

## *On Ramp to College: A State Policymaker's Guide to Dual Enrollment*<sup>1</sup>

### **Plan for Policymakers**

#### **A New Generation of Dual Enrollment Policies**

“Based on Jobs for the Future’s experience in the field, we have defined high-level principles that characterize the best dual enrollment programs:

- The mission of dual enrollment is to serve a wide range of students, particularly those from groups who attend college at disproportionately low rates.
- All of the state’s public high schools provide equal access to dual enrollment opportunities.
- College credit substitutes for high school credit, allowing students to accelerate in the specific subjects in which they demonstrate strength.
- The secondary and post-secondary sectors share responsibility for dual enrollment student success.
- Funding mechanisms are based on the principle of no cost to students and no financial harm to secondary and post-secondary partners.
- The state collects individual student and statewide data in order to assess the program’s impact and help design improvements.
- The policy is part of a statewide agenda to increase the rigor of the high school diploma and is guided by a K-16 governance structure” (9).

#### **Eligibility**

- “High school students can enroll in a college course based on meeting the prerequisites for that course alone. Students need not have met all high school graduation requirements or overall college-admission standards.
- The secondary and postsecondary sectors together determine eligibility requirements.
- Rather than a single, state-mandated test, there are multiple ways to demonstrate readiness, including a combination” (21).

#### **Equitable Access**

- “All high schools provide a state-defined minimum number of dual enrollment courses or credits.
- All public postsecondary institutions participate in dual enrollment.
- All qualified students have the option to build dual enrollment into their individual learning plans.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, Nancy, Joel Vargas, and Janet Santos. “On Ramp to College: A State Policymaker’s Guide to Dual Enrollment.” Jobs for the Future, 2008. <http://www.jff.org/Documents/OnRamp.pdf>

- The state requires that high school/college partnerships are structured to help students to prepare themselves for dual enrollment—including preparation for students who need support in becoming eligible.
- All students and families must be informed of the availability and benefits of dual enrollment” (24).

## **Quality**

- “College courses taught at high schools use the same syllabus, assign comparable work, and give the same examinations as the equivalent courses taught on the postsecondary campus.
- The kind and number of college courses offered is limited in order to monitor quality efficiently.
- Higher education sets minimum instructor qualifications” (27).

## **Academic and Social Support for At-Risk Students**

- “Each partnership between secondary and postsecondary institutions specifies student support responsibilities in a memorandum of understanding [MOU]. The state may provide a template for the MOU.
- Each partnership provides a liaison between the high school and college, with responsibilities for advising students, arranging course schedules, and linking students to support services.
- High schools and postsecondary institutions together select a limited number of ‘high support’ pathways leading to credit in general education or a career certificate, and they counsel students needing such support to participate.
- Provisions are made for students at risk of dropping out of high school to participate in on-campus, credit-bearing courses.
- A ‘college preparatory’ strand is designated for students with risk factors such as being overage and under-credited or reentering the system. These students may take non-credit developmental or remedial courses to help them prepare for college-level work—or better, special preparatory courses” (31).

## **Funding and Finance**

- “Secondary and postsecondary institutions are compensated for each student’s education in such a way that both are held harmless or held almost harmless.
- Courses are provided either to all students or to low-income students free of charge.
- Funding streams are flexible enough that money can be used for professional development, books, laboratory fees, and student transportation” (33).

## **Developing Data Systems to Monitor Quality and Success**

- “State K-12 and postsecondary data systems can identify current and former dual enrollees and distinguish participants and outcomes by social and academic characteristics.

- Unit-record databases with unique student identifiers allow the K-12 and postsecondary sectors to share data and monitor the progress of dual enrollees from high school to and through postsecondary education.
- Data collection and analyses are designed to provide evidence about whether a state is meeting its specified goals for dual enrollment.
- The state reports annually on dual enrollment participation and impact” (38).

### **Governance, Accountability, Alignment**

- “A state body representing education leaders across grades P-16 has the authority and responsibility for guiding dual enrollment policy.
- Dual enrollment programs have a state-level administrative structure that can provide assistance with data collection, designation of dual credit courses, monitoring program quality, and making improvements” (41).