
MEMORANDUM

March 25, 2020

To: Governors' Offices

From: Bill McBride, Executive Director

Re: Dual Credit in the Time of COVID-19

Background

Students enrolled in dual credit courses are relying upon multiple stakeholders to execute the transition from the classroom to virtual learning. Questions of where to find resources to continue their education at home, if they can obtain a refund due to individual circumstances that no longer allow them to remain enrolled, and program quality should be top-of-mind for governors and state policymakers. Answers to these critical questions can largely depend on the individual governance structures in place that grant different levels of authority to the state, school districts, and institutions. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide governors and state policymakers with resources that can help inform decision-making on issues of governance, unique circumstances and program quality, and financing. It also provides early examples of state and institutional action on this front.

Governance

According to Education Commission of the States (ECS), all but four states have at least one dual enrollment program governed by statewide policy. Others are set by district- and institutional-level policy. ECS published [50 state profiles](#) that outline more than a dozen policy elements concerning dual credit including relevant statute or code, financing, and eligibility requirements.

Unique Circumstances and Program Quality

Despite the extremely difficult state of affairs, it is critical that the integrity and quality of dual credit courses be sustained. Moreover, differing responses to COVID-19 from high schools and postsecondary institutions has led to confusion as to whether or not courses remain in progress, e.g. a high school closing its doors while its corresponding postsecondary institution remains operational.

- The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships Accreditation Commission released [guidelines](#) on how to continue meeting their standards during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The Iowa Department of Education issued dual credit [guidance](#) for its community colleges as well as a [fact sheet](#) that addresses specific scenarios that may arise.

Financing

Funding sources for dual credit programs can vary across district and state lines. It is crucial that policymakers meet the needs of students who cannot immediately resume their coursework from home due to a lack of resources. At minimum, states should ensure that students who cannot or do not wish to continue their program are compensated.

- The Chancellor of California Community Colleges signed an [executive order](#) to ensure that students who must withdraw from courses receive refunds for their tuition and are not academically punished. This applies to dual enrollment courses hosted at the state's community colleges.

Additional Early Examples

- Washington’s Superintendent of Public Instruction issued [guidance](#) in response to the state’s long-term school closures. Pages 6-8 address implications for Advanced Placement, Cambridge International, and International Baccalaureate courses.
- Tarrant County Community College posted [instructions](#) for students moving to online learning as well as information on how to get assistance with the transition.

For questions or concerns related to the contents of this memo, please contact NGA staff:

- Jack Porter (jporter@nga.org ; 202.624.5253)