

## **Leveraging Dual Credit to Meet Attainment Goals**

### **Framing Questions for Council meeting**

January 29, 2020

#### Why is the Council discussing this issue?

- The Council identified expanding low-income student participation in dual enrollment as a priority work item in its “Enrollment” strategic cluster.
- The legislature provided \$1.5M to WSAC to launch a pilot scholarship program to reduce out-of-pocket costs for low income students in dual enrollment courses.
- OSPI issued a [report](#) on dual credit issues for students and families in late 2019 at the direction of the legislature.
- High school students are more likely to go to college and succeed there if they have taken rigorous dual enrollment courses.
- More than half of Washington high school students took at least one dual credit course in 2018-2019. Participation has increased in recent years.
- Washington makes a significant financial investment through both state and school district budgets.<sup>1</sup>
- Participation gaps in dual credit remain across racial and economic demographics.

#### What challenges and opportunities does dual credit bring to our attainment goals?

1. **Equity:** Low-income and students of color are not participating in dual-credit programs at the same level as white, non-low-income students
2. **Cost:** Barriers created by out of pocket costs for students
3. **Geographic accessibility:** Students and schools in rural areas may have different needs
4. **Credit efficiency:** There is limited data available to fully understand the role of dual enrollment courses in building an efficient pathway to credential attainment
5. **Student attitude/belief:** Students may be unaware of the options that are open to them, and how those opportunities translate to continued education and training after high school
6. **Advising:** A student/family must first know about the dual-credit opportunity and then it depends largely on advisors to determine what types of courses to take

---

<sup>1</sup> Sources: OSPI WA State Report Card (2015-2016), Education Research & Data Center. (2014-2015)

## Background

### *Equity*

The recent OSPI report found that even though “enrollment continues to grow in Washington, there is **significant inequity in participation rates in dual credit courses**. Students of color, students experiencing poverty, and students with disabilities participate in dual credit courses at a lower rate than their peers.”

When looking specifically at low-income student participation, in 2019 52% of Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible students participated in at least one dual credit course, compared to 66% for their non-low-income peers. (These participation rates include the Career Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit Program.)

Among the dual credit programs with the most student enrollment (Advanced Placement, Running Start, and College in the High School), **low-income student participation is roughly half that of their non-low-income peers**.

In 2015, 65% of students who graduated high school after participating in a dual credit program enrolled directly in postsecondary education the fall after graduation, compared to just 33% of those who did not take dual credit. **For low-income students, 53% of those that participated in Dual credit directly enrolled in postsecondary, yet for low-income students that did not participate, only 29% enrolled in postsecondary.**<sup>2</sup>

### *Cost and financial benefit to students*

The direct or out of pocket cost to students for participating in dual-enrollment **varies by program** and may also be determined by whether the student is **low-income** and eligible for fee-waivers (see chart or OSPI report for breakout of costs).

With the recent expansion of the Washington College Grant and the state’s unprecedented investment in funding postsecondary education, dual credit has the potential to save not only students money in the pursuit of a postsecondary degree, but **more research and data is needed to understand how to leverage dual credit as a cost-saver for students and families**.

### *Geographic accessibility*

Rural students and/or students enrolled in small schools often do not have the same opportunities to participate in the full suite of dual credit programs as their urban/suburban or larger school counterparts. The OSPI report explains that, “Students may simply live too far away from a college campus, limiting access to Running Start. It can be **hard to find qualified instructors for courses** at the high schools in rural and remote areas as well. Many of these communities also suffer from the digital divide, with **limited access to online resources**.”

---

<sup>2</sup> WSAC staff analysis of ERDC 2015/16 data

### *Credit efficiency*

OSPI's report addresses challenges with data, especially CTE: "OSPI does not yet understand the CTE Dual Credit reporting practices in school districts across the state and how participation in CTE Dual Credit is articulated in the 2-year community and technical college system." **There is limited and nuanced data about the percentage of students who earn college credit through the CTE Dual Credit program, and credits in this program are often not transferable among colleges and universities.**

As the OSPI report points out, "K–12 and higher education share responsibility for dual credit student success. Local interpretations of federal privacy rules create unnecessary barriers to sharing information about student eligibility (and) monitoring student progress." **Dual credit programs seek to serve the same student across two separate systems that have different structures for collecting and tracking student data.**

**There is no automated or embedded system that allows for a single, common student identifier across systems.** For instance, the Everett Public Schools (EPS) and Everett Community College (EvCC) Transition Partnership have formed robust data sharing agreements allowing them to better track student results but the process is still cumbersome as it requires faculty and staff to manually match courses one by one.

**Ensuring students are accumulating college credit that is relevant to their goals and that can be transferred and/ or applied to a credential is vital if dual credit is truly going to save time and money towards degree completion.** Resources such as WSAC's Dual Credit Look-Up Tool and the Washington 45 can help but are underutilized and not widely known.

### *Student attitudes, beliefs*

A large body of anecdotal evidence tells us that **many underrepresented students, including first-generation and low-income students, either do not know about the dual credit options available to them, or have the perception that these programs are not meant for them.** Compounding these perceptions are unaddressed cost issues, such as the tuition fee to earn college credit through CiHS, and transportation and food costs through RS. **These costs can not only make a program unaffordable for students, but also perpetuates the perception that the program is not designed for all students.**

### *Advising*

The OSPI report points out that, "Some districts have adopted additional "hoops" before permitting students to access certain types of dual credit. **For example, a school might require that students meet a certain score on the statewide assessment before providing the necessary paperwork for enrolling in Running Start. Access to exam-based dual credit courses, meanwhile, may depend on a teacher recommendation. These policies drive opportunity gaps rather than close them and should not be used."**

Advising students about the potential impact dual credit participation can later have on financial aid eligibility can be confusing for both counselors and students. Questions regarding credit accumulation and how it can affect access to financial aid through the maximum time frame policy, enrollment deadlines, and quarters of eligibility are not easily answered, and **confusion around these differing state and federal financial aid policies can cause students to decide not to participate in dual credit**

**programs.** This is especially true for low-income students who most need financial aid to pursue postsecondary education.

**A recent WSAC-conducted principal focus group found that even when students have received personalized advising in high school there is a “big gap in support for the transition” to college.** Many students complete a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) that includes college, but often when the principals see them again after high school graduation, these same students are not enrolling in or pursuing postsecondary education because there was no systemized supports to help guide them through the transition.

The OSPI report raises the issue that many students may be making uninformed or misinformed decisions that could impact their ability to save time and money: “Counselors provide a key role in ensuring students access dual credit courses. By working with students and using their HSBP as a guide, counselors help students make appropriate class choices. If there are insufficient counselors to counsel students, they may not self-promote to take dual credit classes. **There is also the potential for students to take classes that are not relevant to their postsecondary pathway. This is costly to both the student and the educational system.**”

## Questions for Consideration

### *Major questions*

1. What do we know about students’ participation in Dual credit programs and their enrollment in postsecondary education? How does dual credit work to support WA 1st gen, low-income students access postsecondary education?
2. Do we know if dual credit participation saves students time and money in earning a postsecondary degree?
3. What can we do to better understand student awareness and perceptions of the various dual credit programs available to them?
4. How can the Council use our collective leadership to facilitate cross-sector collaboration to improve the dual credit system?
5. What dual credit issues can we collectively address and tackle now?

### *Background questions*

1. What key questions are we missing?
2. What else do we need to know?
3. Who else should be in the ongoing conversation?
4. What data points are of high enough communication value to be included in a narrative of this type?

## Overview of dual credit programs

This table covers basic information about dual credit programs in Washington State. For complete information about costs, as well as how and when students receive credit, reference the program sections or visit the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) website (links available in sources).

### Legend

*IHE* Institute of Higher Education (college or university)  
*CTC* Community and Technical College  
*FRPL* Free and reduced price lunch

	Standardized exam		Articulation		Course Completion	
	Advanced Placement (AP)	International Baccalaureate (IB)	Cambridge International (CI)	CTE Dual Credit	Running Start	College in the High School (CiHS)
<b>High schools*</b>	308	20	3	356	474	255
<b>Students*</b>	63,348	9,136	3,384	119,770	29,437	41,617
<b>Instruction site</b>	High school	High school	High school	High school	IHE or home (online)	High school
<b>Teacher</b>	High school	High school	High school	High school	IHE faculty	High school**
<b>Curriculum creator</b>	College Board	International Baccalaureate	University of Cambridge	High school and IHE	IHE	IHE
<b>Potential for earning college credit</b>	College evaluation of AP exam results	College evaluation of IB exam results	College evaluation of CI exam results	Varies by high school and IHE	Course completion with passing grade	Course completion with passing grade
<b>Eligible grades</b>	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	11-12	10-12
<b>Potential cost to students</b>	Each exam: \$94	Each exam: \$119	Exam fees vary by level. Ranges from \$99-\$220 per exam.	No or minimal registration, transcription fees Varies by consortium, and IHE	Up to 10% of tuition Transportation, books, fees	Varies up to \$65/credit
<b>FRPL subsidy</b>	Exam fee waiver	Exam fee waiver	Exam fee waiver		Fees waived for FRPL	Prioritized by location, size, FRPL rate
<b>Cost to school</b>	No or minimal cost to high school	Annual high school fee	Annual program fee	Fee to participate in consortium	Based on BEA 93% to IHE 7% to school district	Possible book costs

\*The Number of Students, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, who completed at least one course in that specific program. Data pulled on 01-15-20