

# An Evaluation of Georgia's Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment Programs



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June 1998

Atlanta, Georgia

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## Introduction

Georgia's Post-Secondary Options Program (PSO) allows high school students to simultaneously earn high school and college credits for courses taken at public colleges, universities and technical institutions. Tuition costs are paid by the state through the Secondary Options Grant Account. Students can also take college classes through the joint enrollment program (JE). This program also allows students to attend private as well as public colleges, but the state does not pay tuition. In both PSO and JE programs students usually attend classes on the college or technical institute campus.

PSO/JE courses are popular with parents and students because they can reduce the cost of college and reduce duplication of advanced high school and introductory college courses. For schools and school systems, PSO/JE courses increase the number of advanced courses they can offer students in their area, no matter how small or poor a school or school system may be. From a state policy level, PSO/JE courses offer Georgia's bright, motivated students the chance to take advanced coursework at a state university or technical school.

Like Advanced Placement (AP) classes, PSO and JE classes offer high achieving students challenging courses and the chance to earn college credits. In the 1996-97 school year, 231 of

least one student enrolled in a PSO course (data on joint enrollments was not collected). Many high schools offer both PSO and AP courses. The typical high school that participates in PSO and/or AP reports that 15.2 AP or PSO courses are taken for every 100 students in the school. Some schools have AP enrollments but no PSO enrollments. Many schools reported neither PSO nor AP courses (see Appendix A). Out of Georgia's 180 school systems, 36 report that fewer than 5 courses in AP or PSO are taken for every 100 students.

This report evaluates the Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment programs (PSO/JE). Several methods were used to evaluate the PSO/JE programs including interviews, literature searches, and analysis of existing data from the Council for School Performance, the Board of Regents, and The Department of Education. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Georgia Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment Programs?
2. What are the characteristics of similar programs in other states?
3. What are the characteristics of schools with high (or low) PSO participation?
4. What effects have PSO/JE had on student performance in college?
5. What constraints limit PSO/JE participation?
6. What policy changes could help to increase PSO/JE use?

### **Policy Recommendations**

Based on a careful analysis of the available data, six policy recommendations are offered to strengthen and enhance these programs.

- *Target increased incentives or decreased disincentives for schools with low participation.* A large number of high schools have low or no participation in PSO, which limits the opportunity to challenge Georgia's brightest students. Currently, high schools are **not** funded for the time that students spend in a PSO course. If presented with incentives, or reduced disincentives (such as partial QBE reimbursement for increased participation in PSO courses over the next two to three years), schools with low PSO participation rates may be motivated to increase student participation in the program. Not all schools need to increase participation in PSO, so incentives should be targeted to the schools most in need of such help.
- *Reduce administrative burdens for high school counselors.* The Department of Education (DOE), the Board of Regents (BOR), and the Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) should work to promote the PSO program, to make administration easier, and to increase communication. As new information systems are brought online, the agencies should discuss a joint data system to ease the tasks of scheduling courses, enrolling students, and receiving state-level course approval. To address the concerns of counselors, the statewide PSO coordinator should convene annual meetings with DOE, BOR, and DTAE representatives and with high school counselors to find solutions to administrative burdens, and to consider new ways to promote the program.
- *Reduce fiscal disincentives for schools that offer PSO courses using GSAMS.* DOE needs to make a greater commitment to support GSAMS technology. GSAMS is in place, but it is under-utilized by schools. By offering to fund (or partially fund) both high schools and higher education institutions for distance learning courses offered over GSAMS, the state could better develop this important teaching tool. Schools that are far from college campuses could offer more students advanced classes with fewer scheduling difficulties. To insure quality courses, BOR and DTAE institutions should work with schools to strengthen the distance learning process.
- *Improve efforts to promote the PSO/JE programs.* Schools with low participation rates should expand efforts to inform parents about PSO/JE and to recruit and advise PSO/JE students. The statewide PSO/JE coordinator should work with representatives from BOR and DTAE institutions to find better means of promotion.
- *Maintain the high academic standards of the PSO/JE program.* PSO/JE standards may increase the incentives for students to perform at a higher level. We recommend that the state maintain these standards and work with schools that are not able to qualify students for these programs.
- *Improve data collection and evaluation efforts.* Specifically, three new studies of the PSO/JE programs are needed to determine its effectiveness. Merging student level data from DOE's new student record with BOR and DTAE data could facilitate tracking of PSO/JE students' college level performance in higher education institutions. The same data could help to determine if PSO/JE is helping Georgia keep its top students at in-state institutions. Improved school level financial data could be used to perform a true cost benefit analysis of current PSO spending versus future college tuition spending.

## **What are the Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment Programs?**

The Georgia Post-Secondary Options Program provides opportunities for eleventh and twelfth grade Georgia public school students to simultaneously earn high school and college credits while still in high school. Eligible students can enroll in courses at public colleges, universities and technical institutions, with tuition costs paid by the state through the Secondary Options Grant Account. Students are responsible for books and transportation costs.<sup>1</sup> Those who live 25 miles or more from a public institution can enroll in PSO courses at private post-secondary institutions.

To be eligible for PSO, students must be at least 16 years old, be juniors or seniors in a public high school, and meet the admission criteria of the institution at which they plan to enroll. Students attending colleges and universities (but not technical institutes) must also achieve a combined score of at least 970 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0.

Local districts are required to inform all students and parents about the PSO program on or before April 1 each year, although state law does not specify the type of information that must be provided. Additionally, all students entering the program must be counseled about specific requirements, responsibilities and details of the program. If PSO courses fulfill high school graduation requirements, any credits earned must be applied toward the high school degree. Local systems earn no state QBE funding for the portion of the day that students are off-site attending PSO courses.

Unlike the similar Advanced Placement (AP) program run by the College Board, students in PSO attend actual college classes taught by higher education faculty. Classes are usually taught on the post-secondary (college, university or technical institution) campus, but some schools have college faculty who teach courses at the high school. Other institutions offer distance learning courses using GSAMS. While AP credit is earned only through satisfactory performance on comprehensive subject-area tests, PSO credit is typically earned through completion of the college course. AP credit is generally transferable to any post-secondary institution, while PSO credit may not be transferable to institutions outside Georgia, or to private institutions within Georgia.

Students can also take classes at post-secondary public and private educational institutions through the joint enrollment program. Joint enrollments are arranged by local boards of education and post-secondary institutions. Like the PSO program, they allow the student to earn Carnegie unit credits that count towards high school graduation requirements and post-secondary credit. The main difference in the two programs is that no state funds are used to pay the students' tuition. Students may opt for this program if they would rather attend a private college but live within 25 miles of a state school.

In the 1996-97 school year, 231 of Georgia's 314 high schools reported to the Council for School Performance that they had at least one student enrolled in a PSO course. These schools reported a total of 6,767 PSO courses taken during the year. While most schools have students enrolled in PSO, not all schools have students taking a PSO course. Some schools have AP enrollments but no PSO enrollments. Many schools reported neither PSO nor AP courses. Appendix A shows the number of PSO or AP courses taken per 100 students in each school

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<sup>1</sup> Transportation must be provided for students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) require it.

system in the state. The Georgia median is 15.2 AP or PSO courses per 100 students, but 36 systems report fewer than 5 courses in AP or PSO are taken for every 100 students.

Appendix B shows the receipt of PSO funds by the higher education institutions where students take courses. Spending on PSO exceeded \$1.3 million in 1995-96, and \$1.9 million in 1996-97. DOE projects that spending for the 1997-98 school year will be about \$3 million.

### ***Overview of Post Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment in other States***

Twenty states, including Georgia, currently offer statewide programs that allow high school students to take college courses for credit. Typically, these programs are known as post-secondary options, joint enrollment, dual enrollment, or concurrent enrollment programs. Of the twenty states currently offering such programs, eleven (including Georgia's) are considered "comprehensive" programs in which students can earn both high school and college credit, with few restrictions on eligible courses and most of the associated costs borne by the state.<sup>2</sup> Six additional states offer more limited programs in which students pay most of the costs themselves, while the remaining states combine characteristics of the comprehensive and limited programs.

The earliest efforts to provide high school students with opportunities to take college courses began at individual colleges and universities. Project Advance, started by Syracuse University in 1972 in cooperation with local high schools, was among the first such programs in the nation.<sup>3</sup> Project Advance, unlike Georgia's programs, provides college-level coursework on high school campuses taught by high school faculty who also serve as adjunct university instructors.<sup>4</sup> The first statewide PSO program was introduced in Oklahoma in 1977. The availability of the programs has grown substantially in the 1990s, with many states enacting new programs since 1993.

The State of Washington's "Running Start" program, started as a pilot in 1990, has the most extensive base of experience and evaluation data of any PSO program in the nation. Running Start allows eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college courses at community colleges and technical institutes in Washington at no cost to the student. The state reimburses post-secondary institutions at a per-credit rate (\$79 per credit for academic courses and \$95 per credit for vocational courses in 1996-97). Local district funding is reduced by a comparable amount, less seven percent retained by the district for overhead and counseling services.

Research by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) shows that of the 10,000 students enrolled in the program, 59% are female and just over 14% are students of color. Running Start students earned grade point averages approximately equivalent to those of regular community college and technical institute students (2.5 out of 4.0). The University of Washington tracked Running Start students who enrolled at the university after high school and found that they had higher grade point averages and higher four-year college graduation rates than did non-participating students. SBCTC research also indicates

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<sup>2</sup> Education Commission of the States, "Choice: Post-Secondary Options/Dual Enrollment," November 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Galvin, Patrick and Sagers, Paul (1998). "Concurrent Enrollment: Entrepreneurial markets and Virtual Universities." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Education Finance Association, Mobile, AL, March, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> By contrast, the programs in Georgia allow students to enroll in regular post-secondary courses taught at post-secondary institutions.

that students strongly support the program, with 89% saying they would enroll in Running Start again.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the generally positive evaluation results, many local districts continue to be concerned about the loss of local funding they incur when students enroll in Running Start. Counselors report that the program generates increased responsibilities for advising students, tracking courses and credits, and coordinating with higher education institutions.<sup>6</sup> From the state's perspective, however, the program has been cost-effective, generating estimated savings of \$18.3 million in 1996-97 from reduced state expenditures for secondary and higher education costs.<sup>7</sup>

Minnesota's PSO program began in 1985 and has enrolled approximately 60,000 students since its inception. As in a number of states, the burden of the costs varies depending on whether students choose to earn college credit. If credits count only toward high school graduation, the state pays tuition costs, while the student must pay tuition if post-secondary credits are earned. Although Minnesota's program has been operating longer than most, there has been little evaluation of its impact. A 1993 study by the state Legislative Auditor reported that participating students had higher grade point averages than other freshman at post-secondary institutions, with the exception of those at technical colleges.<sup>8</sup> A slight majority of administrators also reported that the program led to greater cooperation between secondary and post-secondary institutions.

While most states place the program's financial responsibilities on either local districts, state boards of education or students themselves, some states have sought ways to share the burden. For example, Wisconsin has taken steps to reduce the overlap between secondary and post-secondary coursework in their Youth Options program by requiring school districts to pay for student tuition and fees, unless the local school board determines that the content of the post-secondary course is substantially (80%) different from that of a course offered by the district. Under new rules going into effect in the 1998-99 school year, districts will be required to pay for all courses taken by eligible students at technical colleges *even if* the district offers a comparable course. Additionally, technical colleges are required to allow Youth Options students into any course even if enrollment is full, leading to the possibility that high school students could bump full-time technical college students from these courses. As in several other states, districts are not required to pay tuition for students who choose to earn only post-secondary credits.<sup>9</sup>

Iowa also does not allow students to take post-secondary courses if similar courses are offered in the high school. While local districts are required to pay tuition for courses taken during the school year, the program includes a provision requiring students to pay for any courses they do not complete. In Colorado, school districts are required to pay for up to two courses per student per semester. Beyond two courses, the student is responsible for tuition. In Maine, school districts must pay tuition costs while students pay for books. In Ohio, the state pays tuition while

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<sup>5</sup> All Running Start data come from "Running Start: A Progress Report from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges," (Olympia, WA: SBCTC), January 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Ron Crossland, SBCTC Associate Director, February 1998.

<sup>7</sup> "Running Start: A Progress Report."

<sup>8</sup> Since PSO students do not represent a random sample of college-bound students, and since other factors (such as student motivation) may increase both PSO use and college performance, the study does not show a causal relationship between PSO and college grades.

<sup>9</sup> Wisconsin information comes from State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction memorandum on Youth Options Program (January 1998), and from interview with Preston Smeltzer, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, February 1998.

the district pays for books. Transportation costs are generally borne by students, although some states (such as Minnesota and Ohio) offer transportation assistance for low-income students.

The issue of articulation between secondary and post-secondary institutions has been a critical one for many programs. While AP credits are generally transferable to any post-secondary institution in the country, out-of-state schools may not accept credits earned in PSO programs. Public post-secondary institutions are often required to accept PSO credits earned within their states, but no such requirement applies to private institutions. Moreover, for students who hope to attend elite out-of-state universities, transferring credits may be especially problematic without close cooperation between high school counselors and university staff.

Credit equivalency between the high school and post-secondary institution courses may also raise difficulties. In Washington, for example, state law mandates that five college credits (earned through a ten week course) are equivalent to one high school Carnegie unit (one year's worth of work).<sup>10</sup> In Minnesota, no more than four semester credits can be required to earn one high school credit, while in Alabama six semester hours are equivalent to one high school credit. In other states, equivalency may be determined by high schools on a case-by-case basis. The discussions above indicate that while PSO programs are gaining in popularity, they raise many difficult issues for states and for educational institutions.

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<sup>10</sup> Lynn H. Colwell, "Two Degrees for the Price of One," *Community College Journal*, June/July 1995.

## **What are the differences between schools (and school systems) that participate in PSO and those that do not?**

To better understand the reasons that some schools or districts are more likely to participate in the Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment program, it is useful to first explore whether any systematic differences exist in the demographic and institutional characteristics of participants and non-participants. We address this issue by examining differences between schools that participate in PSO/JE and those that do not, as well the characteristics of schools with high and low participation rates.

Our analyses were limited by the lack of data on PSO/JE enrollments currently collected by the Georgia Department of Education (DOE). Although DOE has been working to improve its data collection and analysis, no JE data were available for these analyses from the department. The Council for School Performance collects data on PSO enrollments for its school performance reports but does not collect data on JE participants. The Council maintains the total number of PSO courses taken in math, science or other subjects. It is important to note that the data list *courses* rather than *students*. Therefore, to the extent that students take more than one PSO course, participation rates will overestimate the number of students enrolled in the program. The Board of Regents (BOR) maintains joint enrollment data on students who enroll in BOR institutions. Some of these students receive PSO funding, but funding sources are not maintained in the BOR data.

We first separated the schools into those that participate in PSO and those that do not. For the purpose of this analysis, schools with at least one student enrolled in a Post-Secondary Options/Joint Enrollment course are classified as “participants”. Within the group of participating schools, a participation rate is calculated by dividing the PSO enrollment (in math, science, other subjects, and total) by the full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of eleventh and twelfth grade students. Schools are then divided into quartiles based on their rate of participation in the program.

Of 314 high schools, 231 had at least one student enrolled in PSO, while 83 had no students participating. Of the participating high schools, participation rates varied from 17% (Beach High School in Chatham County, with one enrollment for 602 eleventh and twelfth grade students) to over 98% (Pickens County High School in Pickens County with 378 PSO courses taken among 382 eleventh and twelfth grade students). We then divided these participating high schools into quartiles based on their rates of PSO use, with 57 high schools comprising each quartile.

Mean differences between participating and non-participating schools, and across quartiles, are examined in relation to several factors: student body characteristics, Advanced Placement (AP) enrollments, location of the school (large city, suburb, rural town, etc.), and performance in high school.

### ***PSO Participation and Student Body Characteristics***

Table 1 lists average school and student body characteristics for participating and non-participating schools. As shown, participating schools tend to be larger (average enrollment of 1185 as compared to 914 students), with a lower proportion of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and a higher proportion of white students than schools that do not participate in the program. Schools that participate in PSO also have more students in AP courses. One of the goals of the PSO program was to expand opportunity for schools that could not offer advanced courses. It is troubling to see that smaller, poorer schools do not participate

at the same rate as larger, wealthier schools, and the schools with the least enrollment in AP also have the least enrollment in PSO.

**Table 1. Mean Characteristics of Participating and Non-Participating High Schools**

	Participating	Non-Participating
Total Enrollment (9-12)	1185	914
Percent White Students	62.2%	46.8%
Percent free/reduced price lunch	30.6%	45.1%
PSO Math Enrollment per 100	4.6	0.0
PSO Science Enrollment per 100	1.8	0.0
Other PSO Courses Enrollment per 100	22.9	0.0
AP Math Enrollment per 100	3.9	1.9
AP Science Enrollment per 100	3.3	1.4
Other AP Enrollment per 100	12.5	8.0

Table 2 displays mean school characteristics across quartiles of PSO use. The average percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch declines steadily from the lowest quartile of PSO use to the highest. Statistical analysis also reveals a significant negative relationship between PSO enrollment and eligibility for free or reduced price lunches (correlation=  $-.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). PSO use also rises as the proportional enrollment of white students increases. Schools in the highest quartile of PSO use average almost 70% white students and 25% free lunch-eligible, as compared to 47% white students and 45% free lunch-eligible among schools that do not participate in the PSO program. The poorest schools in the state tend to have the lowest levels of participation in PSO programs.

**Table 2. Mean Characteristics: Quartiles of PSO Use**

	Low Participation	Mid-Low Participation	Mid-high Participation	High Participation
Total Enrollment (9-12)	1036	1209	1313	1186
Percent White Students	60.2%	56.0%	62.7%	69.6%
Percent free/reduced price lunch	35.3%	33.1%	28.5%	25.7%

For Table 3, we analyzed data for high school students who were jointly enrolled in their high school and in a Board of Regents (BOR) institution. The 1994 fall quarter enrollments were 1357 students. By the fall quarter of 1997 joint enrollments had jumped to 2226 students. In two years, from 1994-95 to 1996-97, total annual joint enrollments increased by more than 2200 students.

**Table 3. Number of High School Students Enrolled in Georgia Public Colleges**

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Fall quarter	1357	1444	1669	2226
Winter quarter	1417	1619	1867	2409
Spring quarter	1361	1575	1821	NA
Summer quarter	823	1174	1435	NA
TOTAL	4958	5812	6792	NA

Table 4 shows the percentage change from year to year for each quarter of enrollment. Since 1994, enrollments have risen steadily, with a large increase in the fall of 1997. These data clearly show that enrollments in PSO/JE have been increasing steadily over the period. While we do not have data for DTAE institutions, we expect similar results.

**Table 4. Percent Change from Previous Year in Quarterly Enrollments**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Fall quarter	6.4%	15.6%	33.4%
Winter quarter	14.3%	15.3%	29.0%
Spring quarter	15.7%	15.6%	NA
Summer quarter	42.6%	22.2%	NA
TOTAL	17.2%	16.9%	NA

**PSO Participation and Advanced Placement Enrollments**

Both PSO and AP courses offer students an opportunity to earn college credit while in high school. While PSO credits are generally only transferable to institutions within the University System of Georgia, AP credits are widely accepted by higher education institutions around the country. PSO courses are taken on-site at universities and technical institutes, or via satellite on GSAMS, while AP courses are taught in the high schools by high school faculty. Since the programs offer similar advantages and incentives for students, it is important to consider the extent to which enrollment in AP and PSO courses tend to overlap within high schools and the extent to which students have access to either AP or PSO opportunities.

AP participation, like PSO participation, is defined here as the number of AP courses taken (in specific subject areas and in total) per 100 eleventh and twelfth grade FTE enrollments. The results displayed in Table 1 show that PSO-participating schools have a higher number of AP enrollments in all subject areas than do non-participating schools. Comparing AP enrollments across quartiles (see Table 5) reveals a consistent trend, with AP enrollments rising as PSO enrollments increase.

**Table 5. Participation in PSO and Average Percent of Students Enrolled in AP Courses**

	No Participation	Low Participation	Mid-Low Participation	Mid-high Participation	High Participation
AP Math Enrollment per 100 students	1.9	2.4	3.3	4.1	5.9
AP Science Enrollment per 100 students	1.4	1.7	3.1	3.3	5.3
Other AP Enrollment per 100 students	8.0	9.9	11.2	14.4	14.4

While these data show aggregate trends, they do not offer insight on the extent to which AP and PSO enrollments overlap. Correlation analysis suggests that while total AP and PSO enrollments are strongly related, the relationship within subject areas is much weaker (see Table 6). For example, schools with a higher number of students taking AP math courses also tend to have higher enrollments in “other” (non-math and science) PSO courses. The relationship between AP math and PSO math enrollments, however, is weak and not statistically significant. Similarly, schools with higher proportions of AP enrollments in “other” courses do not have significantly higher enrollments in “other” PSO courses.

Given these results, it appears that schools with higher proportions of students enrolled in PSO courses also tend to have higher proportions of students enrolled in AP courses. The students in these schools appear to be using the two programs to take different types of courses. While the majority of students in the state (258,000 students in 200 schools) have access to both AP and PSO courses, 24 high schools, serving a total of 12,000 students, have no students

enrolled in either program. The students in these schools may, therefore, have much more limited educational opportunities than other students in Georgia.

**Table 6. Correlations between AP and PSO enrollment rates**

	PSO Math	PSO Science	Other PSO	AP Math	AP Science	Other AP
PSO Math	1.0					
PSO Science	.65*	1.0				
Other PSO	.70*	.54*	1.0			
AP Math	.07	.11	.26*	1.0		
AP Science	.00	.06	.17*	.67*	1.0	
Other AP	-.01	.07	.07	.61*	.52*	1.0

\* significant at the .05 level

One goal of the PSO programs is to increase the educational opportunities for students in areas where schools cannot afford to offer higher-level courses. PSO can provide access to higher level courses in schools that cannot offer such courses on-site because of limited funding or small class sizes. It appears, however, that some of the targeted schools make limited or no use of these programs.

**PSO Participation and Location of the School (Urban/Rural/Suburban)**

Given that students take PSO courses on-site at universities and technical schools (unless the school uses GSAMS for distance learning courses), and that no travel expenses are provided by the state, distance from higher education institutions might be expected to limit participation in the program. Travel constraints may have the largest impact in rural areas without public transportation and in areas in which no post-secondary institutions are located in close proximity to local high schools.<sup>11</sup> This study examines enrollment in Post-Secondary Options across five types of geographic regions, classified by total population and population density: large cities, large city suburbs, small cities, large towns, and rural areas.

The highest rate of total PSO usage occurs in large suburbs, with an average of almost seven courses for every 100 FTE students. Interestingly, rural areas have the second highest rate of participation with approximately four courses for every 100 FTE students. Small and large cities have the lowest rates of participation, with 1.25 and 2.5 enrollments for each 100 FTE students, respectively. For all areas, the largest enrollments are in “other” courses, with relatively low average participation in math and science PSO courses. These regional enrollment patterns may be related to the racial and socioeconomic differences described previously, since large and small cities have the lowest proportion of white students and the highest proportion of free and reduced price lunch-eligible students.

As previously discussed, it is important to examine whether PSO is reaching students who do not have access to Advanced Placement courses. As shown in Table 7, both PSO and AP enrollments are highest in the large suburbs. Likewise, both PSO and AP enrollments are low in the small cities. These results provide some indication that PSO may have done little to improve access to advanced courses for students in small cities. It is difficult to draw definitive

<sup>11</sup> As noted, student can enroll at private post-secondary institutions if no public institutions are located within 25 miles of their home.

conclusions, though, without student-level data identifying the specific courses taken and the characteristics of students enrolled.

**Table 7. PSO Use and Characteristics by Location**

	Large City Suburbs	Rural Areas and Small Towns	Large Towns /Lightly Populated Suburbs	Large Cities	Small Cities
PSO Math per 100	0.82	0.86	0.59	0.36	0.37
PSO science per 100	0.29	0.28	0.31	0.21	0.18
Other PSO courses per 100	5.79	3.45	2.07	2.00	0.92
Total PSO courses per 100	6.79	4.02	2.82	2.53	1.25
AP Math per 100	8.92	1.79	3.40	5.77	2.71
AP science per 100	7.23	1.09	4.50	5.18	2.46
Other AP courses per 100	18.47	8.29	13.28	17.84	10.21
AP science per 100	7.23	1.09	4.50	5.18	2.46
Total AP courses per 100	34.61	11.17	21.18	28.79	15.38
Total Enrollment (9-12)	1774	852	1318	1306	1333
Black Students	27.6%	33.3%	24.3%	80.1%	62.6%
White Students	63.7%	65.0%	71.6%	13.6%	32.9%
Free/reduced price lunch	15.8%	38.8%	21.4%	44.8%	41.9%

The AP and PSO enrollment data show somewhat different results in the other types of locations. For example, while AP enrollments are lowest in rural areas, PSO participation is higher than in any type of region except large suburbs. Given that average high school enrollments are also substantially lower in rural areas than in any others, these results suggest that PSO may be providing new opportunities for students in rural schools lacking a “critical mass” of students needed for AP courses. Conversely, large cities have relatively high rates of AP enrollment and low participation rates for PSO, indicating that schools in dense urban areas may tend to rely on AP courses to provide students with opportunities for advanced work.

***PSO Participation and Performance in High School***

The available data show that participation in PSO is related to student performance. Schools with higher PSO enrollments tend to also have above average student performance as indicated by SAT scores and the percentage of students passing the state graduation exams. For example, 42% of students in schools in the highest quartile of PSO use scored at or above the national median on the SAT, as compared to only 29% of students in schools with no PSO enrollments. Almost 88% of students in schools with the highest PSO use passed the state graduation test in writing, as compared to 81% in schools without PSO.

Schools that participate in PSO also produce graduates who are less likely to require remedial course in Georgia public universities than are schools that do not have students in the PSO program. Students in schools with high participation in PSO tend to do well on SAT exams, take more advanced courses, and go to college in higher numbers (see Table 8). High participation schools are more likely to have an increasing percentage of their students qualify for PSO

(based on SAT scores) and a higher percentage of students enrolling in PSO compared to last year. High participation schools have more students who score above 970 on the SAT (minimum qualification for BOR institutions). They also have more students who are eligible for HOPE (3.0 GPA, another qualification for BOR institutions). Schools with higher participation in PSO also have more graduates attending colleges in Georgia. These data indicate that – as one might expect – schools with higher socioeconomic status have more high-achieving students who tend to make the greatest use of PSO opportunities.

**Table 8. Comparison of High School Performance by PSO Participation Level**

	<b>Low Participation</b>	<b>Mid-Low Participation</b>	<b>Mid-high Participation</b>	<b>High Participation</b>
Students Eligible for PSO (SAT 970 or more)	37.2%	42.7%	48.3%	50.7%
Students Eligible for HOPE (GPA 3.0 or more)	48.3%	55.5%	56.7%	59.2%
High School Graduates Attending a Georgia College	30.6%	35.5%	36.9%	35.4%
Percent of schools with increases in students scoring above SAT national average (1995-96 to 1996-97)	52.7%	57.1%	57.9%	59.6%
Percent of schools with increases in PSO enrollment (1995-96 to 1996-97)	56.4%	58.9%	68.4%	80.7%

An important caveat in these analyses is that no causal relationship can be asserted between PSO use and student performance since other overlapping factors may both increase the likelihood that students will enroll in PSO courses and have higher performance. Using multiple regression analysis to control for these other factors can help to determine whether schools with higher PSO enrollments have higher outcomes, other things being equal. Using measures of school performance such as passing rates on graduation exams, student remedial enrollments, there is no significant relationship with PSO enrollment.

### ***What Effects Have PSO/JE Had on Student Performance in College?***

We expect that students who participate in PSO/JE may have higher levels of motivation concerning their learning opportunities than do students who do not take college courses. If the program did not help these students, however, a comparison of two groups of students, one who participated in PSO and one who did not, should not show differences in college achievement levels. We expect PSO/JE students to achieve at higher levels. If they achieve at the same or lower levels than do non-PSO/JE students, that would be evidence that the program is not effective. If PSO/JE does prepare students to perform better in college, differences should be evident in college achievement levels when comparing matched samples of PSO/JE and non-PSO/JE students.

To assess the effect of PSO/JE on performance in college, we selected two groups of 1995 high school graduates who received HOPE to attend a Georgia public college or university in the fall 1995 (see Appendix C for discussion of matched samples). The first group has 609 students who were jointly enrolled in high school and a Georgia public college or university in 1994-95. The second group of 608 students was matched with the PSO/JE students based on SAT

scores and the type of institution attended<sup>12</sup>. By matching PSO/JE and non-PSO/JE students on a number of characteristics, we were able to isolate the effect of the PSO/JE on college performance. The students in the comparison group did not participate in the PSO/JE program.

We compared performance of the two groups after three years in college. Several other factors that affect college performance are also included in our analysis, such as institution type, sex, race, and high school preparation. We calculated regression estimates to measure the effect PSO/JE has on college performance indicators.

College performance is measured in three ways: persistence in college after three years of study, number of college credits earned, and the cumulative college GPA. Persistence is defined as whether the student is enrolled in a University System of Georgia (USG) institution in the fall quarter of 1997, three years after beginning collegiate studies. College credits consist of cumulative or total quarter credit hours obtained through the summer quarter of 1997. Finally, college GPA is the cumulative grade point average of the student through the same time period.

As Table 9 shows, PSO students have an average college GPA of 3.09 after three years of college, while non-PSO students have a 2.80 average college GPA. PSO students have earned an average of 81.1 credit hours compared with 73.9 for the non-PSO/JE students. After three years of study, 91.3% of the PSO/JE students were still in school, compared to 88.4% of their comparison group. And 63.9% of PSO students have a college GPA high enough to keep their HOPE scholarship, while only 48.4% of non-HOPE students have a college GPA high enough to keep theirs.

**Table 9. Comparisons of PSO/JE and Non-PSO/JE Samples Matched by SAT Scores and Type of Institution Attended**

	Did Not Participate in PSO/JE	Participated in PSO/JE
<b>Demographics</b>		
Female students	44.1%	58.1%
African-Americans	4.6%	1.6%
<b>High School Preparation</b>		
Learning support	0.7%	0.7%
College prep diploma	95.4%	91.3%
Overall HS GPA	3.76	3.93
<b>Choice of Institution</b>		
Transferred Colleges	12.2%	15.3%
<b>Performance in College</b>		
Still in school	88.4%	91.3%
Cumulative college GPA	2.80	3.09
Total college credits	71.8	80.6
Keep HOPE	48.4%	63.9%

Some of the results in Table 9 can be attributed to different levels of high school performance, or to the type of higher education institution attended, or other factors. To isolate the effects of

<sup>12</sup> Institution type is based on Board of Regents' categories, which include national universities, regional universities, state universities, and two-year colleges. National universities are Georgia State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and University of Georgia. Regional universities are Georgia Southern and Valdosta State. State universities include Albany State, Clayton State, and others.

PSO, race, gender, SAT scores, high school GPA, type of high school diploma, and type of institution attended on college performance, we used all these factors in a regression analysis. Holding all other factors constant, results of regression estimates using the matched samples show that PSO/JE students have a 0.15 higher college GPA compared to non-PSO/JE students after three years of college. When controlling for other factors, they have earned 4 more credit hours. There is no statistical difference in persistence rates. Finally, PSO/JE students are 5.5% more likely to keep their HOPE scholarships after three years than are the non-PSO/JE students, holding other factors constant.

These regression results show that PSO/JE students do have higher achievement levels in college when compared to a matched sample. Georgia students who are motivated to take challenging college-level classes in high school have a head start on those students who do not have the opportunity or motivation to do so. While these results do not provide evidence that all students should take PSO/JE classes, they indicate that students who *want* to participate in these programs could benefit from the experience in their subsequent college careers.

### ***What constraints limit PSO/JE participation?***

One of the concerns about PSO/JE is that enrollments in the programs, while growing, are still at low levels. In 1995-96 the Department of Education estimated that about 2400 students were participating in the PSO program. Data from the Council for School Performance show that a substantial number of high schools do not have a single student in the PSO program. Many of the schools that do not participate are small schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families—an important target group the PSO program should be serving.

In order to understand why schools do not have students involved in the PSO/JE program, we conducted semi-structured interviews and a focus group with school counselors and principals. The focus group consisted of metro Atlanta lead high school counselors, representing a cross section of large-city urban and large city suburban high schools. In addition to the focus group, phone interviews were conducted with principals and head counselors at schools that have few (less than 5) or no students taking PSO courses.

Before we analyze the concerns about the PSO/JE, it is important to note that respondents expressed strong sentiments in favor of the program. It allows schools to offer motivated students challenging courses in areas that otherwise would not be offered. Respondents report that parents and students actively seek out the program because it allows the students to get a head start on college and to gain an advantage over other applicants when they apply at top colleges. Even counselors who felt overwhelmed by the additional work generated by PSO students were strongly in favor of the program and said they continued to push their students to participate in it.

It became clear in the interviews that the concerns expressed by counselors and principals varied by the level of enrollment in the PSO program. Respondents at schools with large enrollments emphasized the heavy burden on counselors and the need to improve administration of the program. At schools with limited or no enrollment, respondents mainly offered reasons to explain why enrollments were limited. In the following sections we outline why there is a lack of demand at some high schools, and what administrative challenges PSO presents to other high schools.

## ***Lack of Demand***

Respondents gave a number of reasons for the lack of demand in their schools. Several schools said they had no students who qualified for the program, usually because of low SAT scores. One respondent suggested that more students would qualify if the state lowered the minimum SAT score required for PSO. Some schools, however, are using the PSO standards as an incentive to push students to improve their performance. In this way, the minimum SAT standard may prompt schools to work to improve student performance so that students can qualify for the program.

Several respondents felt their school was located too far from eligible post-secondary institutions, and that the distance made participation in PSO too time-consuming for their students. When asked about the possibility of using GSAMS, respondents replied that they were not currently offering any GSAMS courses. While long distances make participation in PSO more difficult, our analysis shows that many rural schools -- which may be isolated from BOR or DTAE institutions -- have relatively high participation in the PSO program. Distance alone may not explain the lack of participation in PSO at many isolated schools.

The time required for travel to distant higher education facilities presents additional problems for students. Respondents reported that some students are reluctant to miss extra-curricular or social activities because of their participation in PSO. Depending upon the school's schedule, students may have to take evening classes or Saturday classes and many are unwilling to do so.

Some students have also expressed concerns that college courses will be more difficult than standard high school courses and thus will adversely affect their class standing and overall GPA. For students who expect to enroll in out-of-state institutions, there are fewer advantages in taking a PSO course if these institutions will not accept dual enrollment credits. At one school where PSO participation is high and GPA competition intense, counselors report that top students feel pressured to skip PSO courses.

Schools with low PSO participation rates report that parents expressed little interest in the program. At schools with high participation rates, however, counselors report that increased workloads caused by parents' demands for the program present one of their most difficult challenges.

At schools with low participation rates, there appears to be little effort to promote PSO opportunities. Higher education institutions recruit top students at many high schools, but low participation schools report that they are not targeted for recruitment efforts by nearby colleges and technical institutes. High participation schools appear to make great efforts to inform their parents about the program, to target students who might qualify, and to ensure that students are able to enroll in PSO courses. Low participation schools appear more likely to assist students who express an interest in PSO than to actively recruit students and publicize the program.

A major cause of the lack of demand in low participation schools may be the lack of commitment to PSO/JE among school staff. Schools with high participation rates are more likely to actively involve students in the process. These schools often receive assistance through the recruitment efforts of local higher education institutions. Schools with low participation rates tend to be more passive in their approach, citing numerous barriers to participation, such as a lack of qualified students, distance, or students' lack of interest.

### **Administrative Challenges**

Counselors in schools with low participation rates rarely cited administrative barriers to student participation. It is important to note, though, that counselors in these schools were often advising only a few students in the program. At high participation schools, counselors seem overwhelmed with their increased responsibilities related to advising students, tracking courses and credits, and coordinating schedules with higher education institutions. These counselors expressed a need for more help from the state, including funding to hire additional counselors.

Counselors' biggest problems often center on scheduling and advising students. Counselors at high participation schools stated that they spend the majority of their time working with the relatively small number of students who participate in PSO and have limited time for non-PSO students. The most difficult coordination issues surrounding PSO typically involve scheduling students and advising them on graduation requirements.

Schools on a six period schedule have particular difficulty creating class schedules for students who need to be at a college campus several days each week. If the high school is on a semester system and the college is on a quarter system, the high school often must schedule courses several weeks before the local college schedule is available. That difficulty will ease for some schools as BOR institutions switch to the semester system.

When students need particular higher education classes but the classes are full, the college will often offer the student another course that may or may not meet graduation requirements. Counselors expressed frustration about the time-consuming task of determining if courses meet their graduation requirements, and about the problems they face in trying to assist all their students in meeting graduation requirements.

The lack of communication with the statewide coordinator of PSO was of particular concern for counselors at high participation schools. These counselors stated that they were often not informed about new application forms and new data collection needs until after the changes had been implemented. Counselors also felt that they spent too much time coordinating requirements of the high school, BOR institutions, and DTAE institutions with limited support from DOE.

Finally, many respondents felt that the loss of FTE funding for students in PSO was a fiscal disincentive that could limit participation. Staff in schools with large PSO enrollments emphasized the administrative costs they faced in trying to assist and counsel all their students in the program. While PSO students are not included in the school's FTE count for the portion of the day spent off-campus, these students may still present the schools with significant cost arising from the increased counseling workload. Staff in smaller schools pointed out that losing state funding makes it more difficult to meet the other needs in their schools.

**Appendix A. PSO and AP Course Enrollments per 100 Students 1996-97**

System	Grade 11&12	PSO or AP per 100	System	Grade 11&12	PSO or AP per 100	System	Grade 11&12	PSO or AP per 100
Pickens County	348	119	Upson-Thomaston	549	18.9	White County	352	7.4
Gwinnett County	9644	69.4	Bartow County	758	18.9	Irwin County	217	7.4
Carrollton City	411	62.8	Whitfield County	1008	18.8	Washington County	410	7.3
Oconee County	578	54.2	Hart County	397	18.6	Habersham County	604	7.3
Dalton City	494	49.6	Chickamauga City	212	18.4	Lincoln County	184	6.5
Marietta City	569	47.6	Monroe County	426	18.3	Mcintosh County	174	6.3
Union County	259	47.1	Glynn County	1238	18.3	Mcduffie County	478	5.9
Fulton County	6787	46.5	Decatur County	659	17.6	Hall County	1750	5.8
Coweta County	1255	45.3	Haralson County	308	17.5	Laurens County	607	5.6
Newton County	813	45.3	Floyd County	1074	17.5	Peach County	460	4.6
Decatur City	231	43.7	Heard County	178	17.4	Early County	292	4.5
Cartersville City	313	43.5	Bacon County	265	17.4	Charlton County	199	4
Cherokee County	2234	43.2	Gordon County	494	17.2	Polk County	706	3.8
Rockdale County	1524	41.1	Clayton County	4049	17.1	Warren County	106	3.8
Lamar County	283	39.6	Commerce City	129	17.1	Elbert County	458	3.7
Clarke County	1182	39.3	Gilmer County	305	17	Telfair County	223	3.1
Columbia County	2245	39	Bryan County	490	16.9	Meriwether County	464	2.8
Troup County	1180	38.6	Bibb County	2212	16.5	Crawford County	197	2.5
Calhoun City	227	38.3	Effingham County	889	16.4	Pelham City	173	2.3
Dekalb County	8890	38.2	Jefferson County	402	16.4	Jeff Davis County	328	2.1
Sumter County	571	37.5	Pierce County	369	16.3	Burke County	555	2
Evans County	197	36	Pike County	266	15.4	Jasper County	182	1.6
Forsyth County	1089	35.4	Emanuel County	597	15.2	Taylor County	194	1.5
Carroll County	1122	34.2	Dawson County	200	15	Atkinson County	137	1.5
Lumpkin County	290	32.8	Ben Hill County	423	14.7	Banks County	231	1.3
Fayette County	2249	32.5	Catoosa County	993	14.5	Miller County	161	1.2
Screven County	382	32.2	Harris County	443	14.2	Wilkes County	242	1.2
Cobb County	9980	32.1	Madison County	471	14	Appling County	410	1.2
Grady County	467	30.4	Wilkinson County	202	13.9	Toombs County	258	1.2
Coffee County	730	30.3	Blecklev County	289	13.8	Brantlev County	274	1.1
Lee County	585	28.9	Dade County	267	13.5	Macon County	304	1
Dougherty County	1858	28.5	Richmond County	3913	13.1	Brooks County	293	0.7
Greene County	237	27.8	Muscookee County	3891	12.5	Social Circle City	148	0.7
Valdosta City	799	26.5	Hancock County	230	12.2	Randolph County	259	0
Montgomery County	144	26.4	Paulding County	991	11.9	Marion County	254	0
Douglas County	1878	26.3	Jackson County	424	11.6	Putnam County	237	0
Gainesville City	335	26.3	Colquitt County	831	11.4	Twiggs County	201	0
Barrow County	571	26.1	Franklin County	327	11.3	Oglethorpe County	199	0
Trion City	153	25.5	Stephens County	430	11.2	Seminole County	199	0
Vidalia City	296	25.3	Walker County	854	11	Wilcox County	174	0
Bulloch County	811	24.3	Jenkins County	222	10.8	Johnson County	167	0
Rome City	483	24	Jefferson City	121	10.7	Bremen City	165	0
Chatham County	3216	24	Liberty County	1127	10.6	Dooly County	164	0
Spalding County	958	23.8	Dodge County	414	10.1	Stewart County	125	0
Rabun County	190	23.7	Berrien County	308	9.7	Long County	104	0
Walton County	731	23.7	Treutlen County	155	9.7	Calhoun County	116	NA
Atlanta City	5259	22.2	Jones County	526	9.5	Candler County	161	NA
Henry County	1760	22.2	Thomasville City	401	9.5	Crisp County	437	NA
Turner County	240	22.1	Camden County	784	9.3	Glascock County	69	NA
Ware County	764	21.9	Chattooga County	296	9.1	Lanier County	147	NA
Morgan County	318	21.4	Echols County	67	9	Talbot County	93	NA
Butts County	282	21.3	Lowndes County	892	8.4	Tattnall County	322	NA
Pulaski County	209	21.1	Murray County	570	8.2	Tift County	878	NA
Cook County	293	20.5	Mitchell County	348	7.8	Towns County	98	NA
Thomas County	580	20	Fannin County	376	7.7	Wayne County	565	NA
Dublin City	500	19.8	Buford City	144	7.6	Wheeler County	138	NA
Baldwin County	650	19.2	Terrell County	240	7.5	Worth County	479	NA
Houston County	2306	19.2	Clinch County	162	7.4			
<b>Median System</b>							<b>382</b>	<b>15.2</b>

**Appendix B. Post-Secondary Options Program Revenue by Institution, FY97 and FY96**

	<b>FY97</b>	<b>FY96</b>		<b>FY97</b>	<b>FY96</b>
DeKalb College	\$388,855	\$320,041	Ogeechee Technical Inst.	\$7,182	\$10,353
Kennesaw College	\$163,575	\$95,628	Thomas Technical Inst.	\$7,095	\$3,402
Thomas College	\$127,725	\$3,150	North Georgia Technical Inst.	\$7,056	\$5,439
Young Harris College	\$118,122	\$71,608	Oxford College at Emory	\$7,000	--
West Georgia College	\$94,954	\$64,274	Albany State College	\$6,688	\$9,414
Georgia Southern University	\$71,751	\$96,312	Columbus College	\$6,536	\$9,330
Georgia State University	\$61,258	\$33,894	Macon Technical Inst.	\$6,464	\$3,648
Piedmont College	\$58,065	\$47,700	Heart of Georgia Tech. Inst.	\$6,237	\$13,357
Valdosta State University	\$55,866	\$40,026	Flint River Technical Inst.	\$6,090	\$2,141
University of Georgia	\$49,874	\$31,463	Georgia Southwestern College	\$5,764	\$4,302
Brewton-Parker College	\$40,365	--	Augusta Technical Inst.	\$4,986	\$5,166
Gordon College	\$37,679	\$43,354	Chatham County Schools	\$4,928	\$2,543
East Georgia College	\$35,723	\$19,963	North Metro Technical Inst.	\$4,347	\$840
Georgia College-Milledgeville	\$33,352	\$17,310	Southeastern Technical Inst.	\$4,232	\$6,090
Gainesville College	\$32,933	\$19,451	Moultrie Technical Inst.	\$4,011	\$4,926
Floyd College	\$32,813	--	Swainsboro Tech	\$4,011	\$2,352
Armstrong State College	\$32,340	\$30,900	Valdosta Technical Inst.	\$3,780	\$2,835
Brenau College	\$30,735	--	Griffin Technical Inst.	\$3,612	\$4,710
Augusta College	\$30,677	\$19,326	Tarulett-McConnell College	\$3,467	--
Darton College	\$28,253	\$19,051	LaGrange College	\$2,610	--
Brunswick College	\$27,405	\$6,532	Walker Technical Inst.	\$2,331	\$2,604
Bainbridge College	\$24,968	\$13,979	DeKalb Technical Inst.	\$1,680	--
Georgia Inst. of Technology	\$22,104	\$16,501	Sandersville Regional Technical Inst.	\$1,008	--
Andrew College	\$21,624	\$5,040	Lanier Technical Inst.	\$756	\$313
Waycross Jr. College	\$19,380	\$18,715	West Georgia Technical Inst.	\$588	--
Middle Georgia College	\$19,065	\$16,978	Albany Technical Inst.	\$504	\$786
Clayton State College	\$16,106	\$12,585	Atlanta Metropolitan College	\$360	--
South Georgia College	\$15,690	\$9,940	Georgia Military College	\$260	--
Middle Georgia Tech. Inst.	\$15,259	\$21,023	Ben Hill-Irwin Tech. Inst.	\$105	\$483
Toccoa Falls College	\$14,768	\$3,258	Savannah State College	\$88	\$210
Reinhardt College	\$14,000	--	DeKalb County Schools	--	\$1,113
Southern College of Tech.	\$13,508	\$8,820	Athens Area Technical Inst.	--	\$1,050
North Georgia College	\$13,464	\$7,224	Okefenokee Technical Inst.	--	\$882
Dalton College	\$12,030	\$18,102	Altamaha Technical Inst.	--	\$861
Abraham Baldwin Agr. College	\$11,618	\$9,802	Coosa Valley Technical Inst.	--	\$796
Macon College	\$9,240	\$15,117	Fort Valley State College	--	\$210
Chattahoochee Tech. Inst.	\$8,903	\$9,728	Columbus Technical Inst.	--	\$168
Pickens Technical Inst.	\$7,875	\$8,724			
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$1,925,693</b>	<b>\$1,313,017</b>

### ***Appendix C: How comparable are the matched samples of PSO/JE and non-PSO/JE students in this study?***

PSO/JE students are more likely than the matched non-PSO/JE sample to be female and white (see table 9). They have slightly higher core course high school GPAs than the non-PSO/JE students. They are less likely, however, to have a college prep diploma than are the non-PSO/JE students. A major concern in this matched group design is that differences exist between the groups that are not related to the program. To reduce this possibility, the research design included other factors that may affect college level performance in the analysis presented above. Three types of variables were used in our final statistical models. The models controlled for the following effects: (a) the effects of institutional choice (variables for type of institution attended and whether or not the student transferred during the years covered in this study); (b) level of high school preparation (SAT scores, and core course HS GPA); and (c) demographic variables that have been shown to relate to college performance (race and sex). After controlling for these factors, PSO/JE remained a significant impact on college GPA, credits earned, and retaining HOPE.

#### ***Selection of the matched samples***

Data used in this study were extracted from the Georgia Student Finance Commission's database and from the Board of Regents SIRS database. Our study population included 1,399 PSO/JE students who were jointly enrolled in a Georgia public college or university in the 1994-95 school year, and who enrolled in a Georgia college as a high school graduate in the fall of 1995. Of these 1399 students, 767 qualified for a HOPE scholarship. After excluding those students listed as graduating prior to 1995, or having incomplete data, there remained 609 PSO/JE students who qualified for HOPE and enrolled in a BOR institution in the fall of 1995. The PSO/JE recipients with HOPE scholarships were selected because the program is designed to help Georgia's top students. By using HOPE scholars, there is a larger selection of non-PSO/JE students at the highest achievement levels to use as a comparison group.

For the non-PSO/JE students, 14,851 graduated from high school in 1995 and enrolled in a Georgia public college in the summer and fall of 1995. These students were matched with the 609 PSO/JE students using SAT scores and the type of institution attended, yielding 608 non-PSO/JE students. By matching on SAT scores, both groups have similar levels of high school preparation. We included institution type attended to control for the level of educational challenges presented by the different types of institutions. The national universities, for example have higher admissions requirements, and attract a higher percentage of the top students in the state.

**Council for School Performance**

The Council for School Performance is housed in the Applied Research Center in the School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Council studies include three assessments of the HOPE scholarship program and many other studies on lottery-funded programs and on educational performance in Georgia.

The mission of the Council for School Performance is to provide impartial and accurate information so that schools and the communities they serve will have appropriate benchmarks for performance and accountability. The Council will be a positive body to promote quality and progress in all schools, helping communities attain local, state and national education goals by sharing innovative educational practices and local successes.

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