



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Dual Credit Programs Enrollment

2021

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.600.280](#)

[ESHB 1109, Section 504\(17\) Running Start Participation](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual update examines statewide enrollment patterns of students in dual credit programs, as required by Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.600.280 (Dual Credit Programs—Annual Report) and Sec. 504(17) (Running Start Participation).

Dual credit courses give high school students the potential to earn both college and high school credit, either through completion of a college-level course or through performance on an exam. Studies have shown that students who complete dual credit courses are more likely to: graduate on time, enroll in post-secondary, persist at the post-secondary level, or transition into a career. Dual credit courses may count towards graduation as part of the new graduation pathways established by House Bill 1599.

Over the past decade, dual credit participation has seen significant growth: 144,178 students completed at least one course in 2010, while 210,491 students completed at least one course in 2021. As a share of total 9–12 grade enrollment, this reflects significant growth from 48.9% (2010) to 58.5% (2021).

While this program has shown steady growth over the past decade, we did see a year-to-year drop of 2% in participation from 2019 (60%) to 2020 (58%) and a minimal (0.5%) increase in 2021. With schools closed for months as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, and with students learning from home, it is likely these factors impacted students' ability to learn about and access dual credit options.

There is a strong commitment between K–12 and higher education agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, to increase equitable access to quality dual credit programs for ready and interested students. Washington is poised to make systemic changes to the dual credit system that will increase opportunities for students across our state.

About This Report

This update combines two legislatively mandated reports:

- [RCW 28A.600.280](#): Dual Credit Programs—Annual Report
- [ESHB 1109, Section 504\(17\)](#): Running Start Participation

UPDATE STATUS

The data source for much of this report is from the Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS), managed by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). For programs not reported to CEDARS, data is collected from either the local dual credit programs or from sponsoring corporate or agency officials. Much of the data provided is also available through the dual credit dashboard of the [Washington State Report Card](#). To ensure the Legislature has the most complete and accurate data related to dual credit participation, information in this report is based on the 2020–21 school year.

Dual Credit Participation

Figures 1a–1c provide a snapshot of overall participation, as well as program-specific participation. The significant increase in the number of students who are taking at least one dual credit course over the past several years demonstrates that Washington is making progress to reach goals outlined in the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan.

Figure 1a. All 9–12 Grade Students Completing at Least One Dual Credit Course, 2020–21 School Year

School Year	Total 9–12 Grade Student Enrollment*	Number of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	Percent of 9–12 Grade Students
2009–10	294,801	144,178	48.90%
2010–11	323,767	171,129	52.90%
2011–12	321,885	171,866	53.40%
2012–13	324,576	173,565	53.50%
2013–14	324,360	177,359	54.70%
2014–15	328,769	183,340	55.80%
2015–16	326,292	186,222	57.10%
2016–17	333,368	190,662	57.20%
2017–18	337,428	200,279	59.40%
2018–19	338,063	203,736	60.30%
2019–20	358,747	208,171	58.03%
2020–21	359,624	210,491	58.53%

Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

*Total enrollment only includes students enrolled in grades 9-12, who attempted more than 0 credits during the school year and did not withdraw from all of their courses.

Figure 1b. Students Enrolled in Dual Credit by Exam Courses

School Year	Advanced Placement (AP)		Cambridge		IB	
	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 9-12 Grade Students	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 9-12 Grade Students	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 9-12 Grade Students
2009–10	36,139	12.30%	0	0.00%	5,041	1.70%
2010–11	46,322	14.30%	27	0.00%	5,495	1.70%
2011–12	51,395	16.00%	1,134	0.40%	6,461	2.00%
2012–13	51,827	16.00%	1303	0.40%	7,553	2.30%
2013–14	58,202	17.90%	1,088	0.30%	7,749	2.40%
2014–15	62,136	18.90%	1043	0.30%	8,721	2.70%
2015–16	62,056	19.00%	1,080	0.30%	7,735	2.40%
2016–17	65,897	19.80%	1141	0.30%	8,651	2.60%
2017–18	68,026	20.20%	1,187	0.40%	9,197	2.70%
2018–19	68,288	20.20%	1,143	0.34%	9,228	2.70%
2019–20	67,227	18.74%	1,324	0.37%	9,062	2.53%
2020–21	64,722	18.00%	1,356	0.38%	9,244	2.57%

Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

Figure 1c. Students Enrolled in College-Level Courses (2020–21)

School Year	College in the High School		Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit		Running Start	
	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 9–12 Grade Students	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 9–12 Grade Students	# of Students Completing at Least 1 Course	% of 11–12 Grade Students
2009–10	8,924	3.00%	104,585	35.50%	12,089	8.40%
2010–11	13,380	4.10%	121,225	37.40%	16,950	10.70%
2011–12	14,420	4.50%	116,550	36.20%	16,974	10.70%
2012–13	16,806	5.20%	113,672	35.00%	17,025	10.60%
2013–14	15,992	4.90%	114,222	35.20%	19,305	12.10%
2014–15	18,865	5.70%	114,894	34.90%	22,184	13.60%
2015–16	22,126	6.80%	115,453	35.40%	22,871	14.10%
2016–17	22,254	6.70%	114,707	34.40%	25,842	15.40%
2017–18	35,349	10.50%	118,744	35.20%	27,832	16.30%
2018–19	41,816	12.40%	120,421	35.60%	29,285	17.46%
2019–20	48,199	13.44%	125,222	34.91%	30,605	16.66%
2020–21	47,260	13.14%	131,348	36.52%	31,944	17.37%

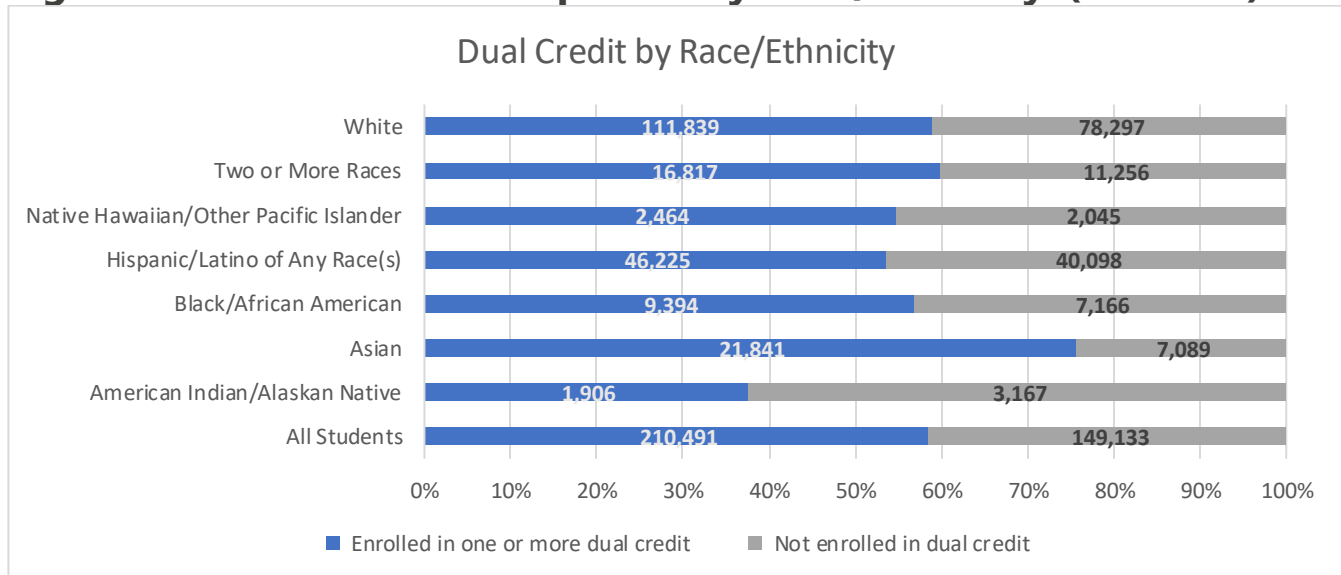
Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

Figures 2–4 show student participation in dual credit opportunities disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, receipt of free or reduced-price lunch (low-income), and other student groups. While schools continue to increase the number of students accessing dual credit opportunities, gaps persist for some student groups. For example:

- 58.5% of all 9–12 grade students access dual credit opportunities, but only 37.6% of American Indian/Alaskan Natives students and 53.5% of Hispanic/Latino students take dual credit courses
- Participation of students from low-income families continue to lag behind rates of those who are not from low-income families by about 14.5 percentage points (50.7%)
- Male students access dual credit at a lower rate than female students (56.6% versus 60.8%)
- Students who are migratory, accessing special education services, experiencing homelessness, and English language learners continue to access dual credit at significantly lower rates than their peers (9.3%-21.1%).

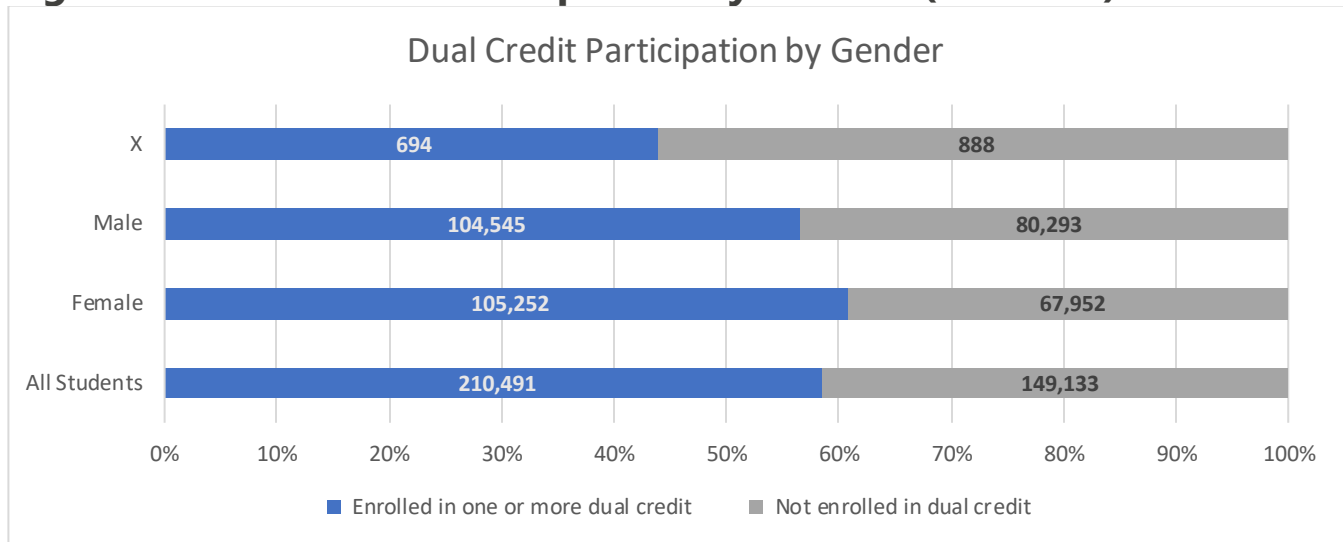
There is still a need to increase the total number of interested and ready participants and broaden the representation of students taking advantage of available dual credit opportunities. Financial barriers such as tuition, exam fees, transportation costs, books and materials, and transcription fees continue to inhibit dual credit participation, especially among historically underrepresented groups, despite Superintendent Reykdal’s call for fully funding dual credit as a component of (not an addition to) the state’s basic education model.

Figure 2. Dual Credit Participation by Race/Ethnicity (2020–21)



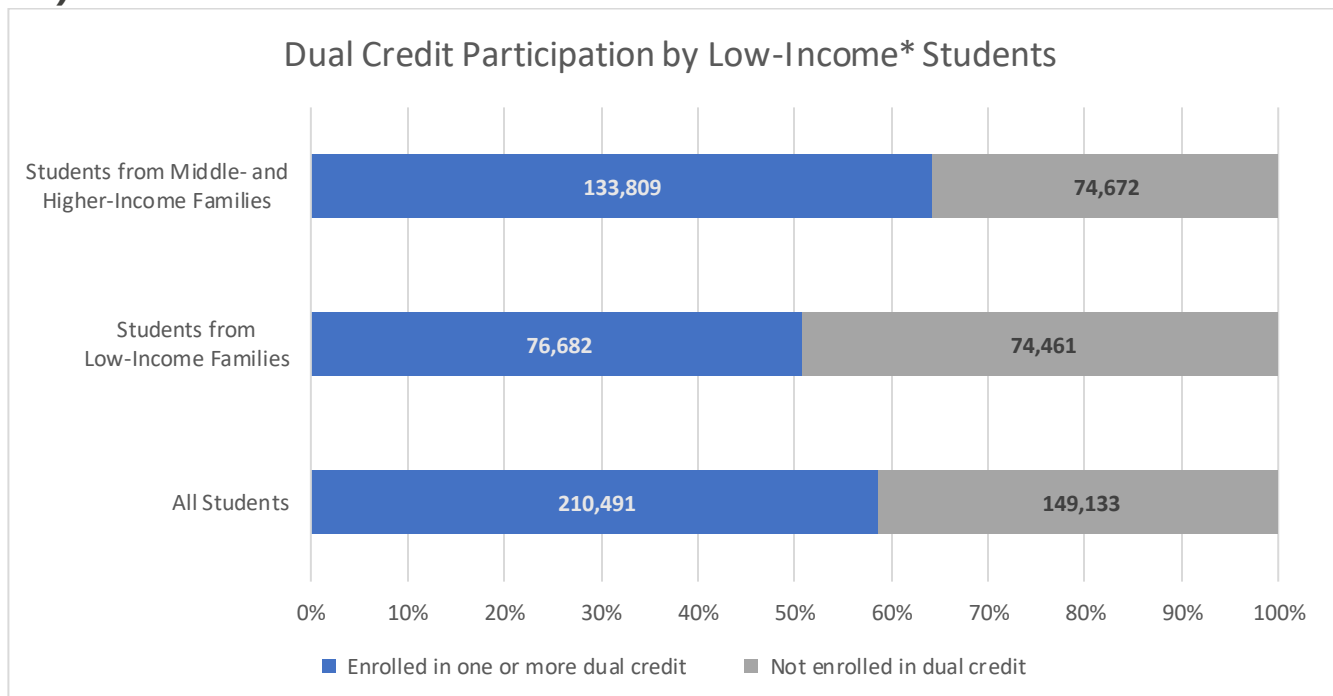
Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

Figure 3. Dual Credit Participation by Gender (2020–21)



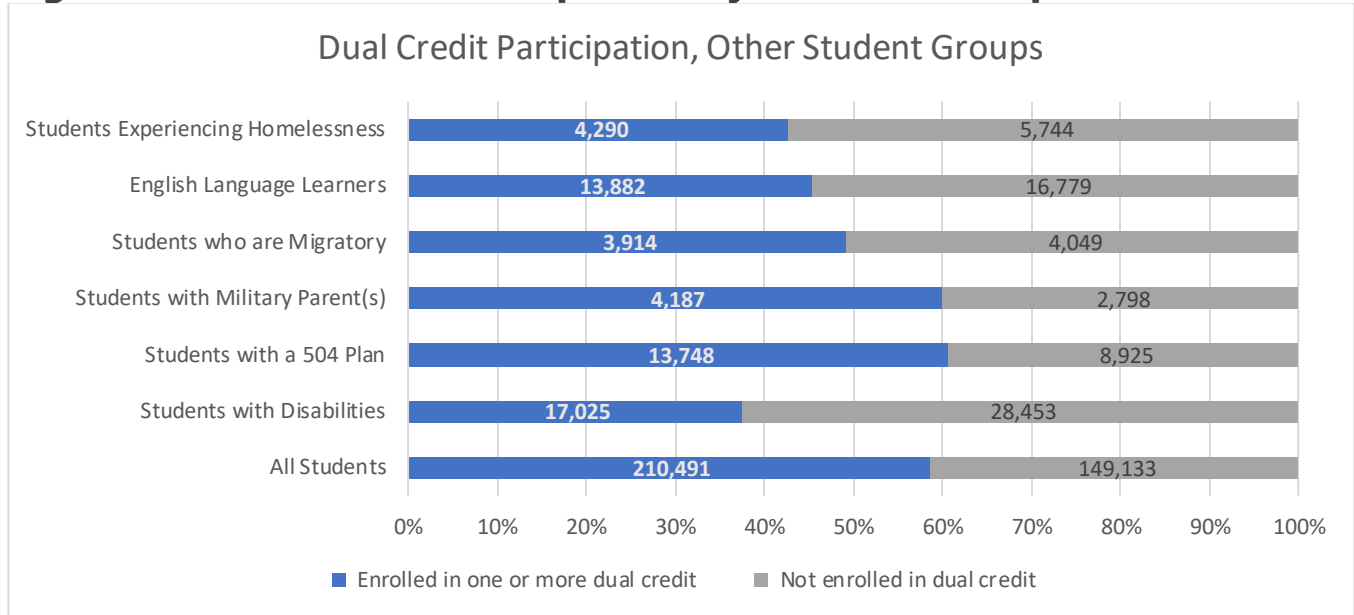
Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

Figure 4. Dual Credit Participation by Low-Income Students (2020–21)



Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021 *Low-income is defined as receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Figure 5. Dual Credit Participation by Student Groups (2020–21)



Data Source: Comprehensive Education and Data Research System (CEDARS). OSPI Student Information Office, Nov. 22, 2021

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

While overall dual credit completion rates continue to progress, there is still room for improvement in increasing the total number of students successfully completing a dual credit course and in reducing disproportionality among student groups. Ensuring student readiness and interest in engaging in the dual credit system begins with more exposure to career and college readiness lessons and guidance. OSPI is actively working to close opportunity gaps for students who are ready for dual credit work. This is evidenced in OSPI’s work to support equitable growth of dual credit options. In particular:

- Equitable distribution of the College in the High School (CHS) subsidy. To increase the number of districts that can access funding and minimize the amount of funding that goes unspent, the process for approving and distributing the CHS subsidy was revamped. While following the guidelines of the tiered system, subsidies were distributed based on actual past usage rather than request.
- Building Equitable, Sustainable Dual Credit Grant. This new grant asks districts to examine their data and identify underserved student groups for dual credit participation. Those districts can then build activities based on what is most appropriate for them to address their equity issues while building sustainability for their dual credit programs.

House Bill 1599 added Dual Credit, CTE Course Sequences, AP, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International courses as graduation pathway options. OSPI is working closely with schools on how to implement these new pathways, promoting the inclusion of all student groups when expanding these new pathways.

One challenge districts and schools are voicing with the new pathways is the lack of funding provided to specifically expand access to these pathways. Implementation of most dual credit programs cause schools to incur some additional costs. Without specific funding, schools and districts are having to reallocate funds from other areas to support these new pathways. It is the position articulated in the Superintendent's 2019 report [Covering the Costs of Dual Credit for Students and Families](#) that dual credit students are basic education students and should be funded as such.

Finally, while Running Start enrollment continues to increase, gaps persist in participation among historically underrepresented groups as demonstrated in Figures 2–5, and the costs of dual credit programs continue to be a barrier for many students. Moreover, there is a belief that the 1.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) cap could potentially impact access to Running Start and impede the achievement of Washington's goal that 70% of all students achieve a credential, as articulated in the Washington Roundtable report [The Credential is Essential](#). It appears to be an administrative burden for districts, and it is unclear how many students would exceed the limitation and whether there is measurable cost-savings associated with it. With the summer Running Start pilot program underway, it should also be noted that the 1.2 FTE cap could prevent summer Running Start from being brought to scale.

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