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New Report: Maryland Should Strengthen Dual Enrollment Program to Increase College Readiness for All Students

Under current law, only 2 percent of Baltimore City high school students take advantage of enrolling in college courses compared to 11 percent statewide

BALTIMORE - In a new report funded by the Abell Foundation, researcher Dr. Gail Sunderman, director of the Maryland Equity Project at the University of Maryland College of Education, looks at the early impact of Maryland's College and Career Act of 2013 on the structure of dual enrollment programs in Baltimore City and three surrounding counties. Dual enrollment programs offer high school students the chance to enroll in college courses and earn transferable college credit.

Research shows that dual enrollment participants are more likely to enroll and persist in college, earn higher GPAs during college and accumulate more college credit. The College and Career Act created a mechanism for dual enrollment in the state, but currently few students are taking advantage of the opportunity. Statewide, 11 percent of high school students participated in dual enrollment programs in 2014-15. However, participation varies greatly from county to county, and only 2 percent of Baltimore City students participated in 2014-15.

This new report, [Dual Enrollment in Maryland and Baltimore City: An Examination of Program Components and Design](#), illustrates that the current law does not do enough to achieve equitable opportunities for all Maryland youth. By examining funding arrangements, eligibility requirements, student support services and communication strategies, Dr. Sunderman highlights factors contributing to unequal enrollment patterns.

In the report, Dr. Sunderman concludes that "designing and implementing a robust dual enrollment program that reaches a broad spectrum of students requires more than simply making the program available and expecting that students will take advantage of it. It requires resources, support personnel and flexibility for administrators to respond to a range of implementation issues as they arise."

Under the law, each jurisdiction is responsible for many of the details of their dual enrollment programs. While still allowing for flexibility, the report makes specific recommendations for the state of Maryland to reform its dual enrollment policies and practices, including:

- Provide full funding for districts and higher education institutions pursuing dual enrollment programs.
- Fund the provision of student and family support services, including counseling to navigate access, course selection and career planning.
- Facilitate the transfer of credits between schools in the Maryland educational system, including standardized numbering for similar courses.
- Incentivize program models that incorporate dual enrollment - e.g., extend tuition discounts to include developmental courses to prepare students to enroll in college courses.

- Consider alternative eligibility requirements, such as using PARCC to develop a metric in place of standard college placement scores.
- Continue to study and evaluate the processes and outcomes for dual enrollment.

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The Abell Foundation is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life in Maryland, with a particular focus on Baltimore City. The Foundation places a strong emphasis on opening the doors of opportunity to the disenfranchised, believing that no community can thrive if those who live on the margins of it are not included.

The Maryland Equity Project is a research center in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership in the College of Education at The University of Maryland. It conducts, synthesizes, and distributes research on key educational issues in Maryland, facilitates collaboration between researchers and policymakers, and seeks to improve education through research that supports an informed public policy debate on the quality and distribution of educational opportunities.

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