

# Early/Middle College and Dual Enrollment: A National Perspective



**EDUCATION  
COMMISSION**  
OF THE STATES

Your education policy team.

Alaska Joint Senate & House  
Education Committee,  
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# Who we are

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The **essential, indispensable** member of any team addressing education policy.



# What we do

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We believe in the power of **learning from experience** and we know informed policymakers create **better education policy**.



# How we do it

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# Overview

- Definitions
- Rationale for early college models
- State of early college policies nationally
- Best practices
- Key policy considerations

# Definitions

- **Dual enrollment:** PS courses offered to HS students, often for both HS/PS credit
  - ◆ **AKA:** Running Start, Dual Credit, College in the High School, Concurrent Enrollment, etc.
  - ◆ **Instructors:** Either HS (approved by PSI) or PS
  - ◆ **Modality:** Face-to-face, online or hybrid
  - ◆ **Course type:** Traditional academic or CTE

# Definitions

- **Early College and Middle College:** In some states, terms used interchangeably; in others, terms refer to differing models
  - ◆ Early college: Programs beginning in grade 9, offering structured course sequence leading to AA/AS, certificate or 60 credit hrs.
  - ◆ Middle college: Students may start later than grade 9, some college classes

# Side-by-side: Dual Enrollment & Early College

Program Characteristics	Dual Enrollment	Early College High School
LOCATION	High school or college classroom, online, two-way videoconferencing or hybrid in-person and remotely delivered.	School-within-a school, small stand-alone school or school located on college campus.
STUDENT GRADE LEVEL	In some states, programs are limited to students in grades 11-12 or 10-12.	Students typically begin in ninth grade.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	Students must demonstrate academic potential by state- or locally-set means, which may include high school grade point average, teacher recommendation, etc.	Students are typically not required to meet academic eligibility criteria to participate.
TARGET POPULATION	Mid- to high-achieving students.	Students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education, irrespective of academic achievement.
CURRICULUM/COURSE SELECTION	Students select individual courses that potentially allow them to earn both high school and postsecondary credit.	Cohesive curriculum integrating high school and college-level coursework into a single program.



# Side-by-side: Dual Enrollment & Early College (cont'd)

Program Characteristics	Dual Enrollment	Early College High School
CREDIT ACCUMULATION	May vary considerably, depending on the student and state policies. Some states set a cap on the number of postsecondary credits a student may earn.	Students are expected to complete an associate degree or industry-recognized credential, or enough credits to enter a four-year institution as a junior.
AREA OF PROGRAM FOCUS	Students may take courses in core academic subjects or in career-technical education. Some states allow students to take courses in elective subject areas.	Postsecondary courses may be focused on a specific subject area, such as health sciences.
GUIDANCE/ADVISING	Students may receive little to no guidance from the high school or postsecondary institution.	All students receive guidance and support.

# For purposes of this presentation

- “Early college models” = dual enrollment, middle college HS, early college HS
- “Dual enrollment” = students take individual courses
- “Early college HS” = Highly structured cohort-style 4-6-year programs
- “Middle college HS” = Less structured cohort-style programs

# Rationale for early college models

Data indicate EC models **increase**:

- Student aspirations
- Awareness of PS expectations, norms
- College-readiness
- Postsecondary matriculation
- Postsecondary persistence, completion

# Rationale for early college models

## Reduce:

- Postsecondary remediation rates
  - ◆ In areas in which students demonstrated college-readiness

## May reduce:

- Excess PS credits
- Time to degree

# State of dual enrollment policy nationally

- Dual enrollment programs in every state
- State policy: 48 states & DC
  - ◆ AK and NY states w/o state DE policy
- Policies and guidance vary in:
  - ◆ Breadth
  - ◆ Specificity vs. local control
  - ◆ Locus

# Sources of state dual enrollment policy

- State statute (*K-12 and/or higher ed., occasionally labor/workforce*)
- State appropriations
- State board regulations (*K-12 and/or higher ed.*)
- Executive orders (*on occasion*)

# Sources of state dual enrollment guidance

*Not strictly policy but impacting programs:*

- Policy manuals/governing documents
- “Guidelines” or “standards”
- Legislative study committees/task forces
- MOUs
- “Initiatives”

# State of early college HS policy

- 5 states w/rel. comprehensive policies
  - ◆ IN, MI, NC, TN, TX
- PTECH:
  - ◆ Codified in CO, MD, TX; active in other states
- Additional states:
  - ◆ Other early college programs active
  - ◆ Little to no dedicated state policy structure



# State of middle college HS policy

- State policies:
  - ◆ CA, CT, TN
- Additional states:
  - ◆ Programs active
  - ◆ Little to no dedicated state policy structure

# Best Practices



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## Increasing Student Access and Success in Dual Enrollment Programs: 13 Model State-Level Policy Components

By Jennifer Dounay Zinth

February 2014

Dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment programs allow eligible high school students to take postsecondary courses for college and, usually, high school credit. Programs are nearly ubiquitous — in 2014, courses for dual or concurrent enrollment credit are offered in every state and the District of Columbia. Statewide policies govern these programs in 47 states and D.C., and local policies or agreements oversee programs in **Alaska, New Hampshire and New York.**

While programs have various names in different states, the term “dual enrollment” will be used throughout this report. Findings are based on an ECS analysis of state dual enrollment policies and a review of relevant academic research.

*What's happening in your state?  
Visit [ECS' 50-state database on dual enrollment policy](#).*

Among some of the findings:

- The number of U.S. public high schools offering dual enrollment programs is growing, with 82 percent providing such opportunities in 2011-12, the most recent national data available.
- Academic research and state experience highlight the benefits of dual enrollment programs for improving college completion rates, particularly for minority and/or low-income students.
- However, with the possible exception of **Massachusetts**, minority and/or low-income students tend to be underrepresented in statewide dual enrollment programs. Recent analyses in **Illinois, Ohio** and **Washington** show white and/or more affluent students are overrepresented in these programs.

ECS identified 13 model state-level policy components that may increase student participation and success in dual enrollment programs. These components fall under four broad categories: access, finance, ensuring course quality and transferability of credit. Examples of state laws containing these components are incorporated throughout this report.

### In this report

<a href="#">Summary of 13 model state-level policy components</a>	<a href="#">p. 2</a>
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## POLICY ANALYSIS

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Study up  
on important  
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### Early College High Schools: Model policy components

JENNIFER ZINTH

An alarming convergence of factors — diminishing percentages of high school graduates enrolling immediately in postsecondary

Early college high schools are one increasingly popular approach to raise the high school completion and postsecondary participation rates of traditionally underserved students and meet projected workforce needs. This policy brief:

**FROM 2008 TO 2013, THE PERCENTAGE OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS ENROLLING IN COLLEGE DIRECTLY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL DROPPED MORE THAN 10 PERCENT, COMPARED TO MUCH SMALLER DECLINES AMONG MIDDLE- AND HIGH-INCOME STUDENTS.**

education, traditionally underserved students comprising a growing proportion of the overall U.S. school population, and projections that more occupations in the future will need education beyond high school — suggest that states will need to adopt new approaches to increase the number of American adults ready to enter tomorrow's workforce.

- Defines early college high schools.
- Clarifies how they differ from traditional dual enrollment programs.
- Provides recent research on the positive impact of early college high school participation on academic outcomes for traditionally underserved students.
- Sets forth the model state policy components that provide the necessary supports to ensure program access, quality and transferability of credit.

Research suggests early college high school participants are **significantly more likely than other disadvantaged students to graduate high school**, enroll in college immediately after high school and earn a degree.

States with **comprehensive early college policies** addressing access and support, program quality, finance and facilities, and credit transfer may **increase the scalability of early colleges statewide** while ensuring quality and fidelity to the early college mission.

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<https://www.ecs.org/increasing-student-success-in-dual-enrollment-programs-13-model-state-level-policy-components/>

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<https://www.ecs.org/early-college-high-schools-model-policy-components/>



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# Dual Enrollment Model Policy Components



Access

Finance

Ensuring  
Course  
Quality

Transfer

# Dual Enrollment: Key Policy Considerations

Before policy adoption:

- Articulate purpose of program
  - ◆ For students unsure of post-HS plans?
  - ◆ For middle-achieving students?
  - ◆ First-generation college-goers?
- Communicate with key state, local stakeholders on **rationale** for, **value** of early college

# Access: Key Policy Considerations

- **Notification** critical, esp. to participation of first-gen college-goers
- Notification to all students/parents, not just
  - ◆ Students (include parents)
  - ◆ Eligible students
- Beyond notification that program exists
  - ◆ Participation benefits/responsibilities

# Access: Key Policy Considerations (cont'd)

- **Counseling/advising** critical, esp. to participation of first-gen college-goers
- Ohio: All students assigned PS inst. advisor. Meet  $\geq$  once before course drop date on:
  - ◆ Academic resources available to assist students
  - ◆ Availability of advisor after meeting
  - ◆ How to engage faculty, campus resources for academic assistance
  - ◆ PSI institution's handbook, codes of conduct

# Finance: Key Policy Considerations

Who pays tuition? Various funding models:

- Local decision
- State pays
- District pays
- Combination of district and student
- Combination of state and student

# Finance: Key Policy Considerations (cont'd)

- States with “same” funding model vary in specifics
- Different questions states must consider to ensure “fit” and sustainability of model



# Course Quality: Key Policy Considerations

- State policies on qualifications for HS teachers
  - ◆ State policies fall along spectrum from local control to very specific
  - ◆ Ideally mirror reqts. set by regional accrediting body (NWCCU)

# Transferability: Key Policy Components

- Without guarantee of course transferability, lost investment of
  - ◆ Student time
  - ◆ Instructor time
  - ◆ State (potentially student) funds

# Questions?

# Contact information

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