

FINANCE

States design funding mechanisms that remove financial barriers for low-income and moderate-income students to participate and excel in college level work in high school.

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This is one of six components that states need to be mindful of to build policy for college in high school programs like dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and early college high school that includes equity and quality as a priority. To learn more, see the full report [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity & Quality in College in High School Programs](#).



WHY THIS MATTERS | *Gaps in access to college in high school programs for low income students will never close while financial barriers remain. States need to push as far as they can to eliminate costs—tuition, fees, books, transportation, etc—to low- and moderate-income students.*



Remove Barriers

Removing cost barriers for students, and particularly for low-income students, are critical to any strategy to expand equitable access to college in high school programs. As a result, states need to be thinking carefully about how they are developing their policies to ensure that low-income students can access these programs tuition-free, as well as looking at how to minimize or eliminate additional costs related to fees, textbooks, transportation, and instructional materials. The commitment to removing barriers can even extend to a bridge program approach that looks at non-course related costs such as what access low-income students have to food on college campuses. Where possible, states should be looking to maximize no-cost participation opportunities in college in high school for low- and moderate-income students.

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For a deeper examination of the existing state models for funding college in high school programs and their implications for equity, please see CHSA's "Funding for Equity: Designing State Dual Enrollment Funding Models to Close Equity Gaps."



Remove Barriers

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

▶ Leverage Federal Funding

The state leverages federal funding to invest in college in high school programs, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act,¹ Perkins V,² and the GEAR UP program under the Higher Education Act.³

Example — In their ESSA state plans, Arkansas identified that it intended to use ESSA Title IV Part A funds to support college in high school programs.⁴

▶ Set a Tuition Ceiling

The state allows colleges to charge no more than a fixed affordable price or ceiling for dual enrollment to students, or as part of the arrangements between school districts and institutions of higher education.

Example — Utah sets a fixed price (\$5 per credit hour) that colleges can charge for concurrent enrollment.⁵

▶ Offer Needs-Based Aid

The state provides need-based scholarships or requires colleges to provide tuition and fee waivers for low-income students.

Example — Nebraska's ACE Scholarship pays tuition and fees if a student or the student's family participates in any federal need-based program.⁶

ADVANCED POLICY

▶ Alleviate non-Tuition Costs

The state provides early access to student financial aid or other sources to, in tandem with eliminating tuition costs, alleviate cost of attendance beyond tuition for low-income students (e.g. books, materials fees, transportation).

Example — Washington's Dual Enrollment Scholarship Program covers course fees, and students may be provided with a textbook voucher of up to \$150 in value.⁷

▶ Offer Some Free Courses

The state provides all students with the opportunity to take a limited number of foundational general education or CTE classes for free.

Example — Vermont provides vouchers for all students meeting eligibility criteria to take up to two dual enrollment courses tuition-free.⁸

▶ Offer a Free Model

The state ensures (through policy and providing funding) that all students enrolled in a certain type of model in the state, such as an early college high school, have access to free courses and entry requirements for the program include determining low-income status.

EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

▶ Make It Free for All

The state has a system providing a tuition free college education (either focused directly on college in high school programs or a broader mechanism covering students of different ages) that includes the costs of all college credits earned while the student is in high school, paired with a funding mechanism to eliminate costs of fees, books, transportation, and other indirect costs.

Example — Georgia's Dual Enrollment Program allows all eligible students to participate in dual enrollment opportunities without paying tuition, mandatory and non-course related fees, or book costs.⁹

▶ Expand Existing Free College Programs

The state includes college in high school programs as part of any broader system covering college costs for students of different ages (such as a 'College Promise' program,) that the state has created to offer free tuition or other costs of attendance to low-income students. States should also be mindful of how college in high school programs interface with any limits to eligibility that exist under the program, and any interaction with federal loan requirements.



Balancing Incentives Between K–12 & Higher Education to Further Equity

In addition to eliminating cost barriers for students, states must also be mindful that college in high school programs are partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education, and that therefore the funding mechanisms in place must ensure that both K-12 and higher education systems have the resources they need to deliver high-quality, equitable programs.



Balancing Incentives Between K-12 & Higher Education to Further Equity

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

► Require Funding Agreements

The state has a funding mechanism in place that provides funding to either K-12 or higher education to ameliorate the costs of administering college in high school programs, and both systems reach agreement on how that money is to be spent, so that both K-12 and institutions of higher education are held harmless.

ADVANCED POLICY

► Fund K-12 & Higher Education

The state has a funding mechanism that provides separate incentives for both K-12 and higher education in the state to ensure both partners are able to cover their costs.

Example — *Illinois allows high schools offering dual enrollment courses to earn funds based on Average Daily Attendance and community colleges to count enrollment toward state Full Time Equivalent funding.*¹⁰

► Provide Tuition Support

The state has a funding mechanism that provides tuition support, in addition to institutional aid, for higher ed partners.

Example — *North Carolina's community colleges that operate an early college high school (referred to in statute as cooperative innovative high schools) receive base aid for each student, but also receive a tuition reimbursement from the State Board of Education.*¹¹

EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

► Support the Total Cost

The state's funding mechanism supports the total cost of education incurred by the providers for identified students (whether all or limited to low-income) to include providing institutional aid to both K-12 and higher education, subsidizing tuition costs on behalf of students, and helping to cover additional costs such as textbooks, fees, and student support mechanisms.



Leveraging Funding for CTE-Focused College in High School Programs

States are placing a significant emphasis and focus upon expanding career and technical education programs and improving the alignment between their educational system and workforce needs. College in high school opportunities are an important component of any robust career and technical education program, including apprenticeships, therefore states should look to ensure that its workforce programs also include a role for college in high school among them.



Leveraging Funding for CTE-Focused College in High School Programs

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

▶ Leverage Federal Funding



The state leverages federal opportunities under Perkins V, as well as existing opportunities under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to enhance college in high school CTE courses. In Perkins V, college in high school program funding opportunities are included as part of both state leadership activities and by local recipients as identified by the local needs assessment process in the law.¹²

ADVANCED POLICY

▶ Include in Career Pathways



The state, if it has career pathways programs in place, requires each approved pathway to include robust college in high school program opportunities to students, in order to support the student's work within that pathway.

EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

▶ Create a Start-Up Fund



The state creates a start-up fund to launch new career-focused college in high school programs with school districts, higher education, and industry partners.

Example — *New York State operates the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (NYS P-TECH) Program that provides seven-year grants to fund regional partnerships between K-12, IHEs, and employers to establish P-TECH schools across the state.¹³ Massachusetts's High Quality College and Career Pathways is another example of such a fund.¹⁴*



REFERENCES

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- 12 College in High School Alliance, *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act: Provisions of Perkins V Benefiting College in High School Programs*, 2018
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