



ILLINOIS DUAL CREDIT REPORT

Current Policy Landscape & Policy Recommendations

JENNIFER ZINTH | ZINTH CONSULTING, LLC | SEPTEMBER 2020



The Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships began in 2014 as a grassroots cadre of concurrent enrollment practitioners and advocates from across Illinois meeting to discuss best practices, opportunities, and challenges.

The purpose of this organization is to support concurrent enrollment programs through the advocacy of best practices, research, and collaboration that promote student access and completion, program development, professional development, communication, and high quality standards. Key focus areas include:

- Disseminating the NACEP standards of quality concurrent enrollment programs
- Equity-centered policies that foster model practices
- Providing professional development to all interested parties concerning quality concurrent enrollment programs, including discussions for best practices and challenges
- Serving as a state advocate for concurrent enrollment
- Fostering strong partnerships between postsecondary and secondary institutions
- Advocating for concurrent enrollment with stakeholders and legislators.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
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INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) and the College in High School Alliance (CHSA), the Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (ILACEP), a grassroots partnership of Illinois secondary and postsecondary concurrent enrollment professionals and the Illinois chapter of NACEP, convened state and local college in high school stakeholders (see sidebar on page 4) from across Illinois and beyond in spring 2020. Although an effort was made to ensure the stakeholder group was inclusive of state agencies, institutions, and organizations focused on advancing equity and access to educational opportunities, participation was impacted as a result of the ongoing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of these virtual convenings was to assess the extent to which Illinois policies meet the goals of each of the six categories of CHSA's October 2019 *Unlocking Potential report*, and to develop policy recommendations to enhance equitable access to high-quality dual credit opportunities across the state.

The present report is intended for state and local leaders with decision-making authority for dual credit programs. The recommendations presented here reflect stakeholders' input, drawn from the diversity of their extensive professional interactions with Illinois dual credit programs at the agency, institution, school district and school level.

Given the interrelated nature of the six *Unlocking Potential* categories and their cumulative potential to broaden equity in quality dual credit programming, we propose these recommendations as a comprehensive set of policies for state and local consideration, rather than a menu from which state and local leaders may choose without compromising equity or quality in dual credit programming and access.

When considering these policy recommendations, state and local leaders should be mindful of three considerations:

- **The role of Illinois community colleges in the offering of dual credit:** Illinois community colleges offer roughly 90% of Illinois' dual credit courses. In addition, per the Dual Credit Quality Act, Illinois community colleges and their secondary school partners may take recourse to the Model Partnership Agreement, while the Dual Credit Quality Act does not provide a similar avenue when school districts and four-year institutions do not reach agreement on dual credit partnerships. As a result, the

present report focuses more on recommended actions for community colleges and ICCB than for four-year institutions and IBHE.

- **The role of state funding support:** States are increasingly investing in dual credit programs as a strategy to increase postsecondary aspirations and success, particularly among students historically underrepresented in higher education; data demonstrating higher matriculation and postsecondary success rates controlling for student demographic and academic backgrounds bear out the return on these investments. Illinois should be mindful that state financial support is a vital component of efforts to address pervasive dual credit equity gaps.

Policymakers should also be mindful of the differences in revenue sources for Illinois two- and four-year institutions - two-year institutions' revenue is tied to a local tax base, while four-year institutions do not receive state reimbursement but rather rely on tuition for revenue. These differences may pose barriers to Illinois' adoption of other states' dual credit funding models, both for two- and four-year institutions.

- **The role of regional discussions:** In tandem with state or partnership-level actions to confront dual credit equity gaps, Illinois should consider supporting regional dual credit discussions. These conversations would bring together school, district, institution, system and state-level K-12 and higher education stakeholders region by region across the state to reach a better understanding of local needs, and the supports necessary to address the unique manifestations of equity gaps within the region.

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For each of the *six Unlocking Potential* categories, this report provides

- A description of each category and a call to action that states should be working towards to achieve equity and quality for college in high school programs in their state
- A quick glance at how Illinois policies measure up against the *Unlocking Potential* policy recommendations
- State and local policy recommendations

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DEFINITIONS IN THIS REPORT:

College in High School programs: An umbrella term for programs such as dual credit, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment and early college high school, offered through partnerships between school districts and accredited postsecondary institutions, that provide secondary school students an intentionally-designed, authentic postsecondary experience leading to officially transcribed and transferable college credit towards a recognized postsecondary degree or credential.

Dual credit: The Dual Credit Quality Act provides, “Dual credit course’ means a college course taken by a high school student for credit at both the college and high school level.” ([110 ILCS 27/5](#)) Both IBHE and ICCB recognize dual credit as such.

In addition, as [defined](#) by the Illinois Community College Board, “dual credit is an instructional arrangement where an academically qualified high school student enrolls in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, concurrently earns both college credit and high school credit.”

Dual Credit Quality Act: Enacted in 2009 and effective January 2010, the Dual Credit Quality Act ([110 ILCS 27/1 through 27/35](#)) codifies minimum requirements for dual credit partnerships and coursework in Illinois. The Dual Credit Quality Act is further supported by Illinois Community College Board regulations ([23 Ill. Adm. Code 1501.507\(11\)](#)) and [23 Ill. Adm. Code 1009.10 through 1009.80](#).

Model Partnership Agreement: As [defined](#) by the Illinois Community College Board, “a default agreement for local high schools and community colleges as they negotiate dual credit arrangements for students. These MPA provisions are made available in the event that local agreement between a school district and community college cannot be reached. Furthermore, the agreement may be modified / utilized to help formulate existing agreements, and specific portions of the agreement may be used in the event of issue-specific impasses. Community colleges are still encouraged to continue to develop their own local agreements with their local districts to develop partnerships that benefit the students served by dual credit. The MPA is required only in instances where a local agreement cannot be reached.”



EQUITY GOAL & PUBLIC REPORTING



► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States set an equitable, statewide public goal for increasing the participation and success of traditionally underserved student groups in college in high school programs, with clear, disaggregated public reporting and accountability for progress toward the goal.

► Define “Equity” for Purposes of Dual Credit Participation

To address the recommendations presented here, Illinois should define “equity” for purposes of dual credit participation, including by diverse geography, low-income and English learner students, and students from diverse demographic backgrounds. The report [Funding for Equity](#) notes: “Dual enrollment equity means that the student population in a state’s dual enrollment program mirrors the demographic, socioeconomic and geographic diversity of the state’s overall K-12 student population. If a state’s K-12 population is 20% African American, 30% rural, and 50% eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, the dually enrolled student population in a state that has achieved dual enrollment equity is 20% African American, 30% rural, and 50% eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.”

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **“Equity” in Dual Credit Quality Act:** The Dual Credit Quality Act does not explicitly state the goal of serving all students and equity of access, participation, and success. However, one of the purposes of the Dual Credit Quality Act is “To offer opportunities for improving degree attainment for underserved student populations.” [110 ILCS 27/10\(6\)](#) ●
- **“Equity” in Illinois’ Perkins V State Plan:** The state’s approved [Perkins V plan](#) defines equity as a “foundational tenet” and establishes the goal of advancing equity in CTE dual credit participation. One of the goals of the plan is to “Increase participation in dual credit coursework,” in particular for students of color, low-income students and students with disabilities.
- **Postsecondary Attainment Goal:** Illinois has adopted a [postsecondary attainment goal](#) that 60% of adults possess a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2025.
- **ISBE Annual Report Card ESSA-Compliant:** The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) annually reports, at the [state](#), district and high school levels, the number of students taking one or more dual credit courses, disaggregated by student race/ethnicity, and low-income status, and as available, disaggregated by English learner, and with IEP status. ▼
- **ICCB Annual Reporting:** The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) publishes an [annual dual credit report](#) that indicates participation by student gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic region; the report does not include student participation by low-income status.¹ ▼

► Recommendations

- **Integrate equity targets in postsecondary attainment goal:** Although the Illinois postsecondary attainment goal is focused on adult completion of credentials and degrees, sub-goals could be added, to (1) set targets for increased dual credit participation among currently-underrepresented student subgroups and geographic regions and (2) publicly report at least annually on progress towards attaining these participation targets.

Setting and integrating mutually agreed-upon dual credit equity targets into Illinois’ postsecondary attainment goals may be a heavy lift for the state. A potential first step towards achieving this task would be an annual ICCB review of participation data with an eye towards equity.
- **Enhance ICCB dual credit reporting with low-income data and state context:** The ISBE annual report card reflects dual credit participation among low-income students; adding low-income student participation data to the ICCB annual report would help maintain equitable participation among this student population on postsecondary stakeholders’ radar. Contextualizing dual credit data in the ICCB report with statewide data (e.g., African American students account for nearly 17% of public high school enrollment but only 9% of dual credit enrollments) would further support efforts to enhance equitable access across student demographic groups.



PROGRAM INTEGRITY & CREDIT TRANSFER





► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States support and promote high-quality college in high school programs through effective oversight and cross-sector collaboration between the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, as well as ensuring credit articulation.

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **Ensuring equivalency with college courses:** Dual credit quality standards and regulations to ensure equivalency with college course are enumerated in
 - o The Dual Credit Quality Act ([110 ILCS 27/5](#) through 27/35, particularly 27/20)
 - o ICCB regulations ([23 Ill. Adm. Code 1501.507\(b\)\(11\)](#))
 - o IBHE regulations ([23 Ill. Adm. Code 1009.10](#) through [1009.80](#))
 - o The [Model Partnership Agreement](#) “Course Planning and Documentation” process ●
- **Making transfer policies clear:** Multiple Illinois mechanisms support dual credit course transfer:
 - o The [Illinois Articulation Initiative](#) (IAI) provides for the transfer of approved courses, either towards the General Education Core Curriculum or towards the completion of specific majors. ▼
 - o The [iTransfer](#) website is intended to inform students and those advising students on the transferability of specific courses across institutions statewide. ▼
 - o ICCB and IBHE regulations require dual credit courses to be transfer or CTE courses. ▼

► Recommendations

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

- **Invest in outreach and training to support the Model Partnership Agreement course documentation process:** The Model Partnership Agreement Exhibit B-III sets forth a Course Planning and Documentation process “to ensure that Dual Credit Courses address equivalent content and include the same learning outcomes as those courses taught at the College.” However, outreach and workshops to help high school and postsecondary partners better understand what items are being requested in Exhibit B-III would ensure that the local partner conversations that the Model Partnership Agreement is intended to facilitate are taking place in a meaningful way.

CREDIT TRANSFER

- **Adopt language encouraging districts to approach dual credit with intentionality about the intended outcomes of student dual credit participation:** The Dual Credit Quality Act provides several purposes of the Act, but does not urge secondary partners to determine the intended outcomes of student participation (e.g., completion of in-demand CTE credentials; reduced time to degree, etc.) before deciding on which dual credit courses to offer. Adding language to the Dual Credit Quality Act and/or the Model Partnership Agreement inviting districts to consider the goals they wish students to achieve through program participation before determining which dual credit courses they'll offer may focus student, parent and counselor/advisor expectations on course transfer.

- **Continue to invest in efforts to develop tools and trainings to better communicate IAI resources:** A partnership including ICCB, IBHE and ISBE should lead efforts to enhance communication to secondary stakeholders on IAI resources. Tools and trainings would be targeted on particular to individuals advising high school students on dual credit course selections – counselors, advisors, teachers, and parents – as well as to high school and district administrators as they seek greater intentionality about the intended outcomes of student dual credit participation.
- **ISBE/ICCB partnership to increase number and availability of dual credit courses aligned with career pathway endorsements:** Stakeholders noted that relatively few IAI courses are career-focused. North Carolina has established multiple dual enrollment [transfer pathways](#), including in select CTE fields such as nursing and education. CTE credits completed through these pathways transfer to all other community colleges in the state.



FINANCE



► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States design funding mechanisms that remove financial barriers for low-income and moderate-income students to participate and excel in college-level work in high school.

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **Dual Credit Quality Act:** The Dual Credit Quality Act does not set dual credit tuition parameters but requires local partnerships to identify fees and costs to be assessed for dual credit courses.
- **Model Partnership Agreement Exhibit C:** Establishes a fee structure depending on whether a course is “Type A” (taught by district teachers), “Type B” (taught on district property by college faculty), “Type C” (taught online, via distance learning, co-taught by secondary and postsecondary instructors, or delivered in another hybrid model), or “Type D” (taught on college property by postsecondary faculty). Exhibit C also provides guidance on responsible parties for textbooks, materials, and supplemental fees, authorizes districts to charge students and families for these resources when purchased or provided by the district and requires districts and colleges to apply fee waivers or discounts to low-income families.

► Recommendations

- **Develop and offer MPA technical assistance through a state partnership:** Because the Model Partnership Agreement guidance on dual credit costs and fee structures is not widely understood, it is encouraged that a state partnership – ISBE and ICCB – develop and provide technical assistance to school districts and community colleges to address existing communication gaps.
- **Create a framework for dual credit tuition that promotes parity on the amount of tuition that can be charged:** A number of states have set parameters around the amount of tuition that can be charged. Some stakeholders advocated for parity on the amount of tuition that can be charged regardless of institution type (two- or four-year), while others cautioned that because community colleges receive

reimbursements and four-year institutions do not, four-year institutions may be hampered in their ability to offer dual credit programming.

- **Create statewide tuition parameters for broadly applicable, transferable courses:** Either in addition to or as an alternative to the aforementioned statewide tuition framework for all courses and all institution types, Illinois may consider adoption of statewide tuition parameters for broadly applicable, transferable courses, such as courses in the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum (IAI GECC), or CTE courses in approved career pathways preparing students for high-wage, high-demand occupations in the state. Such a model is in place in Indiana, where for select CTE and broadly transferable liberal arts courses students are charged no more than \$25 per credit hour (and are charged nothing if a student either is low-income or takes the course at a campus of the statewide Ivy Tech Community College system), and institutions receive a partial reimbursement through a biennial appropriation to offset lost tuition revenue.

Alternatively, Illinois could codify in the Dual Credit Quality Act the tuition parameters established in the Model Partnership Agreement, which partnerships are not currently required to use.

- **Require public reporting of dual credit costs for each partnership:** Students, parents and school administrators are largely unaware of the vast differences in tuition charged – even for the same course offered by the same college – from one partnership to the next. To enhance transparency and help districts negotiate more equitable partnerships, Illinois should consider requiring community colleges to report tuition charged per course for each instructional site and include such data in the annual ICCB report. (Although IBHE does not publish an annual dual credit report, it could publish similar data on its website.) In addition, school districts should be required to make public the cost of each dual credit course respectively borne by the district and students/families – tuition, fees, textbooks, course materials, transportation, etc.
- **Explore strategies to defray district-borne costs:** Because district-borne dual credit costs, particularly in low-resource districts, create inequities in availability of and access to dual credit courses, Illinois may consider [approaches other](#)

[states have adopted](#) to split dual credit costs between the district and state or district and student, at least for non-low-income students. These strategies might be considered in addition to or as an alternative to the aforementioned statewide tuition framework or tuition parameters for broadly applicable, transferable courses.

- **Explore alternatives to the Model Partnership Agreement discount/waiver process for low-income students:** The Model Partnership Agreement requires districts and colleges to extend a tuition discount or waiver to low-income students; however, partnerships are not required to use the Model Partnership Agreement, and the application process itself may be a deterrent to eligible students. Illinois may explore other states’ approaches that eliminate a student application process. Indiana institutions must waive tuition for low-income students in the aforementioned select CTE and broadly transferable liberal arts courses; Washington State requires institutions to waive tuition for low-income Running Start students (taking courses at the college campus) and offers two grant-based programs targeting tuition assistance to high-need school districts.
- **Explore partnerships and strategies to support broader CTE course access:** CTE dual credit courses that require specialized equipment and facilities are often offered at the community college campus, creating an access challenge particularly for rural and low-income students; some CTE courses come with hefty textbook, lab and/or equipment fees that can also create access barriers, particularly for low-income students in school districts not using the Model Partnership Agreement. Further, the availability of qualified instructors can constrain the number and type of CTE dual credit courses offered, particularly at high schools or regional centers.

Illinois may consider incenting public/private partnerships and/or other state strategies (for example, Kansas’ Excel in CTE program or Iowa’s regional centers) to further access to CTE courses; one of the stated goals of efforts to enhance CTE course access should be incentivize and diversify participation in programs preparing students for high-needs fields. Alternatively, Illinois may consider expanding the offering of some CTE courses via distance learning, and/or through mobile labs. For example, the Idaho Digital Learning Alliance serves as a statewide hub for the offering of online dual credit courses, including a [number of CTE dual credit courses](#).



COURSE ACCESS & AVAILABILITY



► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States ensure that students are able to access college in high school courses, regardless of geography, with pathways that maximize opportunities for students to earn multiple credits, and facilitate students exploring academic and career areas of interest while ensuring that those courses count toward high school graduation requirements.

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **Notifying Students of Dual Credit Opportunities:** School boards are required to notify 11th and 12th grade students of the availability of dual enrollment/dual credit opportunities at community colleges ([105 ILCS 5/10-20.62\(c\)](#) and [105 ILCS 5/34-18.55\(c\)](#)). ●
- **Student Eligibility:**
 - The Dual Credit Quality Act requires partnership agreements to set program eligibility criteria. Academic criteria must be “evidence-based and ... include multiple appropriate measures to determine whether a student is prepared for any dual credit coursework in which the student enrolls.” ([110 ILCS 27/16\(3\)](#)) ♦*
 - The Model Partnership Agreement includes student prerequisites and placement under Course Planning Decision Areas.

► Recommendations

- **Require dual credit partnerships to demonstrate evidence of multiple appropriate measures, both for program eligibility and course placement:** Although the Dual Credit Quality Act requires partnership agreements to include multiple appropriate measures in program eligibility criteria, the extent to which partnerships have done so is unclear, as is the extent to which multiple measures that have been adopted demonstrate appropriate flexibility. The Dual Credit Quality Act also limits the multiple measures requirement to program eligibility, not on placement into specific courses.

The Dual Credit Quality Act ([110 ILCS 27/25](#)) requires ICCB and IBHE to implement a review process of dual credit programs for institutions under their respective jurisdictions. The annual institution reports submitted to these agencies under this requirement could be expanded to require institutions to include the multiple appropriate measures adopted both for program eligibility and for placement into English, math, and other subject area coursework.

For community college course placement, these multiple measures could be the same [measures approved](#) in 2018.

- **Require school districts/high schools to annually notify all students and parents of dual credit availability, starting in the middle grades:** The dual credit notification policies in [105 ILCS 5/10-20.62\(c\)](#) and [105 ILCS 5/34-18.55\(c\)](#) should be expanded to ensure parents of students are also notified, that notification is first made when students are in the middle grades, and that the notification extends to the availability of dual enrollment/dual credit courses offered by local public or private four-year institutions, or out-of-state institutions, as applicable. This notification should include not just availability of courses but also prerequisites, costs (and waivers), eligibility measures, deadlines to enroll and other key deadlines (for example, placement exam date, time and location).
- **Provide parents guidance and administrators training to enhance understanding of dual credit/AP differences, and help administrators communicate these differences in curriculum maps, and school/district websites:** Notification needs to be paired with improving parents' understanding of the differences between AP and dual credit. Parent guidance and administrator training could help both stakeholder groups better understand and guide student decisions on whether AP or dual credit course offerings and transferability make one program or another a better fit with students' intended participation goals.
- **Require school districts to communicate multiple measures for program eligibility and course placement to students, parents and high school staff:** Eligibility criteria are not always understood by families and school staff. Multiple measures for program eligibility and course placement could be communicated to students and parents in the same communication already required to students of the availability of dual enrollment/dual credit courses offered by community colleges.
- **Require school districts to clearly designate dual credit courses as such in course catalogs/curriculum guides:** Stakeholders noted that without clearly designating dual credit courses as such in course catalogs and curriculum guides, students and parents often don't realize that a course is offered for dual credit.
- **Encourage school districts/high schools to automatically enroll students in the next course in a CTE pathway, or the next advanced course in an academic discipline:** Students, both in traditional academic pathways and in CTE pathways, frequently are unclear what the next sequential course is in a discipline area or CTE pathway. States such as Colorado and Washington have recently adopted legislation

to do this. Such efforts will further be supported by Illinois' Perkins V Plan, which under Other State Leadership Activities calls for leadership funds to be applied towards providing professional learning and resources to improve career guidance and academic counseling programs so that they assist students in making informed academic and career decisions[,]” which work already began during FY 20.

- **Charge state partnership with leading efforts to**
 - **Develop tools and trainings to better communicate eligibility requirements:** These could be communicated to counselors via webinars and other synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities; the [ISBE Standards for the School Counselor](#) could be enhanced to further encourage counselors to stay up-to-date on eligibility requirements for local dual credit partnerships.
 - **Encourage districts to consider online delivery for select courses:** Postsecondary institutions across Illinois were forced to transition to remote instruction in spring 2020; even after the COVID-19 threat subsides, best practices gleaned from this transition could be applied to delivery of dual credit courses, particularly to rural and small high schools, and high schools lacking teachers credentialed to teach dual credit courses in specific subjects. It is important, however, that dual credit partnerships distinguish between online instruction and remote pedagogy and ensure instructors of online dual credit courses complete adequate, high-quality professional development in remote pedagogy.
- **Leverage college and career pathways to communicate dual credit availability and eligibility to students and families:** The [Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act](#) permits [approved districts](#) to offer College and Career Pathway Endorsements to graduating students who complete an individualized plan for postsecondary education or training, careers, and financial aid; a career-focused instructional sequence; a career exploration activities and demonstrate college-readiness. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, students must earn at least six credit hours via early college credit courses in the career-focused instructional sequence. Early college credit courses for purposes of the Act include dual credit/dual enrollment, AP, IB, and courses offered for articulated credit. However, conversations to help students complete College and Career Pathway Endorsement requirements present a golden opportunity to communicate dual credit availability and eligibility requirements to students and parents.



INSTRUCTOR CAPACITY



► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States develop strategies to recruit, support and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach college in high school while encouraging collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary partners as college in high school programs are scaled.

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **Instructor qualifications:** The Dual Credit Quality Act, ICCB regulations, IBHE regulations, and the Model Partnership Agreement all require high school instructors teaching dual credit courses to meet specified qualifications. ●
- **State directory of graduate programs:** The IBHE maintains a [list](#) of Illinois graduate programs offering dual credit teacher credentialing options, along with program contacts. In addition, as of this writing the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is developing a searchable database of graduate courses in the 12-state MHEC region. ●
- **Dual Credit Teacher Credential:** ISBE, ICCB and IBHE have adopted a [Dual Credit Endorsement](#) valid for grades 11 and 12, that is placed on the professional educator license of an applicant teacher who meets Higher Learning Commission (HLC) dual enrollment teacher credentialing requirements (i.e., a master's degree or 18 graduate hours in the discipline of the course). ▼

► Recommendations

- **Explore state models to support veteran high school teachers pursuing master's credits:** Illinois presently does not offer state-level scholarships or financial incentives for high school teachers to pursue the master's level credits they need to meet HLC credentialing requirements. Illinois can consider models such as Indiana's [STEM Teach](#) and other [state-funded programs](#) to offer high school teachers scholarships to defray graduate-level tuition and in some instances other expenses, and/or stipends, for completion of graduate credits – Indiana's FY 20-21 appropriation in support of STEM dual credit teacher up-credentialing efforts is around \$4 million; additionally, the Indiana Department of Education awarded a \$500,000 grant to Indiana University to offer graduate coursework to allow dual credit instructors with a master's degree to earn 18 graduate hours in their discipline. Minnesota has likewise made a series of appropriations

since FY 2016, totaling \$4.5 million, to support high school teachers' completion of graduate coursework.

- **Encourage local collective bargaining agreements and district hiring practices to emphasize graduate degree in teacher's discipline:** Many local collective bargaining agreements do not direct teachers to complete a master's in their discipline; many district HR departments do not consider subject-area graduate degrees in hiring, but give equal weight in teacher hiring decisions to candidates with subject-area master's and master's degrees in curriculum, instructional design, etc. The Illinois Education Association and Illinois Federation of Teachers might encourage their members to prioritize graduate degree in teacher's discipline in local collective bargaining agreements; ISBE communications to district human resource professionals might encourage districts to consider graduate degree in teacher's discipline in local hiring decisions. ISBE might additionally encourage professional development on dual credit requirements for HR directors and all individuals involved with local collective bargaining agreements.
- **Explore revisions to preservice or master's in teaching requirements to integrate graduate credits:** Some states are changing their master's in teaching requirements to focus teachers' concentrations in particular areas, to make sure candidates complete the 18 graduate hours teachers will need to teach dual credit. Four-year institutions might also establish policies for advisors of preservice teachers, to encourage them to complete a graduate-level credit in their focus discipline in lieu of an undergraduate-level credit. For example, a secondary English teaching candidate might be encouraged to take a master's level English course in lieu of a similar undergraduate English course to fulfill English requirements for the English or teaching major.
- **Encourage state partnership of ISBE, ICCB and IBHE to lead efforts to**
 - **Determine existing shortages in credentialed teachers**
 - **Determine # of teachers by discipline interested in pursuing graduate credits**
 - **Determine extent of credits those teachers fall short of possessing to meet HLC credentialing requirements**
 - **Coordinate the offering of graduate credits among interested four-year institutions in a statewide hub:** A statewide hub could help teachers compare graduate course/degree options within a specific discipline, or even facilitate teachers' ability to combine graduate credits earned through two or more institutions in meeting HLC requirements. According to Jessica Espinosa in the Minnesota State System Office: "The seven Minnesota

State universities have collaborated together to design to deliver a strategic rollout of online graduate courses across several disciplines to meet the recently clarified expectations from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) regarding the minimum faculty qualifications of concurrent enrollment instructors.

"The collaborative has agreed to move forward with the development of a singular platform for recruitment, admissions, and enrollment so that we can more effectively reach and serve this specific graduate student population of concurrent enrollment instructors statewide and beyond. This will provide a coordinated admissions and enrollment process just for concurrent enrollment instructors pursuing online graduate coursework as non-degree seeking students.

"Collaborating to serve this distinct population of graduate students will allow Minnesota to develop, design, and market courses across the seven state universities to concurrent enrollment instructors that will (a) leverage the capacity of what each university can provide, (b) eliminate redundancies or duplication of efforts across university graduate programs within our system, and (c) ensure an increase in enrollments within graduate course offerings with scheduling efficiency. It will support coordinated long-term planning of cross-institutional efforts to create sustainable pathways in a variety of disciplines for current and future concurrent enrollment instructors." (email communication, June 23, 2020).

- **Help stakeholders understand the differences between HLC requirements and the provisions of S.B. 2838 as pertains to professional development plans:** HLC guidelines call for high school instructors in academic disciplines to have a master's degree or 18 graduate hours in the discipline of the course. However, S.B. 2838 allows an instructor who does not meet HLC requirements to teach a dual credit course if the instructor has a professional development plan approved by the institution and shared with ISBE, to meet HLC qualifications within 4 years of the effective date of the legislation. These approvals must be good for as long as satisfactory progress toward the completion of the credential is demonstrated, for up to three years. Communication from the state partnership could create a more consistent understanding of the differences between S.B. 2838 authorizations to teach dual credit provisionally and HLC requirements.



NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORTS



► Unlocking Potential's Call to Action

States prioritize the student navigational supports and advising needed to ensure student success in college in high school courses, particularly for those student historically underserved by these programs.

► How Do Illinois Policies Measure Up?

- **Postsecondary Workforce and Readiness Act:** The Act establishes a process for districts to choose to award College and Career Pathway endorsements to high school graduates. Effective with the 2022-2023 school year, to earn a College and Career Pathway endorsement students must earn at least six hours of credit through early college credit courses, including but not limited to dual credit/dual enrollment, in the student's career-focused instructional sequence. ●
- **Model Partnership Agreement:** Model Partnership Agreement Exhibit D includes "Student Academic Supports and Guidance," requiring the college to provide the district and students with information on "processes such as credit transfer"; Liaisons are required to "jointly identify and establish pre-college and college transition advising services, supports for student progress monitoring, and supports to engage students in postsecondary counseling".

► How Do Other States Direct Students into Highly Applicable, Transferable Courses?

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS & INSTITUTIONS

- **Indiana:** Statute provides student incentives to select highly applicable, transferable courses, as well as institutional incentives to offer such courses. Institutions may charge no more than \$25 per credit hour to non-low-income students (and must waive tuition for low-income students) who enroll in priority liberal arts courses, which are in the Indiana Core Transfer Library, and as such apply to general education requirements at public two- and four-year institutions in the state; priority liberal arts courses also transfer among all public two-and four-year institutions, as well as six independent institutions. The same \$25-per-credit-hour rate applies to select CTE courses that apply to the Indiana Department of Education-approved career pathways. Students, regardless of family income, are charged no tuition for priority dual credit or CTE courses taken at any campus in the Ivy Tech Community College system, the state's single statewide community college system with campuses across the state. (Tuition for courses taken at Ivy Tech campuses is paid by the student's district.)

Each biennium, institutions submit to the legislature a head count of enrollment by semester in priority courses and approved CTE courses; a legislative appropriation based on this reported head count offsets lost tuition

revenue and supports professional development opportunities between postsecondary faculty and high school instructors. In 2019, the Indiana General Assembly appropriated slightly over \$45 million based on head count for priority dual credit and select CTE dual credit courses taken in FY 18 and FY 19; institutions received approximately \$41 per credit hour from this appropriation.

NARROWING STUDENT OPTIONS

- **North Carolina:** Offers dually enrolled students [two pathways](#), each with its own prescribed course options
 - o Two **College Transfer Pathways** for students pursuing an AA or AS, including in specified fields such as nursing, education, and engineering
 - o Two **Career and Technical Education Pathways**
 - "Career and Technical Education Pathway leading to a certificate or diploma aligned with a high school career cluster"
 - "Workforce Continuing Education Pathway (WCEP) leading to a State or industry-recognized credential aligned with a high school career cluster."
- **Ohio:** A dually enrolled student's first 15 credit hours must be completed in a transferable course², a technical certificate course, or specified other courses.

► Recommendations

- **State partnership leads effort to support:**
 - o **Systematic, statewide approach to providing program information on availability, eligibility, benefits, etc.:** Such information would go beyond the content provided on the IAI website. Ohio requires secondary schools and institutions to schedule at least one annual informational session with interested parents and students at local secondary schools to provide such information (R.C. [§ 3365.04](#) and [§ 3365.05](#)). Alternatively, Illinois might offer state-funded transitional advisors, such as North Carolina's [Career Coaches](#), who advise students on community college programs (including but not limited to

dual enrollment) aligned with students' career interests.

- o **Teacher/counselor/advisor professional development on program availability, eligibility, benefits, etc.:** Such training would need to include information on transferability of dual credit courses, to minimize course selections that ultimately do not apply to a student's general education or major requirements or CTE course of study.
- o **Enhanced local implementation of college and career pathways**
- o **Districts in providing appropriate scaffolds and supports to students:** Examples of appropriate academic and non-academic supports and scaffolds are identified in the 2018 [STEM Dual Enrollment: Model Policy Components](#) report; these apply equally to dually enrolled students in STEM and non-STEM coursework.

² Defined for purposes of College Credit Plus as "any course that is an approved Ohio transfer module (OTM), transfer assurance guide (TAG), or career-technical assurance guide (CTAG) course, or a course at a private institution of higher education that is equivalent to such a course based on the private institution's representation of the course" (OAC 3333-1-65.12(B)(1))



• **Adoption of and funding support for tools to help students explore skills and aptitudes, and advisement into education and career pathways related to those skills and aptitudes:** Examples of such tools include

- o YouScience: Described in a 2016 [Georgia evaluation](#) as “an online career and personal planning discovery tool that enables teens and adults to identify their potential aptitudes and careers”, the license-based [YouScience](#) tool creates a personalized profile based on the results of a series of online exercises. The Georgia evaluation found the greatest benefits for female students, students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, and students in schools with a higher percentage of English learner students. In fall 2020, Georgia is entering its 5th contract year with YouScience; the \$700,000-\$750,000 annual contract makes licenses available at no cost to all 500,000-plus public high school and 390,000 middle school students in the state, as well as Technical College System of Georgia students and returning adult learners. The contract cost is a 2-1 split between the Georgia Department of Education and the Technical College System of Georgia. The annual contract also includes report development and training for teachers, counselors, and others on best practices on applying student results for student career planning.
- o Learning Blade: [Learning Blade](#) is a license-based online tool through which middle-grades students solve missions in a game-based format that exposes students to STEM content and careers. Learning Blade also offers activities, organized by subject and academic standards, that teachers can integrate into a lesson plan. A [2016 evaluation](#) of Learning Blade in Tennessee found the tool introduced students to new careers, helped show connections between academics and real-world career

and life applications, and heightened student interest in pursuing STEM careers, “including appropriate academic preparation in high school.”

- o Nevada STEM Career Matchmaker: Developed by the Nevada STEM Hub, a project of the Nevada Governor’s Office of Science, Innovation and Technology, the [Nevada STEM Career Matchmaker](#) identifies occupations based on students’ self-identified passions (e.g., computers, art), skills and interests. For each of dozens of occupations across career clusters, the tool identifies the skills and educational requirements needed to enter the occupation, and Nevada wages and employment projections for the occupation, among other information.

- **Urge greater consistency in gateway courses, particularly in math, at public two- and four-year institutions for specific majors and programs of study:** To improve student transfer and retention, some states are encouraging public institutions to adopt similar gateway courses for specific majors and programs of study, or establishing statewide gateway courses across public institutions. Such efforts allow, for example, a psychology major who completed Introduction to Statistics for their general education math

requirement at Institution A to transfer to Institution B and apply the course towards their gen ed math requirements, without being required to complete a different math course (e.g., Quantitative Reasoning) required as the gen ed math course for non-STEM majors. Identifying common gateway courses for gen ed math requirements is particularly important, as there is greater potential for variability in math gateway courses than in English gateway courses depending on a student’s major/program of study.

Identifying and communicating such courses to dual credit students can increase the likelihood that gateway English and math courses apply to student general education or major requirements and are not transcribed as elective credit upon matriculation.





CONCLUSION

Illinois policies provide a strong foundation for dual credit course access. That said, disaggregated state data on student participation in dual credit courses identify student demographics underrepresented in these courses; a stakeholder analysis of Illinois policies against the nationally recognized Unlocking Potential framework likewise identified Illinois state policy gaps and recommendations that, if addressed, could greatly enhance equitable access to and participation in high-quality dual credit programming across Illinois. It is hoped that state and local policymakers across role groups, representing K-12 and the two-year and four-year higher education sectors, will apply the recommendations presented in this report to make Illinois a national leader in equitable dual credit participation and quality.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
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