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## **Research Shows Dual Enrollment Programs Have Promise for All Students**

*But variations in state policy lead to uneven access and impact for students*

WASHINGTON – July 13, 2010 – Dual enrollment programs, which offer students in high school to enroll in courses for college credit, can be a key element in the transition from high school to college, according to a new report released today by researchers at two universities, commissioned by the Blackboard Institute. And while the programs have shown evidence of increasing college attendance and success rates, they are sometimes hindered by state policies that do not provide the support needed to leverage these programs.

The report, written by Elisabeth Barnett at Teachers College Columbia University and Liesa Stamm at Rutgers-Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies, looked at various configurations of and studies on dual enrollment and finds that these programs, when properly implemented, can be effective in helping all students – not just high achievers – succeed in post-secondary education. But the report’s review of state policies for dual enrollment shows that access to programs varies widely from state to state.

“Education advocates and policy makers are rightly promoting dual enrollment as an effective approach to reaching multiple student achievement goals,” said Barnett. “What we found, though, is that there is a patchwork of policies that govern dual enrollment. In fact, some policies provide financial disincentives for high schools and colleges to provide dual enrollment opportunities. We need policies that promote greater access to these pathways into college for all students.”

The report, *Dual Enrollment: A Strategy for Educational Advancement of All Students*, found growing interest in implementing dual enrollment opportunities for students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. In fact, some states and localities have encouraged accelerated learning strategies that focus on students at risk of dropping out of high school. Research shows that dual enrollment can assist low-performing students to meet high academic standards, better prepare students for the rigor of college-level work, and increase college access and success.

However, in comparing state policies on dual enrollment, the research finds vast disparities in eligibility requirements, quality control and funding from state-to-state, including:

- **Eligibility:** Dual enrollment programs are often hindered by state-mandated minimum eligibility requirements that limit student access.
- **Quality:** Only 29 states have provisions in their dual enrollment policies having to do with quality control.
- **Credit Transfer:** Only 15 states require all public two- and four-year colleges to accept dual enrollment credits.
- **Funding:** In some states, any interested student can participate for free; in others, students must pay tuition costs.

The report concludes that “there is evidence that dual enrollment helps a wide range of students to be more successful in college. Students in these programs experience themselves as real college students and gain confidence and skills that can help them to excel academically.”

“Dual enrollment is a critical link to greater persistence and success in higher education yet there remain policies that actually make it harder, or in some cases nearly impossible for students to access such programs,” said Gordon Freedman, executive director of the Blackboard Institute. “This should be a wake up call for educators and policymakers alike.”

The full report is available online at <http://www.blackboardinstitute.com>.

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### **About the Blackboard Institute**

The Blackboard Institute seeks to help education leaders at all levels improve student progression by leveraging innovative and engaging learning technologies and a global network of education visionaries. The Institute fosters an environment in which schools and institutions work together with government to enhance the learning experience and advance policies that help students succeed. Blackboard solutions are already a familiar education resource in the lives of millions of users at thousands of institutions worldwide. Drawing on Blackboard’s proximity to education practice, as well as original research and analysis, the Blackboard Institute provides vital resources to education providers, policymakers and thought leaders. For more information, please visit <http://www.blackboardinstitute.com>.