



# PROGRAM INTEGRITY & CREDIT TRANSFER

*States support and promote high-quality college in high school programs through effective oversight and cross-sector collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, as well as ensuring credit articulation.*

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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** | *College in high school programs can only give students a leg up if they can be confident that the courses they complete will help move them successfully towards a degree or credential. Access without quality and alignment does not create opportunity.*



## Enabling Credit Transfer

It is critical to ensure that credits earned in college in high school programs can be transferred to two- or four-year colleges in the state. Students that cannot transfer credits lose time, money, and momentum towards their degree. Enabling credit transfer for college in high school programs is an essential step to ensuring that these courses maintain a high value for students and put students on a solid pathway to greater credential attainment. In addition, seamless credit transfer encourages more efficient state investment of resources; if credits do not transfer, states are investing in supporting the student in taking courses in high school, and then again in college. In circumstances where credits cannot transfer it is not just the student who loses out, oftentimes it is the taxpayer as well.



## Enabling Credit Transfer

### FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

#### ► Make Transfer Policies Clear

The state has tools documenting credit acceptance and transfer for college in high school programs that are publicly accessible to students, families, and counselors. These tools should also make clear whether credits will or will not count towards degree requirements upon transfer.

*Example — Many states link acceptance to state transfer libraries, such as Colorado's Guaranteed Transfer courses and Florida's Statewide Course Numbering System. Florida requires districts to provide students with a statement on how their credits will transfer.<sup>1</sup>*

### ADVANCED POLICY

#### ► Foster Credit Transfer

The state has statewide systems, collaborations, or incentives that facilitate effective transfer between public colleges and universities, as well as private institutions that choose to participate. These mechanisms are leveraged to strengthen credit acceptance and transfer for college in high school programs.

*Example — California operates the ASSIST (Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer) system, a public website which generates reports that show how course credits earned at California colleges will be treated when/if transferred to another, including those earned through dual enrollment programs. ASSIST includes the University of California, California State University, and California Community College systems.<sup>2</sup>*

#### ► Require Credit Acceptance

The state requires public colleges and universities, and encourages private institutions, to accept credit earned through a college in high school program just as any other transferable credit.

*Example — Twenty-nine states have policies requiring public colleges and universities to accept dual enrollment credit with no added restrictions.<sup>3</sup>*

### EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

#### ► Limit Credit Transfer Restrictions

The state limits the abilities of public colleges and universities, and any private institutions participating in a statewide system of credit transfer, from restricting credits earned through college in high school programs from counting towards the requirements for a major, if the course sequence was substantially similar.



## Ensuring Equivalency with College Courses

College in high school programs should be high-quality, providing authentic and intentionally-designed college course experiences to high school students that are equivalent to college courses in any other setting. The state plays an important role in creating mechanisms for program oversight and quality assurance of college in high school programs, as well as ensuring that there are tools in place for quality improvement, support, and technical assistance.



## Ensuring Equivalency with College Courses

### FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

#### ► Implement Quality Standards

The state has quality standards and regulations in place for all college in high school programs.

*Example — Many states' quality standards are limited to instructor qualifications, syllabi, and transcribing. The Colorado Community College System's Statement of Standards additionally covers areas of curriculum, faculty training and professional development, student services and advising, assessment, and facilities—many based on the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships' (NACEP) standards for program quality.<sup>4</sup>*

### ADVANCED POLICY

#### ► Fund Quality-Assurance Mechanisms

Where appropriate, the state funds programs to pursue independent mechanisms to demonstrate quality and provide technical assistance (including for K-12 and postsecondary leadership), such as program accreditation offered by NACEP.

*Example — State-run reviews in Washington, Arkansas, Oregon, and Indiana are required for concurrent enrollment providers that do not hold NACEP national accreditation. Virginia conducts periodic audits to determine compliance with state policy.*

#### ► Periodically Evaluate Offerings

The state has a mechanism in place that allows it to periodically evaluate its college in high school programs, and provides as part of that mechanism a structure for institutions and districts to provide feedback prior to making any changes.

### EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

#### ► Support Quality Improvement

The state employs an intermediary or assigns a state agency office to support quality improvement initiatives and provides necessary resources for those efforts.

*Example — NACEP's standards serve as a model for statewide quality standards in 20 states. State policy in ten of these states additionally require, provide incentives, or encourage colleges to obtain NACEP accreditation.<sup>5</sup>*

#### ► Evaluate Intensive Models

The state clearly defines the characteristics and components of more intensive college in high school models (such as early college high schools) and has an approval, certification, and renewal process in place for programs to achieve that designation.

*Example — Texas' Early College High School designation process requires an annual application based on six benchmark categories (target population, partnership agreement, leadership initiatives, curriculum and support, academic rigor and readiness, and school design) as well as Outcome-Based Measures related to access, achievement, and attainment.<sup>6</sup>*



## Cultivating Cross-System Collaboration

K-12 and postsecondary institutions must be core partners in creating successful college in high school programs. Each partner should have clear roles and responsibilities that focus clearly on the quality and equity of program design and implementation. The state can support cross-system collaboration by supporting and facilitating strong partnership models, including engaging employers and other key stakeholders.

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College in high school programs offer significant benefits when combined with career-focused programming, allowing students interested in career and technical education (CTE) courses to make progress toward an industry-recognized credential or degree while still in high school. While many of the policy proposals in this roadmap will positively impact such programming, those that specifically address CTE are noted by this icon.



## Cultivating Cross-Systems Collaboration

### FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

#### Require Partnership Agreement

The state requires that college in high school partnerships between K-12 and postsecondary institutions have memoranda of understanding or cooperative agreements in place, that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of each.

*Example – California’s AB288 requires partnerships between community colleges and school districts in the state to be governed by a partnership agreement developed by both parties, and to establish protocols for information sharing, joint facilities use, and parental consent.<sup>7</sup>*

### ADVANCED POLICY

#### Specify Partnership Agreement Contents

The state requires MOUs or cooperative agreements, that in addition to spelling out roles and responsibilities, also discuss how each partner contributes to upholding quality standards that the state has adopted, and have a process in place for revisiting those agreements.

#### Designate a Statewide Coordinating Authority

The state convenes a cross-agency working group or initiative with the responsibility to coordinate statewide college in high school efforts that includes at least the state education agency, state higher education agency, and postsecondary system offices.

*Example – In the 2019 legislative session, Louisiana passed a law to create a Dual Enrollment Framework Task Force, responsible for developing recommendations for statewide universal access to dual enrollment courses. The task force comprises representatives of all the major stakeholders in the state.<sup>8</sup>*

### EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

#### Promote Workforce Alignment



The state convenes an ongoing cross-sector statewide task force to examine, align, and promote college in high school programs as potential solutions to meet the workforce needs of in-demand industry sectors and employers in the state. The state charges this body to offer recommendations to improve access and success of college in high school programs as a component Perkins and WIOA plans.





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# REFERENCES

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- 1 Education Commission of the States, Dual Enrollment State Profile—Florida, 2016
- 2 Assist Resource Center, ASSIST Introduction
- 3 Lexi Anderson, 50-State Comparison: Transfer and Articulation Policies, Education Commission of the States, 2018
- 4 Colorado Community College System, Statement of Standards & On-Site Best Practices
- 5 National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, Legislation and Policy—NACEP in State Policy
- 6 Texas Education Agency, Early College High School
- 7 California Assembly, Assembly Bill No. 288, Public schools: College and Career Access Pathways, 2015
- 8 Louisiana Senate, SB 243, Creates the Dual Enrollment Framework Task Force, 2019