

Report to the NC General Assembly: Dual Enrollment Opportunity Study

*State Board of Education
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Report Requirements:

NC Session Law 2021-180

“DUAL ENROLLMENT/OPPORTUNITY STUDY SECTION 7.85. The State Board of Education shall partner with a third-party entity to conduct a study examining the factors impacting all students' ability to complete high school courses leading to college credit, an associate degree, or a career-ready credential, including an examination of opportunity, resources, fees, and personnel.



Report Requirements:

NC Session Law 2021-180

The study shall also include an examination of all dual enrollment courses offered as part of the Career and College Promise Program that satisfy basic high school graduation requirements to ensure that the content and skills taught in those courses is aligned to the content and skills outlined in the Standard Course of Study for the requisite courses that meet graduation requirements.

The study shall identify if dual enrollment courses are or are not aligned with the Standard Course of Study and, if not aligned, what content or skills are not aligned.”



Dual Enrollment Opportunity Study: NC Session Law 2021-180

The NC Department of Public Instruction contracted with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to conduct a study of factors affecting students' completion of dual enrollment courses and to examine the alignment of the content expected for high school courses required for graduation and the college courses that can substitute for them.



Dual Enrollment Opportunity Study: NC Session Law 2021-180

The study team looked at the three pathways of the Career and College Promise (CCP) dual enrollment program:

- College Transfer pathway
- Career and Technical Education pathway
- Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS)



Who participates in CCP?

In 2019-2020, approximately 30% of all 12th graders participated in one of the CCP pathways. Characteristics of participating students varied by pathway.

The College Transfer pathway had the widest disparities in participation rates:

- Female students participated at much higher rates than male students.
- White students participated at much higher rates than Black and Hispanic students
- Economically disadvantaged students participated at much lower rates than non-economically disadvantaged students

Who participates in CCP?

In contrast, the CTE pathway had equitable participation by gender and economic status and smaller disparities by race/ethnicity than in the College Transfer pathway.

The CIHS pathway had generally equitable participation by race/ethnicity and economic status but higher rates of participation among female students.



Who participates in CCP?

Participation rates varied widely by high school and by community college:

- High schools in rural areas had approximately twice the participation rates as schools in urban/suburban areas.
- Participation rates were lower in schools with higher percentages of underrepresented minority students, regardless of the location.
- At the college level, CCP participation—measured by the percentage of 12th graders in their service area participating in CCP—ranged from a low of 10% to a high of 73%.



Factors associated with access and success

A strong, high-quality partnership between secondary and postsecondary education institutions is a necessity.

Formal Memoranda of Understanding that cover specific aspects of the secondary-postsecondary partnership can help clarify responsibilities and possibly strengthen the relationship between institutions.



Factors associated with access and success

District, school, and college staff throughout North Carolina identified specific resources and policies that would help expand access including:

- Ensuring that students and families receive information about CCP;
- Having a dedicated staff member with time to focus on college advising and registration, such as a college liaison;
- Funding textbooks and fees;
- Reducing transportation barriers along with addressing class schedule misalignment; and
- Promoting alignment of college and high school calendars.



Factors associated with access and success

Some of the logistical barriers (transportation, scheduling) could be addressed if the courses were offered on high school campuses.

One of the key strategies to support student success is encouraging colleges to share course-taking data in a timely way so that high schools can monitor students' performance in college courses.



Alignment of college and high school courses

The study looked at state-level guidance for key high school courses required for graduation and the college courses that are intended to substitute for them.

NCDPI has developed detailed curriculum standards that summarize learning expectations for students.

The NC Community College System has developed overarching course descriptions that provide an overview of the content, delegating the creation of detailed learning objectives and syllabi to individual campus-level departments and/or instructors.

This has resulted in substantial differences in the level of detail between the two sets of state-level guidelines.



Alignment of college and high school courses

Because of the differing levels of detail in the two sets of documents, the study focused on examining alignment between core content or concepts.

Expectations are similar in English regarding literary analysis, research, and writing; there are some areas—such as standards related to Speaking and Listening and vocabulary development—that are not mentioned in the college course descriptions.

The sciences (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) have overall strong alignment in the general concepts covered with additional content included in the college Chemistry and Physics courses.



Alignment of college and high school courses

The two sets of standards in history (American History and World History) both expect students to engage in historical analyses but otherwise have different approaches, with the high school standards taking a more thematic approach and the college standards listing key historical events or civilizations from the relevant time periods.

For math, there are a total of 30 high school and college courses that students can take to meet their fourth math requirement; given that no specific content was required for the fourth math, the study team did not conduct any course-level alignment.



Next Steps: State Board of Education Policy – CCP Partnership Agreement

The Office of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education is seeking input from the field and working with colleagues and partners to prepare a policy proposal for the August State Board Meeting.

This policy work has been ongoing for six months.





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