CCRC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER
Teachers College, Columbia University

Connect the Path: Dual Credit as a College-Going and College-Success Strategy

Aurely Garcia Tulloch, Community College Research Center
Kentucky Student Success Summit; Lexington, KY
February 10, 2025

Test Your Knowledge

On your computer or mobile device, navigate to https://kahoot.it/

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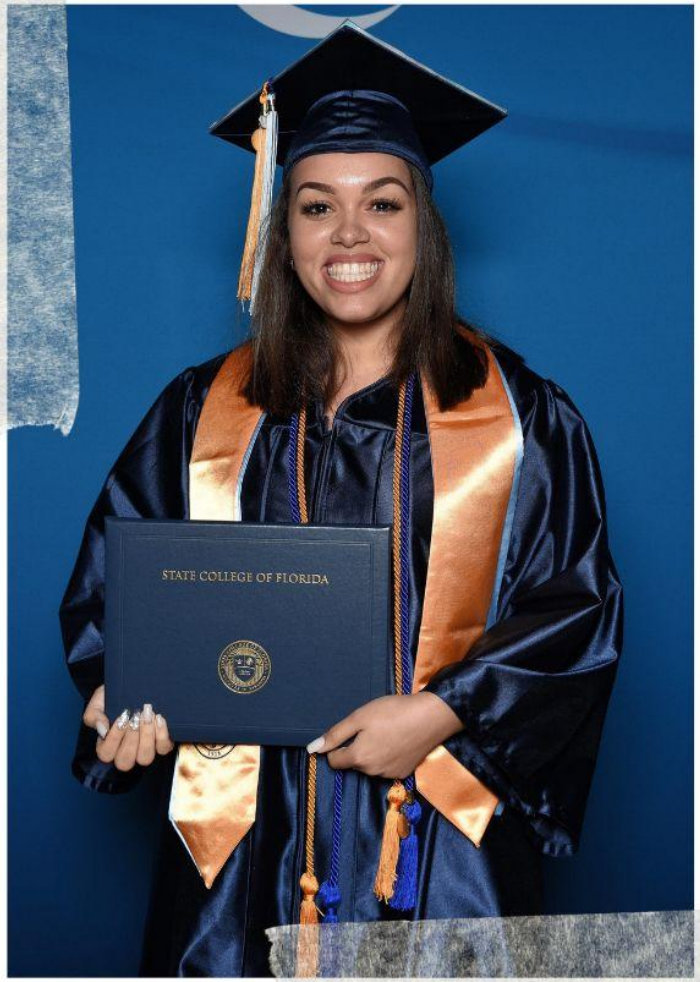

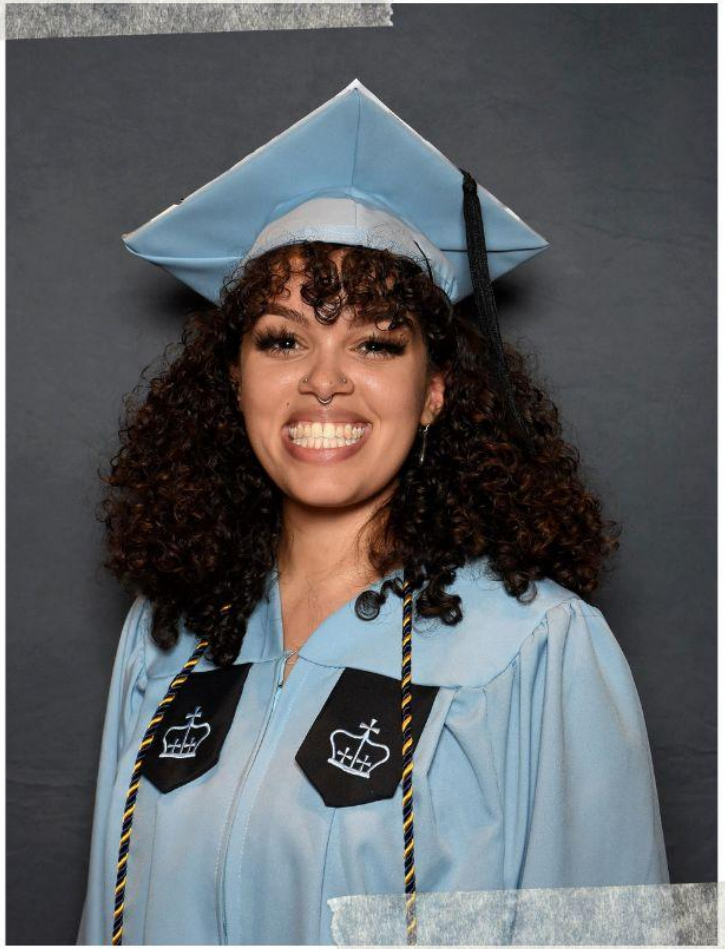

From Dual Credit Student to Dual Credit Researcher

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2.5M 2022-23 First Ever National Dual Credit Count in IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey

	Dual Enrollment	Total Undergraduate	Percent DE
Total	2,489,859	21,220,413	12
Community colleges	1,784,966	8,618,323	21
Public four-years	445,224	7,121,611	6
Private not-for-profit	207,652	3,504,732	6
Other public two-years, less-than-two-years	46,249	237,969	19
Private for-profits	5,768	1,737,778	0

IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey, 2022-23 Academic Year

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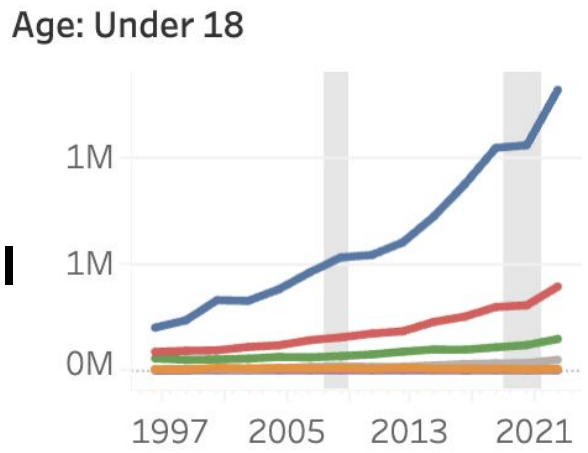
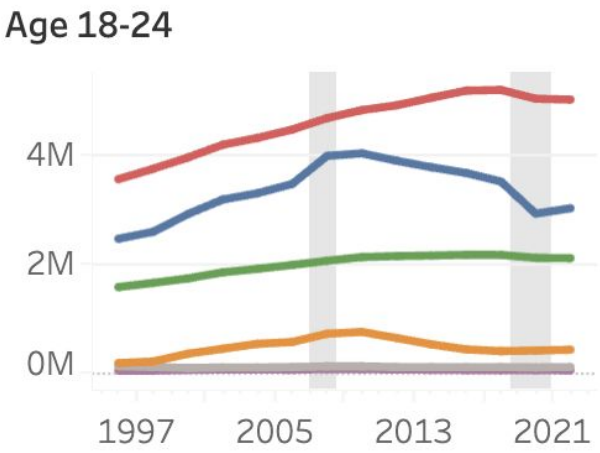
High School Dual Credit on the Rise Nationally and in Kentucky

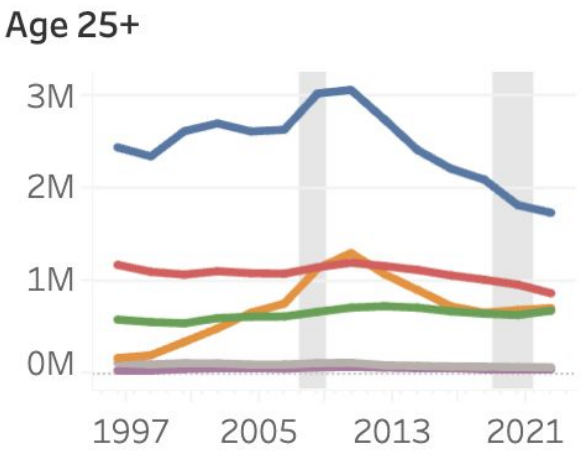
Undergraduate Fall Enrollments by Student Age

Sector (CCRC Definition)
- Community colleges
- Public four-years
- Private not-for-profit four-years
- Private for-profits
- Other public two-years, less-tha...
- Other private not-for-profits

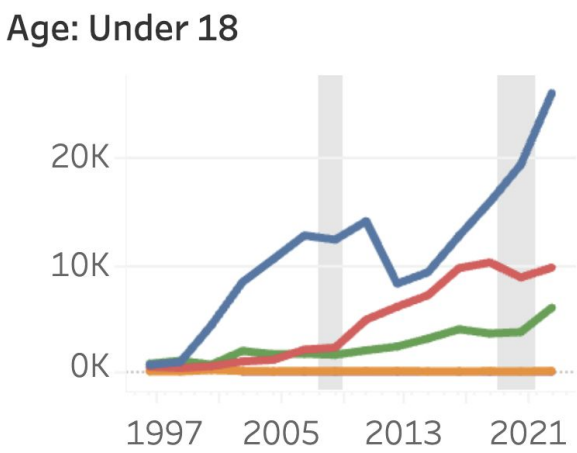
U.S. Overall

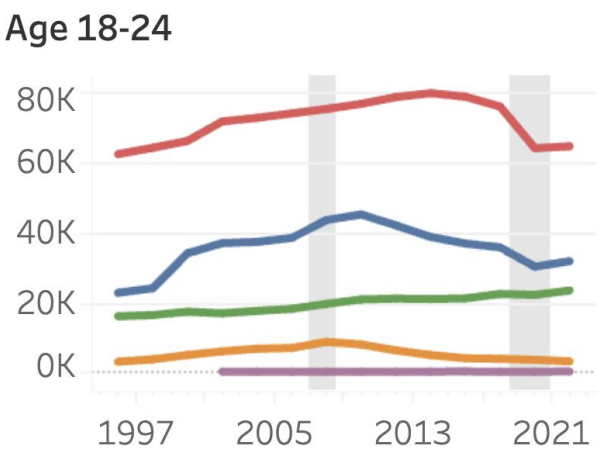


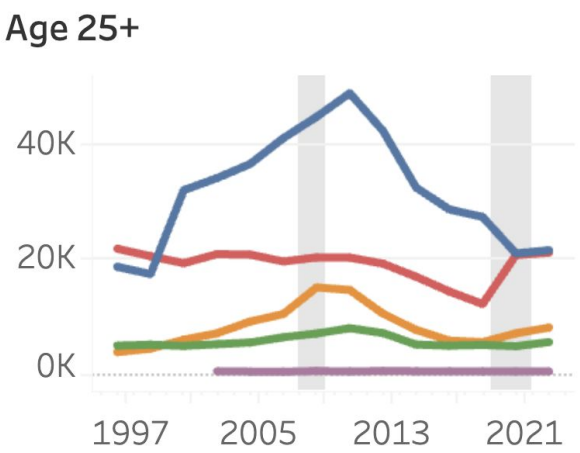




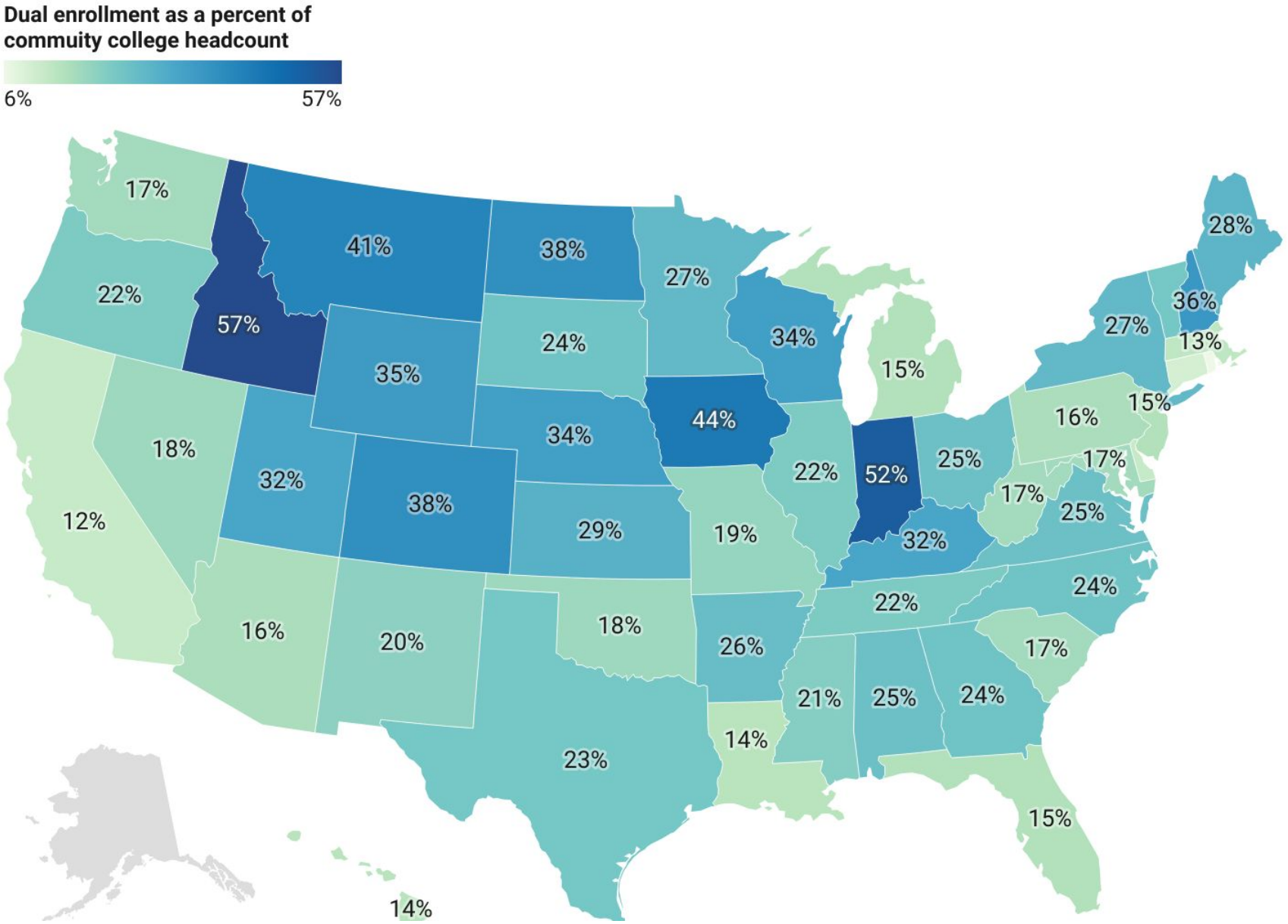
Kentucky







Percentage of Community College Students in High School in 2022-23



Dual Credit:
21% of 2022-23 Community College Enrollment

CCRC analysis of IPEDS Data
https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/how-many-students-are-taking-dual-enrollment-courses-in-high-school-new-national-state-and-college-level-data.html

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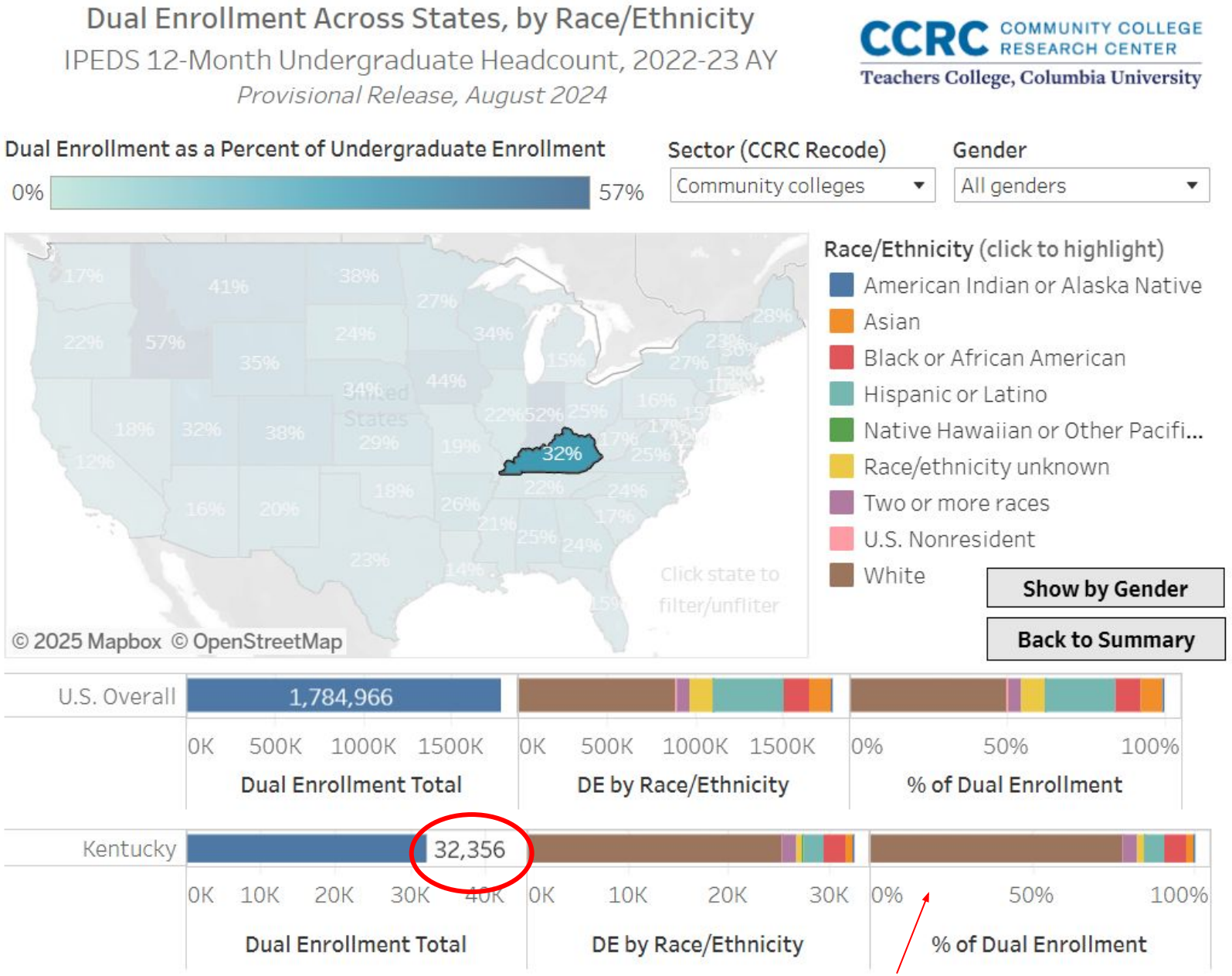

Dual Credit Accounts for 1 in 3 KCTCS Students in 2022-23

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https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/how-many-students-are-taking-dual-enrollment-courses-in-high-school-new-national-state-and-college-level-data.html

Recent Quasi-Experimental Studies Highlight Potential of Dual Credit for Increasing College Access and Success

DC can **benefit students who are falling behind** in high school.

(Lee & Villarreal, 2022)

DC **increases college applications and acceptances** among Black students.

(Liu et al., 2022)

DC Math **boosts Black & Hispanic student entrance and persistence in STEM.**

(Minaya, 2021)

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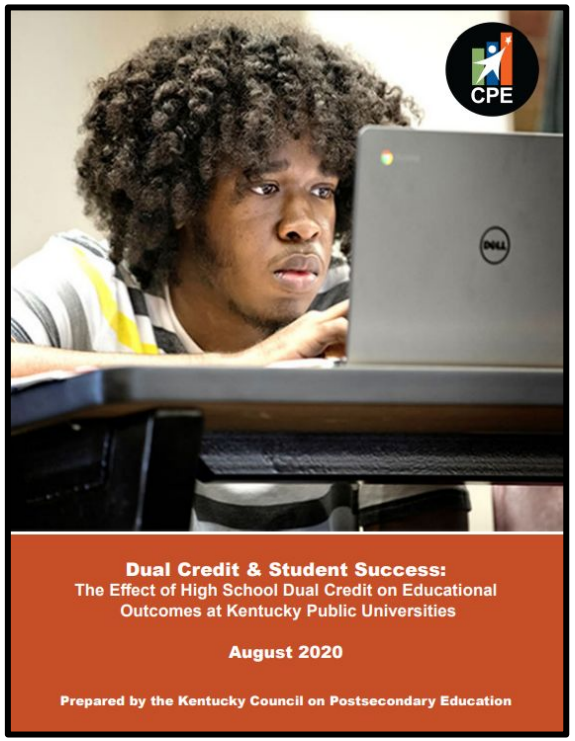
Findings on the Effects of DC in Kentucky



- Dual credit students are **more likely to continue college for a second year and earn higher grades.**
  - Among **non-minority, low-income students**, participation increased second-year persistence by 9.3 percentage points.
  - Among **underrepresented minority, low-income students**, participation increased second-year persistence by over 8 percentage points, and the likelihood of earning a 3.0 GPA or higher in their first year also increased by over 8 percentage points.

https://cpe.ky.gov/data/reports/dualcreditreport.pdf

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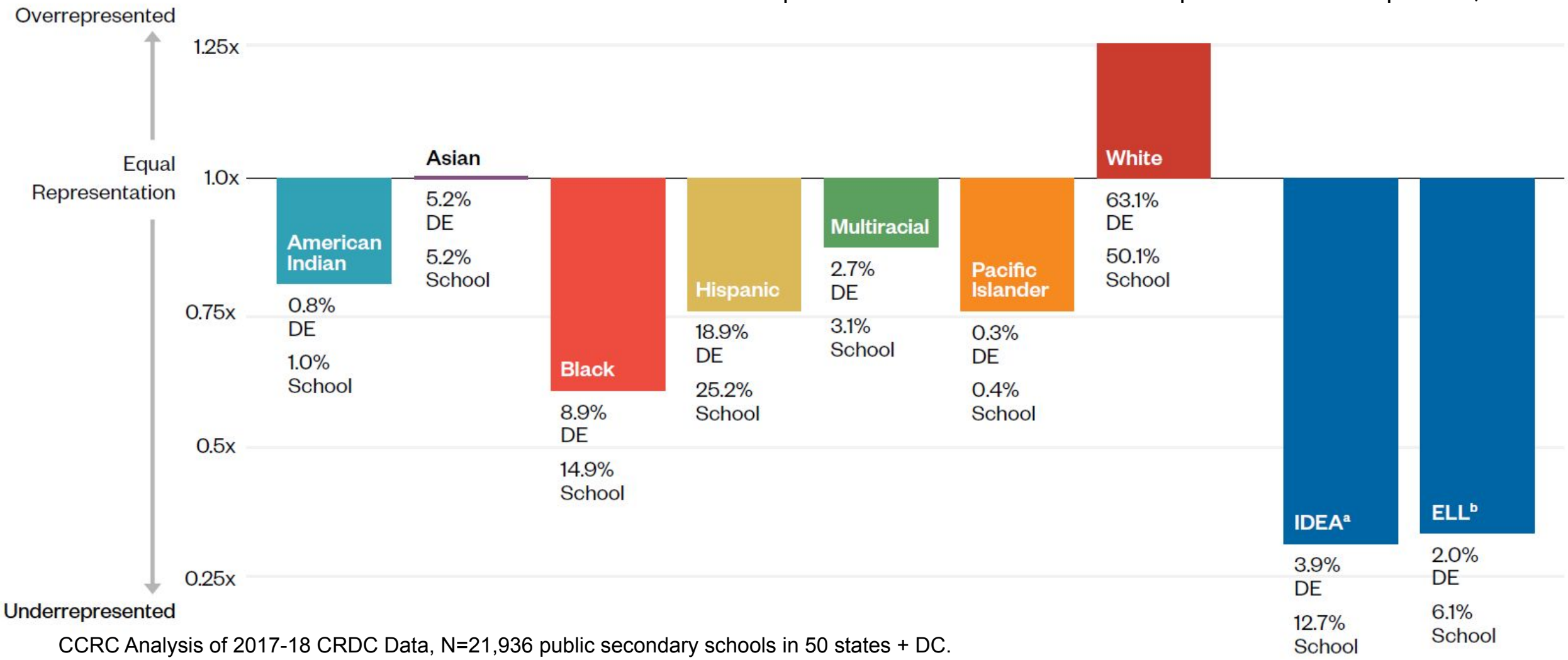
“Programs of Privilege”
Access to Dual Credit Uneven

Representation in Dual Enrollment compared to School Population, 2017-18



CCRC Analysis of 2017-18 CRDC Data, N=21,936 public secondary schools in 50 states + DC.

Major Barriers to Dual Credit Programs

- **Policies**: Lack of funding, instructor qualifications, student eligibility
- **Practices**: Lack of outreach, advising, supports
- **Mindsets**: Beliefs that dual credit is only for “advanced” students

Source: https://cherp.utah.edu/_resources/documents/publications/research_priorities_for_advancing_equitable_dual_enrollment_policy_and_practice.pdf

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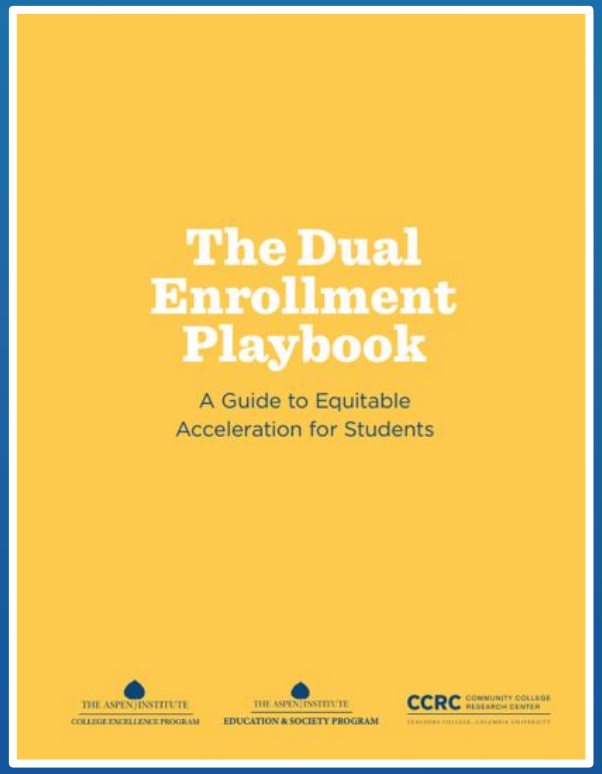
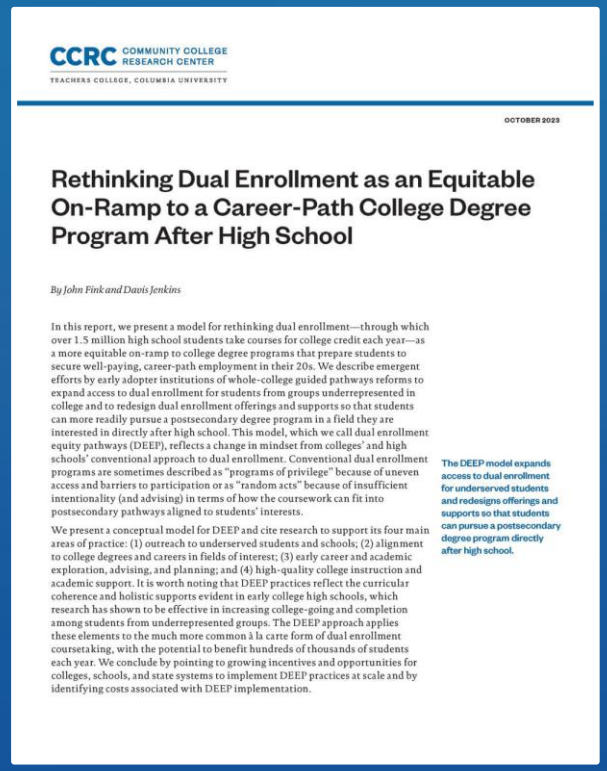
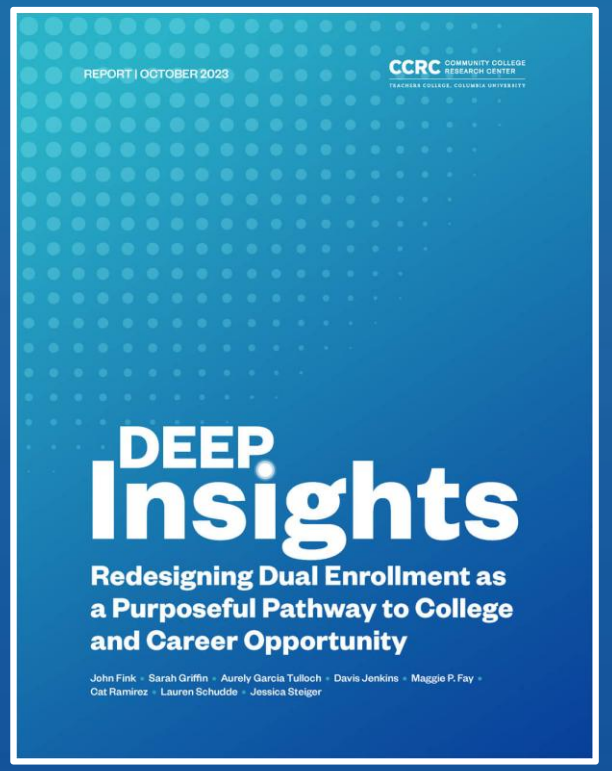
How are Practitioners Strengthening DC as an Equitable On-Ramp to College Degrees?



The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students (October 2020)



Rethinking Dual Enrollment as an Equitable On-Ramp to a Career-Path College Degree Program After High School (October 2023)



DEEP Insights: Redesigning Dual Enrollment as a Purposeful Pathway to College and Career Opportunity (October 2023)

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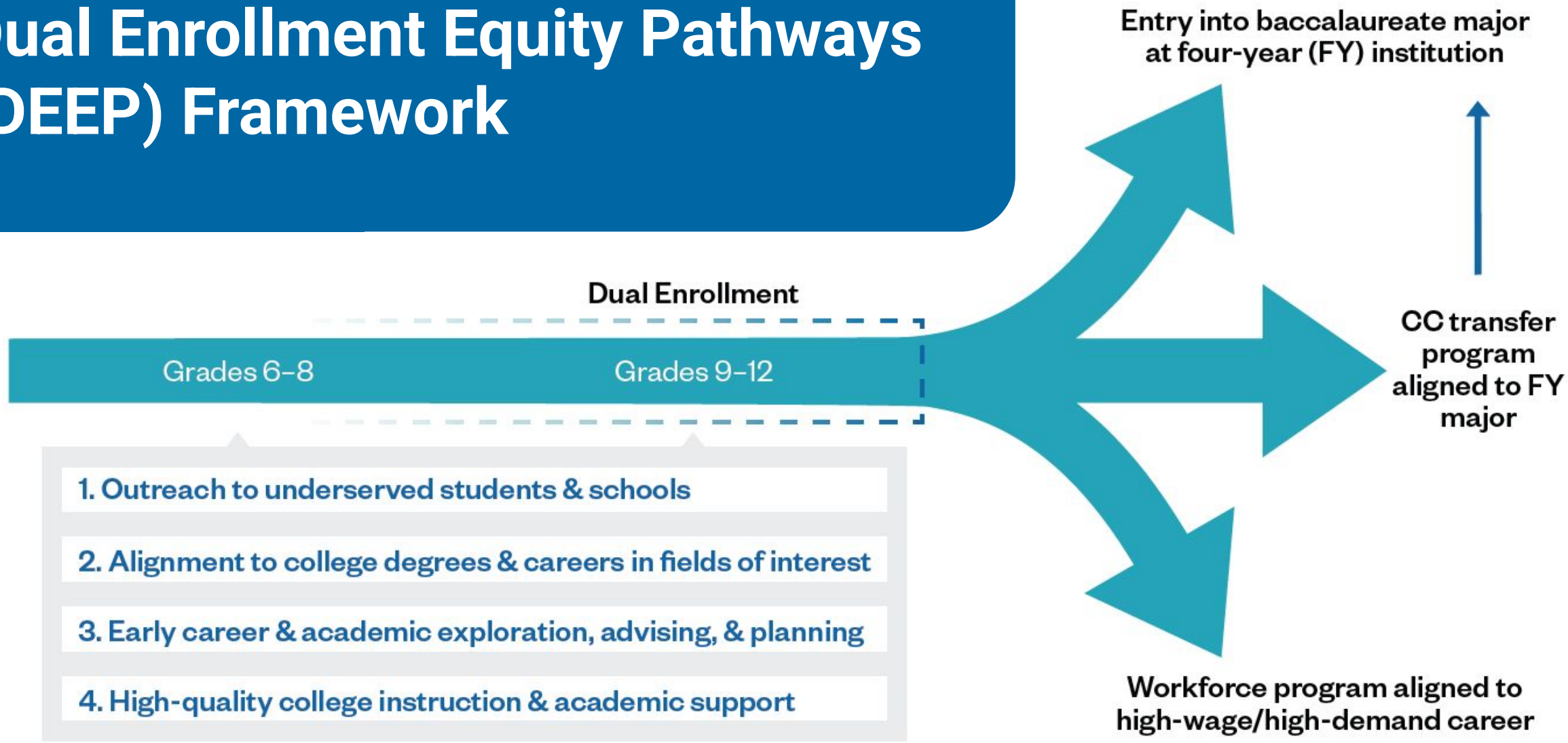
Dual Enrollment Equity Pathways (DEEP) Framework



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DEEP Field Research Sites

- **Lee College** (2 school partners)
- **Navarro College** (2 school partners)
- **San Jacinto College** (1 school partner)
- **Chipola College** (1 school partner)
- **Tallahassee Community College** (1 school partner)
- **Miami-Dade College**, 4 campuses (5 school partners)

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Miami Dade College

Outreach to Underserved Students and Schools

Focus outreach on underserved high schools, students, and communities.

Start outreach before high school.

Leverage community connections to build awareness

Build trust with and educate parents and families.

Use high school grades as an alternative to placement testing for eligibility.

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Align DC to College Degrees and Careers in Fields of Interest

Inventory current DC offerings.

Map DC offerings to college degree programs in fields of interest.

Embed DC offerings in career-connected high school programs.

Lee College

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Chipola College

Advise Students to Explore Interests and Develop Career Path Plans

Showcase DC to support exploration.

Coordinate advising roles across sectors.

Help students develop a college program plan and provide checkpoint advising.

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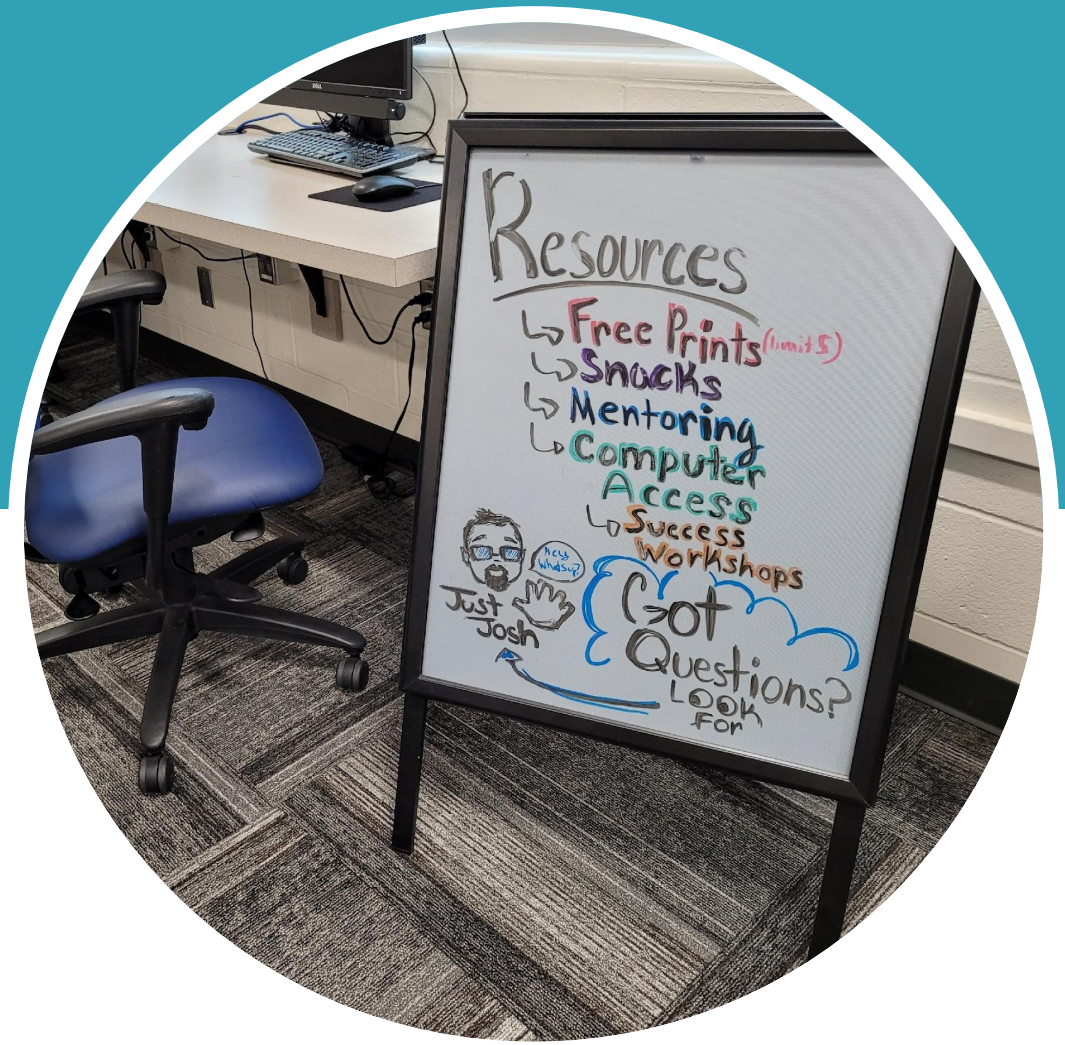
Support Students by Delivering High-Quality Instruction

Scaffold coursework and front-load supports.

Respond quickly when students are struggling.

Provide additional, structured support for online classes.

Support DC instructors and monitor quality.



San Jacinto College

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Think-Pair-Share

What DEEP practices are currently working well in your DE partnerships?

What challenges do you face in implementing DEEP practices?

What further actions and investments are needed?

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Leadership Mindsets for Building DEEP Partnerships

Establishing a Shared DEEP Mindset

Prioritize underserved communities and schools and position DC as a pathway for upward mobility and workforce development.

Commit to doing what is best for students (even if not expedient).

Believe in—and support—the potential of all students.

Recast high school CTE as a college degree pathway and expand college and career opportunities.

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Leadership Strategies for Building DEEP Partnerships

Enabling Practices at Scale

Negotiate college and K-12 interests to find "win-wins" that benefit students.

Strengthen 'back-end' business processes.

Evaluate whether DC staffing is adequate and effectively organized.

Develop a supply of qualified instructors, particularly for underserved schools.

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Potential Costs and Incentives for Implementing DEEP Practices

	Potential Costs
Colleges	1. Direct investments in advising, instructor training, outreach/ recruitment, program operations 2. Discounted tuition/fee revenue 3. Organization costs: personnel time for planning and management
K-12 Schools	1. Losing students—and funding—to colleges 2. Added burden on counselors; costs for coordination and outreach 3. Costs for transportation, books, other related expenses 4. Competition with AP, IB, and other advanced curriculum 5. Program competition between high school and college CTE offerings

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Potential Incentives for Taking a DEEP Approach to Dual Credit

	Potential Incentives
Colleges	1. Declining enrollments among older students; open seats 2. Expanding the pool of potential college-going students after high school 3. Downstream benefits to retention, completion, and statewide performance funding by increasing yield of former DE students 4. Reputational benefits
K-12 Schools	1. Attracting students and families looking for college acceleration options 2. Can offer new and attractive programs in partnership with colleges 3. Improved student outcomes, particularly for underserved populations and schools 4. Gains in state performance reporting and funding

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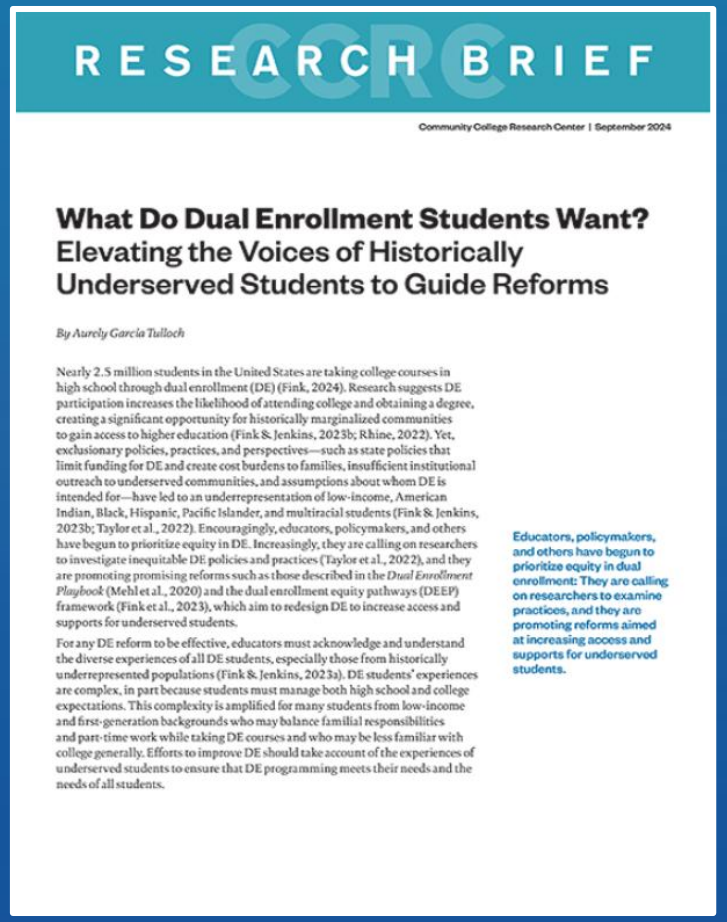

RESEARCH BRIEF

Community College Research Center | September 2024

What Do Dual Enrollment Students Want? Elevating the Voices of Historically Underserved Students to Guide Reforms

By Aurely Garcia Tulloch

Nearly 2.5 million students in the United States are taking college courses in high school through dual enrollment (DE) (Fink, 2024). Research suggests DE participation increases the likelihood of attending college and obtaining a degree, creating a significant opportunity for historically marginalized communities to gain access to higher education (Fink & Jenkins, 2023b; Rhine, 2022). Yet, exclusionary policies, practices, and perspectives—such as state policies that limit funding for DE and create cost burdens to families, insufficient institutional outreach to underserved communities, and assumptions about whom DE is intended for—have led to an underrepresentation of low-income, American Indian, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and multiracial students (Fink & Jenkins, 2023b; Taylor et al., 2022). Encouragingly, educators, policymakers, and others have begun to prioritize equity in DE. Increasingly, they are calling on researchers to investigate inequitable DE policies and practices (Taylor et al., 2022), and they are promoting promising reforms such as those described in the *Dual Enrollment Playbook* (Mehl et al., 2020) and the dual enrollment equity pathways (DEEP) framework (Fink et al., 2023), which aim to redesign DE to increase access and supports for underserved students.

Educators, policymakers, and others have begun to prioritize equity in dual enrollment: They are calling on researchers to examine practices, and they are promoting reforms aimed at increasing access and supports for underserved students.

For any DE reform to be effective, educators must acknowledge and understand the diverse experiences of all DE students, especially those from historically underrepresented populations (Fink & Jenkins, 2023a). DE students' experiences are complex, in part because students must manage both high school and college expectations. This complexity is amplified for many students from low-income and first-generation backgrounds who may balance familial responsibilities and part-time work while taking DE courses and who may be less familiar with college generally. Efforts to improve DE should take account of the experiences of underserved students to ensure that DE programming meets their needs and the needs of all students.

Connecting DEEP to the Student Experience in DC

An analysis of focus group interviews with 97 predominantly **Black, Hispanic, and low-income** students uncovered six themes:

1. Students want to know about DC options earlier.
2. Students want well-informed DC advisors who empower them.
3. Students want their DC courses to be aligned with career and academic pathways in their fields of interest.
4. Students want engaging learning experiences in their online courses.
5. Students want to know how to balance the high school experience and DC coursetaking.
6. Students want to know how to find scholarships and manage debt to help them attend college after high school.

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Key Takeaways

1. Conventional approach to dual credit has resulted in inequitable access and earned the monikers of "**Programs of Privilege**" and "**Random Acts of DC**"
2. Dual credit has great potential but is **currently underutilized** as strategy to expand access to high-opportunity postsecondary pathways
3. Exclusionary policies, practices, and mindsets have resulted in **inequitable access** to dual credit courses
4. **Improvement at scale is possible** – and essential to further expanding opportunity for students and building back enrollments for colleges

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DEEP@CCRC

Resources on dual enrollment equity pathways for K-12 and college practitioners.

Thank you!

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Kentucky's Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) Toolkit

https://sites.google.com/view/kyepsotoolkit/home

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