

Expanding Equity in Dual Credit



District Policy Recommendations



1. Leverage the Model Partnership Agreement

Illinois has a newly created Model Partnership Agreement (MPA) that can help schools and community colleges as they hammer out their dual credit arrangements. Utilizing the MPA as the foundation for a dual credit partnership is an equitable strategy for increasing access through course cost caps and protections for students while maintaining course quality through rigorous standards.



2. Offer schoolwide placement testing

If a placement test is required for students to enroll in dual credit, providing the test on-site in the high school is convenient and accessible for students and establishes a school culture that values dual credit. Vienna High School District 133 uses school wide Accuplacer testing to remove barriers to access such as scheduling, transportation, or even simply knowing that the test is required for dual credit courses.



3. Embed dual credit opportunities in the curriculum

To receive a high school diploma in Illinois, students must meet certain graduation requirements, such as four years of English and three years of Math. Embedding dual credit into course sequence expands opportunities for every student. All roads lead to some college credit in Vienna High School District 133, which embeds dual credit or transitional courses into all course sequences, ensuring each and every student graduates college ready.



4. Articulate prerequisite courses taught at the high school

If a dual credit course requires a prerequisite, communicating that to students early in their high school career as they map out their course schedules is important to increase access. Pontiac Township High School students can meet the prerequisites for high school and college courses by completing course work in the pathway or traveling to the community college to take a placement test.



District Policy Recommendations Continued



5. Establish regular communication channels with partners

Developing a process for communicating among partners is the first step in building a successful partnership built on a foundation of continuous improvement. Pontiac Township High School and Heartland Community College use semi-annual check-ins to conduct program reviews and discuss innovative ideas rooted in practice.



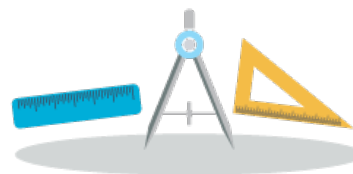
6. Provide targeted supports

Research and practice tell us that students who may not meet certain proficiency benchmarks can still be successful in dual credit courses, so it is vital to meet students where they are in order to expand access to this important courses. Rather than requiring students meet a certain benchmark to be eligible for a dual credit course, Rockford Public School District 205 provides targeted supports to help students reach proficiency in key subject areas.



7. Embed dual credit into CTE pathways

Dual credit courses are often only offered in traditional academic subjects like English or the sciences but offering dual credit CTE courses not only offers students a chance at college credit while in high school but helps solidify the link between academics and careers. Rockford Public School District 205 embeds dual credit courses into CTE and traditional academic pathways because it knows that most students will need some college to land a job after high school.



8. Adopt multiple eligibility measures

Research tells us that most students can benefit from dual credit coursework, so districts should be casting a wide net to enroll as many students as possible in dual credit courses rather than weeding students out. Using program data and research-based best practices, Elgin Community College is adopting multiple eligibility measures to implement more inclusive eligibility practices.



District Policy Recommendations Continued



9. Form an advisory council with other districts

While communication between partners is key for a successful dual credit program, consider collaborating with institutions and districts outside of your partnership to share best practices, discuss barriers, and pool resources. To support a model of continuous improvement, Elgin Community College created the Dual Credit Advisory Council, comprised of assistant principals and counselors from each partnering district. Rather than putting each partnership in a silo, Elgin continues to bring all of its partners together to solve problems and improve equity.



10. Consider non-traditional partners and delivery models

Community colleges are the primary partners for high schools seeking to offer dual credit, but four-year college and universities are also standing up to serve students. Eastern Illinois University offers two models of dual credit delivery, one online and one at the high school campus, to provide students with unique dual credit courses and a chance to see themselves as college students during their visit to the Eastern Illinois University campus.



11. Prepare teachers with professional development plans

Teacher credentialing is a significant, and growing, obstacle to dual credit, but a new provision of the Dual Credit Quality Act allows high schools and higher education partners to provide four-year professional development plans to teachers who want to earn the graduate credits they need to be fully qualified. Eastern Illinois University knows that leveraging this opportunity can be a win-win-win: more dual credit options for students, high-quality professional development for teachers, and more graduate students enrolled in college.



To view the complete Expanding Equity in Dual Credit report, visit dualcreditequity.org