

THE NEXT PHASE OF DUAL ENROLLMENT POLICY

A Vision for the Field

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INTRODUCTION



By 2030, all states will have eliminated access gaps for participation and success for historically marginalized students in college in high school programs such as dual enrollment and early college, and have a policy system and funding in place that are designed to ensure students are completing meaningful and intentional college course experiences in high school.

If this vision is realized, quality college in high school programs will serve as a catalyst for closing postsecondary access and attainment gaps, and improving the efficiency and efficacy of transitions into college and career for all students.

Eliminating access gaps and designing intentional dual enrollment policies will begin with each state setting a clear vision for the role of these programs in their education system that is informed by data and the state's unique contexts, and then designing and implementing policy strategies to meet that vision.

This work at the state level will be supported by national efforts to raise expectations for all dual enrollment programs, align on key terms through policy, and support the field through new research and examination of emerging policy areas, including through federal policy.

The Next Phase of Dual Enrollment Policy outlines the strategies and recommendations that will realize this vision and goal for the field.

After two decades of significant growth in the number of high school students taking college courses, dual enrollment policy work has entered a new phase. The first phase of dual enrollment was characterized by proving the concept, getting a research base that determined whether the concept was worth scaling, and then with evidence of success in hand, significantly scaling up access to students.

But by 2023, practitioners across the country have developed significant and promising models for success, the dual enrollment research base is big and growing, and many students have widespread access to participate in these experiences. As a result, it is clear today that the work ahead for dual enrollment policy, and the needs of dual enrollment stakeholder communities, are different than they were in 2010, 2000, or earlier.

This work should no longer be about proving that dual enrollment deserves a place within the national education ecosystem, it should now be about determining the right placement. And to determine that, it is essential that the field of policymakers interested in supporting these experiences for students and the practitioners who provide them answer a key question: *what is our ultimate goal in expanding these opportunities, and how do we get there?*

What the next phase of dual enrollment policy work looks like is not set in stone, and it will take a concerted effort by policymakers, practitioners, and advocates to evolve the policy conversation and ensure continued support for the needs of students, high schools, colleges, states, and the nation. Policies and practices may need to change in order to better reflect dual enrollment as an integrated component of a state's education system rather than a promising intervention available to very few. And a mindset shift will be necessary among policymakers and practitioners about this work, and what we are collectively trying to accomplish.

Over the last six years, the College in High School Alliance (CHSA) has supported the field of policymakers and practitioners in conceptualizing and supporting the implementation of policies to expand access to dual enrollment programs nationwide, grounded in the principles of improving equity of access, ensuring high-quality, and promoting student success. CHSA is now ready, based on all of the work done to date, to outline a framework for what the next phase of dual enrollment policy work should look like that is grounded in developing an understanding of how to maximize the value for students participating in these course experiences and continue to strive to address equity gaps and overcome barriers so that all students can benefit from any experience that helps that student see the value of postsecondary education on their way to a career.

WHAT IS DUAL ENROLLMENT?

Dual enrollment programs 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 towards a recognized postsecondary degree or credential.

*These programs go by many names, but are typically referred to as **dual enrollment, dual credit, concurrent enrollment, or early college high school**. Included in our understanding of this term are also programs with a career and technical education focus, such as **P-TECH**. For more information on the definitions of dual enrollment, please see CHSA's [glossary of terms](#).*

THE CURRENT STATE OF DUAL ENROLLMENT: BIG AND WELL RESEARCHED

Dual enrollment is big, and growing. The number of high school students taking college courses continues to rise all across the country as students see these programs as a way to get a head start on college, cut their college costs, and strengthen their college experiences. As postsecondary enrollments begin to stabilize after the COVID-19 pandemic—largely because of the expansion of dual enrollment—the current reality of our education system is clear: dual enrollment is here to stay, and it's not just a strategy for the privileged few.

While there are parts of the country where access to dual enrollment is lower, and there are certainly populations of students who have much less access to dual enrollment than others, that cannot obscure the fact that dual enrollment participation is high, and continuing to rise.

For example:

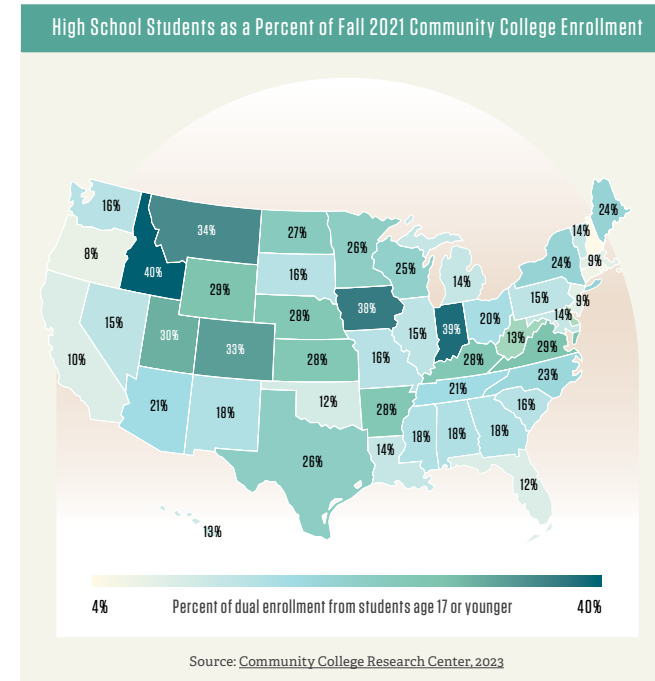
In Indiana, 60% of all high school graduates in 2018 earned dual credit from participating in a dual credit course.

In Colorado, 42.4% of all high school graduates in 2021 participated in a dual enrollment program.

In Kentucky, 40.7% of all high school graduates in 2021 earned dual credit from participating in a dual credit course.

In addition, the extent to which dual enrollment has become a key driver of postsecondary enrollments, particularly for two-year institutions, is most obvious when looking at the data of the percentage of community college students who are also enrolled in high school.

Data from the [Community College Research Center](#) shows that in 16 states the proportion of community college students who are 17 and younger is over one quarter, and in the national leader Idaho, 40 percent of community college students are under the age of 18 and most likely still in high school.



Growth in dual enrollment has also helped offset declines in postsecondary enrollment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dual enrollment experienced a 9.8% increase in fall of 2022 over 2021, and a 10.6% increase in spring 2023 compared to spring 2022, which contributed to largely eliminating overall declines in postsecondary enrollment during these two semesters. While enrollment in these programs may have plateaued during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clearly on the rise again, and in fall 2022 and spring 2023 growth rates returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The research on dual enrollment also communicates several important messages loudly and clearly. Key findings from a [recent review of the research](#) related to dual enrollment include:

- **Dual Enrollment is an Evidence-Based Practice that Has Broad Positive Impacts on Student Outcomes** — Participation in these programs improves a student's likelihood of graduating high school, enrolling in college, and completing college.
- **Dual Enrollment Expands Learning Opportunities & College Access, & Has the Potential to Improve Local Communities** — More access to dual enrollment leads to better college outcomes for students, which creates a more educated populace who can contribute more to the local economy.
- **Dual Enrollment Addresses Increasing Demand for College-Level Education & Increasing College Costs** — Dual enrollment provides students with access to free college course experiences, potentially reducing the overall costs of college.
- **Dual Enrollment has Broad Support from Students, Families, High Schools, Colleges, & Policymakers** — Support for these programs from different stakeholders is strong and bipartisan.

As a result of these findings, we can say that dual enrollment has the potential to be a powerful college access and success strategy for many more students than currently have access. However, the research agenda also outlines the challenges: there are significant equity gaps that need to be addressed, and we need to continue to refine and nuance our understanding of dual enrollment and all the possible ways it can serve students in embarking upon or completing their college journey on the way to a career.

According to an analysis by the [Community College Research Center \(CCRC\)](#) conducted using the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights' [Civil Rights Data Collection \(CRDC\)](#) for school year 2017–2018, Black, Hispanic, English learners, and students with disabilities are underrepresented nationally in dual enrollment from the populations that CRDC collects for.

Student Population	Percentage Point Gap in Representation
Students with Disabilities	-8.8%
English Learners	-4.1%
American Indian	-0.2%
Asian	0.0%
Black	-5.9%
Hispanic	-6.4%
Multiracial	-0.5%
Pacific Islander	-0.1%
White	+13.1%

ENTERING A NEW PHASE OF DUAL ENROLLMENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The policy work needed to establish and begin to scale up dual enrollment is different from the work necessary to calibrate it so that it is available to all students and provides them with the maximum benefits possible. Given that dual enrollment is now widespread and well researched, the policy work of guiding the continued growth and development of the dual enrollment field as a whole must necessarily evolve.

Indeed, as the dual enrollment policy work begins to transition to a new phase we leave behind the well-answered question of whether high school students should be taking college courses, and transition to answering how many college courses students should be taking, under what circumstances, and what kind of supports they need to succeed. On a systems level, that also means evolving the work from understanding whether college course-taking in high school has a role in the education system towards defining exactly what that role is and determining what our expectations are related to dual enrollment for any given high school student.

In addition to developing clearer and more consensus-based notions on exactly what role dual enrollment should play in the educational journey of any given student, there is also a lot of work now to be done to maximize the value of dual enrollment for those experiences. Conversations about intentional and meaningful dual enrollment experiences, and how to reduce or eliminate random acts of dual enrollment, become particularly critical when large numbers of students are taking lots of dual enrollment courses.

And through all of this, the equity mission related to dual enrollment needs to continue to be vigorously pursued and expanded. This is necessary both to continue addressing existing access gaps that have been identified and to begin to explore and close access gaps that have not been seen for new populations of students that we have not seen as dual enrollment students even in more recent years when our definition of equity has expanded.

To that end, CHSA proposes the following vision to guide policy in this new phase of dual enrollment, to support student access and success, and to maximize the value of these programs for students, high schools, colleges, states, and the nation.

A VISION FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF DUAL ENROLLMENT

By 2030, all states will have eliminated access gaps for participation and success for historically marginalized students in college in high school programs such as dual enrollment and early college, and have a policy system and funding in place that are designed to ensure students are completing meaningful and intentional college course experiences in high school.

If this vision is realized, quality college in high school programs will serve as a catalyst for closing postsecondary access and attainment gaps, and improving the efficiency and efficacy of transitions into college and career for all students.

Eliminating access gaps and designing intentional dual enrollment policies will begin with each state setting a clear vision for the role of these programs in their education system that is informed by data and the state's unique contexts, and then designing and implementing policy strategies to meet that vision.

This work at the state level will be supported by national efforts to raise expectations for all dual enrollment programs, align on key terms through policy, and support the field through new research and examination of emerging policy areas, including through federal policy.

The Next Phase of Dual Enrollment Policy outlines the strategies and recommendations that will realize this vision and goal for the field.

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CHSA believes that to accomplish this vision there are three state and three national imperatives:

Setting a Statewide Vision for Dual Enrollment

Every state must have a vision and set a goal related to dual enrollment and its role in the state's education system that is informed by the experiences and needs of students.

Setting a National Vision for Dual Enrollment by Raising Expectations for Policy Support

The dual enrollment field needs a national vision for dual enrollment that signals expectations for practitioners about what kind of program practices align with that vision and should be worthy of funding and policy support, which can be communicated through a new federal definition for dual enrollment.

Doubling Down on the Equity Mission

Nationally, we must expand the equity mission related to dual enrollment by continuing to work to close gaps for underrepresented groups like low income students or Black and Hispanic students, and to expand our work to include new student populations like students with disabilities, English language learners, and others.

Aligning the Field on Key Terms in Policy

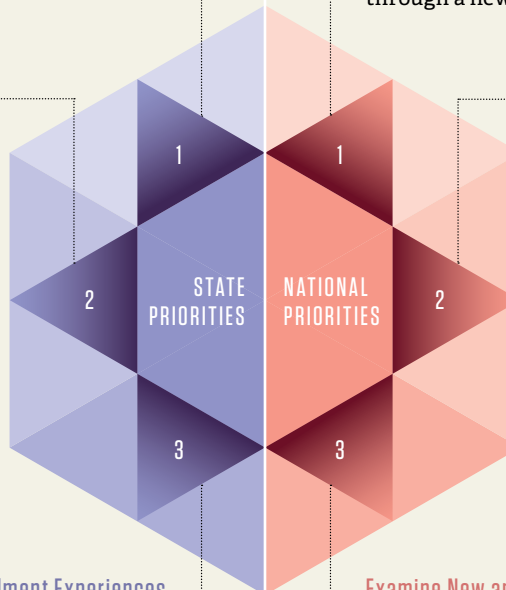
Dual enrollment policymakers at the national and state level need to begin to align, starting with terminology and definitions used in policy, in order to make it easier for students, parents, and other stakeholders to get the information they need about program access.

Focusing Policy on Intentional Dual Enrollment Experiences

States ensure that students with disabilities are able to access college in high school courses with the same pathways that maximize opportunities for all students to earn multiple college credits and facilitate the integration of college in high school programs into federally required transition plans.

Examine New and Emerging Policy Trends

The field also needs to do a deeper examination of new and emerging policy trends that may support or hamper progress toward the other elements of realizing this framework, with a particular emphasis on their impact on equity.



STATE PRIORITIES



STATE PRIORITY NO. 1

Setting a Statewide Vision for Dual Enrollment

Every state must have a vision and set a goal related to dual enrollment and its role in the state's education system that is informed by the experiences and needs of students.

SETTING A VISION

As dual enrollment continues to grow and becomes a further embedded component of every state's education systems, it is increasingly important that states define their vision and goal for what dual enrollment is — for the state, for high schools, for colleges, and most importantly for students. Research shows that dual enrollment programs can have many benefits for students, but it is important for states to determine which of those benefits they are most interested in maximizing as the policy prescriptions for each benefit might be different.

And even though dual enrollment is growing, there is still significant growth potential remaining. There is growth both in the number of students engaging in dual enrollment and in the number of dual enrollment courses students are taking. Given the significant potential for continued growth, it is important for states to outline a vision that determines what dual enrollment should be, and also what it should not be, for students.

Absent that vision and if current growth rates are maintained, there are plausible scenarios in which dual enrollment becomes seen as contributing to a fundamental and permanent reshaping of higher education, effectively moving for all students some amount of college education into high school permanently. That would be a very significant change to US higher education, but it is important to ask: is that what the state is actually looking for from student participation in dual enrollment? Is the ultimate goal for all students to take one or two years of college education in high school?

It's plausible that for some states this might be the intended goal, but whether it is or is not, states should be actively trying to build the education system they want, and not backing into an education system that they did

not intend or had not planned. It is crucial that states carefully think about what role they want dual enrollment to play in their education system.

It is reasonable to understand why a number of postsecondary faculty have concerns about dual enrollment, particularly when it can create the impression that the programs are fundamentally changing students' freshman and sophomore year experiences and moving those into high school. Higher education has a lot of challenges already related to enrollment and questions about the need for current staffing levels, and concerns about the unchecked growth of dual enrollment and transitioning more college experiences into the classroom may exacerbate that.

BUT A CLEARLY DEFINED, WELL ARTICULATED VISION FROM EVERY STATE CAN HELP DEMONSTRATE THE POWER OF DUAL ENROLLMENT AS A STRATEGY TO EXPAND OVERALL COLLEGE-GOING POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS, *rather than re-ordering the experiences for the existing population of college-bound students.*

STATES SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ARTICULATE WHAT ROLE DUAL ENROLLMENT SHOULD PLAY IN STUDENTS' COLLEGE AND CAREER JOURNEYS, *and what benefits the state is seeking from integration of K-12 and higher education.*

THE VISION SHOULD ALSO BE ALIGNED WITH THE STATE'S LARGER EDUCATION GOALS, *such as any postsecondary attainment goal that the state is working towards meeting.*

In developing a statewide vision about the role that dual enrollment plays in the state's education ecosystem, states should be addressing the needs of their residents, particularly the students who are participating in these experiences. That means engaging with all of the different stakeholders who interact with dual enrollment, including students, to help quantify those needs and make sure they are reflected in the state's vision.

STATES SHOULD ALSO BE THOUGHTFUL AND THINKING NOT JUST ABOUT THE VISION FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY IN AND OF ITSELF, BUT ALSO THE ROLE THAT ENROLLMENT PLAYS AS A TACTIC IN OTHER EDUCATION STRATEGIES. *Dual enrollment is an embedded best practice within career pathways, personalized, competency-based learning, and youth apprenticeship programs, and has roles to play in big education policy debates like making community college free for all students.* **A CLEAR VISION FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT WILL NOT JUST OUTLINE THE ROLE THAT DUAL ENROLLMENT SHOULD PLAY WITHIN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, BUT ALSO OUTLINE THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER EARLY POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES** *like Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other education strategies to improve student's college and career success.*

In developing a statewide vision for dual enrollment, states should seek to answer three key questions:

- 1 *What are the goals of the state's dual enrollment system, both for students and the state?*
- 2 *Who is dual enrollment for?*
- 3 *What is the ideal dual enrollment experience, regardless of program type or modality?*

States should seek to develop the answers to these questions through stakeholder consultations with the state's leadership, representatives from K–12 and postsecondary, students and parents at all levels as well as legislators. The vision should then be codified into state policy through whatever appropriate mechanism exists in the state.

ESTABLISHING A GOAL

In addition to setting a clear narrative vision about the scope and scale of the role that dual enrollment plays within the state's education ecosystem, states should also be looking to set specific goals related to dual enrollment, to the extent that the state's data availability related to dual enrollment makes that possible.

A goal, when aligned with a specific vision, can serve as a catalyzing force for positive progress in the state, particularly if that goal is developed to focus on expanding access for underrepresented students in the program.

Based on the state's vision, there are a number of iterations of goal setting for dual enrollment that states may find strategic to advancing dual enrollment productively. This includes examples such as:

- An access goal that sets a target for reducing gaps for underserved populations.
- An access goal that sets a target of every high school in the state offering dual enrollment or a certain number of course experiences.
- An attainment goal that focuses on the number of students who are successfully completing a dual enrollment course by high school graduation.
- An attainment goal designed to align with the state's overall postsecondary attainment goals.

States should determine the right kind of goal that fits their vision, the state's overall goals related to the education system, and any governance or political realities that are unique to the state. These goals are not meant to be exercises in checking a box for the sake of having a goal because other states have them too, but tools to be used to advance the state's own vision around dual enrollment and align everyone in the state behind that vision and what it is ultimately trying to accomplish.

The availability of good data related to dual enrollment access and success is also key in the development and setting of a specific goal related to participation or attainment in dual enrollment in the state. If the state's data system does not provide sufficient data to be able to meaningfully set a goal, particularly if the data don't provide information for specific student demographics, then the state should make it a priority to continue building out their data systems to make such an exercise possible.

State Spotlight: Kentucky's Dual Credit Attainment Goal

In March 2023, the Kentucky Commission on Postsecondary Education approved an amendment to the state's [Dual Credit Policy](#), which included both a vision for the state's dual credit programs and also a first-in-the-nation Dual Credit Attainment Goal.

THE RATIONALE

Kentucky is establishing a Dual Credit Attainment Goal to support the development of a state workforce with the degrees and credentials Kentucky's economy needs to thrive. Increasing dual credit attainment in Kentucky will:

- 1 promote greater alignment between the state's K-12 and higher education systems.
- 2 create a culture that includes attaining a postsecondary degree or credential for all students.
- 3 increase the level of educational attainment of Kentucky's citizens.

THE GOAL

By 2030, 50% of Kentucky high school students should graduate high school having completed at least one dual credit course with a qualifying grade of a C or higher. As Kentucky increases the student success rate in dual credit, the state will work to ensure that students enrolled in dual credit coursework match the economic, demographic, and geographic makeup of Kentucky's high school population as a whole.

THE STRATEGIES

Kentucky's Dual Credit Attainment goal will be accomplished by:

- 1 prioritizing access among students with limited or no access to dual credit courses.
- 2 providing meaningful dual credit experiences related to students' postsecondary and career goals.
- 3 supporting student success in dual credit coursework through high-quality college and career advising and academic services.
- 4 strengthening partnerships among high schools, postsecondary institutions and employers to build and sustain effective policies and equitable practices.
- 5 maintaining, communicating, and, when possible, expanding support for the state's dual credit scholarship program.
- 6 increasing the number of teachers credentialed for dual credit in Kentucky.

The 50 percent goal was not arbitrarily chosen by Kentucky. The state, supported by CHSA, [reviewed data](#) related to the state's existing dual credit attainment broken down by student demographics, and concluded that if the state reached a 50 percent attainment goal and if growth in dual credit attainment was focused on populations currently underrepresented in the programs that the state would largely meet the goal of matching the population of students participating in dual credit to the population of high school students as a whole.

This has allowed the state to issue a charge to its dual credit programs: if every high school in the state were to add just one or two new dual credit students every year between 2023 and 2030 from populations underrepresented in dual credit, access gaps would be largely eliminated. This makes the goal real, and attainable, for Kentucky's dual credit stakeholders.

STATE PRIORITY NO. 2

Doubling Down on the Equity Mission

Nationally, we must expand the equity mission related to dual enrollment by continuing to work to close gaps for underrepresented groups like low income students or Black and Hispanic students, and to expand our work to include new student populations like students with disabilities, English language learners, and others.

THE CONTINUING EQUITY IMPERATIVE

Even as this paper argues in favor of entering the next phase of dual enrollment policy, it is essential that we do not lose sight of the work that has yet to be completed from the current paradigm. While a number of states [like Colorado](#) are making progress in addressing equity gaps in participation and success in dual enrollment, significant gaps remain.

As long as equity gaps exist, the true promise of dual enrollment as a college access and success strategy will never be realized. We will be neglecting students for whom the programs could provide significant, transformative benefits for their onward college and career journey. As recent findings from the Community College Research Center about [the economics of dual enrollment show](#), dual enrollment is most economically feasible for colleges when they are focused on providing access to students who were otherwise not planning to participate in a college experience post-high school.

States must still be attentive to ensuring that they are continuing to work on developing a state policy framework for dual enrollment inclusive of all six categories of CHSA's [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs](#).

Programs must also be attentive to ensuring they are reflecting the best equity-based practices available, such as those summarized by the Community College Research Center and the Aspen Institute in their [The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for All Students](#).

To continue supporting the work of closing access gaps for student populations, states should:

- Define the populations of students who are underrepresented in these programs from state data,
- Close any data gaps for student populations who may be underrepresented for whom there is no data on dual enrollment participation and success, and
- Set priorities and develop specific policy actions that will advance the work to close those gaps for populations relevant to each state's demographic profile.

The work to close equity gaps continues to be too important, and too fundamental, to the next phase of dual enrollment policy to set it aside in favor of other approaches.

EXPANDING THE EQUITY MISSION

In addition to continuing work on closing equity gaps for populations of students that have traditionally been included in [state dual enrollment data reporting systems](#), such as male, Black, Hispanic, and low-income students, it is also important that we expand the equity mission to include populations of students who might not typically be included in dual enrollment data collection, but who deserve access to these programs as well.

The dual enrollment policy community, in addition to expanding its work on closing equity gaps in gender, race, and income, also needs to think expansively and explore what kind of interventions, policies, and practices will support access for populations of students who have not yet gotten much attention from the dual enrollment policy field like students living in rural areas, students with disabilities, English learners, homeless and foster youth, justice impacted youth, children of military families, and others.

There are certainly a number of dual enrollment programs that may specialize in expanding access to underserved students, or who have a particular population focus in the

work that they do, but there is still a lot that needs to happen to implement system-level approaches to expand access to these student populations.

For example, students with disabilities are the most underrepresented group of students participating in dual enrollment out of the populations tracked in federal data. But aside from recent publications like CHSA's Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs for Students with Disabilities, the literature of supportive resources and tools to help states and programs think about how to expand access to students with disabilities is very limited. Resources are almost non-existent for the other populations of students referenced.

Dual enrollment data systems, in addition to doing a better job of collecting and reporting data on participation and success by gender, race, and income, need to do a better job of providing data on other student populations as a first step to expand access for those students. Although there is more literature looking at students geographically and how to get access to these programs (such as expanding access for rural students to dual enrollment), more work is necessary to understand how to respond to the geographic dynamics of where students live and how that impacts their dual enrollment experiences.

Topics such as equity, diversity, and inclusion have become hyper-politicized and very polarizing, however, the underlying concepts for dual enrollment equity remain of utmost importance. As a result, statewide policy needs to continue to center on closing equity gaps, even as some states find themselves needing to reconceptualize how they talk about these issues to respond to political realities.

State Spotlight: Colorado

Through a concerted state effort, Colorado has expanded its concurrent enrollment programs to the point that, while there are still equity gaps for a number of student populations, those gaps are relatively small compared to other states. There is still work to be done, and the school year 2020–2021, which is the latest for which data is available, saw a decline in some student demographics' participation in concurrent enrollment (which may have been a consequence of pandemic disruption).

Colorado has started to move toward expanding their conception of equity beyond the traditional student populations they had previously been examining data for and developing solutions to promote access to. CHSA partnered with Colorado to provide the state with an analysis and recommendations specifically related to expanding access to dual enrollment for students with disabilities. The project was led by Karla Phillips-Krivickas of Think Inclusion.

The report, Illuminating the Pathway to Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities Through Concurrent Enrollment outlines three pressing issues Colorado must address to improve concurrent enrollment access and success for students with disabilities. Each issue is followed by a series of strategies to help the state define the participation gap in concurrent enrollment for students with disabilities and clearly articulate the pathway to improve access and success for those students. The primary recommendations include that Colorado should:

- ▶ Strengthen data collection for students with disabilities regarding their participation in concurrent enrollment opportunities.
- ▶ Increase access to concurrent enrollment for students with disabilities.
- ▶ Provide students with disabilities the services and supports necessary to succeed in concurrent enrollment.

STATE PRIORITY NO. 3

Focusing Policy on Intentional Dual Enrollment Experiences

States and programs must support making intentional and meaningful dual enrollment experiences available to students that are well integrated into the education system and aligned to the full breadth of locally relevant postsecondary pathways.

WHY FOCUS ON INTENTIONAL DUAL ENROLLMENT?

As more students take dual enrollment courses, it begins to really matter what courses those students are taking. Research establishes that students who take dual enrollment courses are more likely to access and complete college, but when students are taking more than a handful of courses these experiences should also be supporting those students on their own specific journeys to action on whatever level of post-high school goals they have. The dual enrollment policy community knows that there are too many examples of students who are not given course selections that are part of thoughtful pathways, have no access to high-quality counseling and advising to help them make course selections, and as a result participate in “random acts of dual enrollment” that may not support their onward college or career journey.

When high school students have significant demands on their time, and plenty of other academic and non-academic opportunities that they could be pursuing to enrich themselves beyond college course experiences, it is important that those experiences are of maximum value to each student who participates in them. At a state and system level, that means that as student college coursetaking increases, and particularly as the number of courses students take increase, there needs to be additional focus on ensuring students are making the best course choices for them.

This is necessary for several reasons:

- Students understand that dual enrollment has value to them in terms of advancing their college and career goals. Ensuring students are making meaningful and intentional course selections maintains that value proposition.

- It maximizes state investments in dual enrollment to ensure that students are taking courses that are of the highest possible personal value to them, in terms of advancing their own journey toward a degree or credential.
- In addition to improving college access and success, many students want dual enrollment to help them save time and money towards a degree, which the research indicates requires a more intentional structure to achieve.

State and system efforts to focus on intentional dual enrollment should also be informed by the state’s vision and what dual enrollment is trying to achieve for students. This may, in one potential version of a state vision, mean that the state is looking for all students to reach a certain threshold level of participation in these programs statewide. In another, it might mean that the state has identified specific course experiences in specific fields that it is most interested in providing students to encourage them to enter those professions. Each of these visions has different implications for what a statewide focus on intentional dual enrollment would look like, but each is informed by the state’s vision and will help determine a productive path forward.

Policy efforts to support intentional dual enrollment are also the area where, as a field, we need to do the most idea development and iteration. While some states have started to think about these questions from a state perspective, there are few comprehensive examples we can point to for policy initiatives that focus on what kind of courses students are offered or how they are advised and supported through their course selections. That is not because there are no policy solutions, just that this is a new field of endeavor at a statewide level and will need states to volunteer to be leading innovators (like Indiana in the state spotlight below) to develop and implement various ideas that other states can take a cue from.

THE TWO OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

There are two potential overarching strategies that states can pursue in order to encourage or incentivize programs to offer students the most intentional dual enrollment course experiences possible:



Developing and Implementing Pathways or Programs of Study and Focusing Policy Incentives on Supporting Them

Through Perkins V and a number of state-based initiatives, states have been focused on developing pathways or programs of study for students, to provide students with clear course sequences that align toward specific degrees or credentials of value in fields for which there is demand for in the local economy. Many of these pathways and programs of study include a dual enrollment component, in which students take one or more of the courses on the pathway/in the program of study for college credit while in high school.

States could do more to incentivize or require students to be participating in dual enrollment course experiences that are part of a specific pathway or program of study. This includes through the potential development of model programs of study ([such as in Illinois](#)) or limiting state funding for dual credit only to those courses that have been identified as highly transferable and a component of many pathways and programs of study ([such as in Indiana](#)).

In many states, what courses get offered as part of any dual enrollment program are at the discretion of the high school and college partners, and often aligned to what capacity the college partner has to offer courses matched to the expressed demand from the high school. Under a state policy regime that places more of a focus on intentional dual enrollment, there is more of a role for the

state too, whether that is one that provides support and guidance to dual enrollment programs in offering the best selection of courses, places requirements about what kind of dual enrollment courses are offered, or incentivizes some courses through state funding as opposed to others.

These approaches are designed to prevent students from being in a position where they have taken a large number of college courses that may not particularly serve to help advance them toward their own college and career goals. But states may wish to be mindful of leaving room within any new state policy regime that focuses on pathways or programs of study to allow students to participate in course experiences that might not be aligned to the student's specific goals post-high school, but which—if intentionally chosen—could be instrumental in getting that student to see themselves as a college student and excited about exploring the opportunities that postsecondary has to offer. Students should continue to have a range of available pathways and programs of study available to them, the ability to move between them as their goals shift, and accommodations for creating onramps for all students into these experiences—which may sometimes not be immediately starting on a specific pathway.



Building the Counseling and Advising Infrastructure to Support Student Course Selections

There is likely more that states and systems can do to support the appropriate counseling and advising of students participating in dual enrollment experiences. The “Navigational Supports” chapter of CHSA's state policy roadmap, [Unlocking Potential: A State Policy Roadmap for Equity and Quality in College in High School Programs](#) is the shortest of the whole paper because, as of the writing of the paper in 2019, there were

not many clear examples of ways states had supported this work. That still largely remains true—but there are promising program and system examples, such as the CUNY Early College Initiative’s Early College Liaisons—that deserve consideration about how to support from a state policy lens.

The need for states and systems to give serious thought to how to support counselors and advisors in helping students making intentional and meaningful dual enrollment courses has increased as the number of students participating in these experiences and the intensity of those experiences have increased too. Even with robust pathways and programs of study, students need support in helping to choose the right pathway or program of study for them.

In its work with states to date, CHSA has heard frequently from counselors attached to dual enrollment programs—particularly in K–12—that they often feel like they lack a sufficient understanding of dual enrollment, the specific programs being offered by the high school they are working for, and the state’s credit transfer policies to be able to confidently advise students about course selections.

Dual enrollment is complex, and the specific idiosyncrasies of individual state policies or programs make it a particularly challenging program for counselors. Counselors often have very limited time and resources already, given their high caseloads and the significant needs of students at this moment in time, to become knowledgeable experts about the idiosyncrasies of dual enrollment programs.

STATES NEED TO DO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT *needed for counselors and advisors to be able to provide students with the best advice possible.* **THIS INVOLVES PROVIDING CLEAR, DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPORT TO COUNSELORS, INCLUDING TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RESOURCES TO BUILD OUT THE COUNSELING INFRASTRUCTURE** *necessary to support every student in their journey through dual enrollment towards college and career.* **THIS MAY ALSO INCLUDE STATES PILOTING NEW INNOVATIONS RELATED TO COUNSELING, SUCH AS FOSTERING A COHORT OF COUNSELORS WHO ARE FOCUSED EXCLUSIVELY ON COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS.**

State Spotlight: Indiana

Indiana has a comprehensive statewide approach to encouraging intentional dual credit in the state. The state's funding mechanism is set up to incentivize dual credit programs to only offer a series of courses that the state has identified as being the most meaningful for students.

The state provides up to \$50 in funding based on student completion and caps student costs at \$25 per credit hour (which is waived for students who are Free and Reduced Price Lunch or attending a dual credit course offered by the state's community college system, Ivy Tech) only to courses that are included on a published list of [Priority Liberal Arts courses](#) or CTE dual credit courses that are part of the state's [Next Level Programs of Study](#).

Therefore, while dual credit programs can offer any courses they want, state funding is only available for courses on the list that the state has deemed the highest value to students.

By way of example, the current list of Priority Liberal Arts courses includes:

BUSINESS

- ▶ Introduction to Economics
- ▶ Macroeconomics
- ▶ Microeconomics

MATH

- ▶ College Algebra
- ▶ Calculus I
- ▶ Calculus 2
- ▶ Brief Calculus 1
- ▶ Finite Math
- ▶ Quantitative Reasoning
- ▶ Trigonometric Functions

THE RATIONALE

- ▶ Human Biology
- ▶ Introduction to Biology
- ▶ Elementary General Chemistry w/Lab
- ▶ Survey of Physical Science

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

- ▶ American Government
- ▶ American History 1
- ▶ American History 2
- ▶ Introduction to Psychology

COMMUNICATION/ENGLISH LITERATURE

- ▶ English Composition 1
- ▶ English Composition 2
- ▶ Appreciation of Literature
- ▶ Fundamentals of Public Speaking
- ▶ French Levels 1–4
- ▶ German Levels 1–4
- ▶ Spanish Levels 1–4
- ▶ Chinese Levels 1–4
- ▶ Japanese Levels 1–4

The state also has invested in developing the [Indiana College Core](#), a block of 30 credit hours of general education courses that can be taken as dual credit courses in high school and transferred to any Indiana college and be accepted as part of its general education requirements. The number of high schools offering the Indiana College Core is [growing](#), as are the students completing it, though the state is facing implementation and scaling challenges that mean availability is currently limited to only around 20 percent of high schools in the state.

And lastly, Indiana has also been working on scaling up the early college high school model. The state's early colleges are more intensive dual credit programs, specifically designed for underrepresented students, that offer structured programs and experiences for those students. The [Center For Excellence in Leadership of Learning \(CELL\)](#) at the University of Indianapolis works in partnership with Indiana's Commission for Higher Education, which designated CELL to offer an endorsement process for schools and career centers wishing to become Early Colleges.

To date, 44 schools across the state have received this recognition, and are focused on providing dual credit opportunities to low-income and underrepresented students to foster their success in a supported academic environment. Since 2010, over 100 additional high schools and career centers have been trained in the Early College model.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES



NATIONAL PRIORITY NO. 1

Setting a National Vision for Dual Enrollment by Raising Expectations for Policy Support

The dual enrollment field needs a national vision for dual enrollment that signals expectations for practitioners about what kind of program practices align with that vision and should be worthy of funding and policy support, which can be communicated through a new federal definition for dual enrollment.

THE CURRENT FEDERAL DEFINITION OF DUAL ENROLLMENT IS INSUFFICIENT

The current definition of dual enrollment at the federal level, which reflects policy definitions for dual enrollment across the country, is insufficient for the task. Many of the current definitions of dual enrollment reflect the most basic and descriptive way of conceptualizing the programs. But from the perspective of wanting to advance programs through policy that achieve the visions outlined by states above, and that focus support on expanding access to underrepresented students, the current definition is lacking.

As it stands, the current definitions focus on merely the act of providing a high school student with access to a college course. This is typified by the federal definition of “Dual or Concurrent Enrollment” that is included within the Every Student Succeeds Act, which the College in High School Alliance advocated for the creation of:

A dual- or concurrent-enrollment program is offered by a partnership between at least one institution of higher education and at least one local educational agency through which a secondary school student who has not graduated from high school is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit that:

- A** *is transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership*
- B** *applies towards the completion of a recognized degree or credential as described in the Higher Education Act of 1965.*

While this definition certainly describes what dual enrollment is in a way that captures the largest number of dual enrollment programs possible, it fails to describe what dual enrollment should be. It is time for the national policy movement supporting dual enrollment to raise our expectations for what programs should be and how they should function to be eligible to access policy support and funding.

We know that in order for dual enrollment programs to successfully realize the positive visions that many stakeholders have for these programs as being an onramp to college and career success for students, particularly those from historically marginalized backgrounds, that programs need to do more than just offer high school students the opportunity to take college courses. Dual enrollment programs need to ensure a close and collaborative partnership between the high school and the college. They need to provide students with appropriate counseling and support to ensure their success. They need to think intentionally about how to be inclusive of students from historically marginalized backgrounds. And they need to be thoughtful about the role that dual enrollment is playing in every participating students’ journey to college and career.

These are the kinds of dual enrollment programs that policy should be serving. And so we should evolve away from thinking about the federal definition of dual enrollment as being a dictionary definition of providing high school students with access to college courses, and begin to signal our expectations about what this means for program design, quality, and culture.

National stakeholders should convene to consider new language for the federal definition of dual enrollment that reflects our expectations and ambitions related to

the power of this model and what it can provide students. This should include updating the definition of dual enrollment to include at least:

- The importance of close, collaborative, and intentional partnerships between the high school and the college that reflect a thoughtful structure for the programs.
- The importance of providing students with support services to ensure they are making meaningful dual enrollment course choices and have the tools necessary to maximize the value of their courses.

A SPECTRUM OF INTENSITY AND AMBITION

An updated federal definition of dual enrollment may begin to align in places with the current federal definition of an early college high school, which reflects the concept of structured programs, student supports, and a focus on serving underrepresented students.

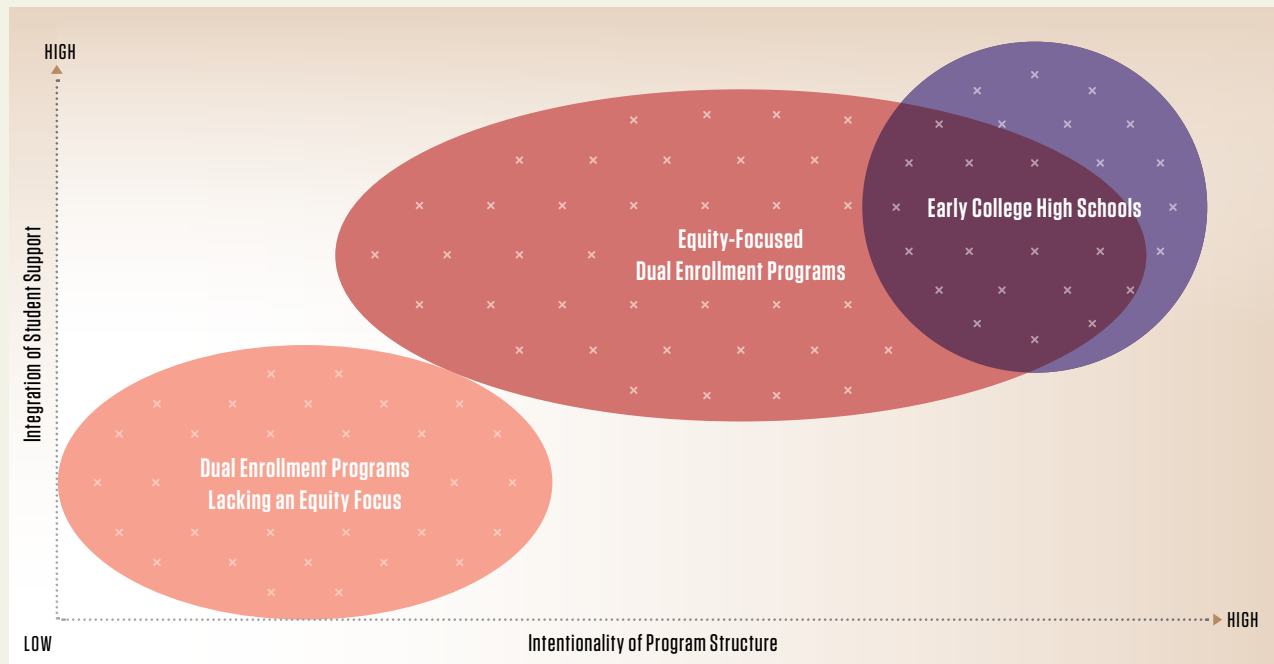
The current federal definition of early college high school reads:

The term ‘early college high school’ means a partnership between at least one local educational agency and at least one institution of higher education that allows participants to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the institutions of higher education in the partnership as part of an organized course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the participant or participant’s family.

UPDATING THE FEDERAL DEFINITION OF DUAL ENROLLMENT to include ideas like student supports and intentional partnerships DOES NOT MEAN THAT THIS IS AN ARGUMENT FOR ALL DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS BECOMING EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS. *There are resource and capacity constraints in many dual enrollment programs that would make transitioning towards becoming an early college high school impossible.* **THERE IS A ROLE FOR BOTH TRADITIONAL DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS AND EARLY COLLEGES IN A COMPREHENSIVE STATE STRATEGY TO PROVIDE INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED COLLEGE COURSE EXPERIENCES TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

It is time to reconceptualize how we see the relationship between dual enrollment and early college. Early colleges do have distinct features that set them apart from the rest of the dual enrollment community, including a specific mission to serve underrepresented students, to provide students with the opportunity to earn above a threshold level of credits, and to be tuition free.

However, as outlined above, there is an increasing amount of alignment in terms of the kind of practices that make a good early college, and the kind of practices that make a good dual enrollment program. And so, rather than conceiving of dual enrollment and early college as being two separate and distinct entities, instead, we should conceive of all college in high school programs and models as living on a continuum of program structure and supports.



Note: This chart is not designed to tell the whole story of the complex interactions between dual enrollment and early college, as there are likely more dimensions that should be included (such as targeting specific populations of students, as argued for in the equity mission above.) But it is designed to make an informative point about the things that unite the program models rather than divide them. Individual plots are meant to be instructive of where programs *could* fall on the continuum, rather than representing any specific dual enrollment programs.

In the conceptual chart above it should be possible to plot every dual enrollment program nationwide on the continuum:

- **Y-axis:** Programs would plot on the Y-axis based on the integration of supports for students to ensure their success in the program, including high quality counseling and advising. The more supports offered to students, the higher up the Y-axis the program would land.
- **X-axis:** Along the X-axis, programs would be plotted based on the intentionality of program structure, which

would be determined by looking at how many courses students have access to, which types of courses, whether they are on pathways, how many credits students have the opportunity to earn (and whether this leads to a certificate, credential, or degree), how many courses are on pathways or programs of study, and how well developed the relationship is between the high school and the college. Programs that have more structure would plot further along the X-axis.

Doing so is very likely to reveal that there is some overlap, particularly between early college high schools that potentially do not have the resources to fully build out the

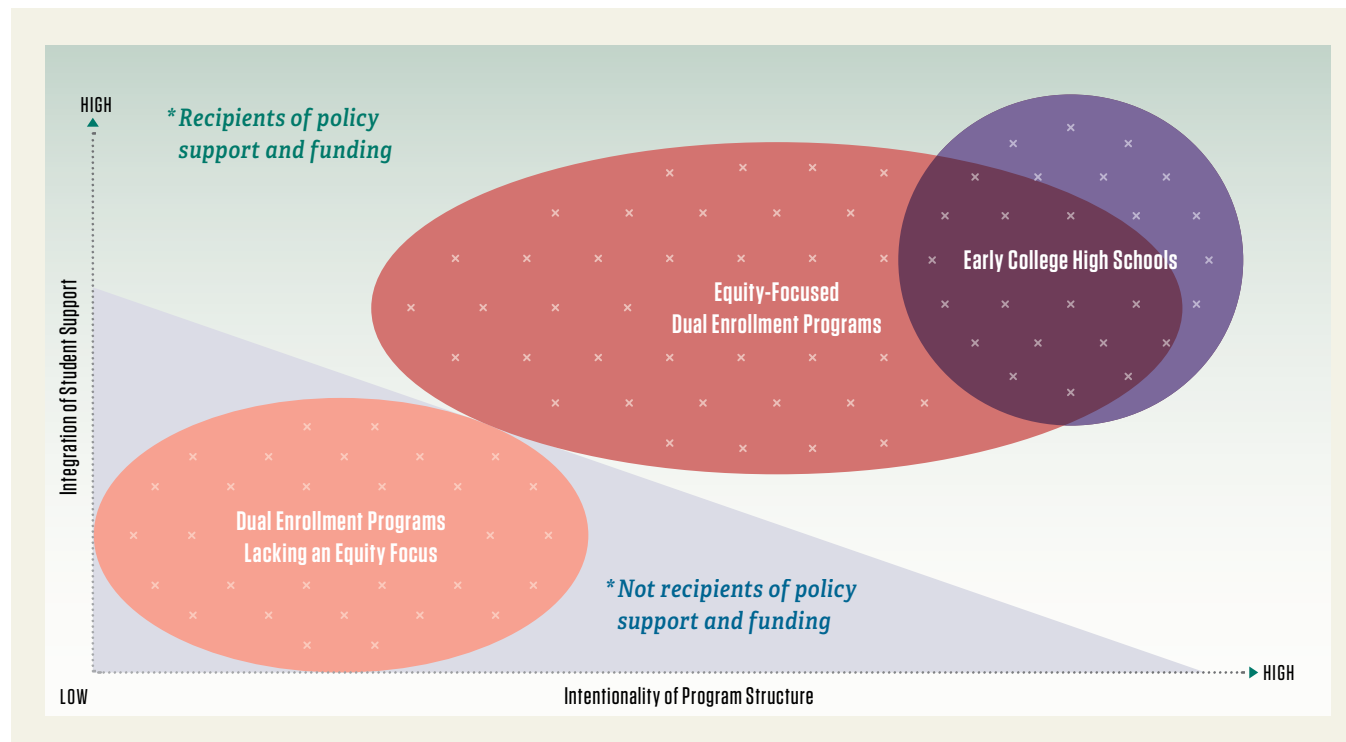
model, and intentionally equity-focused dual enrollment programs. These programs are not completely distinct from each other as we have conceived of them, but rather they are part of a continuum, and through program changes each individual dual enrollment partnership can change its placement on the continuum.

The goal, therefore, is not for every dual enrollment program to become an early college high school. But for each program, there will be a maximum level of intensity that it can provide with its capacities, resources, and capabilities, and our expectations should be that every program is striving to do the most it can to provide students with intentional, structured experiences and student supports. Every program should be pushing as far up the continuum as possible, and policy should both

encourage and require that journey. If dual enrollment programs are not striving to be the very best that they possibly can be—to provide the most structure possible, as many supports as can be provided to students, and a focus on ensuring equitable participation in the programs—then there should not be an expectation that those programs receive support from state policy or state funding.

In the conceptual continuum of dual enrollment programs, that would look something like the chart below.

The work to ensure public investments in dual enrollment are targeted only at the programs that yield the highest value for participating students begins with ensuring the definition of dual enrollment reflects our expectations for what all college in high school programs should be striving for.



NATIONAL PRIORITY NO. 2

Aligning the Field on Key Terms in Policy

Dual enrollment policymakers at the national and state level need to begin to align, starting with terminology and definitions used in policy, in order to make it easier for students, parents, and other stakeholders to get the information they need about program access.

There are 38 different terms in state policy that describe some version of dual enrollment.

In a global internet age, our choice to have created so many names and have those names mean different things makes it even more challenging for students, parents, counselors, and other potential stakeholders in a position to advise students on how to access them to become knowledgeable and competent about these programs. Are Google searches for “dual enrollment” definitely going to return relevant and specific information for your state and their definition of the term? If the answer to that question is not a definitive yes, it means there is work to do.

The field of dual enrollment policymakers and practitioners needs to get serious about cutting through the complexity inherent to the dual enrollment policy system we have created, and that should begin with the terms that we collectively use to describe this work. Long-term, and based upon new research answering questions posed by [the recent dual enrollment research agenda](#), there may be other important points of alignment on policy or practice that the field decides to pursue.

WE NEED TO BEGIN WITH LANGUAGE. *Dual enrollment is complicated enough. There are different kinds of programs, STUDENTS NEED TO GET SMART IN NAVIGATING BOTH THE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION, and there are lots of potential course opportunities for students to choose from and implications from those choices. SO THE FACT THAT THERE ARE 38 DIFFERENT TERMS IN STATE POLICY DESCRIBING THIS WORK IS MALPRACTICE ON OUR PART.*

It's not just that there are 38 different terms to describe the act of a high school student taking a college course. It's compounded by the fact that some of these terms have different meanings depending on where in the country you are.

For example, the most commonly accepted national definition for “concurrent enrollment” is that used by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships, describing the particular model of dual enrollment where students take the course at the high school and receive instruction from a high school teacher who has been credentialed by the college. But in states like Colorado and Oklahoma, “concurrent enrollment” is the general catch-all term used to describe all programs that receive state support, regardless of where the student receives instruction.

Even the term “dual enrollment,” which is the most common generically descriptive term used nationwide to describe these programs, has a specific meaning in certain states. In Indiana and Nebraska, “dual enrollment” specifically refers to programs where students only receive college credit for participating in the courses; the preferred and state-supported programs are called dual credit.

When confronted with this challenge when the College in High School Alliance was founded in 2017, our solution to the challenge of 38 different terms and a desire to speak to the policy field as a whole rather than aligning with any specific model was to invent a 39th term: college in high school programs. And while the term “college in high school programs” is more intrinsically descriptive of what this work is than “dual enrollment,” it has not effectively rendered the language problem moot. It has merely added to it.

The issue of language and terms might, on the face, seem like a problem that only national stakeholders like the College in High School Alliance, who work in multiple states and so need to know the language used in each, face. After all, within any given state everyone uses the same set of terms, so what's the problem?

Aligning on key terms is a critical first step towards cutting through the complexity of these programs, because it will allow the dual enrollment policy community to speak the same language to each other. This does not mean that states need to do anything to change the way their programs function. It just means that we might need to make some changes to what some states call their programs in order to align with the new national definitions.

The following terms should be preferred:

- *Dual Enrollment*
- *Dual Credit*
- *Concurrent Enrollment*
- *Early College High School*

These terms should have common definitions, developed and agreed to by the national stakeholder community and partner states. We owe it to students, parents, counselors, and anyone who interacts with dual enrollment to develop and implement a common lexicon that will make it easier to communicate about this work, and make it easier for students to make choices about whether and what to participate in.

NATIONAL PRIORITY NO. 3

Examine New and Emerging Policy Trends

The field also needs to do a deeper examination of new and emerging policy trends that may support or hamper progress toward the other elements of realizing this framework, with a particular emphasis on their impact on equity.

As dual enrollment continues to further embed within the nation's education system and among students, states, high schools and colleges, new and emerging trends in how our education system is functioning and evolving are going to need careful examination in the context of dual enrollment. These new and emerging trends in education, many of which have accelerated as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, have the potential to significantly shake up the dual enrollment field alongside the rest of education, but are the issues that, to date, we have thought the least about as a field. We need to spend the next few years getting to grips with what implications these changes to the education system will have on dual enrollment and how they support or hinder student access and success to these programs.

New and emerging issues for the dual enrollment policy community include:

The Growth of Online Dual Enrollment, and the Rise of Out of State Providers — To date, dual enrollment has largely been an intra-state initiative. It is present in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, but by and large each individual state has had their own policy regime that governs dual enrollment and encompasses only the high schools and the colleges within the state's borders. Most high school students participating in dual enrollment in that state would be receiving dual enrollment from in-state providers.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant rise in interest of online education, including to provide dual enrollment, and an increase in the number of providers to match. In CHSA's survey of dual enrollment programs post-pandemic, only 15% of respondents said that they had no plans to continue the availability of some form of online dual enrollment. As a result, online dual enrollment—which existed pre-pandemic but seems to have expanded in the aftermath—is here to stay in a much bigger way than before.

States will increasingly need to consider their state policy systems and what role, if any, out of state providers of dual enrollment should be playing within the state's policy and funding system to support access to dual enrollment. In addition to thinking about this in the context of providers coming into the state, states may also wish to consider the cross-state issues in the context of students going out of state. As more students earn credit, and more students become mobile, considering the implications for those students of credit transfer to out of state institutions becomes a factor to think about.

Question for the Field

We currently have 51 different policy regimes for dual enrollment—would it be strategic to think about more alignment between those regimes to allow a broader range of institutions of higher education to serve a high school's dual enrollment population, and give those students more opportunity to transfer and use their credits out of state?

The Role of Federal Support in Realizing The Next Phase of Dual Enrollment Policy — There are currently a number of opportunities for school districts and institutions of higher education to access federal funding to support dual enrollment, but most of these opportunities live within the large formula grant programs within the Every Student Succeeds Act and Perkins V. There is very little federal funding available to support dual enrollment specifically.

Meanwhile, as participation in these programs grow, so do the budget implications for states who choose to invest in these programs. A number of states have made big investments in dual enrollment, but they still

experience equity gaps that they will need to grow participation to solve. This may create a more urgent impetus for a federal-state partnership to continue to cover these costs and realize the full potential of dual enrollment.

If there is a push toward specific state funding for dual enrollment, there are a number of implications of the different potential funding models about what that could lead to. [Federal proposals that already exist in this space](#) have identified three potential paths forward for federal funding:

- Grants to states.
- Grants to dual enrollment programs (either the institution of higher education or the high school).
- Grants to individual students through federal financial aid.

More consideration is necessary of the most appropriate funding mechanism, as well as continuing to build the justification and support for new federal investments to promote dual enrollment access and success. As more states begin topping out what state investments can pay for in relation to dual enrollment, the urgency may begin to increase for supplemental federal funding to continue to advance this work.

Question for the Field

As dual enrollment participation continues to rise, and state investments begin to max out what they can pay for, is there a role for a federal-state partnership in funding dual enrollment and supporting equitable access and success? Or will this remain a primarily state-based program?

Federal Education Statute's Lack of Accommodation for Dual Enrollment's Existence — More broadly, there are several federal policies that may impact more students as the number of students participating in these programs continues to increase, and may adversely impact historically marginalized students who are trying to use dual enrollment as an onramp to college access and success.

The biggest of these issues is the impact of poor student performance in dual enrollment on their federal financial aid eligibility. If students perform poorly in their dual enrollment courses, many colleges will incorporate those grades into the calculations for Satisfactory Academic Performance (SAP) for the purposes of Pell Grant eligibility, which may put the students in danger of becoming ineligible to receive Pell even if they meet every other relevant criteria.

In addition to increasing the number of students benefiting from participating in dual enrollment, a rise in access will likely also lead to an unfortunate increase in students who perform poorly, even in the most well-designed systems that prioritize program quality and ensure student success. There is a nuanced conversation that needs to happen about how to address this, including how and whether we protect students from the consequences of poor performance in their first dual enrollment course, and how colleges and universities are encouraged or required to treat those experiences. Should a first-generation college student who tried dual enrollment but found themselves struggling in the course be penalized for that decision? It is a topic that requires further debate.

In addition, there are other federal policy architectures that do not accommodate the existence of dual enrollment. For example, when low-income students participate in dual enrollment experiences on the college campus, federal school lunch regulations are not flexible

enough to allow those students to access free and reduced price lunch services anywhere other than the high school building—while they may be on the college campus all day, without access to lunch.

We need a careful and thoughtful examination of existing federal policy architectures to understand what implications they have for students who participate in dual enrollment and consider what options exist to ameliorate any identified challenges. Some of these issues have the potential to have a significant impact on reaching the field’s goal of providing equitable access to these programs. We need to be creative and serious about addressing them.

Question for the Field

How can and should federal policy architectures for federal financial aid and school lunch be changed to accommodate the rise in dual enrollment and the number of students taking college courses in high school?

Being Responsive to the Latest Research on Dual Enrollment — In the last year, thanks to the efforts of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, there has been a new emphasis on the importance of new research into dual enrollment, specifically into research that will answer a number of challenges faced by the policy community. [Research Priorities for Advancing Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy and Practice](#) and its follow-up resource, [The Highest Priority Research Questions](#), will lead to new research into dual enrollment and the questions being asked by practitioners and policymakers.

As that research begins to emerge, the field of dual enrollment policy needs to be responsive to what the research shows. There is still a lot for the field to learn about the best ways to serve the needs of students, and with new research in hand, it is imperative to ensure we are using the data to appropriately improve student access and experiences to dual enrollment.

Question for the Field

How can the field incorporate lessons from new research into dual enrollment policy to enhance student access and experiences?

A young woman with dark hair, wearing safety goggles and a white lab coat, is looking intently at a test tube she is holding. The test tube contains a yellow liquid. The background is a blurred laboratory setting. The image is framed by a blue geometric shape.

CONCLUSION

IS THE NEXT PHASE JUST A WAYPOINT TO THE BIG BLUR?

This paper outlines a vision for the field regarding the next phase of dual enrollment policy. If the previous phase of dual enrollment policy was about proof of concept and scaling, and the Next Phase is about continuing to scale the programs, find their appropriate place within the educational ecosystem, and close equity gaps, then there is also a need to begin preparing for the work that comes after that and the long-term re-design of our educational system to support learner needs well into the remainder of this century.

Jobs for the Future's [The Big Blur](#) argues for a radical restructuring of education for grades 11–14 by erasing the arbitrary dividing line between high school and college to open opportunities for the learners our current systems leave behind. JFF makes the case for an entirely new type of public institution, neither high school nor college, designed to better meet the needs of 16-to-20-year-olds by enabling them to earn a postsecondary credential and prepare for a career—free of charge. It is a bold and radical vision for change that some states are beginning to consider and explore how to implement.

In a hypothetical future where dual enrollment partnerships have been subsumed into combined or new institutions that provide students transitioning through the latter stages of their educational journey and into a career with all the teaching and support that students need, states and practitioners will still need:

- A vision for students' postsecondary and career readiness opportunities and how these new institutions can meet students needs,

- A commitment to the equity vision that all students deserve the opportunity to access education, career exposure, and workplace experiences that will provide them with postsecondary credentials sufficient for a good paying job, and
- A clear and intentionally structured set of experiences and supports to ensure students are having meaningful postsecondary and college experiences that will set them up for success.

Such a system will also require:

- Appropriately setting our expectations about what it means to support the needs of students and set them up for success,
- A common language and lexicon to cut through the complexity and help students, parents, and counselors understand and access the opportunities available and,
- A mindful approach to new and emerging trends and how they interact with federal policy.

Whether the dual enrollment policy field consolidates or evolves, the core concepts embedded within this Next Phase vision for the field will set up the efforts to properly integrate secondary and postsecondary education for young peoples' future success.

It is a bold agenda, and there is lots of work to be done. Let's get started.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This report was authored by Alex Perry of the [College in High School Alliance](#) and [Foresight Law + Policy](#), with contributions from each of the Steering Committee Members of the College in High School Alliance including [Achieving the Dream](#), [Advance CTE](#), [Bard College](#), [Jobs for the Future \(JFF\)](#), [KnowledgeWorks](#), the [Middle College National Consortium](#), and the [National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships \(NACEP\)](#).

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