

Dual Enrollment Access

Sarah Pompelia

What Is the Issue, and Why Does It Matter?

Dual enrollment programs allow students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously. Such programs support students in their transition from high school to college in two ways: First, students access advanced learning experiences that can help them prepare academically for college; second, through early credit accumulation, students have the potential to reduce the total cost of their college degree. In addition, [research](#) indicates that participating in dual enrollment increases the chance that a student will attend and graduate from college.

Unfortunately, some groups of students face significant barriers to accessing dual enrollment courses — making it less likely that they are able to reap the benefits that these programs offer. A [recent study](#) from the U.S. Department of Education found that students whose parents have never attended college were less likely to take dual enrollment courses than their peers with parents who have college degrees. In addition, the study showed that Hispanic and black students were less likely to take these courses than their white or Asian peers.

As dual enrollment programs have grown, policymakers across the country have been increasingly attentive to the issue of who has access to these courses. While states have consistently sought to ensure broad access to dual enrollment courses, both dual enrollment generally and the specific issue of dual enrollment access received a significant amount of legislative focus in the past year. In 2019, states considered at least 219 bills related to dual enrollment; nearly half of those involved provisions about access to the courses.

In an Education Commission of the States analysis of enacted 2019 legislation focused specifically on access, four themes arose across the states:

- **REDUCING COST FOR STUDENTS.**
- **EXPANDING STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.**
- **REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION.**
- **INCREASING QUALIFIED EDUCATORS.**



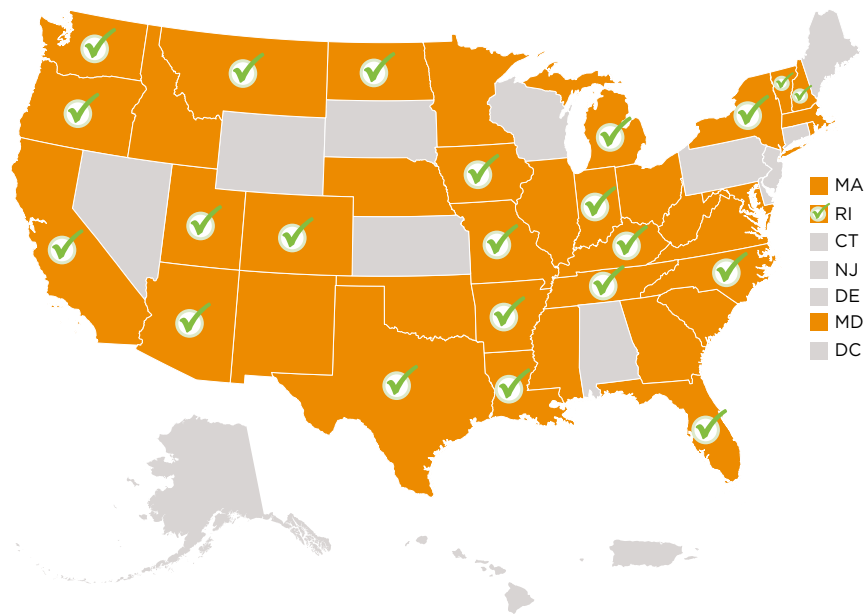
States use a variety of terms to refer to dual enrollment. Find a list of what each state calls its program [here](#).

Because this Policy Snapshot covers 2019 legislation only, it excludes certain well-known state policy themes related to dual enrollment — including disaggregating reporting to better understand issues of access, allowing students multiple options for determining academic eligibility for courses and providing outreach to families in their preferred language.

How Many States Considered Legislation in 2019?

Based on a review of 2019 legislative activity concerning dual enrollment access:

At least **108 BILLS** were **INTRODUCED** in 37 states.



At least **36 BILLS** were **ENACTED** ✓ in 23 states.

STATE	LEGISLATION
Arizona	H.B. 2036 , S.B. 1346 , H.B. 2176
Arkansas	S.B. 343 , H.B. 1413
California	A.B. 30
Colorado	S.B. 19-176
Florida	H.B. 7071
Indiana	S.B. 438
Iowa	S.F. 603
Kentucky	S.B. 98
Louisiana	S.B. 243
Michigan	H.B. 4242
Missouri	H.B. 604
Montana	H.B. 387

STATE	LEGISLATION
North Carolina	S.B. 366
North Dakota	S.B. 2013
New Hampshire	S.B. 276
New York	S. 1506 , A. 2006
Oregon	H.B. 2263
Rhode Island	H.B. 6240 , S.B. 755
Tennessee	H.B. 1425 , S.B. 764 , S.B. 805 , H.B. 949
Texas	H.B. 1 , H.B. 3 , H.B. 3650
Utah	H.B. 291 , H.B. 146
Vermont	H. 533 , H. 542
Washington	H.B. 2158 , H.B. 1973

Reducing Cost for Students

The cost of taking postsecondary courses while in high school can be prohibitive for students and their families. Though [some states](#) cover the tuition and fees associated with dual enrollment courses, others leave funding up to the district, parents and students. Similar to past years, in 2019 states looked for ways to eliminate or reduce the cost burden for students and families so that students from low- and moderate-income households are not prevented from participating. Cost-reduction strategies include fully funding the state dual enrollment program so that it is free for all students, creating scholarship or grant programs to support students from low-income households, limiting what colleges may charge for dual enrollment courses, and covering the tuition and fees for a limited number of courses.

Examples of Enacted Legislation



[S.B. 343](#) creates the Arkansas Concurrent Challenge Scholarship Program for students participating in concurrent enrollment courses. The bill stipulates that the maximum scholarship award a student may receive in an academic year be the lesser of \$500 or the tuition and mandatory fees of the concurrent credit course or certificate program.



[S.B. 19-176](#) requires that concurrent enrollment be offered at no tuition cost to qualified students, and appropriates funds for this purpose for fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21.



[H. 542](#) directs the transfer of \$85,000 from the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation to fund a flat-rate, need-based stipend or voucher program that covers books, transportation and fees for students with financial need who are enrolled in a dual enrollment course or early college.



[H.B. 1973](#) creates the Washington Dual Enrollment Scholarship Pilot Program, to be administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance. To be eligible, students must (1) qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program, (2) be enrolled in one or more dual credit programs and (3) have at least a 2.0 GPA. Use of the scholarship award is limited to mandatory fees, prorated based on credit load; course fees or laboratory fees determined by the college or university policies; and a textbook limited voucher to be used at the institution of higher education's bookstore.

Removing Barriers to Participation

The cost of dual enrollment is not the only barrier for students to participate. States passed a number of policies this year that attempt to make it easier for students to take dual enrollment courses by offering transportation to course locations, eliminating course limits or increasing the number of allowable courses, requiring that information about dual enrollment courses be readily available to parents and students, and amending other course requirements to accommodate students who take dual enrollment courses.

Examples of Enacted Legislation



[A.B. 30](#) allows a high school student participating under a Community Colleges College and Career Access Pathways partnership to submit a single parental consent form, principal recommendation and application, which remain valid for the duration of the student's participation in the program.



[H.B. 7071](#) requires that each career center must enter into an agreement with each high school in the school district served by the career center. The agreement must, among other things, describe how students and parents will be informed about career dual enrollment opportunities and how students can apply to participate in these programs.



[H.B. 6240/S.B. 755](#) exempts 12th grade students enrolled full-time in dual enrollment courses on higher education campuses from the health and physical education course requirement.



[H.B. 3](#) provides funds to reimburse school districts for transportation they may provide for dual enrollment students to travel from their schools to college campuses.

Expanding Student Eligibility

Eligibility requirements for participating in dual enrollment courses include academic measures and grade level, among others. This year, some states took action to allow students in earlier grade levels to be eligible for dual enrollment. Additionally, because dual enrollment courses often take place on high school campuses, the eligibility of private school students or students who are homeschooled might not be guaranteed. Some states acted to explicitly allow these students to participate or included them in cost considerations.

Examples of Enacted Legislation



[S.F. 603](#) allows students from accredited private schools to access dual enrollment if the schools meet certain requirements.



[S.B. 276](#) widens eligibility for dual enrollment courses to 10th grade students, in addition to 11th grade and 12th grade students.





[H.B. 146](#) establishes that students in grades nine through 12 are eligible to enroll in dual enrollment courses and removes previous grade-level exceptions.


Increasing Qualified Educators

Expanding access to dual enrollment courses requires an increase in teachers who meet state qualifications to teach the courses. Though students may take dual enrollment courses on college campuses with postsecondary instructors, [most students](#) take dual enrollment courses at their own high schools — creating a need for teachers at the high school level who are qualified to teach dual enrollment courses. States also want to ensure that students who are taught by high school teachers receive the same quality of instruction as those who are taught by postsecondary faculty.

Examples of Enacted Legislation

 [S.B. 438](#) directs the commissioner for higher education to establish a dual credit advisory council, which will review and update the current requirements that ensure that a teacher who currently teaches a high school dual credit course can meet accreditation requirements by July 1, 2022.

 [H.B. 2263](#) authorizes the department of education, in collaboration with the higher education coordinating commission, to administer the Accelerated College Credit Instructor Grant Program to provide education or training to teachers of accelerated college credit programs. The department must provide grants to (1) school districts and education service districts for tuition costs of up to 65 high school instructors and (2) postsecondary institutions for graduate course offerings in at least six content areas that the commission recommends would meet dual enrollment program qualifications.

 [H.B. 291](#) amends the state board of regents' duty to establish a policy that describes the qualifications for a local education agency employee to be an eligible dual enrollment instructor. The policy aims to ensure such qualifications are uniform statewide and that they build upon dual enrollment partnerships, in an effort to increase offerings in all college service areas.



About the Author

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Sarah was formerly a policy analyst at Education Commission of the States. Prior, she worked as a middle and elementary school teacher. She earned a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy and has two master's degrees in social work and public policy from the University of Denver.

Related Resources

[50-State Comparison: Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Policies](#)

[STEM Dual Enrollment: Model Policy Components](#)

[Increasing the Supply of Qualified High School Teachers for Dual Enrollment Programs:
An Overview of State and Regional Accreditor Policies](#)