

Embedding Career Pathways in Dual Enrollment: Leveraging Florida's Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements and State Funding Mechanisms for Transformational Student Outcomes

July 2025

*Dr. Carrie Henderson, Managing Advisor
Sheela VanHoose, Managing Principal*



As colleges and districts settle down for the summer in Florida, many are putting the finishing touches on their Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreements (DEAAs)—a required annual task with an August 1 deadline. These agreements, which govern the terms of dual enrollment partnerships, often receive little attention beyond compliance. Yet, they present a powerful—and underutilized—opportunity to embed career pathways into secondary-postsecondary transitions, creating more intentional, workforce-aligned routes for students.

This white paper explores how institutions and school districts can leverage DEAAs not just as regulatory documents, but as strategic frameworks that ensure dual enrollment serves as a launchpad into high-demand careers.

Who Executes a DEAA and What Must Be Included?

While DEAAs are required between Florida College System (FCS) institutions and school districts, they are not limited to these entities. Under Florida law, a DEAA must be executed any time dual enrollment will occur between the following:

- **Secondary Providers:** Public school districts, charter schools, private high schools, or home education programs

- **Postsecondary Providers:** School district technical colleges, FCS institutions, state universities, or eligible private postsecondary institutions

This expansive scope means that DEAAs span virtually all combinations of eligible secondary and postsecondary partners, making them a key mechanism to shape how students across Florida experience early college coursework.

Per Florida Statute §1007.271, DEAAs must contain specific provisions, including but not limited to:

- Ratification or modification of any existing articulation agreements
- Processes for informing students and families about dual enrollment opportunities
- Course and program listings available to dual enrollment students
- Procedures for student participation, registration, and GPA exceptions
- Policies on faculty expectations and deviations from institutional handbooks
- Clarification of credit articulation, high school equivalencies, and grade transmission
- Roles and responsibilities for monitoring student performance
- Cost-sharing agreements between the secondary and postsecondary institutions

Critically, these requirements do not preclude districts and colleges from going further. In fact, several of the required components—especially those related to course selection, advising, and student support—are ideal points of entry for embedding career pathways.

From Compliance to Strategy: Embedding Career Pathways into Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment can do more than accelerate time to degree—it can catalyze meaningful exploration and advancement along a career pathway. However, this only happens when programs are designed with intentionality and alignment. DEAs offer a powerful opportunity to:

➤ ***Align Dual Enrollment Courses with
Regional Workforce Needs***

Instead of offering a general set of general education electives, institutions can work with school districts to identify high-wage, high-demand industries in their service region and build career-focused course sequences that stack into certificates, Associate in Science degrees, or even bachelor's degrees.

➤ ***Clarify Program Maps and On-Ramps***

DEAs can be used to clearly outline which dual enrollment courses lead into which postsecondary programs, helping students and counselors understand how early coursework aligns with broader career aspirations. This transparency reduces “random acts of dual enrollment” and increases the likelihood students complete programs.

➤ ***Build Access to High-Value Credentials***

Including specific language about offering CTE-focused dual enrollment options in partnership with industry can create stronger pipelines for students from all backgrounds into well-paying careers.

➤ ***Enhance Advising and Communication
Plans***

The statutory requirement to describe how students and parents are informed about dual enrollment can be transformed into a requirement for targeted advising, career exploration tools, and early exposure to labor market data.

➤ ***Support Stackable Credential Pathways***

Institutions can use DEAs to formalize how dual enrollment coursework articulates into industry certifications, apprenticeship-related instruction, or stackable credential pathways, particularly in programs on the Master Credentials List.

Taking Advantage of State Funding Opportunities

Embedding career pathways into dual enrollment not only supports student success but also opens the door to targeted state funding that can amplify and sustain these efforts. Florida offers several dedicated funding streams designed to support workforce education, career-technical programming, and dual enrollment participation—resources that districts and colleges can leverage to build robust pathway-aligned opportunities for students.

➤ ***CAPE Industry Certification Funding***

The Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act provides incentive funding to school districts and colleges for students who earn eligible industry certifications—particularly those tied to high-skill, high-wage occupations. Many of these certifications can be embedded in dual enrollment courses and count toward articulated postsecondary credit.

- In FY 2025-26, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$8,500,000 to school district workforce education programs based on students who earned industry certifications on the CAPE Funding List in FY 2024-25.

- For FY 2025-26, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$20,000,000 to Florida College System institutions programs based on students who earned industry certifications on the CAPE Funding List.

➤ **Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program**

The Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program reimburses postsecondary institutions for tuition and instructional materials for private school and home education students, playing a critical role in expanding access to career-aligned courses. It also covers the cost of dual enrollment for public school students during the summer term.

- For FY 2025-26, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$18,050,000 to support dual enrollment opportunities for private school students, home education students, and public school students participating in summer dual enrollment at both public and private postsecondary institutions.

Taken together, these funding opportunities create a compelling incentive structure to integrate workforce priorities into the design of dual enrollment programs.

Conclusion

Dual enrollment is one of the most powerful tools in Florida's education toolbox, but its full potential will only be realized if it is aligned with purpose. As institutions and school districts prepare their articulation agreements this summer, they should approach them not just as legal documents, but as strategic levers—tools to connect students with clear, supported, and equitable pathways into college and career success.

With deliberate attention to career pathway integration, DEAs can become more than compliance documents. They can become Florida's blueprint for building a more skilled, prepared, and upwardly mobile workforce.



Contact TSG Advisors - Education for strategic insight and support.



**DR. CARRIE
HENDERSON**

henderson@tsgadvisors.com
850.690.0130



SHEELA VANHOSE

vanhose@tsgadvisors.com
850.690.0130