

Dual Credit: Washington's Aspirational Vision

Dual credit is an [evidence-based strategy](#) to increase direct postsecondary enrollment for [BIPOC students](#) and other underrepresented student populations. Washington's dual credit system possesses incredible strengths in supporting these opportunities. And yet despite significant investment and work, the current dual credit system has created and sustained barriers to access of dual credit programs for our students. Washington's [data shows persistent participation gaps](#) in dual credit programs for BIPOC students and students from low-income backgrounds. There is an urgent need for the state to address these barriers and create a dual credit system that equitably serves the needs of all our students and families.

The Dual Credit Task Force (DCTF) is building the foundational support that is required to advance meaningful dual credit state policy change by forming consensus among key stakeholders around an aspirational vision of how Washington can better serve and support students on their educational journey through the strengthening of dual credit programs.

The following **aspirational statements** are principles the DCTF has established agreement/consensus on, both among DCTF task force members and within their extended networks, in each of the [focus areas](#).

Core Values

These values should be applied to all the principle statements. Each of these principles:

1. Prioritize removing barriers to dual credit for BIPOC students as the most critical need to address.
2. Address the needs of other student groups most disproportionately impacted by inequities in dual credit, including students from low-income backgrounds and rural students.
3. Includes the earning of college credit as inherent to the dual credit system for each program (AP/IB/CI, CTE Dual Credit, College in the High School, Running Start).

Navigational Support Principles

Vision: *All students have access to and receive equitable advising on dual credit courses that support their postsecondary pathway with an emphasis on learning and fit and in alignment with their High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP).*

Washington's dual credit navigational supports system:

1. Consistently and actively communicates with all students and families to make them aware of all dual credit opportunities in their district and school and increase understanding of the benefits and challenges of each dual credit option through multiple modalities and outreach efforts, starting in 8th grade.
2. Equips all students and families with the materials, resources, and guidance within regular school hours and curriculum to plan for, align, and continuously review the progress of their dual credit coursework, with an understanding of how their earned college credits contribute to meeting their postsecondary goals within the HSBP.

3. Builds strong cross-sector partnerships to ensure all middle and high school staff and relevant higher education staff are knowledgeable of each dual credit option available in their district and school and how to objectively and effectively provide guidance on each available program to inform student decisions.
4. Provides resources and training to support K12 teachers, advisors, and other district staff who work with students and families regarding college and career readiness in understanding and implementing DEI principles throughout college and career readiness work.
5. Incentivizes through accountability measures targeted, multi-lingual, culturally relevant outreach to be directed to BIPOC students and their families, including targeted advising and college navigational workshops that help shape student perceptions about themselves, dual credit, and a college-going mindset.

Key questions for the Council:

- Do you agree with these principles? Is anything missing?
- Equitable access to dual credit is about more than communications – not all schools offer the full suite of dual credit options and there are gaps in program availability to all students. How can we ensure students have access to the dual credit programs in their schools that best support their HSBP?

Funding Principles

Vision: Cost barriers to accessing, completing, and earning college credit in all dual credit programs do not exist for any student or family in Washington.

Washington’s dual credit funding system:

1. Focuses on closing equity gaps by offering robust, embedded financial dual credit supports to families for all programs that take no additional effort or systemic knowledge for students to access.
2. Is sustainable, reliable, and consistent to minimize unfunded or unexpected costs for high schools and colleges/universities for all dual credit programs.
3. Positions the state as a true equal funding partner with K12 and higher education dual credit providers, keeping providers financially whole and eliminating competitive funding structures that discourage growth and innovation.
4. Promotes and rewards collaboration and partnership between K12 and colleges/universities for all dual credit programs.

Key Questions for the Council:

- Do you agree with these principles? Is anything missing?
- What would it look like for the state to be a true equal funding partner and to ensure no dual credit cost barriers exist for any student and family?

Data Principles

Vision: *Dual credit providers and policymakers have free access to readily available dual credit data, allowing for both real-time and longitudinal analysis of student outcomes in high school and postsecondary.*

Washington’s dual credit data system:

1. Determines specific dual credit program offerings and availability regionally.
2. Is clear, consistent, and comprehensive, tracking enrollment, completion, and number of college credits earned through each dual credit program across systems, disaggregated by student demographics, most critically race/ethnicity.
3. Generates reports to track student outcomes across systems, both to bolster data literacy and student engagement within a school building and for a centralized statewide analysis, with the state providing the infrastructure to increase data literacy and better facilitate local data sharing agreements (DSA).
4. Analyzes each dual credit program to evaluate impact of program participation on student postsecondary outcomes, including postsecondary enrollment, persistence, completion, and use of college credits earned towards degree.
5. Embeds qualitative research and community outreach within analysis to highlight barriers and student experiences that data alone may not illuminate.

Key Questions for the Council:

- Do you agree with these principles? Is anything missing?
- How can we use the data we have to inform our Enrollment strategy and better understand the impact of dual credit participation on postsecondary outcomes (enrollment, persistence, degree completion)? What additional data do we need?

Dual Credit Task Force (DCTF) Update

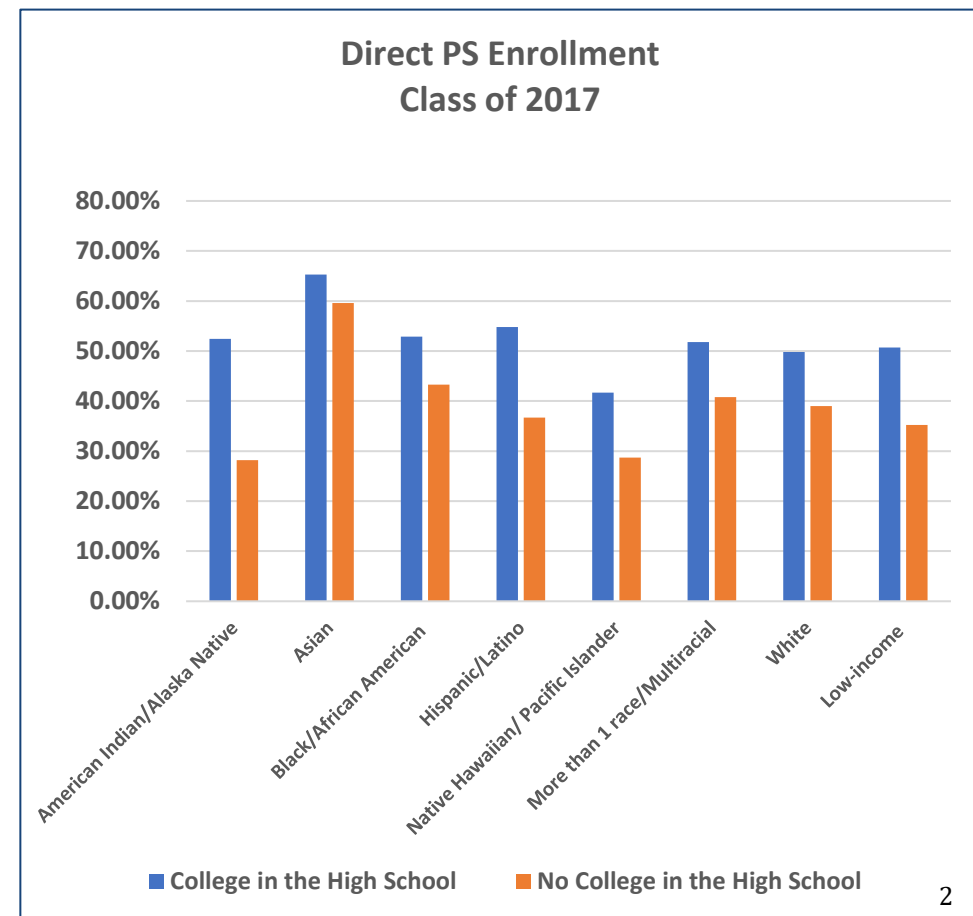
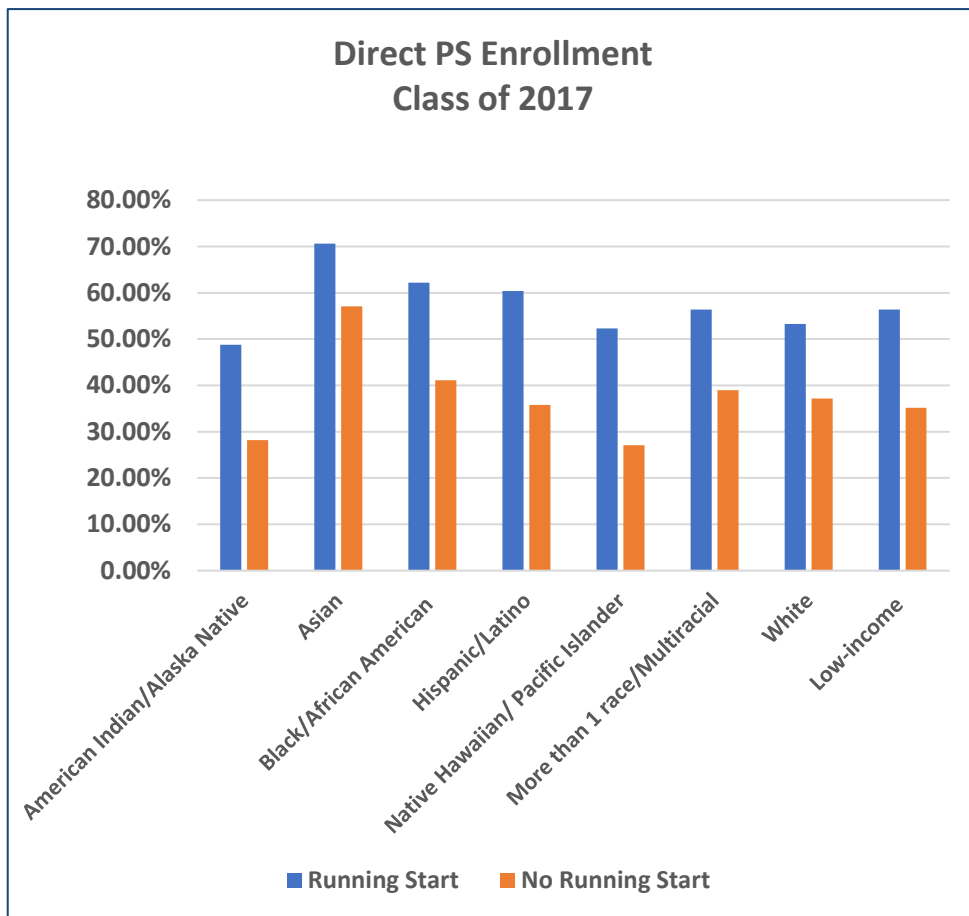
Washington Student Achievement Council
(WSAC)





The Challenge & Opportunity: Dual Credit as a proven enrollment strategy

Data shows a relationship between dual credit participation in certain programs & an increase in direct PS enrollment for BIPOC students. However, BIPOC students participate in dual credit at disproportionately low rates.





Why is the Council convening the DCTF?

Objective

To create a system of dual credit programs that **equitably serves students** throughout the state and leads to **increased postsecondary enrollment**



DCTF Goals

Goals - *Build needed foundational stakeholder support to advance meaningful dual credit state policy change*

- Form consensus among key stakeholders around an aspirational dual credit vision
- Issue recommendations to the Council for state-level policy solutions to persistent barriers in dual credit
- Better serve and support BIPOC students and students most disproportionately impacted by inequities in dual credit on their educational journey through the strengthening of dual credit programs



DCTF Members

Students

- Perla Bolanos, Student, Heritage University
- Stephanie Warner, Student, Washington State University Tri-Cities

Community Based Organizations

- Angela Jones, CEO, WA STEM
- Brian Jeffries, Policy Director, Partnership for Learning

K12 & IHE Frontline Staff

- Arantxa Gallegos, Director for Outreach & High School Programs, Everett Community College
- Grant Storey, Teaching Leader Cadre, UW in the High School Teacher, Cleveland High School
- Mark Wreath, Director of CTE, Vancouver Public Schools
- SaraBecca Martin – Director of Accreditation and Quality Improvement, Heritage University
- Tim Stetter – Director, UW in the High School, University of Washington

K12 & IHE Executive Leadership

- Brent Osborn, Principal, Lakeside High School
- Debra Casey, Vice President of Student Affairs, Green River College
- Ediz Kaykayoglu, Interim Associate Provost, Extended Learning & Outreach, Central Washington University

State Agencies

- Amelia Moore, Assistant Director of Policy & Planning, Washington Student Achievement Council
- Carli Schiffner, Deputy Executive Director of Education, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
- Katherine Mahoney, Assistant Director of Policy, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Julie Garver, Director, Academic Affairs & Policy, Council of Presidents



DCTF Timeline

January-March

Level-Set

- Data review, cross-state learning, & asset-mapping
- Identify focus areas based on collective priorities
- Establish consensus on aspirational principles
- Share focus area priorities & principles with networks for community feedback

March-April

Explore

- Conduct stakeholder engagement interviews & focus groups
- Learn from cross-state research about specific state policy questions
- Begin identifying both short & long-term focus area policy recommendations
- Share short & long-term policy recommendation ideas with network for community feedback

May-August

Consensus

- Form consensus on final focus area state policy recommendations and share with Council
- Identify actions, additional resources, legislative asks needed for state to advance recommendations
- Share focus area policy recommendation ideas with network for community feedback

September-December

Finalize

- Create resources to increase understanding of student and family dual credit experience in WA
- Engage in collective advocacy with DCTF, the Council, and community networks to advance state policy recommendations



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What additional data do we need?

Preliminary Findings from Stakeholder Engagement

Washington Dual Credit Task Force

April 2021

Background

To elevate the voices of the communities that will be most impacted by the work of the Dual Credit Task Force, Education Strategy Group (ESG) collaborated with the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to conduct a series of interviews and focus groups with students, parents, and practitioners from across the state. The insights gleaned from these engagements will support the Task Force in developing an equitable vision for dual credit that is grounded in the interests, needs, and challenges experienced by the communities it serves. Our engagement included:

Stakeholder Type	Engagement Type	Number of Participants
Public High School Counselors	Interviews	Representing 8 high schools
Public High School / District Administrators	Interviews	Representing 6 districts
Public College and University Administrators	Interviews	Representing 8 institutions
High School and Undergraduate Students*	Focus Groups	35 students
Parents and Guardians**	Focus Groups	10 parents / guardians

**While the majority of students had participated in one or more dual credit courses, three of the 35 students had not participated in any dual credit courses.*

***We will also be holding a focus group for Spanish-speaking parents and guardians on April 22.*

Individuals and institutions were selected to include the diversity of communities across Washington, including geographies, institution-type, race/ethnicity, and income. We are grateful to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Council of Presidents (COP), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), and the Washington School Counselor Association (WSCA) for their support in identifying and conducting outreach to participants.

These interviews and focus groups were conducted remotely from February to April and designed to elicit individuals’ unique experiences and perspectives with dual credit. We have captured the key high-level themes that arose in multiple conversations across our interviews and focus groups, but none of these represent a universal consensus among all participants from a given stakeholder type. In addition to highlighting the perceived value of dual credit programs by stakeholder type, the themes are organized across the focus areas identified by the Task Force: data, funding, navigational supports, and capacity. A more in-depth synthesis will be presented to the Task Force next month.

Perceived Value of Dual Credit Programs

Students

- Students largely perceive Running Start (RS) as a full-time, or nearly full-time program, with a strong emphasis on completing an Associates. The program is viewed as most valuable for independent learners who struggle with the constraints of high school and/or aren't involved in extracurriculars, or sports. At smaller schools students reported taking advantage of part-time Running Start to broaden the advanced courses available to them.
- Students largely perceive Advanced Placement (AP) as the program for the most intensely competitive students desiring to attend out-of-state, private colleges. There is pressure amongst such students to take as many courses as possible.
- Students participating in College in the High School (CiHS) indicated that it featured rigorous college courses at their high school with a supportive high school teacher and added class time. Compared to AP, they valued the ability to earn college credit through assessments throughout the term rather than solely on a single exam.
- Only a few students in our focus group had taken a CTE Dual Credit course, awareness of these courses was low among them - with one student in a CTE Club mentioning that counselors at her school rarely talked about CTE Dual Credit as an option.

Parents and Guardians

- Parents view Running Start as an option for students who have the maturity and independence to participate. Several parents expressed that at least one of their children was not ready.
- Several parents had students who participated in CTE Dual Credit courses, and valued that students started on pathways to technical certificates and 2 year degrees.
- Parents of students in CiHS appreciated the rigor of college courses in the high school setting, where students can earn college credit through course performance rather than an AP test.

High School Counselors

- Numerous counselors identified positive impacts of dual credit on raising students' postsecondary aspirations, especially for populations underrepresented in higher education such as migrant Latinx students, Native American communities, and homeless students.
- Counselors reported that expanding access to dual credit courses have helped them achieve the goals of the High School and Beyond Plan, and are currently focused on integrating them with the Graduation Pathways and Academic Acceleration policies.

High School and District Administrators

- Principals and administrators noted that dual credit courses have helped to build a college-going culture in their buildings. They find more students, especially first-generation students, are talking about their postsecondary plans and see college as a viable option.

College and University Administrators

- College and university administrators see dual credit as aligned with their college's strategic plans and missions. Given the diversity of institutional missions, this varied as to the degree it was aligned with program and institutional enrollment priorities, creating a pipeline of diverse applicants, and/or serving the community or state.

Data Needs for Analysis and Enhancing Dual Credit Programs

- Both counselors and principals expressed challenges with **not being able to track student progress in real-time** for Running Start courses.
- Higher education institutions called for an **easier way for students to track their credits earned** and learn how they apply towards a degree.
- Some counselors expressed a desire for **automatic, electronic sharing of student transcripts** between high school and higher education institutions.
- Colleges and some counselors noted that the **SERS database for CTE Dual Credit registration and transcripts is out-of-date and confusing** for teachers and students to use.

Funding and Cost of Dual Credit Programs

- Every stakeholder group - counselors, principals, higher education institutions, parents, and students - many individuals remarked that the **costs associated with College in the High School** are a barrier for both low- and middle-income families, and those costs vary by institution.
- Every stakeholder involved with Running Start also noted that the **cost of books, fees, and transportation** can be a barrier for many students, even though the course is provided with no tuition. Parents, in particular, called for **greater clarity from the outset of expected costs** and what they go towards.
- Almost every parent and student was **aware of the free tuition** for both Running Start and CTE Dual Credit and **valued the potential for future savings on the cost of college** through earning dual credit through all models, including College in the High School and exam-based credit.
- Many counselors and principals shared that their districts discourage schools from actively promoting Running Start due to **concerns over losing state funding**.
 - Several higher education institutions recognized this perception and called for a **funding model that would be less competitive across the two sectors**.
 - This **tension translated to students and parents** who expressed that their school was not supportive of Running Start and that they had to be assertive in finding information and enrolling.
- Counselors expressed that **not all low-income students understand the waivers and financial assistance available to them**. Since students have to identify as FRPL, it can be difficult for counselors to promote these opportunities. Higher education institutions shared that **food insecurity** is a serious issue for full-time Running Start students who qualify for FRPL.
- A few Counselors shared that some districts have been creative in **tapping into multiple funding sources** to support student participation in dual credit (e.g. Title III funds for English Language Learners, GEAR-UP for low-income students).
- Many higher education institutions field requests from principals for **faculty to teach on high school campuses**. This model does not clearly fall within either Running Start or College in the High School rules or funding structures.

Navigational Supports for Student Success

- Many counselors, students, and parents indicated that **dual credit participation is largely limited to highly motivated students**. Some school counselors and principals reported overcoming these disparities through “dual credit-for-all” efforts, academic acceleration, college preparatory programs (e.g. AVID and Pre-AP) and deliberate counselor intervention.
- Many students and parents described a **lack of alignment on advising** between the high school counselors and institutions.
- While variable, several counselors and principals described how the **High School and Beyond Plan and the new graduation pathways** have been valuable in setting a structure for advising more students into dual credit courses.
- Many counselors and principals described challenges in **getting students who have failed Running Start classes back on track to graduate**.
- Nearly all counselors and higher education institutions expressed that **students are not always aware of the impact of poor grades in dual credit courses** - on their college GPA, financial aid eligibility, and competitive admissions programs.
- Many counselors, principals, and higher education institutions expressed a need to **expand and strengthen CTE Dual Credit options** for all students, as these are often viewed as serving a narrow pool of students. They indicated a desire to connect CTE Dual Credit with efforts to expand career exploration and work-based learning experiences for all students. In most colleges and high schools, CTE Dual Credit appears to be siloed, with different staff and faculty administering programs and advising students than for other dual credit models.

Capacity Building to Implement Dual Credit

- Many Principals identified **teacher credentialing standards in College in the High School** as a key challenge for expanding access, particularly at small schools, urban schools with high teacher turnover, and for CTE subjects. Several principals suggested the need for increased flexibility and consistency of minimum standards across institutions.
- At some colleges, the **staff coordinating different program models** are located in different departments and buildings; some had never met before our interview. Others collaboratively work with their high school partners to serve student needs.
- Many principals and higher education institutions noted **little to no communication or coordination between institutions and school leaders** - that most contact was through counselors or teachers - but expressed a desire to improve.
- Many counselors also expressed the need for **improved training on the various dual credit programs** in Washington to better advise students, both in counseling certification programs and for continuing education.
- Some counselors expressed a need for **better access and training on examining dual credit data** to identify and address equity gaps, noting that this type of information often doesn’t “trickle down.”