



Early College Credit Linked to Success, Savings for Indiana Students

by [Tiffany Pennamon](#)

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Recent data findings from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) underscore the academic and economic value of providing high school students with an opportunity to earn early college credit.

According to ICHE's findings, Indiana students who earned early college credit through Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit courses are more likely to enroll directly in college, more likely to achieve early success in college and are more likely to graduate on time than their peers.

Moreover, early college credit attainment has played a role in efforts to close the state's achievement gap for low-income and minority students, while also having the potential to annually save Indiana \$62 million and its students a total of nearly \$69 million in tuition costs over the course of their postsecondary education.

"These positive results underscore our state's commitment to providing all students with dual credit opportunities in high school," said Indiana's Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. "From the postsecondary institutions who offer dual credit opportunities to state legislators who have worked hard to make these opportunities accessible, the data show that our statewide efforts are paying off for students and our state."

Over the last four years, the number of Indiana students enrolled in AP or dual credit courses rose to 62 percent, a 15 percentage point increase.

One of the biggest factors driving this increase in AP and dual credit course enrollment is collaboration between the commission and the state's high schools and postsecondary institutions to spread awareness about early college credit opportunities, Lubbers said, noting that spreading awareness is still a challenge, however.

In addition, "Indiana is unique in that we are one of the few states to require every high school to offer at least two dual credit courses," Lubbers said. "These opportunities are available for all students ... For the first time, we see students seeking out more dual credit opportunities because their older sibling, cousin or neighbor had such a good experience."

ICHE's data indicates several benefits for students who earn early college credit:

- Seventy percent of all dual credit earners and 87 percent of AP credit earners enroll directly in college after high school compared to the 44 percent of students with no pre-college credit. Ninety-three percent of students who earned both dual credit and AP credit enrolled directly;

- Forty-seven percent of Indiana's dual credit earners met benchmarks for early college success (no remediation, persistence to the second year and completion of all credits attempted). This is in contrast to the 26 percent of no pre-college credit students who achieved similar benchmarks;

- Dual credit earners require less remediation in college (10 percent) compared to students with no pre-college credit (27 percent). Similarly, dual credit earners are more likely to graduate on time – or earlier – depending on the number of early college credits earned;

- Black and Hispanic students who earn dual credit are more than twice as likely to graduate on time compared to minority peers with no dual credit;

- Since 2012, dual credit earning rates have increased by double digits for students from all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Taking dual credit can save Indiana's low-income students an average of \$18.7 million over the course their postsecondary education, according to the commission.

Given the outcomes from earning early college credit, particularly for low-income and minority students, the commission will hone in on efforts to increase statewide dual credit participation and exposure to college coursework in high school in accord with a 2013 resolution to close the state's [achievement gap by 2025](#).

"We know that one-third of all dual credit earners are low-income students," Lubbers said. "This new data will be incredibly helpful as we continue to think strategically about how to encourage our low-income and minority students to take advantage of the opportunity to earn college credit in high school at no cost."

Currently, the state's 21st Century Scholars program – an early promise program that provides support for college and career success and up to four years of tuition to low-income high school students – is aiding in improving students' success and educational attainment rates in the state.

"By every measure, 21st Century Scholars are outpacing their low-income peers," Lubbers said, "and I believe the program is our key to ultimately closing the achievement gap."

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