



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Clerk of the Senate
Clerk of the House of Representatives

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education

DATE: January 29, 2024

SUBJECT: Dual Credit Expansion Efforts Report

In accordance with Section 32 of Public Act 23-167, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education, enclosed is a copy of the Report on Dual Credit Expansion Efforts for the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children and education.

If you have any questions, please contact Laura Stefon, Chief of Staff at 860-713-6493.

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Enclosure

Report on Dual Credit Expansion Efforts



Report to the Connecticut General Assembly
January 2024

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Introduction

Section 32 of Public Act 23-167, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education, states the following:

Sec. 32. (Effective July 1, 2023) Not later than January 1, 2024, the Department of Education, in partnership with local and regional boards of education, public institutions of higher education and independent institutions of higher education, as defined in section 10a-173 of the general statutes, shall, within the limits of available funding, expand opportunities for dual credit and dual enrollment for students in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, in the state in various subject areas, including, but not limited to, courses that are required to pursue health care occupations. The work to expand such opportunities shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the creation of resources, such as an online inventory of dual credit and dual enrollment programs and model agreements to promote information sharing between boards of education and institutions of higher education, (2) support for curriculum development and professional development for teachers and faculty to create new career pathways for in-demand industries, such as health care, and (3) tuition assistance for students who enroll in dual credit and dual enrollment programs. Not later than January 1, 2024, the Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education on the department's efforts to expand opportunities for dual credit and dual enrollment pursuant to this section.

In fulfillment of the above requirement, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is submitting this report on its efforts to expand dual credit opportunities for students across the state.

Terms and Definitions

“Dual credit courses” are courses that are offered by the high school for which students can get both high school and college credit. These courses can be part of traditional academic college pathways or career-oriented pathways that may lead to industry-recognized credentials.

“Dual enrollment courses” are dual credit courses that are delivered at an institution of higher education (IHE) and taught by IHE faculty.

“Concurrent enrollment courses” are dual credit courses that are delivered at the high school by high school teachers who are approved by the IHE.

Research

According to a summary of findings from the What Works Clearinghouse at the U.S. Department of Education, *“Dual enrollment programs were found to have positive effects on students’ degree attainment (college), college access and enrollment, credit accumulation, completing high school, and general academic achievement (high school), with a medium to large extent of evidence.”* (USDE, 2017).

Increasing dual credit opportunities is an evidence-based strategy that will also maximize the affordability of higher education for Connecticut students. Students who successfully complete dual credit courses can leave high school with a semester or more of college credits on their transcript. Graduates who choose to matriculate to a community college program can continue their credit-based pathway at the college for no-cost through Connecticut’s free community college program called The Pledge to Advance CT or PACT.

CSDE Efforts to Expand Dual Credit Opportunities

Over the past three years, the CSDE has implemented several activities to expand dual credit opportunities for Connecticut high school students in partnership with public and private IHEs. These efforts can be grouped into three broad categories:

1. Communication and Partnerships
2. Accountability and Program Quality
3. Funding Support

Communication and Partnerships

The CSDE is facilitating greater communication and partnerships between public schools and IHEs through a variety of ongoing initiatives.

State-Level Postsecondary Success Workgroup

The CSDE convenes the Postsecondary Success Workgroup to provide input on policies and initiatives around college and career readiness. The membership of this workgroup is comprised of the following organizations:

1. **Higher Education:** Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC); Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU); CT State - Connecticut Community Colleges; Office of Higher Education; University of Connecticut

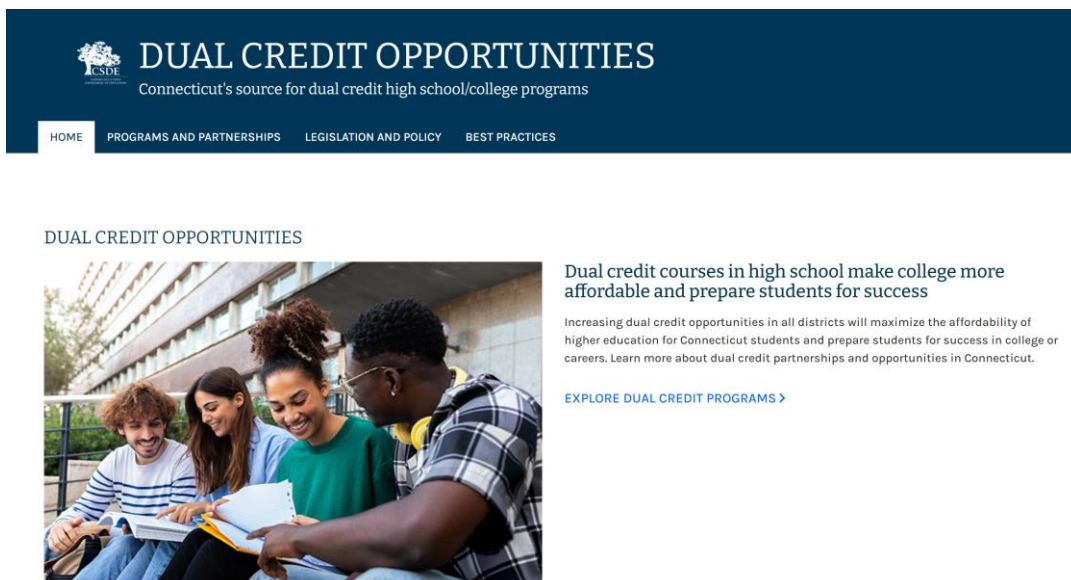
2. **K-12 Organizations:** American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut (AFT-CT); Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE); Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS); Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS); Connecticut Education Association (CEA); Connecticut School Counselor Association; Connecticut Students for a Dream; Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance
3. **Non-Profit Organizations:** Connecticut Parents Union; Connecticut Voices for Children; CT RISE Network; Hartford Promise; Higher Heights Youth Empowerment Programs; New Haven Promise; ReadyCT

This workgroup also assists the CSDE with developing strategies and recommendations for improving FAFSA completion as required in Section 9 of [Public Act 21-199](#). The group meets about four times a year.

Dual Credit Opportunities Website

The CSDE created the [Dual Credit Opportunities \(ct.gov\)](#) website to bring transparency to essential information about dual credit programs at Connecticut’s IHEs including student eligibility, instructor qualifications, registration and fees, supports for multilingual families, and a single point of contact. This website is intended to serve as a single authoritative source of information about dual credit opportunities for school staff, students, and families.

Figure 1: [Dual Credit Opportunities Website](#)



Postsecondary Readiness Leads

To facilitate greater communication and partnerships between schools and IHEs, it is important to have designated contacts at the district/school level. In some districts, this may be a school counselor or an assistant principal, while in others it may be an assistant superintendent, superintendent, or some other administrator serving as college and career readiness coordinator for the entire district. Therefore, the CSDE created the new role of Postsecondary Readiness Lead and asked school districts to designate at least one person in that role for the district. The list of Postsecondary Readiness Leads for all districts/schools is now accessible through the [Find Contacts](#) report.

Dual Credit Community of Practice

Having established designated points of contact at IHEs and school districts, the CSDE has begun convening monthly community-of-practice sessions. Each session focuses on a pathway/industry and showcases existing/new partnerships between an IHE and a Connecticut school district. All recordings of these sessions are posted on the [Dual Credit Opportunities \(ct.gov\)](#) website.

Letters to Students

Every January, the CSDE sends letters from the Commissioner directly to parents/guardians of students who have the potential to succeed in rigorous courses. These letters are sent to 9th and 10th graders, so students have time to plan their course pathway in high school. Students are identified through sophisticated statistical modeling based on their performance in state assessments taken in middle school (6, 7, and/or 8) in English language arts, mathematics, and science. The letter encourages students to consider participating in courses that will give them a head start in postsecondary education including:

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses;
- an International Baccalaureate (IB) program;
- dual credit courses that may be academic- or career-focused offered in partnership with local universities and colleges either at the high school or on a college campus; and/or
- career-oriented courses, including internships and apprenticeships, focused on high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand careers.

In January 2024, nearly 31,500 letters were disseminated statewide.

Accountability and Program Quality

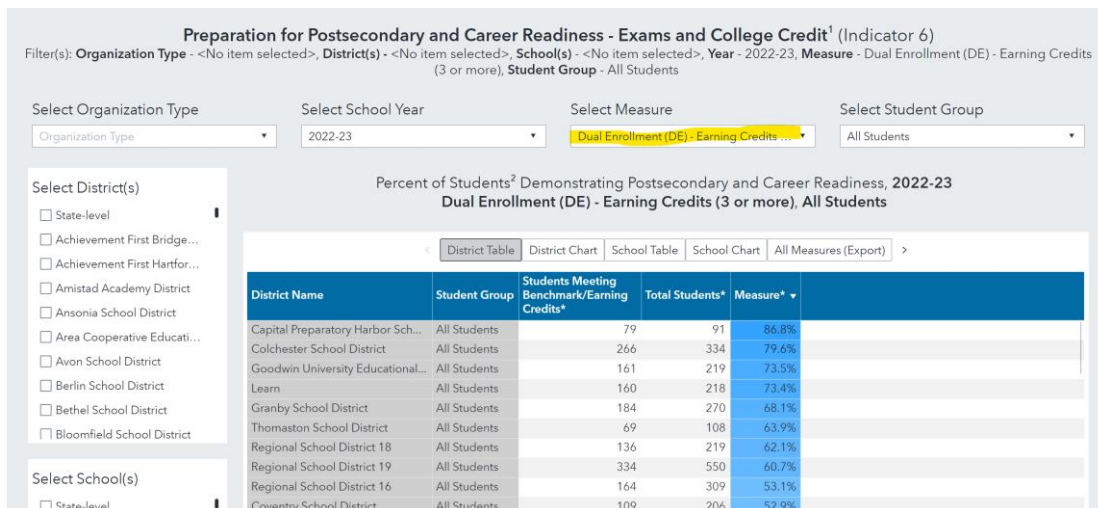
The CSDE has taken several steps to ensure that all efforts and investments in this area are guided by valid and reliable student data and are of the highest quality.

Data Management and the Next Generation Accountability System

The Next Generation Accountability System is a set of 12 broad indicators that provides a holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance. The CSDE uses this system to recognize schools for high achievement and/or growth, and to identify schools and districts that need state support. This system is an essential component of Connecticut’s approved federal education plan with the U.S. Department of Education.

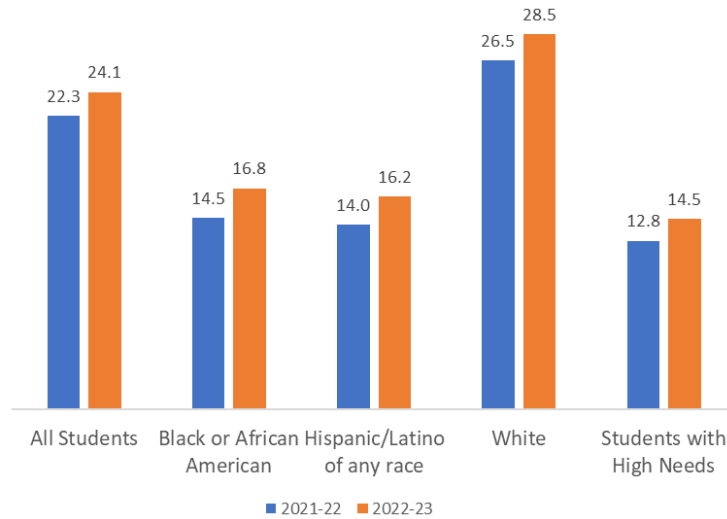
One indicator (#6) evaluates the extent to which 11th and 12th graders are demonstrating readiness for postsecondary education while in high school. Acceptable measures include passing exams like SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate (IB), as well as earning three or more non-remedial college credits with a grade of C or better. To make this determination, the CSDE receives student-level data on an annual basis from external entities including the College Board, ACT, the IB Organization, and almost all public and private colleges in Connecticut. The CSDE painstakingly matches these data with its own student enrollment data to identify which students are meeting at least one benchmark for inclusion toward Indicator #6. The results from this annual matching process is reported in the [Postsecondary Readiness \(ct.gov\)](#) report (Figure 2). This report allows the user to look specifically at the dual credit outcomes for all districts, schools, and student groups.

Figure 2: EdSight [Postsecondary Readiness](#) Report



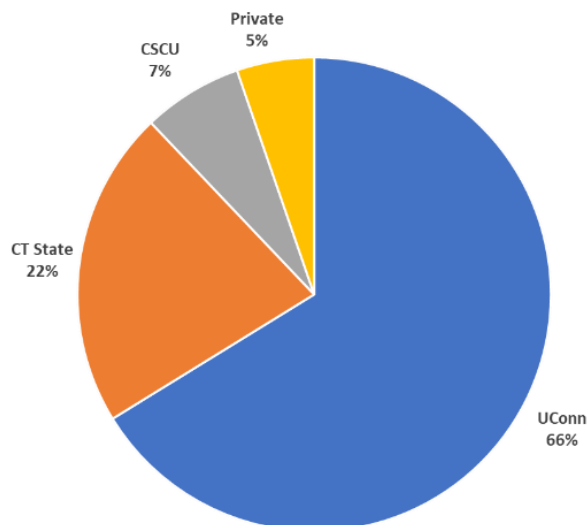
Statewide, the percentage of 11th and 12th graders earning three or more college credits prior to high school graduation stands at 24.1 percent in 2022-23 (over 18,900 students), an increase of nearly two points from 22.3 percent in 2021-22 (over 17,500 students). Students of color, as well as those from high need backgrounds (i.e., students from low-income families, English/multilingual learners, and/or students with disabilities), evidence lower rates of earning dual credit than their peers (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentage of Grade 11 and 12 Students Earning Three or more College Credits



Receiving detailed student-level data from IHEs has enabled the CSDE to know the current landscape of providers (Figure 4). In 2022-23, around 88 percent of the nearly 35,000 dual credit enrollments (about 19,000 students) occurred with either the University of Connecticut or the 12 CT State campuses.

Figure 4: Dual Credit Enrollments, 2022-23



The current partnerships between high schools and colleges across the state are enabling students to access a wide range of courses in multiple career pathways including healthcare, education, manufacturing, construction, and information technology (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Sample Dual Credit Courses Offered by UConn and CT State

Sample UConn ECE Courses

- Calculus I and II
- Elementary Concepts of Statistics
- EMT Training
- Environmental Science
- General Chemistry and Physics I and II
- Individual & Family Development
- Intermediate Spanish Composition
- Introduction to Allied Health Professions
- Medical Terminology
- Principles of Biology I and II
- Macroeconomics/Microeconomics
- United States History To/Since 1877

Sample CT State Courses

- Automotive Specs, Shop, Brakes
- Blueprint Reading I and II
- Business, Accounting, Marketing, Finance
- Calculus and Algebra
- Computer aided design AD
- Culinary/Food Safety
- Forensic Science, Biology, Health Careers
- Literature, Composition, Public Speaking
- Manufacturing, Machinery/Milling,
- CNC, Lathe, Benchwork
- Programming, logic, JAVA, Python
- Mobile Design, Web Design

Contract with National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP)

NACEP is the sole recognized entity nationally for the accreditation of dual credit programs. As dual credit partnerships expand across Connecticut, it is critical that all IHE programs are of a high quality. Therefore, the CSDE has engaged in a three-year contract with NACEP through November 2026 to support Connecticut IHEs to implement best practices with respect to dual credit programs and attain NACEP accreditation. Through this contract, NACEP will provide live webinars, virtual problems-of-practice collaborative meetings, Preparation for Accreditation sessions, and two intensive in-person institutes on Program Quality and Accreditation.

Funding Support

In addition to fostering communication, developing partnerships, tracking data, and promoting program quality, the CSDE has also attempted to provide financial support to school districts and IHEs to expand dual credit opportunities. Historically, the [College Career Pathways \(CCP\) program](#) that has been funded for many years through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 has given high school students the opportunity to experience college-credit bearing courses taught by

college-approved high school teachers. Several districts and IHEs have also dedicated their own resources to supporting dual credit opportunities.

To expand and systematize this patchwork of supports, the CSDE, through the Office of the Governor and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), submitted a proposal for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Connecticut General Assembly subsequently allocated \$7 million across two years for this work. In addition, the CSDE allocated \$2 million from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) funds.

Dual Credit Expansion Grant for School Districts

The CSDE has awarded a total of \$3.8 million to 89 school districts to fund start-up costs for increasing academic *and/or* career-oriented dual credit courses. Common uses of funds include the following:

- High school teacher and higher education stipends to create/amend course curricula;
- Tuition reimbursement for high school teachers to complete the coursework necessary to qualify as concurrent enrollment instructors;
- Specialized equipment purchases for healthcare, manufacturing, technology, etc.; and
- Develop strategies to inform students and their families of the benefits of earning college credit during high school.

Here are some examples of activities currently underway in Connecticut school districts that were extracted from [a summary of all plans Connecticut school districts](#):

- Ansonia Public Schools is partnering with the University of Bridgeport to offer *HSCI 206: Introduction to Exercise Science* and *HSCI 324: ACE Personal Trainer* to bolster their Allied Health pathway. Students will also be working towards the certifications needed to become an ACE Personal Trainer, NASM Certified Personal Trainer and/or a NSCA Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach.
- Bristol Public Schools is collaborating with CT State (Manchester campus) to build out dual credit courses in their culinary pathway that will also result in ProStart certification in culinary arts.
- Clinton, Meriden, and other districts are working with Goodwin University and local industry leaders to enhance their Engineering and Manufacturing pathway and deliver courses that provide students with practical experience using equipment and machinery that are industry standard in advanced manufacturing.

- Colchester Public Schools is collaborating with Charter Oak State College and the local fire department to develop a Fire 1 Service and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course sequence that will lead to Fire 1 certification and EMT licensure. Fire and EMT trainers will obtain appropriate CSDE certification endorsements.
- East Lyme Public Schools is partnering with the University of Connecticut to offer an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course that will prepare students to provide pre-hospital assessment and care. Successful completion of the course will allow students to sit for the two sections of the National Registry EMT exam. East Lyme is using a portion of their funds to purchase a “power stretcher.”
- East Harford Public Schools is collaborating with Central CT State University to offer dual credit courses such as Education in a Multicultural Society to strengthen their education pathway through a grow-your-own approach.
- Griswold Public Schools is working with Southern CT State University to diversify their offerings including courses such as Intro to eSports, Computer Science Principles, and Introduction to Drone Technology.
- Newtown Public Schools is partnering with Central CT State University to bolster their IT/Digital and Web communication pathway by offering Digital Imaging for Graphics Technology.
- Seymour Public Schools is collaborating with CT State (Housatonic campus) to expand dual credit offerings in Manufacturing. They already offer the first three courses (blueprint reading, solid works and benchwork) and would like to expand to a fourth class in the sequence known as Introduction to Machine Technology. Students who take the courses will be one-third of the way to finishing their Advanced Manufacturing and Machine Technology certificate.
- Region 8 (RHAM – Hebron, Andover, Marlborough) is working with Eastern CT State University to enhance the Business pathway by developing and offering a Business Communications dual credit course.
- EdAdvance is collaborating with seven districts (Explorations Charter, Plymouth, Regions 1 & 7, The Gilbert School, Thomaston, and Torrington) to partner with CT State (Northwest campus) to create new dual credit courses in freshman English and Math, Public Speaking, and Introduction to Literature with a significant research component. They are also partnering with CCSU to create a customized 1-year graduate-level math program for interested math certified teachers with a master’s degree in education to complete the program and become credentialed with CT State to teach dual credit math courses.

Grants to IHEs

The CSDE is finalizing a grant to IHEs to bolster dual credit capacity and provide no-cost enrollment for high school students from low-income families for the next three years. As a condition of receiving this grant, IHEs will be expected to affirm adherence to the following expectations:

1. Funds will only be used to expand dual credit opportunities for public high school students who enroll in these courses through the school district, especially students from low-income families as established by the districts based on CSDE policies.
2. The IHE will not charge the student or the district for the enrollments of students from low-income families who are enrolled in dual credit courses at the institution for the 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27 school years.
3. The IHE will participate in webinars, collaborative meetings, accreditation sessions, and intensive institutes offered by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP).
4. The IHE will pursue NACEP accreditation at the latest in the 2026-27 year. The IHE understands that dual credit courses offered by an IHE that is not pursuing NACEP accreditation or not already accredited by NACEP by the 2026-27 school year will likely not be included in the CSDE's accountability system for schools and districts.
5. The IHE will designate a single point of contact for the institution to coordinate partnerships between the school districts and all academic departments within the institution.
6. The IHE will create a dedicated website for its dual credit offerings. Starting with the 2024-25 year, the IHE will annually publish on its website, a complete list of dual and concurrent enrollment course offerings for the upcoming year. Each course will include the course description, a course outline with expected learner outcomes, student enrollment requirements as appropriate, and instructor credential requirements if offered as concurrent enrollment.
7. From 2022-23 to 2025-26, the IHE will commit to increasing its enrollments for students from low-income families by 50 percent or at least by 100 students, whichever is larger.
8. Full or part-time salaries and benefits for state employees at state IHEs (i.e., UCONN, CT State, CSU 4-year Colleges) can only be paid until December 31, 2024.
9. All expenses for non-state-employee salaries and benefits must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and expended by December 31, 2026.
10. The IHE will annually provide CSDE with clean and complete data on dual credit course participation and completion, based on CSDE specifications for all dual credit students.
11. Institutional indirect costs will be limited to no more than 10 percent of the total allocation.

Recommendation: Dedicated, Annual State Appropriation

The CSDE has taken several steps over the past few years to expand dual credit opportunities and build a system for dual credit programming in high schools that is equitable, accessible, industry-aligned, and student-centered. The current funding allocated for these expansion efforts comes entirely from COVID-relief dollars. **Sustaining and growing high-quality dual credit opportunities for the foreseeable future requires multi-million dollars of dedicated, annual state investments.**

Our neighbors in Massachusetts and Rhode Island have had similar state-level investments for many years. The Massachusetts [Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Partnership \(CDEP\)](#) provides opportunities for Massachusetts high school students to take college-level courses for free or at a discounted price. Another initiative called the [Early College Initiative](#) is intended to create and maintain partnerships connecting districts and high schools with the state's colleges in order to give thousands of Massachusetts students, especially first-generation college-goers, access to college completion and career success. Rhode Island's [Early College Opportunities](#) allow high school students in Rhode Island to explore new fields of study and prepare themselves for the rigors of college or career.

Connecticut should establish a similar **dedicated, annual appropriation** that enables thousands more students, especially from low-income families, to gain exposure to college-level coursework in high school, enroll in postsecondary after high school graduation, and earn postsecondary credentials.