses that rigorously control for this factor must be done before any relationship between PSEO participation and postsecondary outcomes can be established.

Going to College

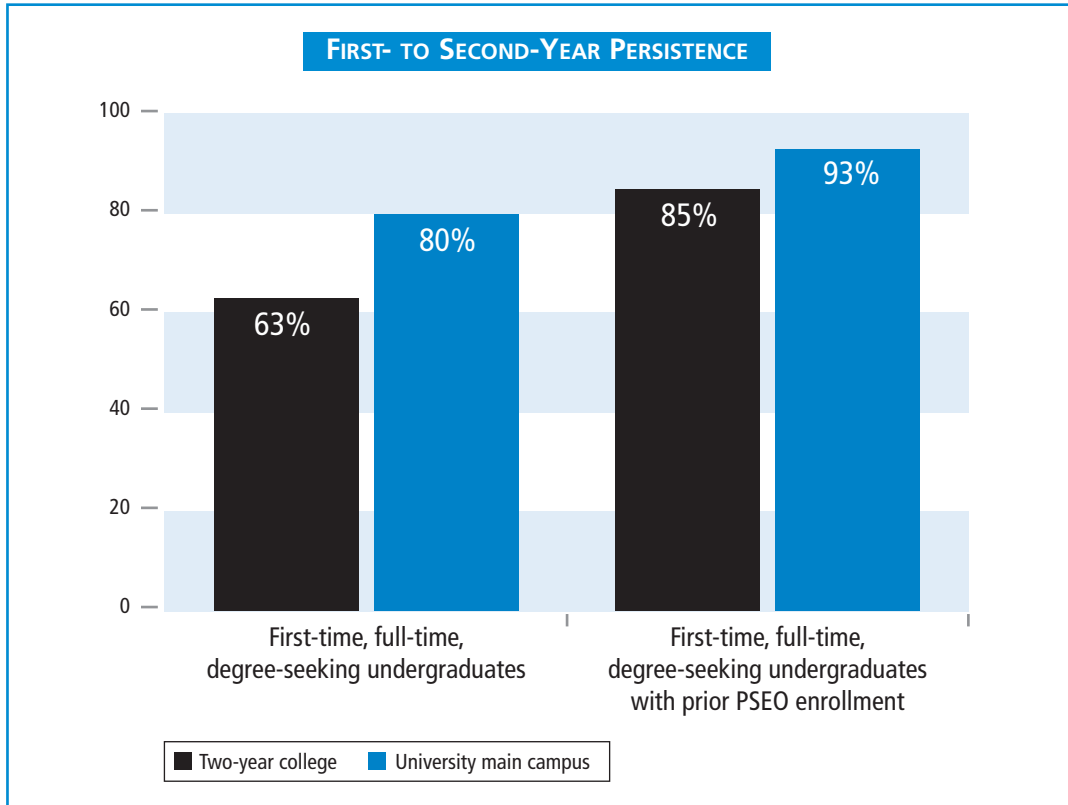
PSEO students who graduate from high school appear to be more likely to attend college than graduates in general, and even more likely to go to college in Ohio. Of 7,470 PSEO participants who graduated

¹⁶ In fact an important effort led by numerous national organizations is being mounted to help states build effective educational data systems that meet growing analytical needs. Information about the Data Quality Campaign, is available on their website at www.dataqualitycampaign.org. Florida is one state with a data system with sufficient capabilities, and recently WICHE conducted an extensive transcript analysis that examined the academic records of over 700,000 students who graduated from public high schools in that state. This comprehensive analysis provided some descriptive information about the relationship between accelerated learning options (specifically AP, dual enrollment, and IB) and college-going, persistence, degree completion, and even time-to-degree.



Source: PSEO information is from Ohio Board of Regents. Information for Ohio's class of 2003 is from National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Fall Enrollment Survey.

Figure 9. College-going rates for PSEO participants, as compared to all Ohio graduates.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 10. Persistence of PSEO students from year one to year two of college, fall 2004 to fall 2005.

from high school in 2003, approximately 5,291 – or 71 percent – enrolled in a public college in Ohio during the following academic year. By comparison, 46,104 of the 120,393 Ohio high school graduates (including both PSEO participants and non-participants) in 2002 enrolled in an Ohio public institution within 12 months, a rate of 38 percent.¹⁷ The percentage of these graduates who enrolled in college anywhere was 58.7 percent

PSEO students who enrolled in Ohio public colleges were much more likely to enroll as full-time students at a university main campus than a two-year college. Only 420 PSEO participants enrolled at two-year colleges, while 1,908 enrolled at a university main campus (a disparity that probably would be even greater if data on out-of-state and nonpublic institutions was available).

Success in College

Although access to a college education is critical, success in college is equally important. This analysis studied measures of success for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students but had no data for students who did not fall into that category. Lower-income and minority students are more likely to attend part time or outside a degree program, so they may not be fully represented in these results.

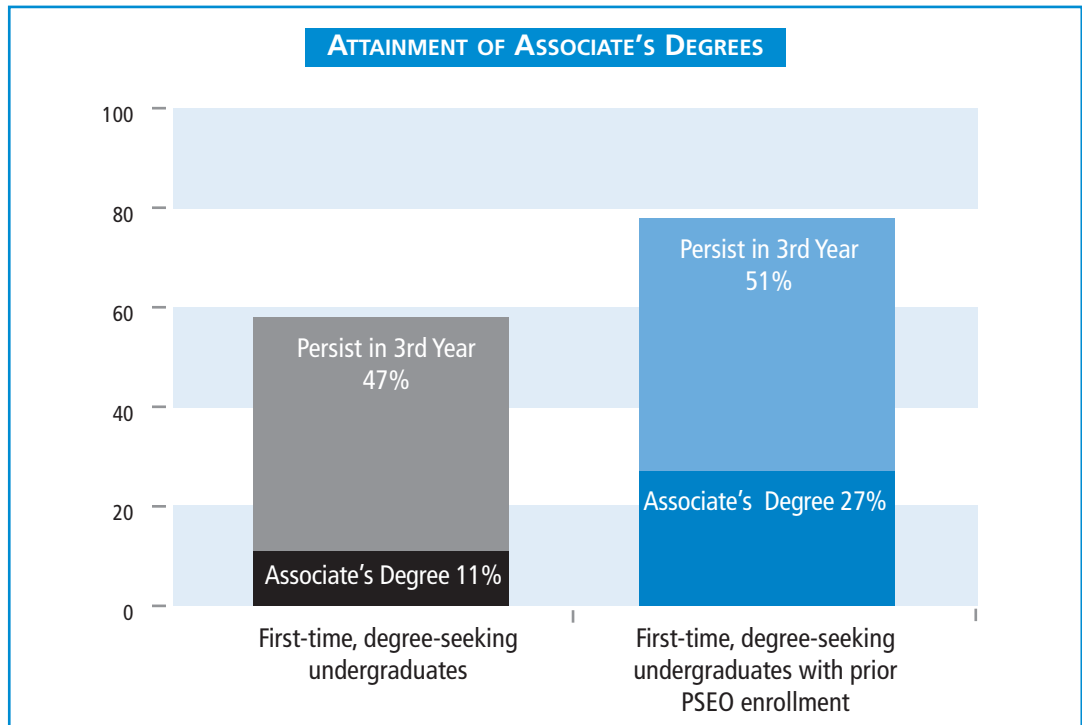
Staying in College

PSEO participants may be less likely to drop out of college during the first year than their counterparts in general. Those who enrolled in fall 2004 in either a two-year college or a university main campus were more likely to stay in college from the first year to the second.¹⁸ Eighty-five percent of PSEO participants who enrolled at a two-year college stayed for a second year, compared to 63 percent of the general

¹⁷ WICHE calculations using data from the 2002 Fall Enrollment Survey of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

¹⁸ All remaining figures in this section were prepared by William Wagner, Senior Analyst of the Ohio Board of Regents.

Students who participated in public institution PSEO courses also were more likely to complete associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees than the student population as a whole.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 11. Associate's degree attainment and persistence of PSEO participants at three years, fall 2002 full-time cohort.

population of similar undergraduates; on a university main campus, the rates were 93 percent versus 80 percent.

Earning Degrees

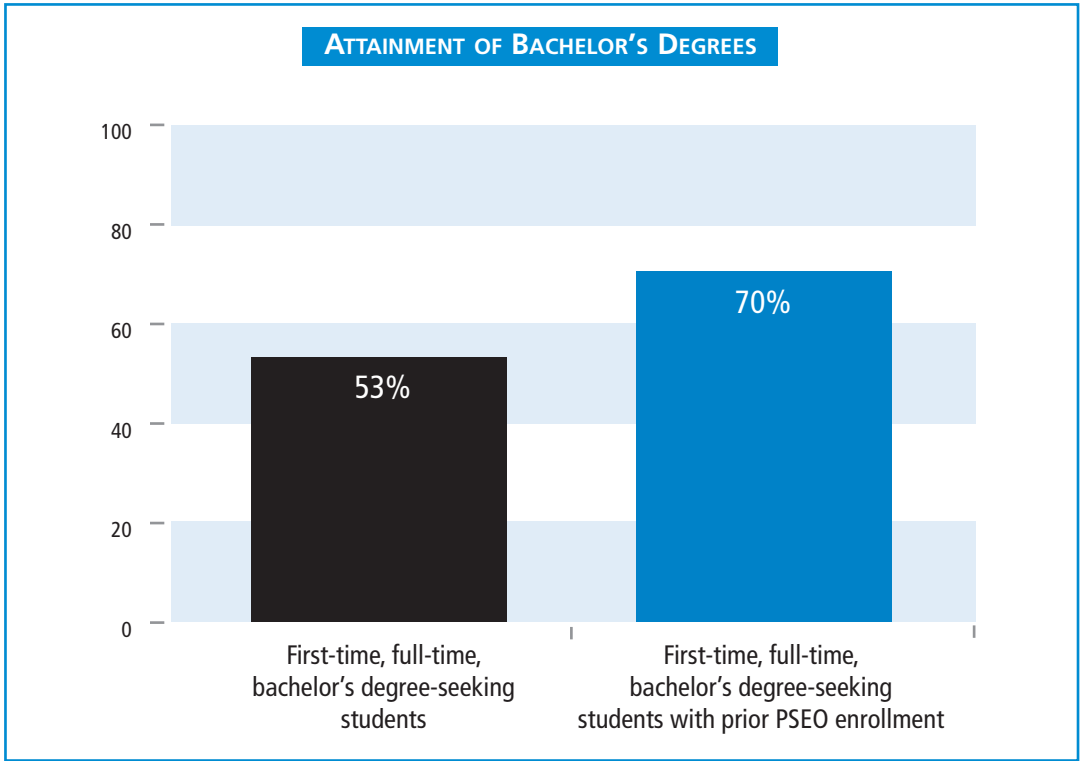
Students who participated in public institution PSEO courses also were more likely to complete associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees than the student population as a whole. At the three-year mark, 27 percent of PSEO participants had earned associate's degrees and 51 percent continued in college, as opposed to 11 percent of the general population who earned associate's degrees and 47 percent who were still enrolled in college.

At six years, 70 percent of students with PSEO experience had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 53 percent of all students.

Time to Degree

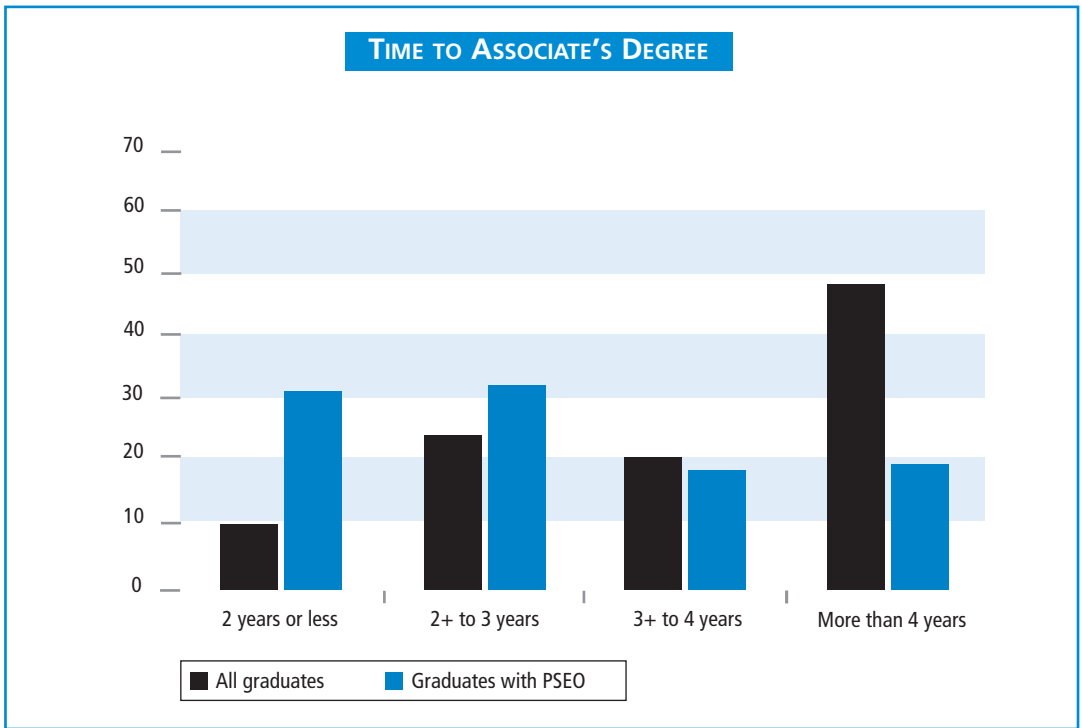
Undergraduates who participated in PSEO also got their degrees more quickly than the general population. Among students who completed associate's degrees without transferring between institutions, 32 percent of PSEO participants graduated in two years or less, compared to 10 percent for all graduates. For bachelor's degrees, the difference between those graduating in four years or less was 64 percent for PSEO students and 44 percent for all students.

Among students who completed public postsecondary degrees in 2004-05 without having transferred, those with PSEO experience who earned associate's degrees on average took 2.7 years to graduate, compared to 3.8 years for all students. Those who graduated with bachelor's degrees did so in 3.8 years, opposed to 4.3 for all students. Both groups accumulated roughly the same number of credits by the time they graduated.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

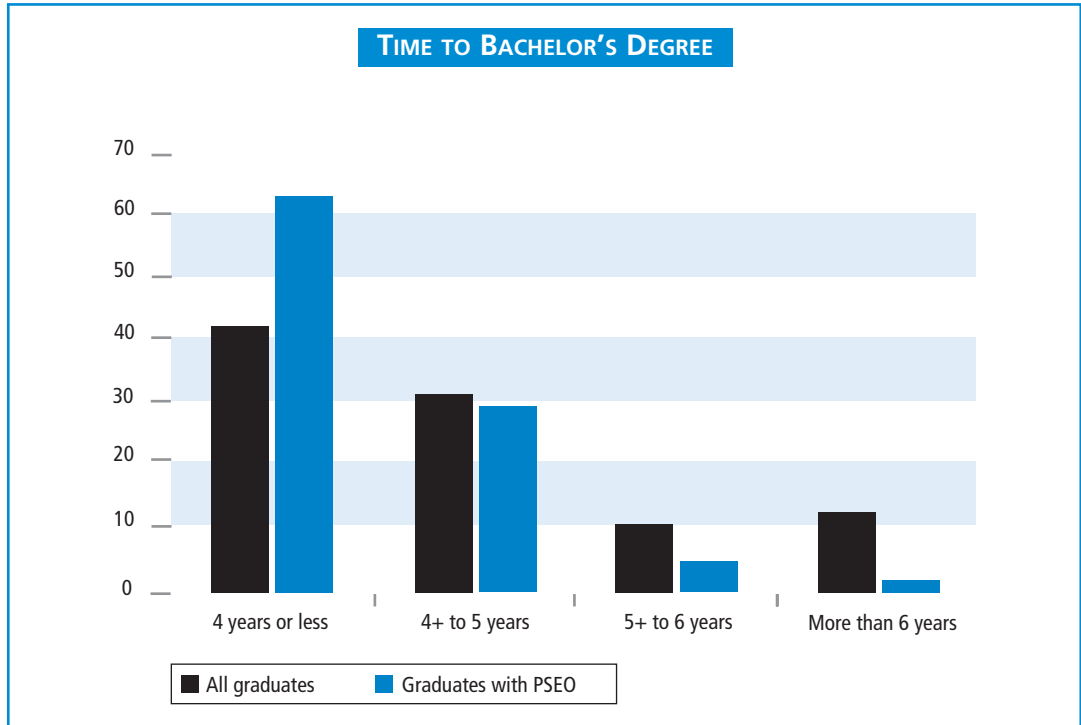
Figure 12.¹⁹ Bachelor's degree (or higher) attainment and persistence of PSEO participants at six years, fall 1999 cohort.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

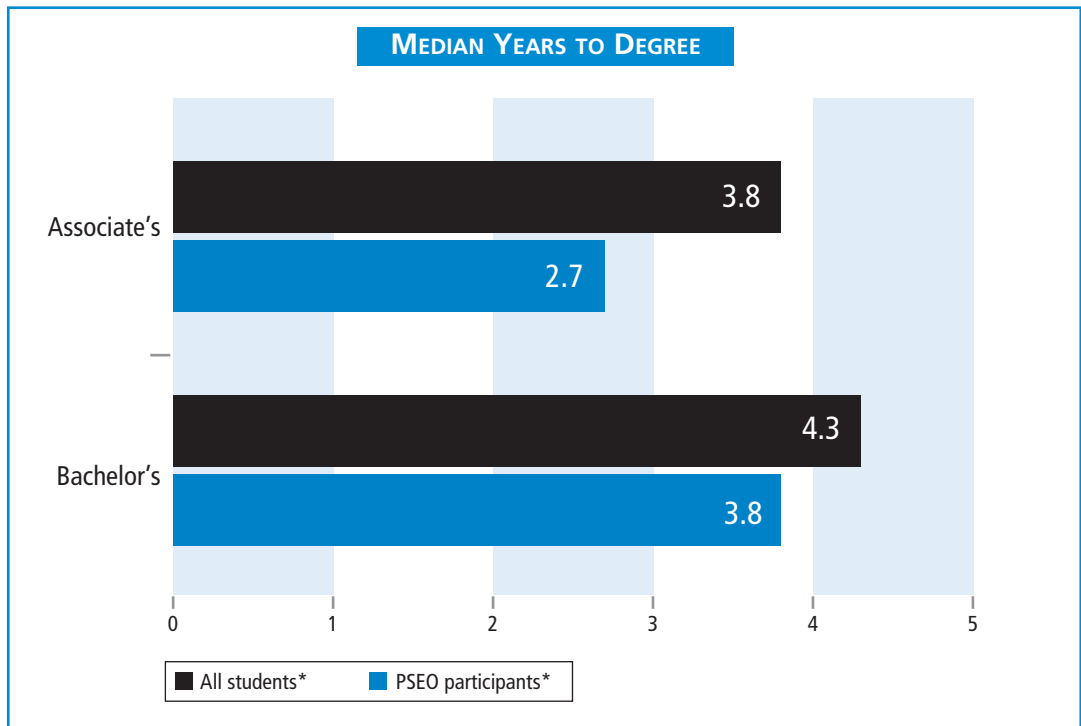
Figure 13. Time to associate's degree, 2004-05.

¹⁹Data for this figure does not include data for Central State University, Miami University, Ohio State University, or the University of Toledo.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 14. Time to bachelor's degree, 2004-05.



*Non-transfer students only. Source: Ohio Board of Regents

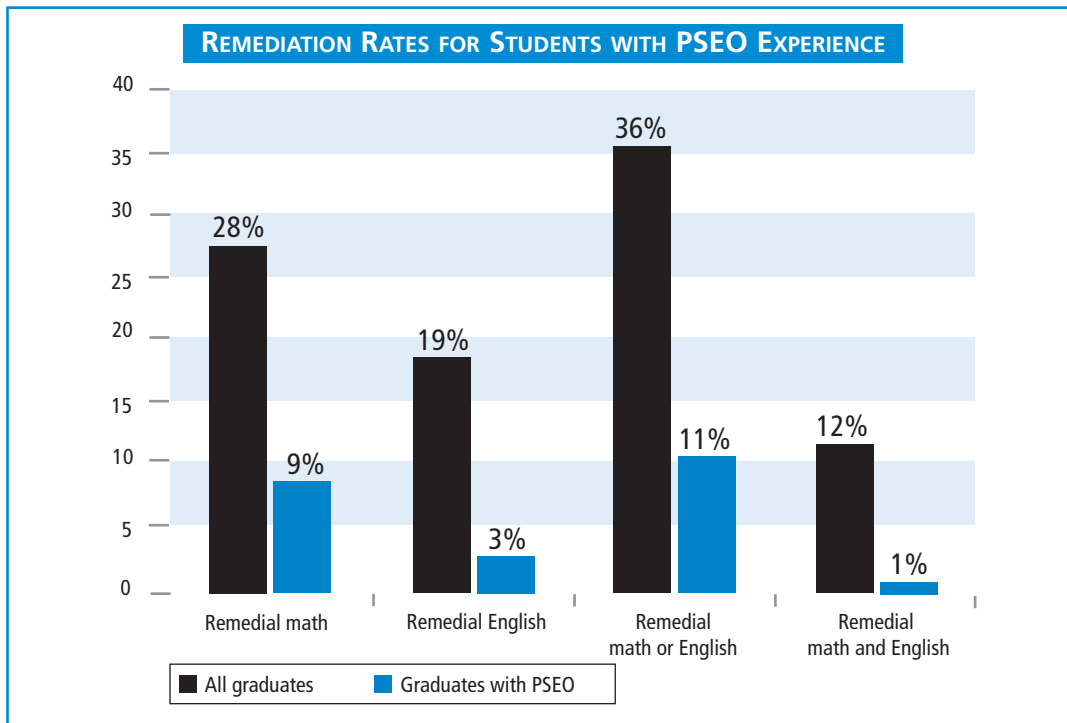
Figure 15. Median years to degree for PSEO participants, 2005.

Need for Remedial Work

Students who do not arrive at college prepared to do college-level work may be less likely to remain in college or may require more time to complete their studies. Remedial work can be costly to both students and institutions, so this report attempted to look at the effect of PSEO participation on remediation. PSEO participants were much less likely to be enrolled in remedial courses than first-time students as a whole. One question these data are not able to answer is whether PSEO participants were found in remedial courses in the same subject areas in which they took PSEO courses.

While these data offer a useful view of how PSEO is related to success in college, several limitations should be noted. First and foremost, these simple indicators do not account for self-selection and so it would be inappropriate to say that PSEO is the *cause* of the improved outcomes observed. Second, the data do not offer any clues about whether the benefits vary for students of color or from low-income backgrounds. Finally, the data rely on a relatively small number of observations for PSEO participants, and the type of student for whom data is available – the student who enters college directly from high school and progresses successfully to a degree without transferring, stopping out, or going part time – is becoming increasingly rare.

PSEO participants were much less likely to be enrolled in remedial courses than first-time students as a whole.



Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Figure 16. Remediation rates by subject for first-time students under age 20, 2004-05.

Costs of PSEO Policy

Any comprehensive review of a governmental policy must not only consider whether the policy is effective in achieving its intended purpose, but also whether the policy is a good investment of tax dollars. In the case of PSEO, the first challenge in that process is determining what the policy actually costs the state and what costs are borne by students, school districts, and higher education institutions.

Direct Cost to State

A large portion of the state cost for PSEO is not an additional expenditure – the PSEO policy redirects money already allocated for public high schools, diverting it to colleges that provide PSEO courses. This reallocation could be perceived as allowing the state to get more for its education dollars – financing high school and college coursework with the same outlay. (For the formula used to calculate the amount of PSEO course reimbursement, see page 12.)

The money that is shifted from the per-pupil district allotment goes toward the PSEO student's tuition, fees, books, and materials. For fiscal year 2004-05, the state reallocated \$17.8 million in state foundation funds to reimburse institutions for PSEO students from public high schools, according to the Ohio Department of Education.

While this reimbursement is a shift in funding as opposed to a new expenditure for the state, it reduces the school districts' bottom line in providing K-12 education and is a loss to the individual schools and districts.

In addition, the state spent \$1.5 million to reimburse colleges (both public and private) for classes taken by students from nonpublic high schools.²⁰ To cover PSEO participation for nonpublic students, the General Assembly designates a sum of

money at the beginning of each two-year budget cycle. Because demand is greater than the money available, students are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. This money is an additional expenditure rather than a reallocation, as no foundation funds are given to nonpublic schools.

Taking into account students from both public and nonpublic schools, Ohio spent \$19.3 million to reimburse institutions for 11,669 PSEO students who completed the equivalent of almost 152,000 semester hours in fiscal year 2005 – an average of \$127.28 per semester hour.

That amount does not represent all the direct costs to the state, as it does not include state payments for student transportation costs or administrative expenses. Indirect costs may also need to be considered, as discussed below.

Additional Costs

A number of costs in addition to tuition reimbursement factor into the total PSEO cost. One of the most significant of these is the difference between the foundation fund reimbursement amount and the expected revenue from tuition, fees, materials, and books. While the state reimbursed colleges \$19.3 million for PSEO tuition and materials in 2004-05, ODE reports that the institutions' expected revenue for those courses were \$28.6 million – a difference of \$9.3 million.

Considering the total for tuition, fees, books, and materials, PSEO courses in 2005 cost an average of \$188 per semester hour.²¹

These data do not include payments by PSEO students who are responsible for their tuition costs, whether because they took the course for college credit only or because they were eligible for free tuition from another program.

²⁰ Costs for nonpublic students are paid out of a set-aside from the state's Auxiliary Services Program. This is a tax-supported program (a line-item in the state's biennial budget) that provides students in chartered nonpublic schools with funding for health and psychological services, intervention services for students with special needs, instructional resources, computer hardware and software, standardized testing, and other supplemental educational services and resources.

²¹ Quarter hours were converted to semester hours by multiplying each quarter hour by 2/3, a standard calculation used nationally and in Ohio.

COST TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

	Tuition, books and materials		PSEO reimbursement		Revenue loss
Public high school students	\$26,190,565	MINUS	\$17,822,003	EQUALS	\$8,368,562
Nonpublic high school students	\$2,428,656		\$1,495,033		\$933,623
Total	\$28,619,222		\$19,317,036		\$9,302,185

Considering the total for tuition, fees, books, and materials, PSEO courses in 2005 cost an average of \$188 per semester hour.

Source: ODE (From the finance department, which calculates the reimbursement for all high school students, regardless if they attend public or nonpublic postsecondary institutions.)

Table 4. Revenue loss to higher education institutions for providing courses to PSEO students, 2004-05.

The higher education institutions also have costs beyond the loss of expected revenue from tuition and fees, such as administration and facilities maintenance, as well as additional instructional costs not covered by tuition (costs that are incurred for any student and are not specific to PSEO). The Ohio Board of Regents reports that costs to public postsecondary institutions associated with PSEO enrollment, including these additional overhead expenditures, were estimated at \$32.6 million in 2004-05. PSEO reimbursements covered \$19.3 million of that amount; in addition, public institutions received State Share of Instruction (SSI) allocations estimated at \$10.9 million. When combined, these two forms of state funds covered all but approximately \$2.4 million of the institutions' costs.

School districts also may have costs in addition to the revenue lost when funds are shifted to pay for PSEO courses. They likely incur expenses to comply with the state law requiring them to communicate PSEO as an option for students and families and counsel them on its potential advantages and drawbacks. Also, school districts likely have administrative overhead associated with PSEO.

Savings

It must be noted that there exists virtually no data from which to obtain an estimate of any savings related to the PSEO policy that accrue to Ohio. PSEO could possibly save public dollars if students require less remediation, graduate sooner, and contribute more to the state economy (or require less public support) after reaching the workforce.

Cost by Course

The cost to provide a course in which a PSEO student might enroll varies by course. Some courses in which PSEO students enroll are more expensive than others due to such factors as teacher's salary, class size, and facilities maintenance. For example, a class restricted to five students will likely cost more per student than one that can accommodate 40 students. Also, science classes might require a lab facility.

Costs for the five most expensive courses (among those taught at public colleges with enrollments equaling more than 150 semester hours)²² ranged from \$451 to \$354 per semester hour of credit, while the least expensive courses ranged from \$192 to \$170 per semester hour of credit in 2004-05.

²²Factors that affect the cost for these courses include instructor's salary, number of students in the class, equipment for the course, and the costs associated with facility in which the course is offered.

SUMMARY OF PSEO COSTS: WHAT WE KNOW AND DON'T KNOW

Who incurs the costs		Amount
State funds redirected for PSEO		
Tuition reimbursement for public high school students (Foundation funds shifted from school district to postsecondary institution)	School districts	\$17,822,004
State Share of Instruction (SSI) funds to higher education for PSEO students (estimated)	*	\$10,934,807
Total		\$28,756,811
New costs		
State budget set aside for nonpublic students	State	\$1,495,033
Revenue lost in tuition, books and materials	Higher education institutions	\$9,302,186
Total		\$10,797,219
Unknown costs		
Administrative overhead and mandated communications/counseling	School districts	\$?
Administrative overhead, facilities maintenance, instruction not covered by SSI	Higher education institution	\$?
Tuition, books and materials of PSEO students who do not qualify for reimbursement	Student or possibly higher education institution	\$?
Transportation	District, state and/or student	\$?
Administrative costs	State	\$?

*SSI is a fixed amount of money in the state budget divided up proportionately among public postsecondary institutions based on the number of students enrolled. The total spent for SSI does not increase due to PSEO enrollment, but is distributed differently.

Table 5. Summary of PSEO costs, fiscal year 2005.

These costs are for providing the course regardless of whether the student is PSEO or a general college student. The data help convey the cost of providing a postsecondary level course, including administrative overhead and facilities costs, but do not indicate whether institutions incur additional costs for PSEO students, such as administrative costs associated with enrolling, paying for, and receiving reimbursement for a PSEO student.

Cost by Institution Type

The cost for offering PSEO courses also varies according to the type of

postsecondary institution. These ranged from \$293 per semester hour of credit at a university main campus to \$173 per semester hour at a state college in 2004-05, according to data from the Ohio Board of Regents. Community colleges had the most enrollments in PSEO courses and the largest expenditure. Courses offered at universities, especially at the main campus, were the most expensive per semester hour. This may be partially due to university campuses being the most likely site for the courses that are costlier to deliver.

ESTIMATED COSTS BY COURSE			
Subject Area	Cost	Semester Hours Taken	Cost/Semester Hour ²³
<i>Most Expensive</i>			
Other Engineering	\$86,907	192	\$451
Drama	\$267,182	660	\$404
Nursing	\$57,367	153	\$374
Health & Physical Education General	\$508,338	1,428	\$356
Engineering Technology	\$938,866	2,646	\$354
<i>Least Expensive</i>			
History	\$1,152,347	6,000	\$192
Political Science	\$1,472,973	7,965	\$185
Other Social Studies	\$154,441	837	\$184
Psychology	\$2,306,888	13,464	\$171
Sociology	\$1,280,439	7,554	\$170

Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Table 6. Estimated costs by course, 2004-2005. Cost interpreted as costs to the state of Ohio. Only subject areas with enrollments of five or more full-time equivalents included.

ESTIMATED COSTS BY INSTITUTION TYPE			
	Cost	Semester Hours Taken	Cost/Semester Hour
Community College	\$10,725,399	47,040	\$228
State College	\$6,204,167	35,820	\$173
Technical College	\$2,513,462	12,750	\$197
University Branch Campus	\$6,372,817	27,720	\$230
University Main Campus	\$6,777,233	23,160	\$293
Total	\$32,593,078	146,490	Average: \$223

Source: Ohio Board of Regents

Table 7. Estimated costs at various types of institutions, 2004-05.

²³ Cost per semester hour was calculated as follows: 1FTE = 30 semester hours

PSEO in Context: A Comparative Review

Ohio's PSEO is a statewide dual enrollment policy that not only encourages students to participate in dual enrollment courses, but also supports their participation on many levels.

As of August 2006, 47 states had state policies related to dual enrollment. Of those states, nearly all have statutory language while 15 have established policy through the state board of education and/or a higher education board.

Ohio's PSEO is a statewide dual enrollment policy established in state law. It is similar in design and scope to policies in only a few other states: Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa, which also have statewide programs created by statute that not only encourage students to participate in dual enrollment courses, but also support their participation on many levels. Unlike Ohio, many states have isolated policies that do not speak to dual enrollment in a comprehensive manner.

Ohio's policy is similar in scope to such top-performing states as Michigan and Colorado in addressing main principles,

notably eligibility criteria, awarding of credit, providing for counseling and communication, and designating K-12's responsibilities. Ohio does not fare as well compared to other states on one critical criterion, however—reporting and accountability.

The following matrix compares Ohio's PSEO policy to other states' policies, providing a baseline comparison of issues that are addressed in Ohio's policy and identifying some that are not. This analysis examines key elements of the dual enrollment policies, such as eligibility, financing, information dissemination and legislative expectations.

Eligibility

	Ohio	Other States
SUMMARY	2 explicitly stated eligibility requirements – standing and grade-point average as outlined below.	30 states with dual enrollment have at least one minimum requirement. Most common for a state to have at least two requirements, where one is class standing. 17 states do not have eligibility criteria.
Class Standing	Open to students in grades 9-12.	19 states have some form of a class standing requirement. Most require junior or senior standing. Only 6 states refer in some way to 9th or 10th graders being eligible.
Recommendation From school	Not required.	7 states have some form of a recommendation requirement.
Standardized or Placement Test	Not used.	4 states use a minimum score on the ACT or SAT as a requirement. 4 states use a placement exam score to demonstrate ability as a requirement.
Grade Point Average	Prohibits students from enrolling in a college course through PSEO if they have taken high school courses in same subject area and have not attained a 3.0 in those courses.	6 states require a minimum overall grade-point average, of which most require a 3.0.
Class Rank	Not used.	3 states have some form of a class rank requirement.
Private School Participation	Permits students from nonpublic high schools to participate	Of 3 other states with programs similar to PSEO, only Colorado is limited to public school students.

Awarding of Credit

Ohio	Other States
Allows students to choose whether course will apply to college credit only or both high school and college credit.	The norm across states offering dual enrollment is to allow students to choose. Some states decentralize the process – requiring agreements between school districts and postsecondary institutions to specify how credit is applied.

Paying for Dual Enrollment Courses

Ohio	Other States
Determines who pays on the basis of the credit awarded, as follows: If course is for college credit only, the student pays. If for college and high school credit, the state reimburses the postsecondary institution.	Of the 28 states that address the issue in the state statute, six pay, eight have the school districts pay, eight have students pay, and six have other special arrangements.

Counseling and Communication

Ohio	Other States
Mandates dissemination of information about PSEO. Ohio has a strong counseling component that includes counseling of risks and consequences of participation to students and parents in grades 8 through 11. Requires confirmation by students and their families of receipt of counseling.	11 states require that information about dual enrollment be given to students. 6 states have a statutory counseling requirement. 2 states require confirmation by students and their families of receipt of counseling.

Incentives/Disincentives for Success

Ohio	Other States
Reimburses only students who successfully complete course for high school credit.	Most states have no incentives for successful completion. Advanced Placement programs are more likely to have incentives.

Breakdown of Responsibilities

Ohio	Other States
<p>School districts develop the plan for PSEO options and provide information and counseling to all students (and their parents) enrolled in grades 8 through 11.</p> <p>Postsecondary institutions send written notices of acceptance and courses and hours of enrollment; they either notify students of tuition and fees (college credit only) or furnish participants with course materials and textbooks (both college and high school credit).</p> <p>OBR and ODE are not required to work together to promote the PSEO policy.</p>	<p>Often state policy requires that the state board of education for K-12 and the coordinating or governing entity for higher education work together in promoting dual enrollment opportunities.</p>

Reporting and Accountability Requirements

Ohio	Other States
<p>State statutes do not have reporting or review language for the PSEO program. No clear requirement that specific data be collected and reviewed annually.</p>	<p>States generally report on an annual basis to policymakers on a varied selection of statistical indicators.</p>

The inability to answer many of the questions surrounding Ohio's PSEO policy with available data is the most significant hindrance to any assessment effort.

New Policy Approaches for PSEO

Based on the data review and a comprehensive comparison of Ohio's dual enrollment policy with those across the nation, the following section offers potential policy revisions and options for PSEO. These options were developed with the following observations in mind:

- **PSEO is the only statewide policy** that offers *all* students the opportunity to gain early college access and encourage schooling beyond high school – a 21st-century reality for self-sufficiency.
- **Clear policy direction is needed for PSEO in Ohio.** This is the first comprehensive collection and examination of the data even though the policy has been in place for years.
- **Ohio can no longer afford to offer early college access to a select few** and current trends demand that *all* Ohioans are encouraged to continue beyond high school – across all socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and regional sectors of the state.
- **PSEO is a *policy* – not a program with a system of supports.** To transform access and use PSEO as a lever, the state may need to consider what supports are needed to encourage participation from students, families, and institutions.

Data Limitations

The inability to answer many of the questions surrounding Ohio's PSEO policy with available data is the most significant hindrance to any assessment effort. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of an educational intervention like PSEO, researchers must be able to track individual participants through future educational experiences to determine how the intervention influenced students and whether it affected them differently based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, native language, and family educational background.

Ohio faces at least two significant barriers to being able to fully address these important questions. First, data on individual students in the public K-12 system are necessary, especially to identify key characteristics of family background and to track their enrollments in accelerated courses, both generally and for specific academic subject areas. Second, there are presently no linkages that allow the state to track students across the threshold between the K-12 system and the public postsecondary system.

Figure 17 presents a matrix which, when completely filled out, would provide a reasonably comprehensive, descriptive view of how PSEO participation is related to several postsecondary outcomes of interest, although certainly the matrix does not exhaust all the related research avenues worthy of attention. This matrix would need to include data from an entire graduating cohort, not just those who participated in PSEO, in order to

MATRIX FOR COLLECTING PSEO DATA				
	PSEO Participants		non-PSEO Participants	
College-Going	by Income	by Race/Ethnicity	by Income	by Race/Ethnicity
Total				
Two-Year Institutions				
Four-Year Institutions				
Persistence/Transfer Up				
Total				
Degree Completion				
Associate's				
Bachelor's				
Still in Progress				
Time-to-Associate's Degree				
Less than 2 Years				
2-3 Years				
More than 3 Years				
Credits-to-Associate's Degree (semester hours)				
Less than 75				
75 or more				
Time-to-Bachelor's Degree				
Less than 4 Years				
4 Years				
5-6 Years				
More than 6 Years				
Credits-to-Bachelor's Degree (semester hours)				
Less than 145				
145 or more				

Figure 17. Matrix for Collecting PSEO Data

compare their post-high-school experiences with those of non-PSEO participants.²⁴

In addition to collecting more thorough data, it may be possible to improve on the analysis of the relationship between PSEO and persistence, degree completion, and even time to degree by using data available through the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The NSC maintains data on individual students who are attending or have attended nearly all the nation's nonprofit

postsecondary institutions since the mid-1990s. This includes variables for high school diploma award date, name and location of high school, postsecondary institution(s) attended and academic terms attended, and postsecondary degree(s) and award date. Merged with data from the state on PSEO participation, this source might be sufficient for a rudimentary analysis.

The NSC would be a potentially valuable tool for future educational research

²⁴ This matrix shows only disaggregations by income, which reflect the most important fault lines of educational policy in our society. Other disaggregations might also prove useful in an evaluation of PSEO, while not necessarily adding much information to the overall view of how Ohio is serving its citizens through PSEO. For example, adding native language to this table might offer some insights into how educators might better reach out to non-native English speakers.

The state may want to consider exploring ways to prepare and engage low-income and minority students who are not currently accessing PSEO in notable numbers.

efforts even if Ohio had a data system that contained information on individual students spanning the K-12 and postsecondary systems since it would enable researchers to track most students who attend private or out-of-state institutions, from which the Board of Regents collects no data. However, because it does not contain a precise variable for family income, even it may not be sufficient to examine whether students from different socioeconomic backgrounds share equally in the potential benefits participating in PSEO may have on future schooling .

Participation and Access

Research on higher education participation and success, or developing a “college ready” identity, has demonstrated that many factors may discourage students from participating, including:

- Lack of access to the necessary courses and preparation.
- Lack of guidance or even discouragement from parents, counselors, teachers, and other school personnel.
- Time commitments, such as work or family responsibilities.
- Lack of financial resources and/or fear of financial penalty for course withdraw/failure.
- Fear of failure.

Students with some accelerated learning credit in high school have been shown to be more likely to enroll in college, stay in college, and graduate than students who do not have accelerated learning opportunities. This is true for all students, and most particularly for low-income students. The complexity and range of factors that can lead to low participation, countered by the higher pay-off in terms of postsecondary performance, means that

concerted and coordinated efforts by the state, schools, parents, and community members are needed to prepare and engage a wide range of students in PSEO.

The legislature may want to consider providing incentives to consortia of schools and postsecondary institutions that demonstrate progress in enrolling students and assisting them to successful completion of a PSEO course.²⁵

Eligibility criteria for students

Additional eligibility criteria (beyond the state-mandated criteria of a 3.0 GPA in the subject area) that are imposed by individual institutions may impede access. Criteria in many cases are well above what is required of traditional students seeking college admission, reinforcing a perception that PSEO is for the “select few.” To address this, the state may want to determine the relevance of any additional criteria and clarify the criteria as a statewide policy.

Participation by low-income and minority students

The state may want to consider exploring ways to prepare and engage low-income and minority students who are not currently accessing PSEO in notable numbers. It may also consider ways to encourage broader district and university participation in those efforts. PSEO could be a highly effective strategy to expand access to higher education for students who have historically been underrepresented. The best available data suggest that only a fraction of all participants are from economically disadvantaged families, and participation by racial/ethnic groups is out of proportion with the state’s population. Black non-Hispanic students are underrepresented in PSEO participation when compared to their representation in the public high school enrollment.

²⁵ *Accelerated Learning Options: Moving the Needle on Access and Success* (Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2006).

Attention might be given through state law to ensure that costs associated with participating in the PSEO program, such as application fees, orientation fees, or activity fees, are not barriers for low-income students.

Participation across the state

Uneven geographic participation in PSEO may occur because of availability of other options (including AP or IB), as well as the proximity of postsecondary institutions and available transportation to reach those institutions. If PSEO is to be a statewide opportunity, the state may wish to conduct further research to determine how location contributes to participation and develop strategies to remedy these conditions.

Participation by younger students

Ninth- and 10th-grade students, potentially ready for college-level work, are also vastly underrepresented. In 2004-05, 9th- and 10th-grade students made up only 4 percent of all PSEO participants. The state should consider engaging more students at the freshman and sophomore levels.

Incentives for districts

Less than 5 percent of high school students, mostly from suburban, upper-income, and white families, are accessing PSEO. As state leaders work toward their goal of increasing participation in PSEO, they may need to counter concerns by some K-12 districts and schools over losing students and funding to colleges. To address the problems of under-representation of some student groups and disincentives to local districts, the state may want to create incentives for innovative partnerships to expand access and success for low-income and minority students and to broaden

engagement across all regions of Ohio, as well as provide incentives to high schools that have appropriately certified staff delivering PSEO to low-income and minority students on site at the high school.

Success

Awarding credit

Ohio's law allowing students to choose how credit will be awarded—college credit only or both college and high school credit—seems fair and reasonable. However, students sometimes encounter problems transferring credits across institutions and receiving dual credit. These problems have cost implications and can extend time to degree completion. To address this problem, Ohio could require all public institutions to issue and accept all PSEO credit.

Counseling and communication

Access and success in PSEO rely strongly on the navigation skills and "education literacy" of parents and students. Research demonstrates that the role of advising and support systems is crucial, particularly for those who would be the first in their families to attend college.

Ohio has a comprehensive set of policies related to counseling and other forms of communication on PSEO. But this does not shed light on how the policies are implemented in schools, or even if counselors, teachers, and other school personnel actually do what is required by law. An earlier report on PSEO, based in part on interviews with Ohio educators, noted that "Students are not provided with the same information and guidance about PSEO or the same ability to participate across the state."²⁶

The state may want to create incentives for innovative partnerships to expand access and success for low-income and minority students and to broaden engagement across all regions of Ohio.

²⁶ *Postsecondary Enrollment Options for High School Students: Directions for Policy and Practice in Ohio* (unpublished document, Jobs for the Future and KnowledgeWorks Foundation, May 2006), 4.

As PSEO moves from providing options to a relatively small number of high school students to a much larger policy or program, the financial burden must be addressed.

To further strengthen current statutes, the state might consider requiring that written notification be provided to students and parents. Written communiqués and more dynamic messaging or marketing may have a higher probability of reaching parents and encouraging them to act.

The state may also want to review the effectiveness of guidance counselors and other supports that are currently in place to counsel on PSEO and evaluate which kinds of supports encourage student success. There may be a possibility to encourage and coordinate with existing college access programs with proven track records, such as Ohio College Access Network or federal programs such as GEAR-UP and Trio.

Cost and Accountability

Financing dual enrollment programs

The current method for funding PSEO is often perceived as an undue burden on participating high schools/K-12 districts, whose leaders may object to the loss of state funds when students take PSEO courses. As PSEO moves from providing options to a relatively small number of high school students to a much larger policy or program, the financial burden must be addressed. To gain knowledge about possible ways to address this, Ohio may want explore the PSEO policies of other states that are perceived by national observers as doing this well, such as Utah and West Virginia.

Additionally, Ohio could examine the effectiveness of the various methods of providing students with PSEO credit, including courses taught on high school campuses, online, on college campuses, or in whole schools on college campuses. When these various options have been researched more closely, the state can weigh the financial costs and benefits of each.

Joint responsibility

Currently PSEO operates as a standalone policy, rather than as part of the state's strategy on K-12 reform, higher education, and the economy. Furthermore, PSEO reflects the vision of *individual* administrators, which impacts broad access to PSEO. In order for PSEO to become a more effective statewide policy, Ohio should consider creating a more interconnected approach to PSEO as part of the state's P-16 strategy and reinforce this approach across K-12, higher education, and workforce reforms to build more seamless pathways leading to a postsecondary degree or certificate. Any efforts to broaden and incorporate PSEO with other initiatives should ensure consistent and equitable access to PSEO across the state.

The success of accelerated learning options such as PSEO that operate in the nexus between secondary and postsecondary education is largely dependent on the respect and collaboration across agencies and actors. In most states, there are more barriers to collaboration than incentives.

A recent publication on college access and success summed this up: "Secondary and postsecondary education have developed divergent histories, governance structures, policies, and institutional

boundaries. As a result, there are few widespread practices or traditions for these two systems of education to communicate with each other, much less to collaborate to improve student achievement across institutions.”²⁷

To encourage and strengthen collaboration between K-12 and higher education and address other areas of concern for PSEO, lawmakers might consider requiring that these agencies come together annually in a meeting dedicated solely to examining and critically analyzing the effectiveness of PSEO for students, the state, and its institutions. A periodic PSEO Review Conference would bring together representatives with both data and policy experience so that the discussion is informed by research, practice, and policy. The results of the Review Conference, if published as a report to the legislature, would serve as a joint statement to policymakers and school leaders on how to improve program effectiveness, quality, and efficiency. This will become increasingly important to potential 21st-century approaches to education reform that cross the boundaries of traditional education systems.

Reporting and accountability requirements

Stronger and more effective accountability requirements also call for comprehensive information on all accelerated learning options in the state. Requiring annual reports from K-12 and higher education agencies on *all* such options, including in the least AP, IB, early college high schools, and Tech Prep, is a commonsense response to accountability questions and not an unreasonable burden on the agencies. These annual reports should include data on rates of participation, college going, degree completion, time to degree, race/ethnicity, income, location, costs to the state and districts, costs to students and institutions, and estimated savings to state.

The state may wish to pursue the strategy of placing all accelerated learning options under one umbrella program. Such a move would greatly enhance research efforts and enable cross-referencing for students who enroll in multiple options. It may also open the door for additional alignment of supports to ensure the success of these options.

A periodic PSEO Review Conference would bring together representatives with both data and policy experience so that the discussion is informed by research, practice, and policy.

²⁷ Patrick M. Callan, Joni E. Finney, Michael W. Kirst, Michael D. Usdan, and Andrea Venezia, *State Policymaking for Improving College Readiness and Success* (San Jose, CA: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2006), 1.

Conclusion

An opportunity is before our state to forge a model for dual enrollment that bridges old education boundaries and increases access and preparedness for all students. PSEO is one of the few policies in place that allow students to move across the invisible walls between high school and college. It offers a 21st century approach to learning that is essential for our state to compete globally and to prepare a society of constant learners, ready to meet the challenges of a new century.

Any successful move to make full use of PSEO will require a focused effort by the state to create a more interconnected approach to PSEO by bringing together government leadership, K-12, higher education, business, and civic groups around this issue and connecting with existing reform efforts. To ensure that this opportunity extends to all Ohioans, the state should target its communications and policy revisions to areas of the state and populations where increased access is essential – for low-income and minority populations and in areas where the policy may be underutilized.

To accomplish this and accurately assess progress toward this goal, it is critical that Ohio examine the data realities, including the holes in the data that limit current meaningful policy analysis.

The need for thoughtful action is urgent. Done right, PSEO could be one path for Ohio to translate the ideals of a 21st century education into a reality.



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