

Dual Enrollment Opportunity Study: A Report to the NC General Assembly

Who Participates in Career and College Promise?

Approximately 28% of 12th graders across the state participated in the three CCP pathways in the 2019-20 school year. The demographic characteristics of participating students varied by pathway.

28%
of NC 12th
Graders in
2019-2020

The College Transfer Pathway

The College Transfer Pathway had the widest disparities in participation rates with female students participating at much higher rates than male students, white students participating at much higher rates than Black and Hispanic students, and economically disadvantaged students participating at much lower rates than non-economically disadvantaged students.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway

The CTE Pathway had equitable participation by gender and economic status and smaller disparities by race/ethnicity compared to the College Transfer pathway.

The Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS) Pathway

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

Participation by High School and by Community College

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 in Dual Enrollment

There are many factors that affect high school students' access to and successful completion of college-level courses, some of which are amenable to policy intervention. 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. District, school, and college staff throughout North Carolina identified specific resources and policies that would help expand access including:

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

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

Key strategy to support student success:

Encourage colleges to share course performance 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. At the high school level, NCDPI has developed detailed content standards that summarize learning expectations for students. At the community college level, NCCCS 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. Because of the differing levels of detail in the two sets of documents, the current study focused on examining alignment between core content or concepts.

Overall, the 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. 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 primarily 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.

Expectations are similar regarding literary analysis, research, and writing; there are some areas, however, that are not mentioned in the college course descriptions.

English

Overall strong alignment in the general concepts covered, with additional content included in the college Chemistry and Physics courses.

Science

Both sets of standards (American History and World History) expect students to engage in historical analyses but otherwise have different approaches.

History

There are 30 high school and college courses students can take for their fourth math with no specific content required. Therefore, no alignment was done.

Math

About this Report

The NC Department of Public Instruction contracted with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to conduct a legislatively-mandated third-party 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. Key findings from the study appear in this executive summary with more detail in the full report. The study team looked at Career and College Promise (CCP), North Carolina's statewide dual enrollment program. CCP includes three pathways: **(1)** the College Transfer Pathway for students who want to transfer to a four-year institution; **(2)** the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway that leads to a technical credential or career-oriented major; and **(3)** Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS), small schools that allow students to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an associate degree or two years of college credit.