

**RESPONSE TO HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION 23
OF THE 2011 REGULAR SESSION
OF THE LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE**

**LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS
LOUISIANA BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION**



JANUARY 2012

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

House Concurrent Resolution 23 of the 2011 Regular Legislative Session by Representative Patricia Smith requests the Board of Regents (BOR) and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) “jointly study the source, nature, and amount of funding allocated to various units of public secondary and postsecondary education related to dual enrollment initiatives, to determine the appropriateness of such funding, and to determine the impact of such initiatives and to submit...a written report of their findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for legislation relative to the issue...” (Attachment A).

Dual enrollment is designed to prepare high school students for college or career by enrolling them in advanced, developmental, or work skills courses through which the students earn both college and high school credit. Advanced (general education) courses keep strong students academically challenged and give them early exposure and an opportunity to complete college work; developmental courses help students prepare for college and gain admission to four-year institutions; and work skills courses provide technical training toward industry-recognized certification in high-demand fields. These programs also encourage partnerships between postsecondary institutions and secondary schools and districts to help address the large numbers of high school students leaving school, either as graduates or dropouts, neither prepared for college nor ready for work.

Efforts across the nation have focused on initiatives designed to graduate more students from high school prepared for college and careers. These initiatives,

while varying from state to state, have included dual enrollment opportunities for high schools students.

In Louisiana, many high school students have historically enrolled in college courses at public postsecondary institutions, whether or not they also received high school credit. As indicated in Table 1, reported fall enrollment numbers of high school students in college courses remained relatively stable until:

- (1) The Louisiana Technical College, with a history of enrolling high school students, began reporting enrollment data to BOR in 2003, and
- (2) State dual enrollment programs that provide tuition assistance for high school students were introduced.

The state's programs are the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Tech Early Start (2005) and Early Start (a pilot program in 2006 and a statewide program in 2007). The number of high school students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions has grown from 501 in fall 2000 to 18,551 in fall 2010. Table 2 provides the number of high school students participating in the state's dual enrollment programs in the 2005-2010 fall terms. That number has grown from 136 in fall 2005 to 11,836 in fall 2010.

Table 1

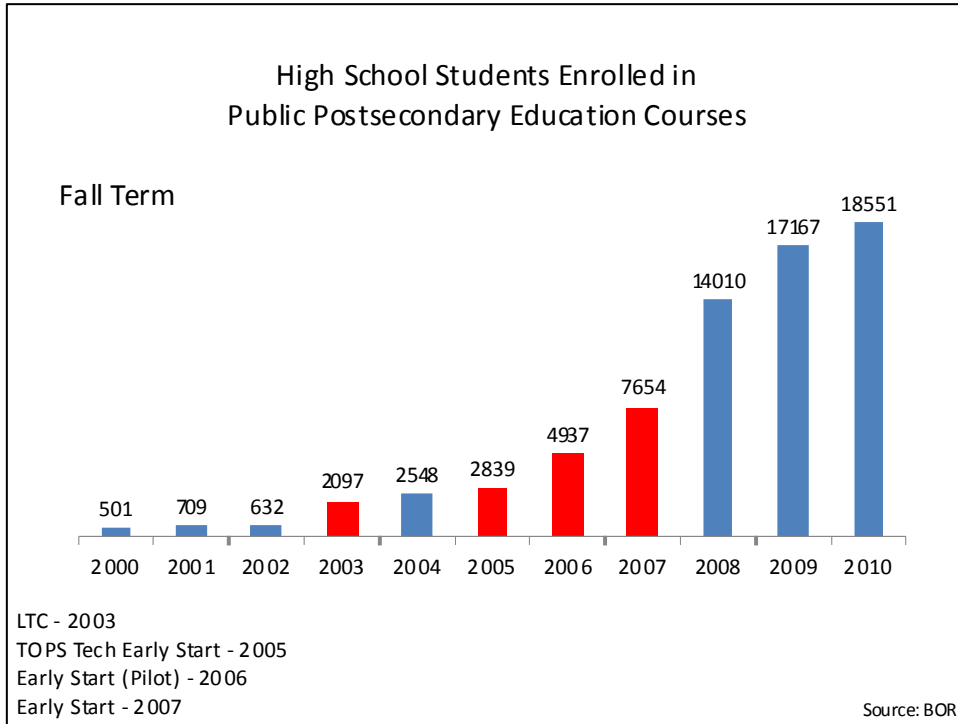
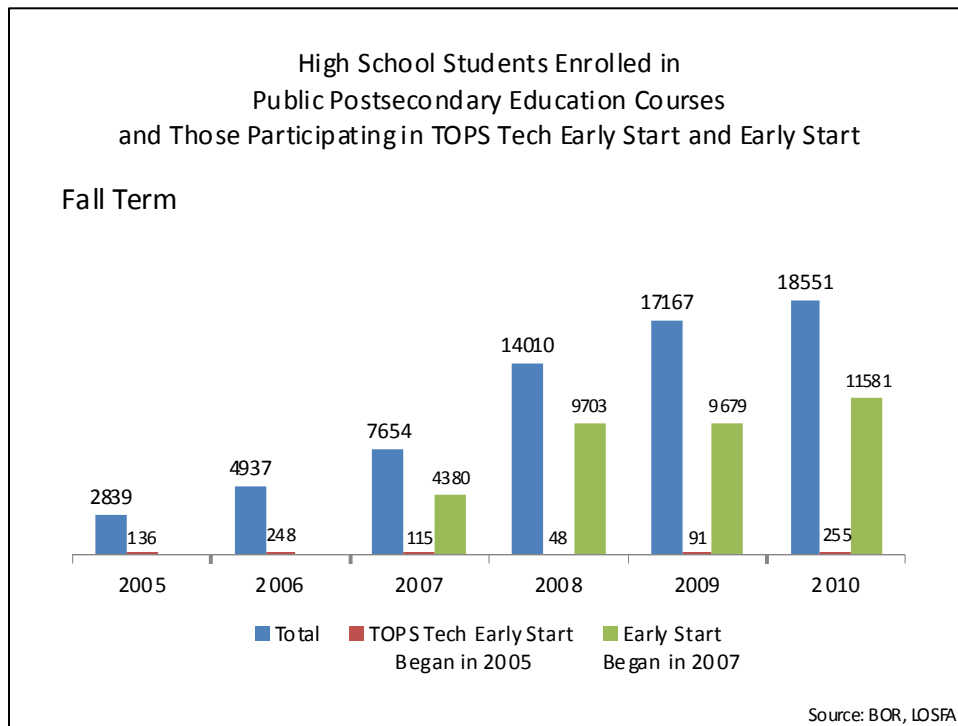


Table 2



Dual enrollment, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the enrollment of a high school student in a college course for which the student receives both college and high school credit. The college course may be taught on the high school or the college campus. The student's credits are posted on the student's college and high school transcripts.

The state's two programs that provide tuition assistance for high school students enrolling in postsecondary education courses for dual credit are:

(1) TOPS Tech Early Start - created by Act 348 of the 2005 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) as part of the state's Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS); and

(2) The Early Start Program - created by the Board of Regents in 2006 in conjunction with its work with the High School Redesign Commission.

The program was introduced as a pilot for the 2006-07 academic year and developed into a statewide program for the 2007-08 academic year.

LOSFA administers this program through an agreement with BOR.

The program rules, approved by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, state the purpose of each program.

TOPS Tech Early Start

“to provide an incentive for qualified Louisiana public high school students to prepare for and pursue an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential in a top demand occupation while still in high school.”

Students from public high schools participating in this program enroll in college courses and earn credits that apply to an industry-based certification.

Early Start

“to provide an incentive for qualified Louisiana high school students to prepare for a postsecondary education or career.”

Students from public high schools participating in this program enroll in college courses and receive both college and high school credits.

The following three critical goals identified by BESE utilize dual enrollment as a strategy to help achieve the goals:

- (1) students will graduate on time;
- (2) students will enroll in postsecondary education or graduate workforce-ready; and
- (3) students will successfully complete at least one year of postsecondary education.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

In Louisiana, high school students may enroll in college courses for which they will earn both college and high school credit with either all or a portion of their tuition and fees paid through a variety of sources:

- (1) Students;
- (2) Two state programs (TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start); and/or
- (3) Partnerships between postsecondary institutions and local schools/schools districts.

Dual Enrollment Programs: Bridging the Gap from High School to College, a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) 2011 draft report on dual enrollment programs, identified the state programs and who pays the student's cost of attendance for each SREB state. Louisiana was the only state identified that pays the student's cost of attendance solely from state funds for students participating in the state's dual enrollment programs. In other states, the tuition is either paid by the student, college, lottery, or a combination of these. This study will focus on Louisiana's two state-funded programs, TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start, comparing the course offerings, eligibility framework, student participation, and funding.

Course Offerings

TOPS Tech Early Start provides funding for students enrolling in work skills courses. These courses must be in a program of study leading to an industry-based certification in a top-demand occupation. The courses are offered by Louisiana's public community colleges, technical community colleges, and technical colleges. The decision as to what high school credit the student will receive when completing the college work skills course is determined at the high school level. The Department of Education has developed a statewide guide for work skills course alignment.

Early Start provides funding for students enrolling in college-level degree credit courses, developmental courses, or work skills courses. These courses are offered by all levels of institutions: technical colleges, 2-year colleges, and 4-year

universities. The decision as to what high school credit the student will receive when completing the college-level or developmental course is also determined at the high school level. However, there is no guide for the alignment of these courses with high school courses.

The college courses offered through both programs may be taught on either the high school or the college campus by qualified faculty. If taught on the high school campus by a high school teacher, the teacher must possess the credentials to teach the college course.

Table 3 displays the percent enrollment and Table 4 displays the number of students enrolled in both programs, by institutional level, since the 2007-08 academic year, the first year of the statewide Early Start program.

Table 3

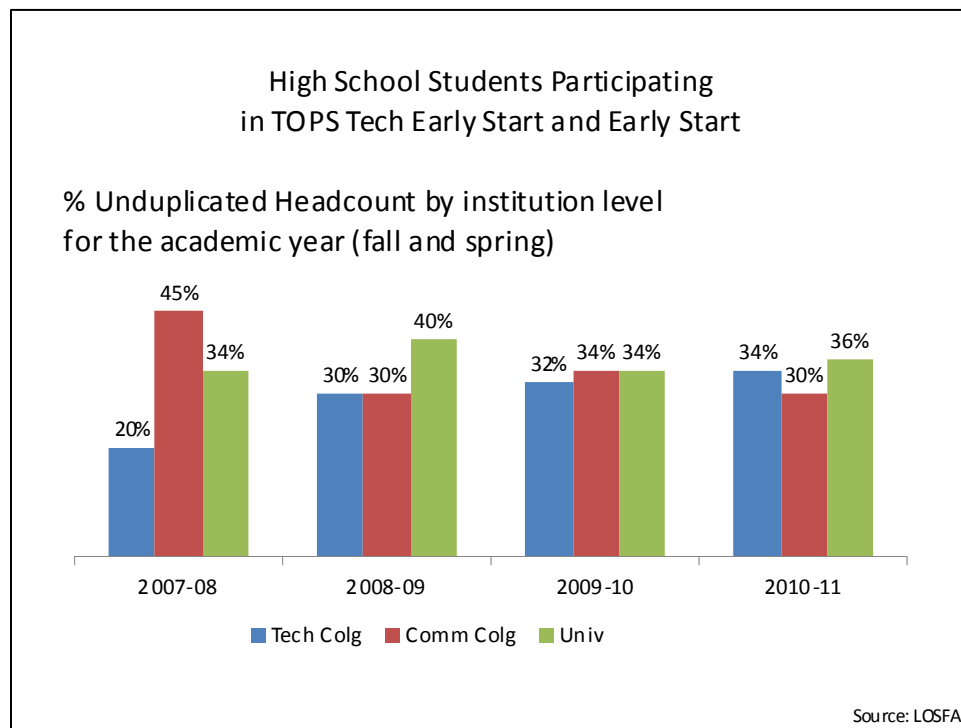


Table 4

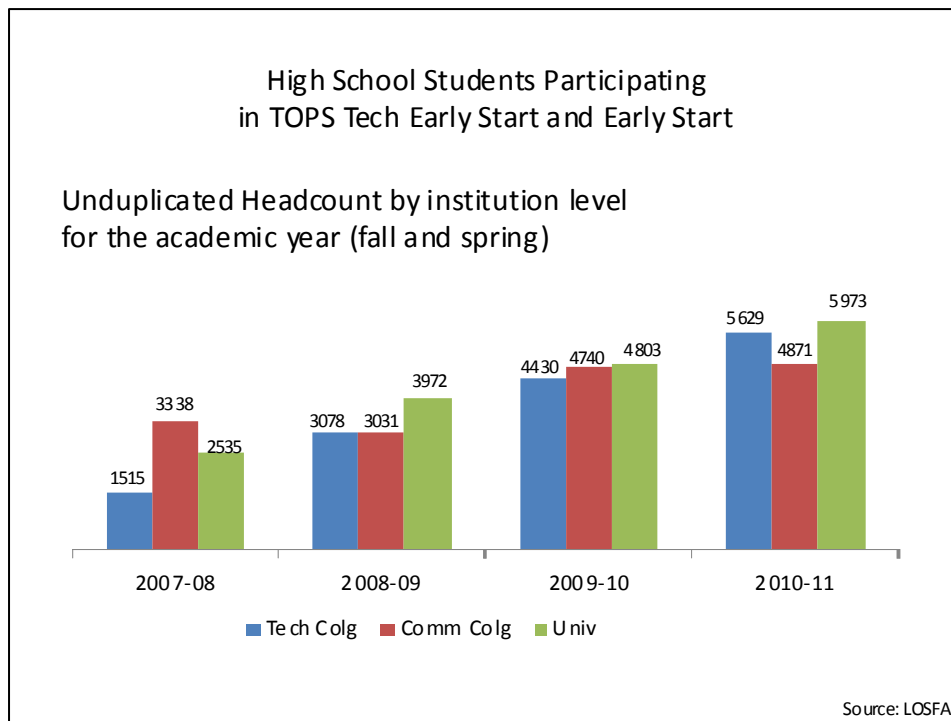
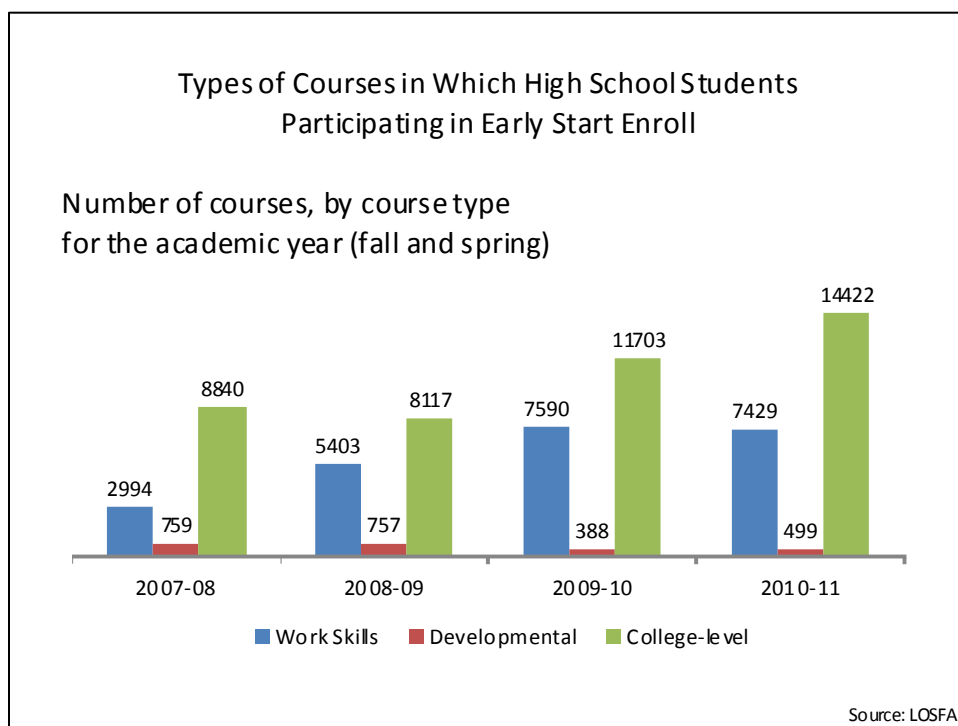


Table 5 provides the number of courses in which the students in Early Start enrolled, by course type for each academic year.

Table 5



Eligibility Framework

The eligibility framework for TOPS Tech Early Start is prescribed in Act 348 of 2005 and modifications may be made only by the Legislature. Early Start is a Board of Regents' program, and the eligibility framework has been modified over the years to better align student preparation with course enrollment and to operate within funding constraints.

Students may be funded through Early Start for enrollment in college-level degree credit general education courses or developmental courses if they meet general eligibility criteria, are on track to graduate from high school with the Louisiana Core 4 curriculum, and have the following test scores:

College- level: PLAN or ACT composite score 18 and
English subscore 18 and Math subscore 19
(subscores are in accordance with Board of Regents' policy
for placement into entry level college courses in English
and math).

Developmental: PLAN composite score 12 or ACT composite score 14.

Both TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start provide funds for students desiring to enroll in work skills courses, but the course definitions and eligibility requirements differ as displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

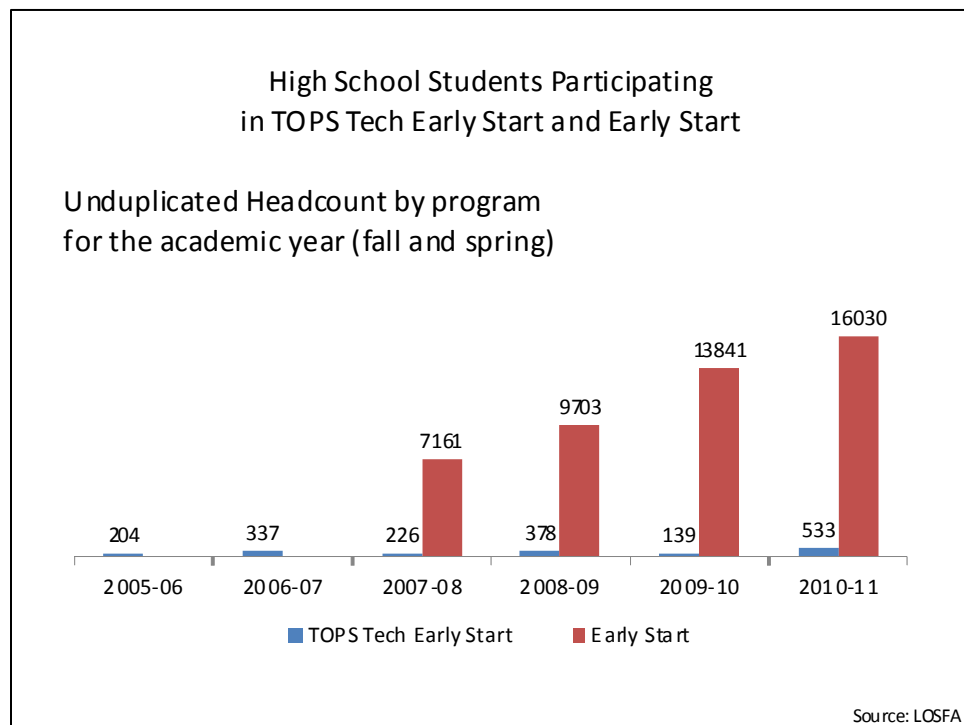
	TOPS Tech Early Start	Early Start
Courses	Vocational courses in program of study leading to IBC in top-demand occupation	Courses in a skill or occupational training area that contribute to a declared Career Area of Concentration and lead to a recognized IBC
General Eligibility Requirements	11 th or 12 th grade student	11 th or 12 th grade student Aged at least 15 On track to graduate from high school with the Core 4 or to graduate from high school with a declared Career Area of Concentration
	In good standing at high school	In good standing at high school
	2.00 overall high school GPA	n/a
	Minimum passing score in English and Math Graduate Exit Exam	n/a
	PLAN English subscore 15 PLAN Math subscore 15	PLAN composite score 14 or ACT composite score of 15 or WorkKeys Bronze Certificate
	2.5 college GPA to continue	Grade A, B, C, or P in college course to continue

Student Participation

Student participation for the academic years, from the beginning of each program to the most recent (2010-11) academic year, appears in Table 7.

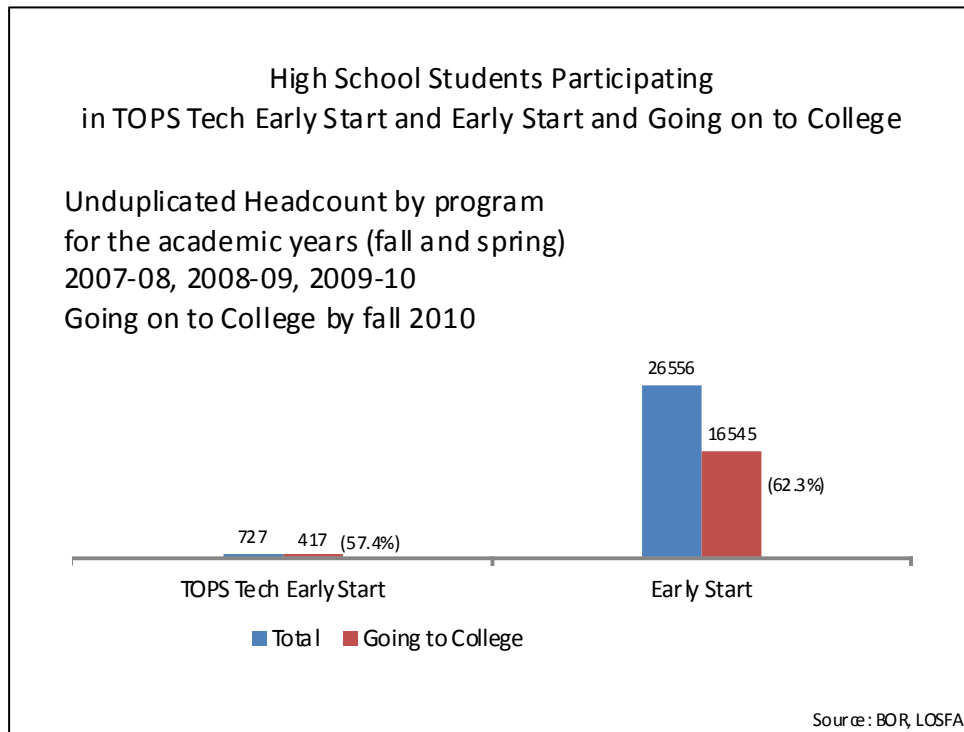
Participation in Early Start has continued to increase while participation in TOPS Tech Early Start remained low but stable until the most recent academic year.

Table 7



The SREB draft report cited earlier also states that “students in dual enrollment courses are more than likely than their peers to enroll in college after high school...” Table 8 provides the number and percent of students participating in TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start who have gone on to enroll in Louisiana’s public colleges and universities as entering first-year students (enrolling at any time after high school by fall 2010). In its Louisiana First-time College Freshmen Report, the Department of Education reports that the going-to-college rate of public and nonpublic high school students graduating in 2009-10 (enrolling in college by fall 2010) is 52%.

Table 8



Funding

High school students

High school students enrolling in college courses through the state's dual enrollment programs do so at no cost. The programs pay the postsecondary institution certain amounts that are applied to the students' tuition and fees associated with enrolling in the college course(s).

Secondary schools and postsecondary institutions

Public secondary schools are funded through BESE's Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) to cover the schools' costs associated with educating students. No costs are borne by the student. Postsecondary institutions receive state funds to cover a portion of the costs associated with educating students based on the Board of Regents' Funding Formula and the implementation rate based on the annual appropriation. The implementation rate for the 2011-12 year was 67%. The student's share of the costs is the tuition and fees. A portion of the student's tuition and fees is paid by the state's dual enrollment programs. The balance of the student's cost (if there is one) is absorbed by the institution.

Payments are made to institutions that enroll eligible students through TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start. The payments are applied to the students' tuition and fees. TOPS Tech Early Start provides up to \$600 per academic year for eligible students to enroll for up to six credit hours per semester. This amounts to \$150 (\$50 per credit hour) for a typical three-semester-hour course. Early Start provides \$100 per credit hour for up to three credit hours per semester or \$300 for a

typical three-semester-hour course. Table 9 compares the amounts paid by these programs to the 2011-12 average tuition and fees for a three-hour-credit course, by institution level.

Table 9

TOPS Tech Early Start (3 hr. course payment)	Early Start (3 hr. course payment)	Technical College (Avg. tuition/fees for 3 hr. course)	Community College (Avg. tuition/fees for 3 hr. course)	University (Avg. tuition/fees for 3 hr. course)
\$150	\$300	\$189	\$360	\$720

Both TOPS Tech Early Start and Early Start are funded with state funds. TOPS Tech Early Start is funded through the TOPS program with no finite budget. Early Start is funded through the higher education budget with an annual appropriation. Table 10 provides the amount of TOPS monies expended for TOPS Tech Early Start, by academic year.

Table 10

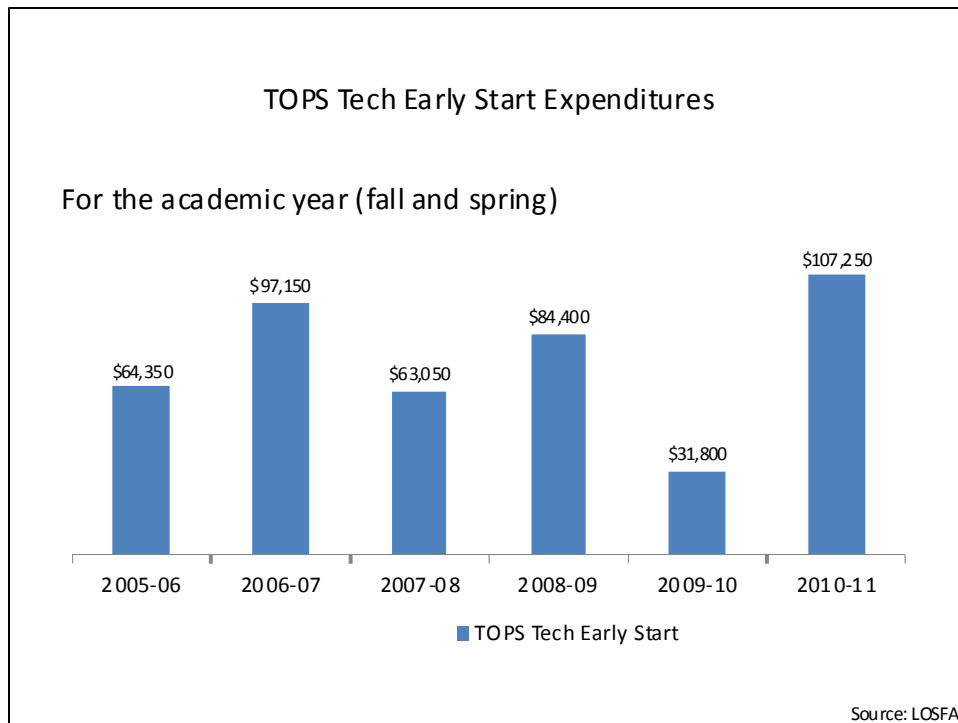
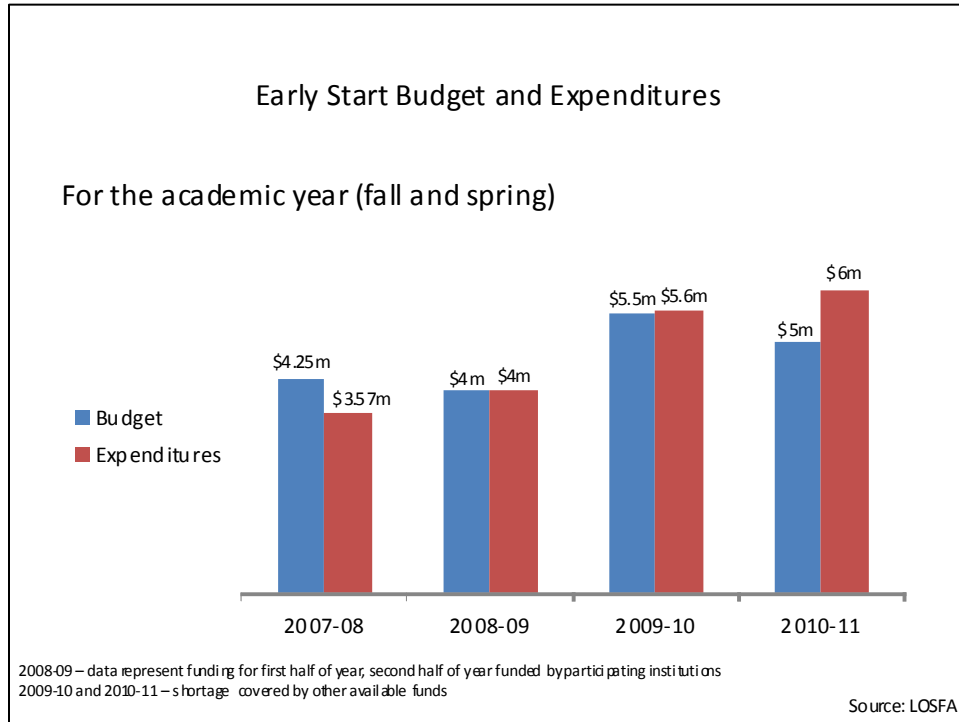


Table 11 provides the expenditures for Early Start, compared to the annual budget.

Table 11



The students funded by these programs do not pay any additional costs to enroll in courses. There are other factors in the students' costs of attendance not addressed by either of the state programs, such as books and transportation. In 2009-10, budget reductions eliminated over \$1 million in the Department of Education's Career Technical Education funds that were previously used in grant awards to Local Education Authorities for some of these other costs associated with dual enrollment.

FINDINGS

A relatively small number of Louisiana's high school students historically were reported enrolled in public postsecondary education while still in high school.

That number increased four-fold with the inclusion of Louisiana Technical College data. However, dramatic increases have occurred since the introduction of the two state programs that pay the student's cost of enrolling. The number of students participating in the TOPS Tech Early Start Program has fluctuated since its beginning and reached an all-time high of 533 in the 2010-11 academic year. The fluctuations have probably been due to limited knowledge about the program across the state, the outdated and inappropriate eligibility framework, and the introduction of the Early Start Program which also funds students enrolling in work skills courses.

The number of students participating in the Early Start Program has grown to over 16,000. Additional participation in Early Start has been strategically held back due to budget constraints. Comparing the two programs, the TOPS Tech Early Start Program is underutilized.

Although it is desirable to increase the number of high school students participating in the state's dual enrollment programs, in the absence of additional funding it is difficult to increase access. Growth in the number of high school students enrolling in these programs does not have any impact on the MFP for secondary education. However, in a level-funding environment, an increase in the number of students enrolling in postsecondary education does have an impact on the amount provided per student in the Funding Formula.

While the stated purpose of each program is similar in that both provide an incentive for high school students to prepare for a postsecondary education or career

and align with the critical goals of BESE, there is no single state purpose or goal for dual enrollment.

Students participating in TOPS Tech Early Start may only enroll in work skills courses at the 2-year community, technical community, or technical college level. Students participating in Early Start may also enroll in work skills courses at the same institution levels. Early Start students may also enroll in college-level degree credit courses or developmental courses at the 4-year universities or 2-year community and technical community colleges.

The Remedial Education Commission, created by ACT 187 of 2011, has recommended college preparatory courses be delivered by the high school as a strategy for reducing the need for remediation of high school graduates when they enter college. Until such time as these courses are offered at the high school level, there is still a need for postsecondary institutions to continue to offer high school students the opportunity to enroll in college developmental courses through dual enrollment.

In the last two years, the combined enrollment of students in both programs has become equally distributed among three institutional levels – 4-year, 2-year and technical.

There is a state guide for the alignment of college work skills courses and high school courses to assist in determining what high school credit a student receives when completing the college course. A guide does not exist for the college-

level degree credit or college developmental courses, though such a guide would ensure standardization across the state.

The eligibility framework for the Early Start program has been modified over the years by BOR to better align student preparation with course enrollment and manage the stable funding as demand increases, resulting in limiting access. The eligibility requirements to enroll in work skills courses are different for the Early Start program and the TOPS Tech Early Start program. The TOPS Tech Early Start program eligibility requirements are outdated and have not been modified by the Legislature to reflect the focus of secondary education on career and technical education; this may contribute to low student participation.

Students who have participated in TOPS Tech Early Start have an average going-to-college rate of 57.4%. Students who have participated in Early Start have an average going-to-college rate of 62.3%. Both rates exceed the going-to-college rate of 52% of the 2009-10 high school graduating class.

Both programs pay institutions for enrolling eligible public school students in college courses. The TOPS Tech Early Start law does not provide for the participation of students from non-public schools. Due to budget constraints and demand from public high school students, the Early Start program also does not allow students from non-public high schools to participate. Act 460 of the 2008 Legislative Session requires that students from non-public high schools and home school programs who meet the Early Start eligibility framework be eligible to enroll in the program. However, these students shall be charged tuition at the same rate

as that reimbursed by the state for public school students participating in Early Start. The payments from the state (or from the non-public school students) are applied to the student's cost of attendance at the postsecondary institution, with no additional costs to the student. However, the current amounts paid to the institutions do not fully cover the tuition and fees, and may leave a gap in excess of \$400 at a 4-year university. The difference in the actual tuition and fees and what the programs pay must, therefore, be absorbed by the postsecondary institution. It should not be expected that postsecondary institutions absorb these dollars, especially when the Funding Formula is implemented at 67%.

There are also other factors in the student's cost of attendance not covered by either of the state programs, such as books and transportation. These are currently either being paid by the student, by limited secondary education funds, or by another entity on behalf of the student.

Funding for the TOPS Tech Early Start Program is provided under funding for TOPS and there is no specific amount dedicated to this program. The annual expenditures for this program have ranged from \$31,800 to \$107,250. Funding for the Early Start Program has ranged from \$4.25 million to \$5.5 million. However, demand for the program has required BOR over the years to limit student participation and tap other sources of postsecondary monies to cover shortfalls, including requesting that postsecondary institutions assume the state's full share of the payments. Again, it should not be expected that postsecondary institutions absorb these costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings from the study required by House Concurrent Resolution 23 of the 2011 Legislative Session, the Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education make the following recommendations:

1. The Board of Regents and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopt the following as a common purpose of the state's dual enrollment programs:

In an effort to ensure that students graduate from high school on time, college- and career-ready, improve postsecondary participation and attainment, and improve the overall workforce of the state, Louisiana shall provide eligible high school students access to college courses through dual enrollment programs at no cost to the student.

2. The Board Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Regents, in support of providing adequate access to and funding for dual enrollment, develop a plan for the 2013-14 budget request to identify all available sources of funds to fully pay the students' share of the costs associated with enrolling in college developmental and college-level degree credit courses.

3. The TOPS Tech Early Start Program continue to provide funding for high school students enrolling in work skills courses at the state's community, technical community, and technical colleges. However, two aspects of the program should be changed:

- a. The general eligibility framework should be modified as follows:

TOPS Tech Early Start	
Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courses in a skill or occupational training area that contribute to a declared Career Area of Concentration and leads to a recognized industry-based or technical certification -Student limited to 3 semester hours per term
General Eligibility Requirements	-Aged at least 15
	-Pursuing a high school diploma with either the Louisiana Core 4 curriculum or a declared Career Area of Concentration
	-Permission at both the secondary and postsecondary level
	-PLAN composite score 14, ACT composite score 15, or WorkKeys Bronze Certificate
	-Grade A, B, C, or P in college course to continue

- b. The payments made to the institutions for eligible high school students should be equal to the allowable tuition and fees provided for under the TOPS law for the other TOPS programs.

4. The Board of Regents coordinate with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to expand its General Education Articulation Matrix to include alignment with high school courses.

REFERENCES

Collins, C. (2011). Dual Enrollment Programs: Bridging the Gap from High School to College. *Southern Regional Education Board*. Draft for discussion at the Annual meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board.

Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance. Program Rules. http://www.osfa.state.la.us/MainSitePDFs/ProgramRules_PartIV.pdf

Louisiana Department of Education. Louisiana's First-Time College Freshmen Report. <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/19080.pdf>

ATTACHMENT A