

ACE Academic Model Acceleration Programs – survey responses to open answer questions Oct./Nov. 2008

Question #1 - If offered, I would be likely to sign-up for one of these programs, or I would encourage my student(s) to sign-up for one.

- Overall, the idea of having accelerated programs accessible at each district high school is positive
- High numbers of responses lean towards having only one program available at a given high school. Didn't want to overload students/school.
- Consensus appears to be that adding these programs could really help our college bound students.
- Respondents generally were in favor of programs that helped students earn college credits earlier and that would assist in them completing school earlier

Question #2 - I believe that having one of these programs at my school either currently benefits the school, or would benefit the school if it were added.

- General belief that programs would benefit the students giving them a better chance to get into college
- Concerns voiced regarding resources that would be made available if schools implemented programs (staff, financial, etc.)
- Strong belief that focus should remain on addressing the needs of the students while implementation of various programs at schools

Question #3 - The program proposed for my school (in Scenario A) is a good fit for the students.

- Schools generally had strong feelings for or against the proposed program for their school, while staying neutral for the overall Scenario plan
- Believe proposed scenario would help prepare students for college
- Feelings positive in regards to a program being offered at each high school in the district

Question #4 - The program proposed for my school (in Scenario B) is a good fit for the students.

- General belief that Scenario B is better choice from options listed because it affects a wider variety to all areas of town.
- Schools with changes from Scenario A to B had strong feelings with regards to whether they believed their students could handle the newly proposed program
- Concern raised with regards to students signing up for programs at various high schools and not taking it as seriously as other students that want the challenge

Question #5 The AICE Program is:

- Comments provide overwhelming evidence that respondents have little or no knowledge or understanding of the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) as an international accelerated program.
- Many respondents indicate that they are very knowledgeable of the rigor of the IB program and AP courses. They believe these courses will prepare them adequately for college.
- It was apparent that respondents enrolled in the AICE program find the course of study to be challenging and confident that they will be prepared for postsecondary education.
- Some respondents suggested that the AICE program appears to be good for struggling schools but not a good fit for their school.
- General comments support the premise that acceleration programs should be available at more high schools.

Question #6 The IB Program is:

- Comments provide overwhelming evidence that IB is highly recognized as a challenging, rigorous course of study.
- Many respondents learned of the program from family members or family friends who were IB graduates.
- Comments from individuals currently associated directly or indirectly with the IB program offer the following concerns:
 - Can the district financially support additional programs?
 - Students should not be forced to enroll in the program.
 - The reputation of our program causes post secondary institution to seek out our graduates.
 - Will IBO authorize additional programs for the district?
- A significant number of respondents indicated that they would like the opportunity to enroll in such a prestigious program.

Question # 7 The Early College Program is:

- Comments suggest that respondents are aware that the Early College program allows students to get a head start on preparing for post secondary education.
- Several respondents recognize that the Early College program provides a significant cost saving to students and families.
- Many of the comments indicate that the critical need for the Early College program is to introduce students to the college atmosphere and expectations while still enrolled in high school.
- Comments from respondents associated directly or indirectly with existing international accelerated programs suggest that Early College might be a good program for some schools but is not needed at their school.
- Some respondents believe that 9th grade students are too young to enroll in the program.

Question # 8 The AP Honors Program is:

- A majority of the respondents suggest that the AP Honors Program can and should be offered at each high school.
- Most respondents are knowledgeable of the rigor of AP classes and are concerned that the number of required courses will provide too much stress for many students.
- Some respondents indicated that it is impossible to take 9 AP courses and complete requirements for their major program of choice.
- Respondents strongly agree that AP courses provide full opportunity for students to obtain college credit in high school.
- Several comments noted that highly trained teachers are critical for students to be prepared to successfully pass the AP examinations.

Question # 9 – The district should have eligibility criteria that define performance standards and/or prerequisites to enter an acceleration program.

- Respondents agree that eligibility criteria are needed for entrance into acceleration programs.
- Comments indicate that criteria are already in place and should be maintained.
- Some comments also indicate that criteria should be flexible and offer some exceptions.
- GPA criteria noted most often but other criteria were indicated including test data and course prerequisites. (Algebra I)

Question # 10 The district should have continuation criteria that define academic standards to remain enrolled in an acceleration program.

- Respondents agree that the district should implement continuation criteria for acceleration programs.
- Comments reflect the belief that continuation criteria keep students motivated and maintain the integrity of an acceleration program.
- Some respondents note a concern for making the continuation criteria unreasonably difficult without appropriate safety nets.
- The desire for program criteria to be the same across schools noted in several comments.

Question # 11 The district should have the same criteria for entry or continuation in a particular program, regardless of which school the program exists (vs. criteria that is set on a school by school basis).

- The majority of responses strongly agree that entrance and continuation criteria should be uniform across the district.
- Some comments focus on the need for criteria to be determined on a school-by-school basis with reasons cited as inequities in funding, teaching staff and programs already in existence.
- Several responses indicated program criteria should be based on existence of program – start up programs may have different criteria to get program started.

Question # 12 Please provide your opinion as to whether the entry and continuation criteria proposed by the ACE Academic Model Committee is too east, about right or too hard.

- The majority of respondents believe that entrance and continuation criteria are about right
- Some comments reflect the opinion that entrance and continuation criteria are about right.
- Comments that indicate the criteria are too hard focus on the FCAT Level requirement.
- Several comments on the need to keep program criteria the same across the district.

Question #13 What do you like best and what do you like least about the proposals.

- There were many supporters of the idea that there should be some entry/exit criteria – although this was not universally agreed. When there was disagreement it was more typically focused on entry not on continuity.
- There was general agreement that these programs would be beneficial to schools and it is a good thing to have them available at more locations – although some disagreement on this point as well.
- FCAT as a criteria was a concern for some who are “poor test takers” as well as concern about 7th grade score being representative of a student’s ability in high school.
- Improving preparation for college was noted as a positive several times.
- Current budgetary constraints drew skepticism for our ability to execute.
- Focus on high achievers vs low achievers was criticized by some.