



# FEDERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## Purpose

Teaching in a dual or concurrent enrollment program requires an instructor to meet the hiring criteria of the partnering college, usually requiring an advanced degree that includes extensive discipline-specific graduate coursework. While many teachers have postgraduate degrees, their degree qualifications largely lack the discipline-specific graduate coursework necessary to become a dual or concurrent enrollment instructor, particularly where state law or accreditor policies require such qualifications.

As a result, states have struggled significantly to recruit enough credentialed teachers to offer dual or concurrent enrollment courses to most school districts and students, and the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the teacher workforce has only exacerbated these challenges. The teacher workforce faces real crises around recruitment, retention, and diversity, and these crises are even worse among teachers qualified to teach a dual or concurrent enrollment course.

## Concept

Congress should leverage existing federal programs under the Higher Education Act to support states in their efforts to expand the pool of credentialed teachers who are qualified to become dual or concurrent enrollment instructors, and may also consider a new program specifically designed to support instructor credentialing for dual enrollment.

## Funding Mechanism

There are three primary approaches that Congress could take to specifically support expanding the dual or concurrent enrollment instructor workforce, in addition to other important initiatives to support the teacher workforce in general.

These include:

- Expanding the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants to include a focus on expanding educator preparation programs (both for new and existing teachers) to include discipline-specific coursework.
- Expanding eligibility for the TEACH Grant and/or Public Service Loan Forgiveness programs to provide opportunities for current teachers to secure the discipline-specific coursework necessary to qualify as a dual or concurrent enrollment instructor.
- Creating a new funding mechanism to support states and/or colleges in expanding the pool of credentialed instructors for dual or concurrent enrollment



### SUPPORT DUAL ENROLLMENT TEACHERS BY SUPPORTING THE PROFESSION GENERALLY

*While the recommendations included in this proposal will have a positive impact on expanding the pool of instructors qualified to teach a dual or concurrent enrollment class, it is essential that Congress and the Administration expand funding and adopt new policies to develop and strengthen teacher pipelines to grow the size and diversity of the teacher workforce as a whole, including through raising teacher pay.*

*While it is essential that the number of teachers with credentials to teach dual or concurrent enrollment grows, there will never be enough credentialed teachers while the profession as a whole is experiencing severe shortages in many high-need subjects, including career and technical education instructors. All proposals designed to expand and diversify the teacher workforce and address shortages will be a net benefit to dual enrollment programs.*

## Goals

- **Create Opportunities:** Provide opportunities for teachers to secure additional discipline-specific graduate coursework in order to meet the criteria in many states and colleges to become a dual or concurrent enrollment instructor, including structuring those opportunities so that they accommodate the teacher's existing schedule and professional commitments.
- **Provide Incentives:** Incentivize teachers to take advantage of those opportunities by eliminating costs involved to the teacher and support their onward career momentum.

## Expanding the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants

Many states have struggled with incentivizing their existing teacher workforce to commit to the extra graduate classes necessary to get certified for dual or concurrent enrollment. Long-term, educator preparation programs should include this discipline-specific training as a baseline in graduate teacher training programs, so that teachers enter the workforce qualified to teach dual enrollment.

To achieve this, new provisions should be added to the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants under Title II of the Higher Education Act to encourage educator preparation programs receiving grants to provide opportunities for teachers to earn their teaching credentials with the discipline-specific graduate coursework that will allow them to begin teaching dual or concurrent enrollment classes without the need for additional instruction.

In addition to adding new provisions to the program, funding for the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants should be significantly expanded from current funding (\$50 million in FY21) to support more partnerships in improving teacher education nationwide.

## Expanding Eligibility for the TEACH Grant and/or Public Service Loan Forgiveness

In addition to providing discipline-specific training for new teachers, Congress should consider expanding the eligibility and scope of the TEACH Grant program to

allow mid-career teachers to receive a TEACH Grant to incentivize those teachers to secure the discipline-specific graduate credits necessary to be credentialed as a dual or concurrent enrollment instructor.

Award sizes should be calibrated to cover the costs of accruing up to 18 credit hours of discipline-specific coursework. Given the teachers accessing the awards are mid-career and the award sizes will be comparatively smaller than a teacher candidate seeking their initial teaching credential, the service obligation should be significantly reduced or waived entirely.

Alternatively, Congress could consider the Public Service Loan Forgiveness as an alternate existing program to provide mid-career teachers with access to funding to secure the necessary discipline-specific graduate coursework to become a dual or concurrent enrollment instructor.

## Creating a New Funding Mechanism to Support Dual Enrollment Teacher Credentialing

Given the scale of the problem in a number of states, particularly those states where colleges receive accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (which accredits institutions of higher education in 19 states), with finding enough credentialed instructors to teach dual or concurrent enrollment classes, Congress might also consider establishing a separate funding mechanism to support dual enrollment teacher credentialing.

This could either be done through establishing a new competitive grant program funded through Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (where dual enrollment teacher credentialing is already an allowable use) or through Title II of the Higher Education Act. The competitive grant mechanism should provide funding either to states and school districts to pay tuition costs on the teachers' behalf for discipline-specific graduate credits, or for institutions of higher education to offer those courses to teachers tuition-free. To limit program costs, teacher eligibility for funding could be limited to a certain credit threshold (e.g. 18 credits, which is the minimum requirement for the Higher Learning Commission).