

KEY INSIGHTS

- Dual enrollment programs offer states an opportunity to overcome workforce readiness and postsecondary access and completion challenges.
- Governors can strengthen dual enrollment programs by using their bully pulpit, agenda setting authority, budgetary authority, and appointment authority.
- In strengthening these programs, governors should consider a holistic framework that incorporates six key areas: (1) equity goal and public reporting, (2) course access and availability, (3) navigational supports and advising, (4) program integrity and credit transfer, (5) instructor capacity, and (6) financing.

INTRODUCTION

America faces crises in both workforce readiness and postsecondary access and attainment. Projections indicate that while the percentage of jobs requiring a postsecondary credential continues to rise, businesses will continue to face shortfalls in filling these positions with workers who meet their criteria.ⁱ And the outcomes for those who do attend college are less than optimal – fewer than 6 in 10 students who enter college go on to graduate, and students who drop out are more likely than graduates to experience difficulty paying off their student loan debts.ⁱⁱ For those who do graduate, their student loan debt can impose a heavy burden on their future finances, leading many to put off key life decisions such as buying a house or having children.ⁱⁱⁱ

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE THROUGH DUAL ENROLLMENT

Dual enrollment, which is referred to by many names including “college in high school” programs, offers states an opportunity to begin overcoming these challenges.^{iv} These programs rely on a partnership between school districts and institutions of higher education to allow high school students to enroll in college courses that lead to transcribed credit. Students who participate in these programs are more likely to graduate high school ready for college, persist in their college courses, and attain a college degree.^v Furthermore, students who enroll in these programs are able to leverage the credits they earn while still in high school to more quickly obtain a degree, thereby reducing the overall cost of their education since many of these “college in high school” programs are heavily subsidized by states.^{vi}

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

Governors have an important role to play in advancing policy related to dual enrollment programs. Governors can use their authority to set the state’s policy agenda, convene stakeholders, and use their bully pulpit to draw attention to issues of access, equity and quality assurance in these programs. In particular, governors can leverage their convening power to bring together the different stakeholders in the K-12, postsecondary and workforce arenas – whose productive partnerships are critical, but who may otherwise not be around the same table – to ensure that these programs can be expanded and made more effective, particularly when serving low-income students and those who are underrepresented in higher education.

FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

The College in High School Alliance (CHSA) encourages governors and other state policymakers to use the following framework categories when seeking to strengthen their state “college in high school” programs. This framework contains six different elements, and we have highlighted different ways in which governors can exercise their unique authority as governor to take action on each of these elements:

Framework Element

Ways Governors Can Take Action

Element 1: Equity Goal and Public Reporting.

The state should set a public goal for increasing participation of traditionally underserved students and disaggregate public data to ensure transparency in its progress toward reaching this goal.

- **Setting Equity Goals:** Governors can use their public statements to establish setting an equity goal as a priority for the state. For example, in his 2019 State of the State address, **Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards** voiced his commitment to ensuring that all junior and senior high school students have access to dual enrollment opportunities.
- **Inclusion in Other Attainment Goals:** States often set additional attainment goals in areas such as postsecondary attainment and workforce readiness. Governors can leverage their agenda-setting authority, convening authority, and oversight of state agencies to ensure that dual enrollment is incorporated into these goals if and when they are being developed or reexamined.
- **Publishing Disaggregated Data:** Several states, notably Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio and Washington, publish annual dual enrollment reports with data disaggregated by student subgroups. Governors can work with state legislators or their executive branch agencies to produce similar reports and ensure that they are available to the general public. Governors also can leverage their oversight of state agencies to ensure that local districts have the tools necessary to utilize this data in identifying participation gaps and driving interventions. See [this resource](#) from ECS to determine whether your state requires this reporting.

Framework Element

Ways Governors Can Take Action

Element 2: Program Integrity and Credit Transfer.

States should support and promote high-quality “college in high school” programs that offer transferable credit.

- **Establish Quality as a Priority:** Governors can emphasize through public statements the need to establish program quality as an important precondition for expanding dual enrollment programs. For example, in his FY20 budget, **Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker** proposed \$3 million in new funding specifically for “high quality” early college pathways.
- **Revising Quality Standards:** State dual enrollment quality standards can differ significantly from state to state, and some states limit their standards to a small number of areas. Governors can establish bodies (e.g. commissions or taskforces) to examine their state’s existing quality standards, provide recommendations for strengthening them, and then allocate funding through the budget process or implement the appropriate legislative changes to facilitate putting these recommendations into practice.
- **Clarifying Where Students Receive Credit:** Dual enrollment credits do not always count toward high school graduation, and not all states have a uniform policy requiring public colleges and universities to accept dual enrollment credits. Governors can work with the state Legislature to pass laws addressing these two policies. See [this resource](#) from ECS to determine whether your state has a postsecondary transfer agreement in place and separately [this report](#) on whether students earn secondary and/or postsecondary credit for dual enrollment.

Framework Element

Ways Governors Can Take Action

Element 3: Financing.

States should ensure that funding mechanisms remove financial barriers for low- and moderate-income students and incentivize school districts and higher education institutions to maximize “college in high school” opportunities to underrepresented students.

- **Retooling Financial Aid Programs:** Postsecondary financial aid programs can be leveraged successfully to increase dual enrollment access for low- and moderate-income students. Governors can use their bully pulpit and policy-making authority to promote policies allowing these programs to be used for dual enrollment. For example, **Governors Kate Brown of Oregon** and **Brad Little of Idaho** each included funding in their 2019 state budgets for financial aid programs to provide access to college level coursework for high school students.
- **Lowering or Eliminating Dual Enrollment Tuition:** Many states cap the tuition paid by students to participate in dual enrollment programs, and in some cases make some or all courses free to all students. Governors can draw attention to this issue and work with state legislatures to pass laws or budgetary items capping costs or making some or all courses free. See [this resource](#) from ECS to determine what level of tuition students pay to participate in dual enrollment in your state.
- **Bring Clarity to Funding Systems:** Dual enrollment requires partnerships between K-12 and postsecondary institutions, and funding mechanism must ensure that both groups have the resources necessary to offer high quality programing. Governors can leverage their executive and convening powers to bring together stakeholders to study existing dual enrollment funding formulas and identify opportunities for improvement. Governors also can use their budgetary authority to ensure that existing funding systems receive adequate funding to meet demand for these courses. See these ECS reports for how your state funds [high schools](#) and [postsecondary institutions](#) as it relates to dual enrollment.
- **Disseminate Information on Federal Funding Opportunities:** Various federal laws and programs such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), The Carl D. Perkins Technical Education Act (Perkins), and the GEAR UP program allow funding to be used to enhance “college in high school” programs at the state or local level. Governors can ensure that state agencies, districts and schools have the information necessary to leverage these opportunities to expand access to dual enrollment programs.

Framework Element

Ways Governors Can Take Action

Element 4: Course Access and Availability.

The state should ensure that students can access these courses regardless of geography and that they are able to earn multiple credits as well as explore academic and career pathways of interest.

- **Spearhead Access Initiatives:** Governors can spearhead initiatives specifically targeted toward expanding access to dual enrollment programs in collaboration with other state stakeholders. For example, **Montana Governor Steve Bullock** created the [One-Two-Free initiative](#) to provide all Montana students with two free dual enrollment courses, up to six credits, through the Montana University System.
- **Include Dual Enrollment in Workforce Initiatives:** Governors can ensure that dual enrollment opportunities are included in new workforce initiatives. For example, this year **Tennessee Governor Bill Lee** announced the Governors Investment in Vocational Education ([GIVE](#)) initiative, providing \$25 million in one-time grants to schools starting new dual enrollment programs targeted towards trade and technical pathways, and doubling state funding for dual enrollment tuition grants from 2 courses to 4 per student.
- **Ensure Students and Parents Have Information:** Governors can work to ensure that students and parents have adequate information to take advantage of dual enrollment coursework. They can work with state legislatures to ensure that schools and districts are required to notify students and parents about dual enrollment opportunities for qualified students, such as is required in [Colorado](#) and [Michigan](#). See [this resource](#) from ECS for information on your state policy as it relates to dual enrollment notifications.
- **Require Access for All Students:** Not every high school has access to dual enrollment opportunities. Governors can establish commissions to identify pathways to addressing this access challenge. For example, **Governor John Bel Edwards** established a [task force](#) in Louisiana to study expanding the state's dual enrollment program to all eligible juniors and seniors. Governors also can work with state legislatures to pass laws requiring all high schools to provide dual enrollment programs. See [this table](#) from ECS for information on your state's policy related to requiring dual enrollment course offerings.

Framework Element

Ways Governors Can Take Action

Element 5: Instructor Capacity.

States should actively work to ensure that they are implementing the policies necessary to grow and diversify the pool of instructors with the qualifications to teach these courses.

- **Spur Information Collection on Educator Shortages:** States do not always know where shortages exist in dual enrollment instructors. Governors can use their bully pulpit to draw attention to this issue and their oversight of state executive agencies to identify ways to collect this information.
- **Review Teacher Certification Qualifications and Requirements:** Governors can use their convening authority to establish commissions or task forces to examine existing dual enrollment teacher requirements and recommend improvements. Governors also can ensure that they are engaged in this process when led by other actors. Indiana recently established a council to review state dual credit teacher requirements, which includes a representative from the office of **Governor Eric Holcomb**. See [this resource](#) by ECS for information about instructor qualifications in your state.
- **Include Dual Enrollment in Teacher Recruitment and Retention Efforts:** Increasingly, governors are introducing proposals to attract and retain teachers to their states. When introducing these proposals, they can ensure that dual enrollment instructors are explicitly included. For example, when proposing teacher compensation increases or debt forgiveness plans, governors can include specific items to benefit teachers who successfully attain the credentialing necessary to teach dual enrollment courses.
- **Scale Promising Teacher Certification Practices:** Schools and districts often are already working at the local level to ensure teachers are meeting their state credentialing requirements. Governors can work to scale innovative practices statewide by leveraging their bully pulpit and support this scaling by including funding in their budget proposals. See [this report](#) from Jobs for the Future for two local-level examples of actors working to help teachers meet credentialing requirements for dual enrollment.

Framework Element	Ways Governors Can Take Action
<p>Element 6: Navigational Supports and Advising.</p> <p>States should ensure the navigational supports, such as advising and online information, are in place to ensure student success in these courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support or Lead Efforts to Build Navigational Supports: Students and parents are not always aware of existing dual enrollment programs or how to take advantage of them. Governors can address this by dedicating funding or passing legislation to ensure that states have appropriate navigational supports in place, such as centralized resources like websites. For example, last year, Colorado Governor Jared Polis worked with the General Assembly to create a new program to remove barriers to accessing concurrent enrollment, and this year he doubled funding for that program in his budget.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **[Transition to College Intervention Report](#).** The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) reviewed the research data on college in high school programs and provides the most comprehensive review of the existing evidence about the effectiveness of “college in high school” programs.
- **[Rethinking Dual Enrollment to Reach More Students](#).** Education Commission of the States (ECS) provides a review of promising practices in the states to reform policies related to “college in high school” programs to make them more available to low-income students and those underrepresented in higher education.
- **[State Policy Framework for Dual Enrollment](#).** The College in High School Alliance provides a roadmap for state policy in the categories listed in this paper to advance equity and quality as it relates to these programs.
- **[How to Scale College in High School: A State Policy Guide for Implementing Dual Enrollment and Early College Designs Under the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).** The College in High School Alliance provides recommendations for how the federal ESSA law can be leveraged to support these programs, as well as state policy best expansion practices.

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- ii Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Huie, F., Wakhungu, P., Yuan, X., Nathan, A & Hwang, Y., A. (2017, April). A National View of Student Attainment Rates by Race and Ethnicity – Fall 2010 Cohort (Signature Report No. 12b). Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.
- iii National Association of Realtors and American Student Assistance. (2017). *Student Loan Debt and Housing Report: When Debt Holds You Back*. Retrieved from <https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/2017-student-loan-debt-and-housing-09-26-2017.pdf>.
- iv “College in high school” here refers to a range of different programs, including dual or concurrent enrollment, college in high school, or other early college credit programs.
- v U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2017, February). *Transition to College intervention report: Dual Enrollment Programs*. Retrieved from <https://whatworks.ed.gov>.
- vi Joel Vargas. (2013). *The Economic Payoff for Closing College-Readiness and Completion Gaps*. Boston: Jobs for the Future.