

Unlocking Potential's College in High School
Policy Landscape and Recommendations

SOUTH CAROLINA





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INTRODUCTION

South Carolina has an opportunity to address the historical inequities that continue to plague the state's education system.

As outlined in the 2018 *Minimally Adequate* series, state policies have resulted in a system that does not provide the structures and supports to ensure the success of every student. The final installation in the series offered eight ideas to address this crisis. One of those ideas is to confront racial inequity in access to course options.

Strengthening the state's college in high school policies and implementation is an evidence-based way to address course access inequities facing students across the state. With a lens toward equity, quality and student success, college in high school programs, including dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment and early college high school, are proven to improve college transitions, persistence and completion. Unfortunately, these programs tend to benefit more privileged students due to a range of barriers that inhibit access for historically underserved students. To address this national challenge, the College in High School Alliance (CHSA) in partnership with the Level Up coalition administered by the Education Strategy Group created [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity & Quality in College in High School Programs](#). This tool includes a set of policy recommendations to expand high-quality, equitable access to college in high school programs.

WITH A LENS TOWARD EQUITY, *quality and student success*, **COLLEGE IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS**, *including dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment and early college in high school*, **ARE PROVEN TO IMPROVE COLLEGE TRANSITIONS, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION.**

Using *Unlocking Potential* as the foundation, this report explores how South Carolina's policies measure up to this national policy framework. It includes six sections with definitions, aligned South Carolina policies and recommendations for improvement. Many of the recommendations also include examples from other states to help South Carolina stakeholders learn from others across the country tackling similar challenges. This report is meant to help stakeholders in South Carolina interrogate their policy system and advocate for changes with a lens toward quality and equitable college in high school programs. *Unlocking Potential* includes foundational, advanced and

exceptional policy recommendations which represent the full spectrum of actions for achieving an equitable and high-quality college in high school system. This report adapts those recommendations to

provide South Carolina stakeholders with a clear and actionable next step along the continuum based on the state's current policy context.

The findings in this report come from a review of existing policies, including laws, regulations and programs. They provide initial insights into the South Carolina college in high school context, but they do not include deeper stakeholder insights on implementation or nuances of the policies. We look forward to working with stakeholders to advance these policies and to support South Carolina work toward a more equitable education system.



Definitions

College in High School Programs

College in high school programs, such as dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment and early college high school, are partnerships between school districts and accredited institutions of higher education that provide high school-age students an intentionally designed, authentic postsecondary experience leading to officially transcribed and transferable college credit toward a recognized postsecondary degree or credential (from [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Quality & Equity in College in High School Programs](#)).

Dual Enrollment

This term refers exclusively to sections of courses offered through an institution of higher education in a cooperative arrangement with a local school district. The purpose of these courses is to allow high school students who have mastered or nearly mastered the relevant high school curriculum and who are capable of college-level work that is, by definition, more advanced than the regular high school curriculum to earn simultaneously both high school credit toward graduation from high school and academic course credit toward either an associate or baccalaureate degree in an institution of higher education. In such an arrangement, when the student successfully completes the course, the institution of higher education formally posts the earned credit to a student's transcript for the collegiate experience, and the high school posts the earned credit to a student's transcript for the secondary experience (from South Carolina's [Statewide Higher Education Policy for Delivery and Transferability of "Dual Enrollment" Coursework Offered in High Schools](#)).

Early College High Schools

Schools with an early college design allow students to simultaneously complete a regular high school diploma and complete college courses as part of an organized course of study leading to a degree or credential. Key characteristics of these successful schools include:

- 1 An integrated, organized, transferable college course of study leading to a college degree or credential provided at no cost to students
- 2 A comprehensive system of supports that proactively develops students' academic skills and the behaviors necessary for high school and college completion
- 3 A commitment to serving students from low-income families and backgrounds underrepresented in higher education (from College in High School Alliance, [What Are College In High School Programs?](#))

Guide to This Report

Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs includes six critical categories to ensure that state policy supports equitable and quality college in high school programs.

This report uses these six categories to examine South Carolina's college in high school policy landscape. For each of the six categories, this report includes:

- The call to action from Unlocking Potential
- An overview of South Carolina policies addressing the call to action
- State and local policy recommendations

6 ► NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORTS

States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those students historically underserved by these programs.

5 ► INSTRUCTOR CAPACITY

States develop strategies to recruit, support, and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.

4 ► COURSE ACCESS & AVAILABILITY

States ensure that students are able to access college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple college credits, and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.

1 ► EQUITY GOAL & PUBLIC REPORTING

States set an equitable, statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.

2 ► 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.

3 ► 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.



A woman with curly hair is writing on a whiteboard. The whiteboard has the words "ong Division" written on it. The image is partially obscured by a dark teal diagonal overlay.

EQUITY GOAL & PUBLIC REPORTING

States set an equitable, statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.



Equity Goal & Public Reporting

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Make Equity A Priority

The state appears to emphasize college in high school programs for “talented” students in the [SC CHE Dual Enrollment Policy](#):

- “Dual enrollment courses have been a feature in South Carolina high schools for at least a decade. The purpose of these courses is to provide an avenue through which highly talented high school youth can earn college credit while simultaneously meeting high school graduation requirements.”
- “Dual enrollment courses should be made available only to those who have mastered or nearly mastered the complete high school curriculum and who are capable of college-level coursework.”

► Include in Postsecondary Attainment Goals

While the state does not have specific goals related to subgroups, the CHE did set goals around dual enrollment participation. The 2017 [CHE Public Agenda](#) set the goal that 60% of the adults in South Carolina will obtain a workforce-relevant credential (degree or certificate) by 2025. As part of this goal, the agenda also set a key metric of increasing the percentage of high school students dually enrolled in college courses by 1% in 2020, 2% in 2025 and 4% in 2030. This metric

was based on benchmark data from the Southern Regional Educational Board stating that 0.4% of South Carolina's high school students were dually enrolled.

► Be ESSA Compliant

The [state's report card](#) includes total participation and the % of 11th/12th grade students who completed six hours of dual enrollment course work with a grade of C or higher.

► Report Teacher Workforce Demographics

The state does [comply with ESSA requirements](#) to report teacher diversity data by district but does not distinguish for educators who are dual certified to teach college courses in high school.

Recommendations

- 1 Amend the Commission on Higher Education's (CHE) Dual Enrollment Policy to clarify that dual credit is intended to serve all students, with a priority for students underrepresented in the state's programs.
- 2 Revisit dual enrollment participation goals based on data collected by the state to evaluate success and determine strategies for maximizing success. Explore steps for expanding goal to include a focus on improving equitable outcomes across the state.
- 3 Report disaggregated data on the state and local level for dual enrollment participation and completion for all subgroups required under ESSA. States to learn from include [Colorado](#), [Hawaii](#), [Indiana](#), [Louisiana](#), [Kentucky](#) and [Washington](#).
- 4 Amend the state's teacher data collection to include information on the number and diversity of dual-certified teachers by district.



Equity Goal & Public Reporting

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Report Usable, Disaggregated Data

Local report cards mirror the state, providing total student participation in and completion of dual enrollment. Neither the state nor local report cards disaggregate by college in high school program type, but there is data for AP/IB program participation and percent of students with passing scores.

► Include in ESSA Indicators

The state's College & Career Readiness accountability indicator fails to include dual enrollment courses. Instead, it accounts for the percentage of students that have scored 20 or higher on the ACT, 1020 or higher on the SAT or received a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam. See the Oversight Committee's [Accountability Manual](#).

Recommendations

- 1 Amend the Perkins V accountability and reporting requirements to align to the CHE's dual enrollment participation goals.
- 2 Build capacity for local reporting of disaggregated dual enrollment participation data. Also explore improvements to state and local report cards to differentiate between participation in dual enrollment and early college high school programs.
- 3 Include dual enrollment completion in the College & Career Readiness Indicator and provide additional points for higher levels of credit, with the greatest number of points for students who complete an associate degree. [See Louisiana's Accountability System](#), including its Strength of Diploma Index.



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.



Program Integrity & Credit Transfer

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Make Transfer Policies Clear

South Carolina has several tools to support students, families and counselors to understand credit transfer policies and which courses qualify for credits. These include the [South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center \(SC TRAC\)](#), a website dedicated to understanding credit transfer; a [guide](#) for how dual enrollment aligns to career and technical education; and a [list of transferable courses](#), which lists courses for which credit acceptance is required, included in the state's articulation agreement.

According to the Statewide Higher Education Policy for Delivery and Transferability of "Dual Enrollment" Coursework Offered in High Schools, credits will transfer as long as a course is included in the list of transferable courses or, in the case of technical education courses, the student enrolls in a technical college which would allow for the course to count toward a degree, diploma or certificate.

► Implement Quality Standards

According to [S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-210\(B\)](#), dual enrollment courses must be equivalent in content and rigor to the equivalent courses offered in higher education.

According to [S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-234 \(South Carolina State Register Vol. 41, Issue 5, May 26, 2017\)](#),

students can only take dual enrollment courses that may lead to a bachelor's or associate degree offered by institutions accredited by New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools or the Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools.

Recommendations

- 1 In addition to the general requirements around equivalent quality, develop a set of quality standards to ensure that dual enrollment courses have a set of standards that would indicate equivalent quality. Standards should include defining characteristics of more intensive models, such as early college high schools, to clarify the approval and certification process for programs to attain that designation.
- 2 For college in high school partnerships, require a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement between K-12 and postsecondary institutions that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of each.



Program Integrity & Credit Transfer

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Foster Credit Transfer

The Statewide Higher Education Policy for Delivery and Transferability of "Dual Enrollment" Coursework Offered in High Schools, list of transferable courses and SC TRAC outline the systems in place to ensure transfer of credits.

► Require Credit Transfer

As long as they are included in the list of transferable courses, credits earned through college in high school programs count just as any other transferable credit. Private universities are not required to participate but are encouraged.

► Fund Quality-Assurance Mechanisms

Any quality oversight of dual enrollment programs comes from the Commission on Higher Education or Chief Academic Officers from postsecondary institutions.

Recommendations

- 1 Identify an independent entity, such as an intermediary or dedicated state agency office to oversee the quality of South Carolina's dual enrollment offerings and policies and support quality improvement initiatives.
- 2 Create a cross-agency working group to coordinate statewide dual enrollment and other college in high school opportunities, to include secondary, postsecondary, workforce and industry partners.
- 3 Develop a policy to ensure credits are recognized for general education courses for all public institutions satisfying degree requirements (not counting as electives only) for all courses taught by qualified faculty at Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges accredited institutions.

A photograph of three women in a professional setting. One woman is seated at a table, smiling, while two others stand behind her, looking on. The image is overlaid with a large, dark red diagonal shape that covers the right half of the page.

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.



Finance

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Offer Needs-Based

There are some tuition assistance options. For students taking six credit hours per semester, there is a Lottery Assistance program ([S.C. Code Regs. § 62-900.165](#)). Additionally, a website to support parents of homeschooled students says that some counties offer free tuition for residents, and there are some low-income scholarships available.

For students taking courses in technical colleges, the SC-WINS scholarship is available for students receiving free or reduced lunch. It includes an allowance for the cost of books.

► Require Funding Agreements

The state funds both the K-12 system and postsecondary institutions to provide dual enrollment. The funding provided for postsecondary is equal to how traditional students are funded. It is not clear that there are requirements around both systems reaching an agreement around how the money is spent.

Recommendations

- 1 Increase transparency and access to resources for families to understand their tuition assistance options.
- 2 Increase the number of needs-based tuition assistance programs for dual-enrollment students, including exploring options to leverage federal funding to support access to dual enrollment for low-income students (see CHSA guides on [HEA](#), [ESSA](#) and [Perkins](#)) and setting a tuition ceiling for students participating in dual enrollment.
- 3 Provide needs-based college in high school program options at no cost to low-income students.
- 4 Create requirements for K-12 and postsecondary institutions to come to agreements around spending money for dual enrollment students.

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Alleviate Non-Tuition Costs

SC-WINS, described previously, has a \$300 allowance for covering the cost of books for students who qualify and allows some students free access to college in high school programs.

Recommendations

- 1 Create funding streams for any students with financial needs to access support paying for non-tuition costs of dual enrollment.
- 2 Create a state-level program to allow students access to free college in high school programs. See [Funding for Equity](#) for examples where the state pays, district pays or a combination pays.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands plugging a white Ethernet cable into a port on a network switch rack. The rack has multiple rows of ports, some labeled with numbers like 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 21, 22, 23, 24. The background is dark and out of focus.

COURSE ACCESS & AVAILABILITY

States ensure that students are able to access college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple credits and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.



Course Access & Availability

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Offer Broad Range of Courses

A list of transferable courses can be found [here](#). Any courses need to be part of a track toward a degree or certificate.

► Notify Students & Parents of Graduation Requirements

[State guidance](#) indicates that dual enrollment classes, by definition, should count toward high school and college credit.

Recommendations

1 Ensure that information on dual enrollment and graduation requirements is easy to find and easy for parents to understand through tools such as an online web portal, and require high schools to notify students and families of college in high school opportunities in which they are eligible to participate. State example: [Colorado](#), page 33.

2 Ensure that there are no barriers for any interested student to access dual enrollment courses, including issuing statewide requirements to remove caps on participation and ensuring that eligibility criteria for college in high school programs aren't more stringent than requirements for college students.

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Include Multiple Providers

Dual enrollment programs must address geographic barriers, and multiple types of postsecondary providers participate. CTE opportunities are also included in college in high school programs and policies.

► Require Dual Crediting

Dual enrollment credits count toward both high school and college graduation (see [state guidance](#)).

Recommendations

1 Provide multiple supports to ensure equitable access to college in high school programs, including requiring online options and transportation.

2 Incentivize high schools to create flexible pathways, including providing support for students to access different types of college in high school pathways. Explore using federal funds or establishing a special fund to expand options for students. See examples in [Unlocking Potential](#), page 29.

3 Create supports for college in high school programs to identify students who are on the cusp of meeting college readiness expectations and provide them with supports to meet those requirements.

EXCEPTIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Provide Flexible Graduation Options

[High school graduation requirements](#) allow students to earn credit based on proficiency.

Recommendations

1 Require that all high schools provide college in high school opportunities, and provide financial and technical supports to ensure high-quality implementation.

2 Create state-level policies to support whole-school models for college in high school programs.

A woman with dark hair is shown in a close-up, looking slightly to her right. She is holding a white, anatomical model of a human ribcage and spine. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or laboratory setting with other models and equipment. The image is overlaid with a dark blue diagonal shape that contains the text.

INSTRUCTOR CAPACITY

States develop strategies to recruit, support and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.



Instructor Capacity

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Make Requirements Clear

South Carolina leaves educator qualifications for dual enrollment courses up to the postsecondary institution so long as they meet standards set by the state's regional accreditor the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. As such, there is almost no mention on the SCDE's website regarding certification guidelines for educators interested in teaching dual enrollment courses. The only mention of dual credit certification requirements in SCDE's guidance on teacher certification requirements is for two courses administered as SREB Readiness Courses.

Recommendations

1 Include a section in the state's educator certification regulations and guidelines section of the SCDE's website that clearly describes the minimum qualifications for a high school teacher to teach dual enrollment as outlined by the regional accreditor. Include additional information, where possible, of state institutions that require qualifications above the regional accreditor's standard. Partner with state institutions to communicate information on their websites such as the Minnesota State System. Effectively communicate the need for more educators with credentials to teach these courses.

2 Survey school districts annually to identify gaps in supply and demand for dual enrollment educators. This might be done in partnership with CERRA through its South Carolina Annual Educator Supply and Demand Report. Report gaps by institution and subject area to support recruitment efforts. Prioritize funding to address most severe gaps in subject or geographic areas.

2 Partner with state postsecondary institutions to create a directory of graduate course offerings available for high school teachers pursuing credentials to teach in a college in high school program. Make sure to clearly label which courses institutions will accept as credits for specific teaching concentrations. Educator Supply and

Demand Report. Report gaps by institution and subject area to support recruitment efforts. Prioritize funding to address most severe gaps in subject or geographic areas.



Instructor Capacity

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► No Evidence of Advanced Policies

Recommendations

1 Develop a new pathway program for college faculty interested in teaching college courses at the high school level. This could be achieved through expansion of the South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program or through partnerships with other teacher recruitment programs such as the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers (SC-PRRMT) and the Call Me Mister program.

2 Include a dual enrollment pathway in the Call Me Mister Program and SC-PRRMT to address shortages in critical dual enrollment subject areas and regions.

3 Create a dual enrollment teacher recruitment fund to cover additional education expenses needed to secure certification. This could be a new public-private initiative or amendment to existing state scholarship and needs-based grants programs. Explore use of federal Title II funds for this purpose. See the Indiana STEM Teacher Recruitment Fund and the Indiana Higher Education Commission's public-private partnership to increase the supply of dual credit teachers.

4 Partner with state postsecondary institutions to learn about efforts at other postsecondary institutions across the country to enable teachers to meet dual enrollment certification

requirements through credit for prior learning. Example: Minnesota State Credit for Prior Learning program.

A young man with glasses is focused on his work in a workshop, using a heat gun on a component. The background shows various tools and equipment, suggesting a technical or vocational setting. The image is overlaid with a dark green diagonal shape that contains the text.

NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORTS

States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those students historically underserved by these programs.

Navigational Supports

FOUNDATIONAL POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Build into Pathways to Postsecondary Degrees

The state has taken steps to organize courses into pathways and provide students greater choice in how they earn a high school diploma. See [the Diploma Pathways Project](#). The state has also created a series of [career clusters](#). However, there is no guidance that speaks to dual enrollment.

The state has also taken steps to minimize students taking courses that would not count toward a postsecondary degree. The State Board [regulations in 2018](#) state that dual credit students may take only courses that are applicable to baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees or certification programs that lead to an industry credential offered by an appropriate regional accrediting agency.

Lastly, the state [publicizes a list of general education courses](#) that transfer between any public SC postsecondary institution. However, these courses may be treated as an elective and not toward specific degree requirements.

Recommendations

1 Build on the Diploma Pathways project and the state's Career Clusters to clearly articulate a series of sequenced course pathways in a variety of focus areas that lead to an associate degree and are fully transferrable at public institutions in the state. Make sure each pathway clearly lists the sequence of courses and the total college credit available to students who successfully complete the sequence. See [Tennessee's Transfer Pathways](#) for an example of what this could look like.

Navigational Supports

ADVANCED POLICY

How Do South Carolina Policies Measure Up?

► Develop Centralized Resource

The SC-TRAC website includes a section for high school students that explains dual enrollment. There is a [search for course equivalencies](#) function as well as a list of [South Carolina Universally Transferable Courses](#) which are guaranteed to transfer between public colleges and universities in the state. However, the site is largely geared toward postsecondary transfer students and does not include information on program availability, how to enroll, student cost or eligibility.

Recommendations

- 1 Partner with SC-TRAC to create easily-accessible content on the website for high school students, including program availability, enrollment information, cost per program and eligibility criteria.
- 2 Amend the [South Carolina Comprehensive School Counseling and Career Guidance Model](#) to emphasize effective strategies for increasing participation and completion of dual enrollment courses, particularly for historically underserved students. Develop accompanying trainings and tools to help school counselors set and achieve aligned equity-focused goals through implementation of these practices.
- 3 Incentivize the creation or expansion of early college or dual enrollment programs that provide intensive supports to ensure historically underserved students persist to completion.
- 4 Expand the SC-CAN and GEAR-UP programs to focus more intentionally on helping historically underserved students access and successfully navigate through dual enrollment opportunities.

CONTACT US

Please contact [Lillian Pace](#) or [Jon Alfuth](#) at [KnowledgeWorks](#), steering committee member for the [College in High School Alliance](#), with questions or comments.

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