

DUAL

ENROLLMENT STUDY COMMISSION

REPORT 2022



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Executive Summary

To expand opportunities for students, Governor Phil Murphy established through law ([P.L. 2018, c. 145](#)), a Dual Enrollment Study Commission (“Commission”). The Commission was directed “to study issues related to the implementation of an expanded dual enrollment program” and to issue a framework for implementing and expanding dual enrollment. Providing students opportunities to simultaneously earn high school and college credits helps students pursue and attain industry-valued credentials and/or degrees.

The Commission built upon the work of previous task forces such as the [On-ramps to College Working Group](#), which was created following the release of New Jersey’s [State Higher Education Plan](#) and the frameworks set out by the [College Affordability Study Commission](#) pursuant to (P.L. 2015, c. 4). The work of this Commission serves as part of New Jersey’s greater efforts to close opportunity gaps among racial and socio-economic groups when accessing college courses.

The Commission also listened to practitioners from across the State, reviewed data, and explored national research to fulfill statute requirements. Following these reviews, the Commission independently developed the following report, which:

- Provides a **landscape analysis** of relevant national research, State policies and data, and identifies New Jersey-specific barriers regarding dual enrollment (e.g., cost, staffing, scheduling, transportation, transferability);
- Sets **guiding principles and five-year targets** designed to expand high-quality dual enrollment opportunities; and
- **Recommends steps** to expand dual enrollment opportunities, particularly for low-income students, and inform future policies.

The Commission recommends that New Jersey develops and implements an innovative pilot program that allows for immediate expansion of dual enrollment opportunities, particularly for low-income students. This pilot will provide models of high-quality programs that will inform future dual enrollment policies that are feasible and effective in different contexts. Alongside the pilot program, this report further details considerations to improve the success of the pilot, including:

- Allow for program flexibility in dual enrollment practices;
- Ensure State-level support and collaboration across the New Jersey Department of Education and Office of the Secretary of Higher Education with the pilot and in developing complementary website resources;
- Provide wrap-around supports at both the high-school and college-level;
- Clarify terms relating to dual enrollment and early college programs;
- Build data and reporting capacity to annually evaluate dual enrollment access and outcomes; and
- Develop Statewide resources (e.g., technical assistance) to help local education agencies (LEAs) implement and expand dual enrollment.

The Commission believes that through the multi-pronged approach presented in this report, in five years, the State will improve access and participation in dual enrollment – particularly around racial and socio-economic student groups – and will increase overall credential attainment.

The Commission submits the following independent report in fulfillment of its charge to study issues related to the implementation of an expanded dual enrollment program and recommendations for a Statewide framework via a pilot to the Legislature and Governor for their review and future considerations.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this document belong to the Dual Enrollment Study Commission and do not reflect the official policy or position of the State of New Jersey or the Murphy Administration. The content provided is intended to serve as a non-exhaustive resource to provide lawmakers with general information about dual enrollment in New Jersey to assist in charting the path forward.

DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDY COMMISSION REPORT

I. Introduction



Dual enrollment helps prepare students to meet the rigor and academic demands of institutions of higher education (IHEs) and improves college and credential access, affordability, and completion. The Dual Enrollment Study Commission (Commission) was charged with investigating specific barriers to dual enrollment expansion in New Jersey and developing actionable, practical, and equitable recommendations in response to these findings. This report includes the Commission’s guiding principles, five-year targets, and recommendations. The Commission’s aim is to unify practitioners and policymakers around common goals, which if achieved, will lead to New Jersey equitably expanding dual enrollment for all students.

Dual Enrollment Study Commission

The Commission began convening in September 2021 by studying issues related to the expansion of dual enrollment programs. According to [P.L. 2018, c. 145](#), Commission members were tasked with exploring pathways to enable students to enroll in “up to 15 college credits in high school” and reviewing New Jersey’s current utilization, program rigor, and faculty qualifications, online and early college innovations. The Commission was also charged with identifying current barriers to dual enrollment expansion.

In addition to the actionable recommendations and highlighted promising practices, the NJDOE and OSHE will contemporaneously release website resources including a step-by-step toolkit and provide technical assistance for high schools and colleges looking to expand their dual enrollment offerings.

Introduction

The Commission met five times between September 2021 and May 2022, reviewed Statewide data and dual enrollment models in other states and conducted multiple focus groups and interviews with representatives from local education agencies (LEAs), IHEs, and other states.

The Commission built upon recommendations of the On-ramps to College Working Group, created following New Jersey's State Plan for Higher Education. Additionally, frameworks explored by the College Affordability Study Commission provided ample background and rationale for the importance of dual enrollment expansion. The College Affordability Study Commission, which included representatives from across the higher education field, cited the creation of more dual enrollment opportunities as its first of twenty recommendations designed to make college more affordable. Then, a few years later, the On-ramps to College Working Group which was also made up primarily of representatives from IHEs, recommended that New Jersey launch a Dual Enrollment Study Commission (or a similar advisory board) composed of higher education and high school leaders to create a dual enrollment "blueprint" of implementation. Accordingly, the Commission, which included equal representation from IHEs and LEAs (preschool through twelfth grade), was created to more deeply research barriers at the LEA level and to recommend actionable next steps.

Dual Enrollment Return on Investment

National research shows that students who dually enroll are more likely to earn higher grades in high school, graduate from high school, attend an institution of higher education, and successfully earn a post-secondary degree.¹ As cited by the 2019 College Affordability Study Commission Report, research also shows that dual enrollment students, when compared to peers who have not participated in similar programs, are:

- ✓ More likely to meet college readiness benchmarks;
- ✓ Less likely to require remedial English or math;
- ✓ Earn higher first-year grade point averages; and
- ✓ Have shorter average time to bachelor's degree completion.

These outcomes are even more pronounced among students who are traditionally less likely to finish high school and attend or complete college.² The financial benefits of dual enrollment in college courses while in high school can also be significant; students can earn multiple college credits at a significantly lower cost (or potentially no cost) to their families before graduating high school. For many students, earning a few college credits and having a positive post-secondary experience may make enrolling in and completing a post-secondary degree a more attainable goal than it would have been otherwise. Additionally, IHEs find that dual enrollment programs offer the opportunity to engage in valuable outreach and recruitment.

¹ 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>.

² An, B.P. (2013) The impact of dual enrollment on college degree attainment: Do low-SES students benefit? Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 35(1), 57-75. Retrieved from <http://www.issuelab.org/resources/15260/15260.pdf>.

Introduction

In New Jersey, colleges see a direct return on dual enrollment investments. For instance, in 2018 and 2019, Middlesex College compared several key outcomes (grade point averages, retention, graduation) between students who participated in a dual enrollment course in high school compared to those students who were not enrolled in dual enrollment. According to their data, students who participate in Dual Enrollment performed better in each outcome (i.e. they are more likely to earn higher grade point averages, return in their second year, and to persist through to graduation). This was true for student comparisons in every high school with which Middlesex College has a dual enrollment relationship.

While the return on investment can be tremendous, existing barriers to participating can sometimes be prohibitive. The box below shows benefits and barriers identified nationally.

Benefits of Dual Enrollment

- Early exposure to college academics, rigor, and content; students more likely to see themselves as “college material”
- Wider array of subject matter options to appeal to students while in high school
- Potential of future tuition savings
- Increased likelihood of earning a college degree and high school diploma
- Higher GPAs one year after high school graduation
- Increased sense of belonging and agency in higher education
- Increased awareness of various college and career pathways

Barriers to Dual Enrollment Participation

- Cost of tuition (even with reduced tuition), student supports, transportation, course materials and wraparound costs when on campus (e.g. food)
- Staffing shortages in high school and in colleges
- Negative mindsets of high school and college staff who believe it is only for high-achieving students
- Lack of guidance and support to ensure student can apply credit to attending college
- Limited awareness and understanding of the opportunity throughout communities

To meet its legislative obligation, the Commission engaged in a deeper analysis of these barriers specific to New Jersey LEAs and IHEs. This research is summarized in the next section.

II. Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey



From its inception, the Commission focused on understanding the barriers that disproportionately affect New Jersey low-income students, students of color, English language learners, and other students from underserved and marginalized communities. Conversations with representatives from high schools, colleges, and other states revealed concrete and sometimes even logistical barriers (e.g., new high school dual enrollment coordinators were unsure of whom to contact at the local colleges to build a partnership) and practical solutions (e.g. create a Statewide dual enrollment college coordinator contact list).

The Commission's research also revealed pockets of strong commitment to dual enrollment throughout the State with existing robust partnerships between high schools and colleges. The Commission found New Jersey to be well positioned to embrace high-quality dual enrollment courses and related wraparound supports as a way of helping students complete high school and access an affordable college education. Promoting dual enrollment also serves as a workforce development strategy by providing an opportunity for more students to build skills to succeed in career and technical fields.

This section describes the current New Jersey dual enrollment environment to provide context for the Commission's recommendations. It outlines current rules and definitions, New Jersey-specific data, and information gathered from stakeholder focus groups and interviews conducted throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Definition of Dual Enrollment and Applicable Rules

New Jersey students have multiple pathways to earn both secondary and post-secondary course credit. For instance, students may earn both secondary and post-secondary course credit in Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate, high schools or programs, career and technical programs, and/or alternative individualized student learning opportunities, which are commonly referred to as “Option II” courses and are allowable under N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)(2).

As the Commission was tasked with studying ways to expand a program in which “all college-ready high school students will be eligible to enroll in up to 15 college credits at a partnering [IHE] while still enrolled in high school,” this report focuses on dual enrollment as a course for which students may earn high school and college credits simultaneously. Additionally, it was the duty of the Commission to “research and develop proposals for sustaining and expanding early college high schools, which is an intensive, evidence-based model of dual enrollment.” Early college high school programs refer to programs in which students, once they complete the program, will receive a college degree (associate degree) usually concurrent to receiving a high school diploma.

Under New Jersey regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.3), LEAs “shall make reasonable efforts to increase the availability of college-level instruction for high school students through courses offered by IHEs at their campuses and in high school.” The courses taught at the high school must be “equivalent [in rigor] to those offered to regularly admitted college students; and accepted toward both college degree and high school graduation requirements.” Further, New Jersey statute (N.J.S.A. 18A:61C-10) provides that a “public institution of higher education... shall enter into a dual enrollment agreement with one or more school districts with a high school.” The agreement must include descriptions of the courses, student eligibility requirements of initial and continuing participation, and provisions ensuring that “an eligible student is not excluded from participation because of an inability to pay.” The agreements must also include “the process by which a student and their parent or guardian exercise the option to participate in the dual enrollment program” and are notified of the opportunity.

Accordingly, New Jersey law requires IHEs to accept the course credit of a student who completes a dual enrollment program as agreed upon by a partner IHE and LEA through a memorandum of agreement (MOA). Under New Jersey’s comprehensive Statewide transfer agreement, otherwise known as the Lampitt Law (N.J.S.A. 18A:62-46 to 18A:62-51), a college or university must accept credits earned through an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree. However, there is no requirement that a New Jersey IHE accept a student’s credits earned through a dual enrollment program with a different IHE or that the IHE must apply all of a student’s credits earned in high school toward the student’s graduation or major requirements.

For the purposes of NJDOE’s data collection and reporting through the School Performance Reports, which mirror the definition in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), courses identified as dual enrollment allow high school students to enroll in college courses for credit prior to their high school graduation, and they may be taught by college staff assigned to a school or staff outside of the LEA. Also, LEAs are instructed to only report students as dually enrolled if there is an existing articulation agreement, or MOA, between the high school and a college or university.³ Currently, LEAs do not report the number of students who are on track for or have completed a college degree concurrent to receiving a high school diploma.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

National Context

Dual enrollment options are available in high schools across the country with more than one million U.S. high schoolers participating each year. However, on average nationally, twelve percent of white students participate in dual enrollment, compared to seven percent of Black students and eight percent of Hispanic students.⁴

The National Center for Education Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) reported that 82 percent of public schools with students enrolled in any of grades nine through twelve offered dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities for students.⁵

National to State data comparisons are difficult to make due to limited data available throughout the country. States use different terms (e.g., dual credit, concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment) when referring to students earning high school and college credits concurrently and reporting sources vary across different data collections.

Virtually all states offer state-level support for dual enrollment programs, although some are more robust than others. By the numbers⁶:

- 18 states have mandatory dual enrollment policies requiring every LEA to offer a dual enrollment program or to participate in the state-run program.
- 30 states, including New Jersey and D.C., make dual enrollment optional for LEAs.
- 22 states, including New Jersey, do not operate a dual enrollment program at the state level.

New Jersey's requirements for dual enrollment programs, should an LEA choose to offer one, are consistent with those of most other states. New Jersey:

- Does not require LEAs to notify all students and parents of dual enrollment opportunities (27 states require LEAs to notify all students and parents).
- Does not specify student eligibility criteria for participating in dual enrollment programs (41 states specify student eligibility criteria).
- Does specify instructor qualification requirements (42 states specify instructor qualification requirements).
- Does not provide state-level funding for dual enrollment programs OR require LEAs to pay for all students to participate in dual enrollment courses (13 states have policies enabling students to earn dual enrollment credits for free).

Overall, New Jersey supports dual enrollment programs and does not create barriers to LEAs establishing or engaging in dual enrollment partnerships. At the same time, the State does not actively encourage or support the expansion of dual enrollment programs, either in State code or with financial support.

³ NJSMART Student Course Roster Data Handbook, Page 35

<https://www.njsmart.org/njr/ks/Course%20Roster%20Submission/NJ%20SMART%20Student%20Course%20Roster%20Data%20Handbook.pdf>

⁴ Mehl, G., Wyner, J., Barnett, E., Fink, J., and Jenkins, D. (2020). The dual enrollment playbook: A guide to equitable acceleration for students. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. Retrieved from <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/dual-enrollment-playbook-equitable-acceleration.pdf>

⁵ National Center for Education Statistics at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), "Dual or Concurrent Enrollment in Public Schools in the United States," DATA POINT December 2020, NCES 2020-125, U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020125.pdf>

Reporting data from the public school questionnaire of the 2017-18 National Teacher and Principle Survey (NTPS).

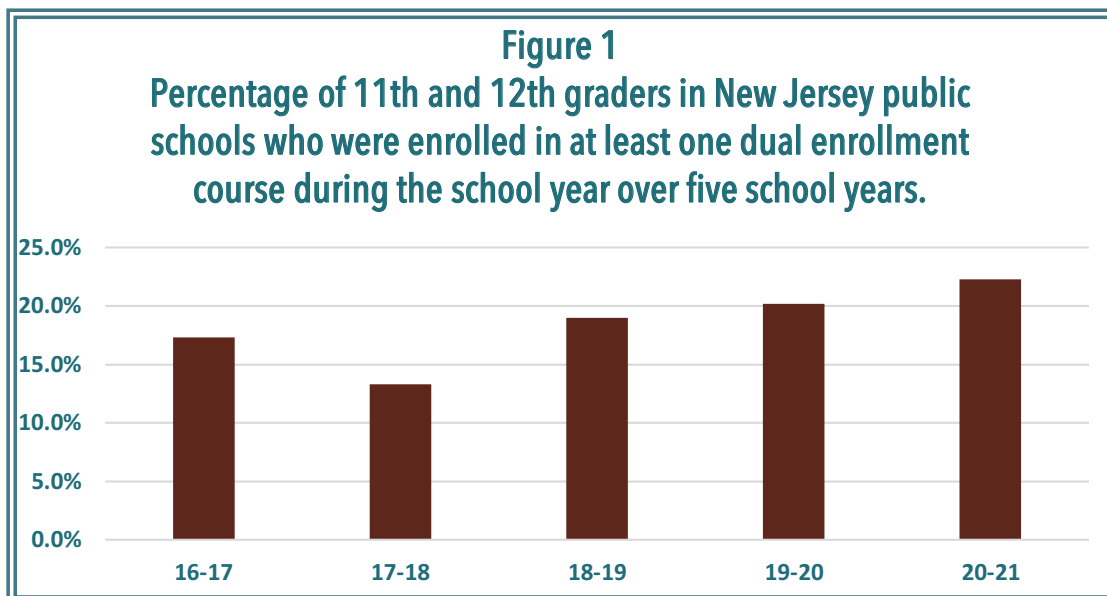
⁶ Education Commission of the States "50 State Comparison Dual Concurrent Enrollment Policies" <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-dual-concurrent-enrollment-policies/>

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

New Jersey Data

Dual enrollment opportunities range broadly across the State, within counties, and sometimes even within LEAs. Over the last several years, public New Jersey high schools have reported higher percentages of students enrolled in at least one course that is earning them high school and college credits simultaneously. Based on LEA-reported information, percentages of 11th and 12th grade students who are enrolled in at least one dual enrollment has increased since the 2016-2017 school year. In 2018, the State average participation rate was reported as 17.3 percent compared to 20.3 percent in the 2020-2021 school year.

Figure Below: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders in New Jersey public schools who were enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course during the school year over five school years. This data is provided by the NJDOE as reported in its School Performance Reports. ([Text Version of Figure 1](#))



Additionally, colleges and high schools have informed NJDOE and OSHE that they are expanding early college or certificate programs so that students can earn a college degree and/or industry credentials before they graduate high school. Surveys would need to be conducted to capture the total number of public New Jersey early college programs, as this information is not explicitly collected at the LEA level.

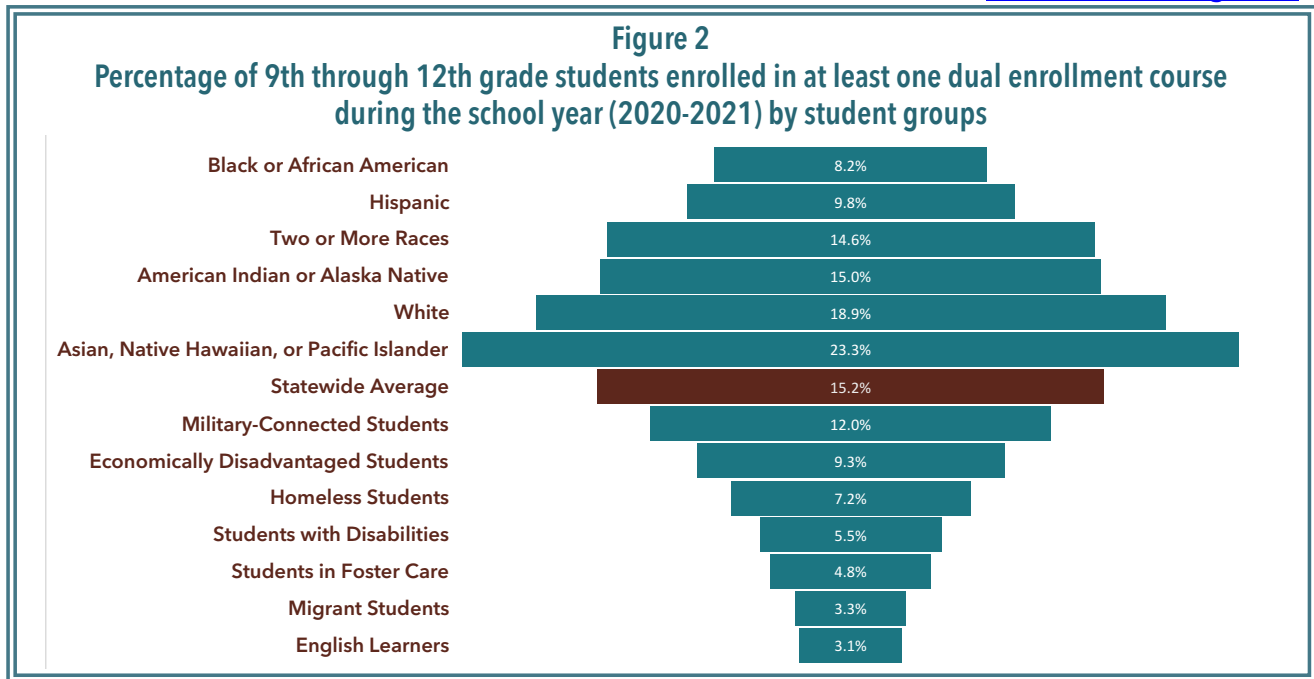
Despite this growth, the opportunities are not equitable across all student groups. See the figure on the following pages for summaries of dual enrollment participation across student groups. The discrepancies in participation rate mirror opportunity gaps throughout the nation. However, these opportunity gaps shown below are even more pronounced in New Jersey and are unacceptable. This report recommends a path forward to bolster efforts to expand dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible students.

During the 2020-2021 school year, only 298 out of 446 high schools (67 percent) reported to the NJDOE as having at least one student enrolled in a dual enrollment course. This statistic highlights the need for expansion of dual enrollment opportunities across the State.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Figure 2 Below: Percentage of 9th through 12th grade students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course during the 2020-2021 school year by student groups. Data was collected by NJDOE from districts through its annual NJ Smart Collection.

[\(Text Version of Figure 2\)](#)



Models/locations

Dual enrollment classes in New Jersey are delivered in different settings. The below chart describes the three locations for the delivery of dual enrollment courses.

<p>At the high school</p> <p>Students may take dual enrollment courses in their high school and are taught by a high school teacher who holds the proper credentials determined by the partnering college issuing credits. Typically, in New Jersey, the high school teacher is an LEA staff member and the course schedule aligns to the high school schedule.</p>	<p>On a college campus</p> <p>Students take courses on the college campus from a college instructor and typically along-side college students. Often, students will report to their high school in the morning and then attend their college campus in the afternoon or evening.</p>	<p>Hybrid: virtual college courses at the high school</p> <p>While on site at their high school, students may take college courses virtually. Focus group participants reported using this option successfully by some high schools and colleges during the pandemic.</p>

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Subjects

There are a variety of courses offered for dual enrollment credit in New Jersey. Some LEAs reported focusing on core subjects like mathematics (e.g., Algebra I, II) and English, which are required for high school graduation. Others focused on providing expanded educational opportunities that the high school may not offer such as additional world language courses, specialized social, life and physical, and computer sciences, or advanced academics.

Some high schools have agreements with colleges allowing them to offer career and technical education courses counting toward future college credit. For instance, students may take courses in logistics management, hospitality, supply-chain management, or business.

In the 2020-2021 school year, New Jersey LEAs reported students participating in over 20 subject categories, with the highest participation in these categories:

- Social sciences and history courses (17,880 students)
- Life and physical sciences (15,742 students)
- Mathematics (13,157 students)
- English language and literature (12,136 students)
- World language and literature (12,136 students)
- Business and marketing (6,198 students)
- Visual and performing arts, and engineering and technology (4,164 students)
- Health care sciences (3,275 students)
- Engineering and technology (3,137 students)
- Computer and information sciences (2,733 students)

Innovative dual enrollment programs have been developed in New Jersey to meet students' needs and to expand high quality offerings for high school students. Stockton University developed the Dual High School Credit Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies which is currently taught in 32 area high schools. The course is supervised by a Stockton faculty member who collaborates with high school staff members to design curricula. Upon successful completion, students receive four college credits from Stockton University. The cost is about \$400.00 to students and is free for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The Rutgers Department of Supply Chain Management, in partnership with the NJDOE, developed a Supply Chain Management Curriculum for high schools. Schools that adopt this curriculum and meet program requirements can offer their students a Supply Chain Management Career and Technical Education program. Students completing the program will be prepared for careers in Supply Chain either directly after high school graduation or as the beginning of post-secondary studies in Supply Chain Management. Students will participate in work-based learning and paid practice experiences. Students who complete the program can enter Rutgers University Business School with three college credits.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Early College Programs

As this model is expanding rapidly, New Jersey schools are developing early college programs throughout the State. Representatives from LEAs reported an increasing number of students who, beginning in ninth grade, are set to earn enough dual enrollment credits to earn an associate degree while earning a high school diploma. In 2022, a total of 216 students (up from 193 in 2021 and 161 in 2020) from county vocational-technical high schools across the State graduated with both a high school diploma and an associate degree from their county college.⁷

Additionally, three national early college programs operate in New Jersey. As early college programs, none of the three programs charge the student or parent for tuition or fees and all program participants earn a college degree within four or six years, depending on the model. Program representatives have cited lack of sustainable and ongoing funding as a barrier to expansion or even continuation of the program. The three New Jersey programs are:

- o BARD Early Colleges (Newark)
- o CARVER Early College & Career Pathways (Atlantic, Cumberland, Mercer, & Salem counties)
- o P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) (Burlington City, New Brunswick, Paterson, and Trenton)

At this time, the NJDOE does not yet collect LEA-level participation rates in early college programs explicitly, which makes Statewide program evaluation difficult. However, students who are reported as being enrolled in a dual enrollment program may be enrolled in an early college program.

Summary of Dual Enrollment Focus Groups/ Roundtables

Four focus groups on dual enrollment were held between January and April 2022 with representatives from high schools/LEAs and IHEs, representing more than 40 locations across New Jersey. The roundtables and individual interviews provided critical information for the Commission as they heard from college deans, LEA leaders, high school principals, school counselors, and dual enrollment coordinators in high schools and colleges. The information shared in the focus groups provided a picture of how dual enrollment is being implemented throughout the State. Participants shared barriers to implementing and expanding dual enrollment programs. They also shared recommendations, lessons learned, and ideas for how New Jersey can expand dual enrollment for all students.

⁷ Career Tech NJ, (June 20, 2022) "A record setting year 2016 county vocational-technical New Jersey high school graduates earn associate degrees," <https://careertechnj.org/a-record-setting-year-216-county-vocational-technical-high-school-graduates-earn-associate-degrees/>. See also, <https://careertechnj.org/161-county-vocational-technical-school-students-earn-associates-degrees-while-in-high-school/> and <https://www.nj.com/education/2021/05/193-students-are-getting-a-2-year-college-degree-before-their-hs-diploma-a-new-nj-record.html>.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Cost

The cost of dual enrollment programs was an issue that emerged in every conversation. Most commonly, students and families pay directly for their college credits earned through dual enrollment, often at a reduced price. The Commission's research revealed that most New Jersey public colleges provide high school students with a reduced fee/tuition for their dual enrollment courses. Some fees and costs can be offset by a LEA and/or the IHE. Sometimes the IHE or the LEA absorbs the cost or provides a significantly reduced rate for low-income students. However, as some participants in the focus group shared, the tuition rates are often prohibitive to some students who cannot afford even the discounted rates.

LEAs and IHEs have used a wide array of funding options to cover costs or to reduce the student's tuition for dual enrollment programs. Programs can be paid for by a high school, by a college or university, shared by both, or paid for by families directly. Sometimes Federal funds are used to cover costs, such as Title I, Title IV, or when the course is related to career readiness, Perkins funds.

Many LEA representatives reported concerns about adding costs of dual enrollment programs into yearly budgets, especially if (as some choose to do) they had to pay high school teachers additional stipends to teach these classes. While all participants were supportive of dual enrollment programs, they all acknowledged that costs create barriers to starting dual enrollment programs and as programs grow and costs rise, money could become a larger issue. Due to cost constraints, many schools have limits on the number of dual enrollment classes a student can take.

Some LEAs and/or IHEs require that high school students take the PSAT, SAT, or Accuplacer tests before enrolling in a dual enrollment course, which creates additional and sometimes unnecessary burden for students.

As course costs vary among IHEs, costs of dual enrollment classes also vary significantly across the State. Many participants encouraged the State to provide funding for or place limits on the price of dual enrollment fees. Some recommended that the Commission identify a Statewide cost per dual enrollment credit. However, some participants expressed concerns that a state funding mechanism would limit their program autonomy.

Many LEAs and colleges are working hard to reduce or eliminate costs for students in need. For instance:

One county subsidizes at least one course for high school students enrolled at their county college.

LEAs utilize Title I and Title IV annual entitlement grants to fund new early college programs and other dual enrollment courses.

In addition to discounting all tuition for high school students, one university makes all courses free to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

One university counsels partner LEA staff and works with them to identify existing Federal and state funding streams that can be used to fund dual enrollment opportunities.



Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Credit Transferability

Participants representing LEAs from across the State cited issues of transferability as a major deterrent to investing in dual enrollment programs. One dual enrollment coordinator noted that some out of state colleges did not grant students credit for college courses taken at the high school. Unfortunately, focus group participants reported that in some situations, even some New Jersey IHEs occasionally limited the conditions in which they would grant college credit that students earned in high school through dual enrollment partnerships at other New Jersey IHEs. Occasionally, IHEs only accept credits earned in high school as an elective course; even if the course met a core high school requirement such as mathematics or English language arts. Most frustrating to LEA administrators were inconsistencies of credit transferability across programs within the same IHE. The divergent transferability rules across IHEs create a financial risk for students and LEAs investing in the program.

Staffing

Participants identified staffing of dual enrollment courses as a common challenge, particularly when the dual enrollment course is taught at the high school.

High school teachers do not always have the appropriate advanced degree(s) typically required of faculty members of the IHE. For example, many high school teachers may have a master's degree in administration or leadership, but they infrequently have a master's in the content area (e.g., English, physics, etc.) of the dual enrollment course they would teach, which is often a requirement to teach at a college or university. While N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.3 requires teachers to have a master's degree, whether a teacher must have a master's in the subject they are teaching depends on college rules regarding teaching college-quality courses.



One university used grant money to help high school teachers earn additional credits to meet the requirements to serve as higher education faculty. High schools can also use Title IIA funds to fund teachers' advanced degrees.

Often, building a specialized dual enrollment program in a high school is a "labor of love" for the teachers and counseling departments. New Jersey high schools offer dual enrollment opportunities in areas such as applied sciences, health fields, and criminal justice. These programs require coordination among colleges and certification programs, higher education staff, and LEA administrators and career/guidance counselors. Dual enrollment courses as part of high school career and technical programs must be approved by the NJDOE and in accordance with all Federal funding laws. Additionally, when an educator retires or moves on from the high school, it can be difficult for high schools to replace staff of popular, but specific, programs.

Schools also struggle with whether to classify high school teachers as adjunct faculty or not. Some high school teachers are considered "coadjunct" to the partnering college. Teacher payment varied among the LEAs in the focus groups. Some schools provide stipends to the teachers of dual enrollment courses and others do not. Some schools said that it can sometimes be difficult to find high school teachers interested in leading dual enrollment classes, and additional funds or adjunct standing can help address this issue.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Scheduling

Several scheduling and logistical issues present challenges for dual enrollment programs. High schools and colleges are often on different school calendars, with mismatched semester start and end times. Day-to-day schedules are also challenging; many high schools use rotating class schedules - meaning the same class does not happen at the same time every day - which does not align with typical post-secondary class schedules. Many focus group participants said they offered classes during late afternoon or even evening hours. LEAs and IHEs all emphasized the benefits of building in some level of flexibility to help students best access courses.



One high school created a special three-week seminar in January, during which the students met with the principal, engaged in independent research, and completed a service component. The program was beneficial for all participants, but it did require the time and attention of the school leader.

Transportation

Location of classes and transportation can also be a major barrier to access. A few schools are fortunately located close enough so students could walk to the IHEs for classes, or in urban areas, some high schools can subsidize students' public transportation costs. Many schools simply require students to figure out their own transportation, which limits the ability of younger students (who do not drive) or students without access to transportation.



One New Jersey college includes full transportation for students enrolled in their early college program and in select dual enrollment programs.

Virtual Options

With the increase in virtual course work, some colleges are increasing their virtual course options. For these courses, all college students are attending virtually and therefore, the high school student is on equal footing with those students. Space was also identified as an issue; if the class is held at the high school, the school needed to find additional available classroom(s). Sometimes classes are held virtually (with the college/university faculty at a different location), which may require the student to have additional technological resources.

While the student is not immersed in the full in-person campus experience, this increased access through technology opens opportunities for students experiencing transportation barriers and allows schools to expand the subject matters being offered. For example, if a school may not be able to justify the costs of staffing or busing because of an insufficient number of students enrolled in a world language course, they may be able to justify the lower cost of providing space and technology to one student to attend a course virtually.

Landscape of Dual Enrollment in New Jersey

Communication with Students/Families

LEA and IHE participants discussed the importance of positive and clear family communication. High school leaders found it is necessary to be explicit about the benefits and limitations of dual enrollment programs. For example, most students and families think that all dual enrollment course credits are transferrable to any college, which is not always the case.

Schools spoke to the need for greater publicity and awareness about dual enrollment programs and course options to students and families. Schools mentioned challenges in reaching areas with non-English speaking families or lower income areas where families might not see these courses as a possibility due to perceived costs.

Additionally, communication is needed early and often. Many high school staff and leaders spoke of the need to plan early for participation in dual enrollment classes, starting in ninth grade, working with students to plan for any required prerequisite courses or other class scheduling considerations and even simply building interest in the programs as early as middle or junior high school.



Some high schools conducted family information sessions for entering and/or attending ninth graders. The Commission's toolkit shares some communication best practices including example videos from East Brunswick High School's dual enrollment program.

Organization and Logistics

Early college programs also exist across the State, allowing students to earn an associate degree while still in high school. But in even the most successful programs, there were still process challenges. Participants spoke to the need for clear structure, organization, and collaboration between the high school and college for program success. The most successful programs were supported by full or at least part-time college staff who oversaw the logistics of the dual enrollment program. Many high school participants attributed success of programs to strong and consistent support for a program from a partnering college, parental and family buy-in, and staff support and management of the many operational pieces. Both LEAs and IHEs need to be willing to work collaboratively to address the many logistical challenges; without that commitment, it is difficult to develop programs beyond an ad hoc level.

Overall, both LEA and IHE participants in these focus groups and roundtable conversations were very supportive of dual enrollment programs. Many have built innovative and comprehensive programs, often with a particular career focus, such as police/fire and safety or hospitality and management. Many of these career clusters enable students to earn industry credentials. Opportunities to begin earning professional/industrial certifications while in high school provide those students with the opportunity to earn above minimum wage earnings upon high school graduation and the potential to be self-supporting.

III. Guiding Principles and Targets



The Commission developed the following principles to frame its recommendations and Statewide targets, to unify practitioners around common goals, and to more easily track New Jersey's progress in equitably expanding dual enrollment.

Principles

- 1) The purpose of any dual enrollment recommendation is to expand access to dual enrollment opportunities for all eligible students. Any Statewide initiative should provide direct support to students who need the most resources.
- 2) The Commission recognizes the diversity of types of high schools and IHEs across the State and seeks to support programs that meet the unique needs of each community.
- 3) Any State-funded dual enrollment opportunity will:
 - a. Provide students with high-quality, transferable courses that are the equivalent to those offered to regularly admitted college students or credential earners and either align with or exceed the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, when applicable;
 - b. Budget for wraparound costs (e.g. transportation, course supplies, food as needed) for students who are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch, or who would be eligible for New Jersey College Promise;
 - c. Result in hubs of best practices that can be shared across the State; and
 - d. Be assessed on an annual basis so policy makers and practitioners can evaluate the return of investment and program success.

Guiding Principles and Targets

The Commission's mission is to provide policy recommendations as directed by the statute, but the Commission is also committed to amplifying short- and long-term ways to reduce barriers for young adults on the path to earning college degrees and/or professional/industry certifications.

Targets

Throughout its engagement in this work, the Commission asked: "What are the outcomes we expect to see as a result of expanding dual enrollment opportunities for New Jersey students in the short- and long-term?"

The ultimate purpose of creating dual enrollment opportunities is to increase the number of students earning credentials and degrees, leading to more New Jersey residents with livable wages and fulfilling careers. As research shows, earning dual enrollment credits improves students' chances of earning credentials and/or degrees. Therefore, the Commission believes that by immediately increasing the number of students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course in high school, and by closing the access gap among student groups, the researched-based assumption is that there will be an increase in the number of students enrolled and succeeding in college.

To improve access to post-secondary degree or certificates, by 2028 New Jersey should:

- **Double** the number of high school students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course;
- **Close access gaps of all student groups** so there is no difference among enrollment of student demographic groups;
- **Have 100 percent of high schools** providing dual enrollment options for students; and
- **Increase of credential and college attainment for all students** and double the percentage of economically disadvantaged students achieving such credentials and degrees.

The above targets are intended to direct policy makers and practitioners toward a common goal and will serve as a standard to measure progress and outcomes in the recommendations provided by the Commission below. The Commission is confident these targets can be achieved through a multi-pronged approach beginning with the release of free technical assistance to stakeholders provided by NJDOE in partnership with OSHE. These supports will help districts expand existing dual enrollment programs and create new programs starting as early as the 2023-2024 school year. Then, to inform long-term, sustainable, student-focused, and practical policies, the recommended pilot program can begin in 2024. The immediate technical assistance and the implementation of the recommendations below, including the three-year pilot, will increase the numbers of innovative, high-quality programs, while expanding access to dual enrollment opportunities.

IV. Recommendations and Considerations



In response to the review of the New Jersey landscape captured in earlier sections of this report and building upon recommendations of the On-ramps to College Working Group, the College Affordability Study Commission Report, the Commission presents the following independent recommendations. The Commission believes that if the recommendations are followed, New Jersey will be able to meet the aggressive targets listed in the prior section.

1) Create a three-year pilot

The Commission recommends New Jersey develop and invest in a three-year pilot, which would simultaneously serve to inform future dual enrollment policies, while also immediately expanding dual enrollment opportunities across the state. The pilot should:

- Collect and use pilot data and lessons learned for developing strategies and policies to expand dual enrollment and early college models.
- Support new or expand innovative dual enrollment programs in different-sized high schools in the north, central, and south regions of the State.
- Fund tuition and anticipated wraparound costs for qualifying students (see page 22 for recommended funding models).

Recommendations and Considerations

- Partner new program leaders with high quality existing programs.
- Be supported by staff at the NJDOE and OSHE.
- Lead to a Statewide database of best practices and measures of success, such as progress toward the targets listed above.
- Provide students in the pilot the fiscal, academic, social, and career supports high school students require when engaging in college-level coursework and selecting a career pathway.

The lessons learned from the pilot will inform how IHEs, LEAs, and State agencies build and expand on high-quality dual enrollment offerings in the long term. This expansion will occur in a gradual and strategic way that meets the individual needs of the State's diverse student population, and can be implemented flexibly and in a wide range of LEA and postsecondary learning structures and regions. Finally, the pilot will foster innovative programs that provide diverse learners with on-ramps to postsecondary success and preparation for 21st century careers.

2) Continue to allow for program flexibility

Dual enrollment State policies should establish standards that can serve as the foundation for expanding statewide access to high quality coursework and student wraparound supports but remain as flexible as possible to spark innovative practices and allow for different local contexts. The Commission recognizes New Jersey high schools vary widely in their size, staffing, structure, schedules, location, proximity to IHEs, student populations, and even surrounding labor markets. For these reasons, rigid and proscriptive credit requirements from the State do not make the most sense for our high school students. However, the robust dual enrollment and early college programs throughout the State demonstrate that despite the many layers of institutional and student diversity, colleges and high schools are capable of partnering to expand and enhance opportunities for students.

For these reasons and more, the Commission is not recommending that New Jersey expand dual enrollment by requiring a singular instructional model or type of program to be implemented in each of its high schools (see example types of programs on page 22). Instead, the Commission is recommending the State, through the pilot, test a flexible financial model that allows the adjustment of the fund distribution and responsibilities depending on the location of the dual enrollment courses. If pilot participants apply this flexible financial model, the State can evaluate the effectiveness. If the distribution of costs is effective in supporting the coursework and wraparound supports for students, particularly students who receive free or reduced lunch, the State would have evidence to invest future dollars to offset the LEA and/or IHE costs, depending on the model.

3) Increase State-level support

Dual enrollment program expansions should continue to be supported by both education agencies (NJDOE and OSHE) so the agencies can continue to evaluate policies and regulations regarding dual enrollment and early college programs. To support the pilot, the Commission recommends a minimum of one full-time staff member at NJDOE and one full-time staff member at OSHE to support the grant process, professional development, pilot communities of practice and related convenings, which may require additional funding.

Recommendations and Considerations

Example Activities and Fund Distribution Between College to High School

Table 1 below shows a distribution of example activities that may need to be provided by the IHE and the LEA to ensure students successfully navigate the dual enrollment process. Column one lists the three types of locations: at the high school; at the college; or hybrid. Columns two and three list the types of activities and support staff at an IHE or a high school, respectively, may need to provide to a student.

Table 1

Location	Example Activity College/IHE	Example Activity High School/LEA
At the high school	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of curriculum • Review of instructor credentials • Assist students with registration • Transcription of credits 	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to students and parents • Liaise with college in registration process • Submit final grades
At the college campus	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist students with registration • Transcription of credits 	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to students and parents • Liaise with college in registration process
Hybrid: Virtual college courses at the high school	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist students with registration • Transcription of credits 	In kind contributions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to students and parents • Liaise with college in registration process

Table 2 below provides the recommended financial model, or fund distribution for pilot participants to apply to cover the costs of activities for each IHE and/or LEA. Column one lists three locations: at the high school; at the college; or hybrid. Columns two and three list the recommended fund distribution that pilot participants may apply to their programs to provide the evidence-based supports students need when participating in dual enrollment or early college programs. To develop the model, the Commission surveyed IHEs in various regions of the State and determined that on average, given the range of fees, a reasonable expected cost would be \$300 per course, with the IHE receiving the majority of those funds if the student took a course on its campus and the LEA receiving the majority of funds if the student attended the course at their high school.

Table 2

Location	Fund Distribution College/IHE	Fund Distribution High school/LEA
At the high school	\$50/course	\$250/course
At the college campus	\$250/course	\$50/course
Hybrid: at the high school; virtual college courses	\$200/course	\$100/course

Recommendations and Considerations

4) Clarify terms relating to dual enrollment and early college programs

Clear definitions of programs are critical to ensure equitable access to dual enrollment programs. If the State is not able to properly capture all methods by which high school students are simultaneously earning high school and college credits or credentials, the public will not be able to fully understand the gaps of opportunities among various student groups. As mentioned above, the State does not currently collect data regarding high school students who are enrolled in an early college program. The Commission recommends that New Jersey codify the below definitions. As variety exists between and amongst high schools and IHEs regarding these terms, codifying the below definitions in regulatory code and guidance would improve the quality of New Jersey dual enrollment and early college data.

Term	Definition
Dual Enrollment Course/ Credit	Course credit earned by high school students that is equivalent to that offered to regularly admitted college students, enables students to meet or exceed the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs), and is accepted toward both college degree and high school graduation requirements. To qualify as dual enrollment for the purpose of NJDOE data collections, there must be an existing articulation agreement between the high school and a college or university when the student is enrolled in the course.
Early College or Credential Program	A program of study in which high school students earn a series of dual enrollment credit that culminate in an associate degree or at least two years of college credits toward a bachelor's degree in high school.
"Option II"	Individualized learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom that enable students to meet or exceed the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs). Students are permitted to earn credit toward graduation through Option II experiences. These experiences include but are not limited to: course remediation/acceleration, early college credit where there is no formal partnership between the high school and college, online learning, work-based programs, school-based programs, and internships.

5) Through a longitudinal data system, create a statewide data report to annually evaluate dual enrollment program and outcomes

NJDOE and OSHE should continue to build their data and reporting capacity so policy makers and the public can identify opportunity gaps or inefficiencies in dual enrollment programs and so the LEAs, colleges, students, families, and the general public can evaluate the effectiveness of dual enrollment in expanding access and improving college affordability and completion.

6) Develop toolkit and technical assistance to help LEAs implement and expand dual enrollment

The Commission strongly supports NJDOE and OSHE's plans to provide Statewide technical assistance to LEA leaders in partnerships with IHEs. Website resources coupled with in-person and virtual professional development regarding efficient and effective best practices will be instrumental in expanding dual enrollment in the short-term. The NJDOE should expand its guidance provided in its [Maximizing Federal Funds](#) resource to help LEAs identify sustainable Federal funding and other available resources that will enable LEAs to reduce costs and increase equitable access to dual enrollment.

V. Conclusion



Education leaders and policy makers who focused on expanding career pathway options have consistently identified dual enrollment as a key mechanism to increase college access, affordability, and completion for New Jersey students. Based on research, dual enrollment, if implemented well, has the potential to close opportunity gaps among students of different races, learning needs, and socioeconomic statuses in their path to pursuing and completing a college degree or industry-valued credential. The Commission's recommendations set forth in this report create a blueprint for New Jersey's next steps in expanding students' opportunities. By shining a light on best practices and highlighting strong dual enrollment and early college programs throughout New Jersey, improved State agency supports and technical assistance, and through a State investment in an innovative three-year pilot, New Jersey can expand and enhance students' dual enrollment opportunities. This pilot proposal honors the incredible work and creativity of educators and schools throughout the state, while acknowledging the profound potential benefits of providing all students opportunities to earn high school and college credits concurrently.

Appendix I: Research Citations

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Appendix II: An Act Establishing the “Dual Enrollment Study Commission.”

P.L. 2018, CHAPTER 145, approved December 17, 2018 Senate, No. 870 (First Reprint)

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. There is established a Dual Enrollment Study Commission for the purpose of developing a Statewide framework for use in the future implementation of an expanded dual enrollment program. The commission shall consist of 11 members, including the Secretary of Higher Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee; the individual who served as the Chair of the College Affordability Study Commission established pursuant to P.L.2015, c.4; and eight members appointed by the Governor, including one from each of the following organizations: the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the New Jersey Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the New Jersey Presidents’ Council.

b. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 30 days after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made.

c. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds made available to the commission for its purposes.

2. a. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable, but no later than 30 days following the appointment of the members. The commission shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the commission.

b. The Department of Education shall provide such staff and related support services as the commission requires to carry out its work. The commission also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

3. a. It shall be the duty of the Dual Enrollment Study Commission to study issues related to the implementation of an expanded dual enrollment program. Through the program, all college-ready high school students will be eligible to enroll in up to 15 college credits at a partnering institution of higher education while still enrolled in high school. The commission shall:

- (1) identify the costs associated with the implementation of the program, and develop a fair and reasonable distribution of costs among students, school districts, and institutions of higher education;
- (2) survey institutions of higher education about possible tuition discounts;
- (3) identify ways to minimize or eliminate the program costs borne by school districts;
- (4) study the viability of including transportation services in the program;
- (5) review information related to the utilization of dual enrollment programs throughout the State;
- (6) study the effect of dual enrollment programs on college participation rates, college graduation rates, and the average time to degree;
- (7) assess the rigor of dual enrollment courses, including the academic qualifications of faculty who teach the courses; [and]

Appendix II: An Act Establishing the “Dual Enrollment Study Commission.”

(8) develop any other proposals, such as the offering of dual enrollment through online curriculum, that the commission believes would increase the success of an expanded dual enrollment program; and

(9) research and develop proposals for sustaining and expanding early college high schools, which is an intensive, evidence-based model of dual enrollment

b. The commission shall issue a Statewide framework for use in the future implementation of an expanded dual enrollment program no later than one year after the commission organizes. The framework shall ensure that dual enrollment programs in effect prior to the organization of the commission are able to continue.

4. This act shall take effect immediately, and the commission shall expire 30 days after the submission of its report.

Establishes Dual Enrollment Study Commission.

Text Version of Figure 1

Percentage of 11th and 12th graders in New Jersey public schools who were enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course during the school year over five school years

Year	Percentage of Students
16-17	17.3
17-18	13.3
18-19	19.0
19-20	20.2
20-21	22.3

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Text Version of Figure 2

Percentage of 9th through 12th grade students enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course during the 2020-2021 school year by student groups

Student Group	Percentage of Students
Black or African American	8.2
Hispanic	9.8
Two or more races	14.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	15.0
White	18.9
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	23.3
Statewide average	15.2
Military-connected students	12.0
Economically disadvantaged students	9.3
Homeless students	7.2
Students with disabilities	5.5
Students in foster care	4.8
Migrant students	3.3
English Learners	3.1

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