

Understanding the Value of Dual Credit for Students

July 23, 2020

For a review of why the Council is discussing this issue, the challenges and opportunities dual credit brings to our attainment goals, and additional background, see the [Leveraging Dual Credit to Meet Attainment Goals](#) document from the January 2020 Council meeting.

What dual credit issues did the Council agree to focus on at the January meeting?

During the dual credit discussion in January (see [full minutes](#)) the Council agreed that:

- Dual credit participation improves **college-going behavior** and leads to better postsecondary outcomes for diverse student groups.
- Dual credit is valuable to students, and there is a pressing need to expand access & **reduce equity participation gaps**.
- WA needs more data and research to understand **cost, value, and student perceptions** associated with dual credit.

Picking up where the discussion left off, **this meeting will unpack how the Council views the value of dual credit in relation to postsecondary attainment work**, specifically for Running Start (RS) and College in the High School (CiHS) programs, **through a data-informed equity lens**.

Why focus on the Running Start & College in the High School programs?

- **CTE Dual Credit** is the largest dual credit program in the state, but there is still work to be done to fully understand student participation levels. OSPI's [2019 Dual Credit report](#) excluded CTE Dual Credit because 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."
- **AP/CI/IB** programs are predominantly implemented by the K12 system, while the success of Running Start and College in the High School programs depend heavily on the cross-sector partnerships supported by the Council's work.
- There is clear data showing the relationship between Running Start & College in the High School participation and increased direct postsecondary enrollment.

Applying an equity lens to dual credit issues & understanding the data

Equity Participation Gaps: Are systemically underserved students of color & low-income students participating in Running Start & College in the High School?

- Low-income students participate in both RS & CiHS about **8% less** than their non low-income peers.¹

¹ Sources: Education Research & Data Center. (Class of 2017 & Class of 2012)

- Except for Asian & Multiracial students, all students of color are participating in RS & CiHS at disproportionately low rates. For example, Hispanic/Latino students made up **20% of the class of 2017, but only 17% of CiHS and 14% of RS participants from the class of 2017.**

College-going behavior: Is there a relationship between Running Start & College in the High School participation & an increase in postsecondary enrollment for students of color & low-income students?

- There was increases between **13 to 25%** for RS participants and **6 to 24%** for CiHS participants in direct postsecondary enrollment across all racial groups.
- Direct postsecondary enrollment increases for low-income RS participants: **21%**
- Direct postsecondary enrollment increases for low-income CiHS participants: **15%**

Cost and value: Do students who participate in Running Start take fewer years to earn a postsecondary degree?

- **Sixty-two percent** of students who participated in RS & earned over 45 credits completed BA degrees within 5 years. This is a **15% increase** from students who participated in RS & earned up to 44 credits, and **20% increase** from students with no RS participation

What are the policy questions the Council needs to answer to better understand the value of dual credit?

1. Can we further disaggregate the data by race/ethnicity to reflect the diversity of student groups and experiences (for example, data showing strong participation by Asian students may obscure differing outcomes for Southeast Asian students), and capture more timely data to understand the impact of the COVID crisis on postsecondary enrollment through a racial equity lens?
2. Is the incentive to postsecondary enrollment the college credits earned, or the college-readiness embedded in rigorous course taking? Both?
3. Does student participation in RS and CiHS lead to more postsecondary persistence and completion?
4. Is there a “credit threshold” that is predictive of improved postsecondary outcomes?

How can students provide their expertise to the Council and help us better understand the challenges and solutions with dual credit access and participation?

1. Why are many students of color and low-income students not participating in RS and CiHS and what are the barriers that students face in accessing these programs?
2. How do students find out about the different dual credit opportunities available and how do students choose the dual credit program that is the best fit for them?
3. Are these programs being designed to meet the needs of all students?
4. What can we do to better understand and meet these challenges?