Florida College and Career Readiness Initiative: Feedback from the First Two Years of Implementation

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The Florida College and Career Readiness Initiative (FCCRI) is a statewide policy that mandates college placement testing to 11th graders who meet high school graduation criteria but are unlikely to meet college readiness criteria. Students who score below “college-ready” are required to take math and English college readiness and success (CRS) courses in grade 12. In order to provide feedback to the Florida Department of Education about program implementation, CNA collected and analyzed qualitative data from students, teachers, district administrators, and college staff about FCCRI’s first two years.

What FCCRI College Readiness Courses Look Like in Practice

CRS courses vary in their level of difficulty and in the types of resources and curricular materials used to teach them. In addition, teachers report several different goals for their CRS courses; for most, however, their top priorities are helping students to develop academic skills for college and to test college-ready. CRS teachers continue to struggle with student engagement in their courses, particularly among students who are not college bound.

How Teachers Perceive FCCRI’s Implementation and Its Effectiveness for Students

Teachers identify many deficiencies in the way the reform was implemented. They particularly focus on the legislation’s failure to provide time or resources for curriculum development. They also note the difficulty of teaching CRS courses when they have no textbooks and no information about the placement tests students face upon college entry. They also suggest that they could be more effective if they knew students’ grade 11 test scores, and particularly diagnostic information about specific skill needs. Despite these difficulties, teachers express support for the reform, and they report extensive actions to support it. We also find that teachers believe FCCRI generally is effective, particularly for the just below “college-ready” college-bound students it was intended for.

What Students Believe Could Be Done to Better Prepare Them for Post–High School Plans

We find that about half of the grade 12 CRS students have credible plans for attending a postsecondary institution after high school. The percentage of students who indicate that their high school was not helpful in developing their post–high school plans varies considerably across the high schools surveyed. There are two main differences between the high schools where students have positive attitudes about the helpfulness of their high school versus those where students have negative attitudes. These are the extent to which students have contact with teachers or staff who care about them as individuals, and college
personnel who provide the students with information about the benefits of attending college and the fields of study that might be right for them.

**How K–12 and Postsecondary Institutions Collaborate around FCCRI**

The majority of the collaboration is among schools and districts. While less frequent, we also find examples of collaboration between schools and state colleges. Moving forward, most of the people we interviewed would like to see more collaboration. Suggestions include colleges providing professional development for CRS teachers; CRS teachers being given more opportunities to interact with college faculty; and colleges sharing more resources from their developmental programs with CRS teachers.

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