

# Dual Credit Programs Subsidized Fees

## Statutory and/or Budget Language

\$4,894,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$4,894,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for the office of the superintendent of public instruction to administer programs and grants which increase equitable access to dual credit programs, including subsidizing or eliminating student costs for dual credit courses or exams. By November 2024, the office shall submit a report to relevant committees of the legislature describing options for entering into statewide agreements with dual credit exam companies that will reduce the overall costs for all students and eliminate costs for students who are low-income.

## Purpose

Dual credit proviso funding is intended to support the administration of programs and subsidization efforts which increase equitable access to dual credit programs. This includes awarding grants to districts adopting strategies to promote equitable and sustainable dual credit programs and/or demonstrating a need to support student access and completion by reducing out-of-pocket costs and/or expanding program offerings. Included in these strategies are efforts to subsidize test fees for Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International (CI), and International Baccalaureate (IB) dual credit exams, engage in collaborative research and professional development to identify and remedy performance gaps, invest in equipment and supplies required to meet college and technical program learning objectives, and increase staff capacity at high schools and districts to administer summer quarter Running Start (RS).

## Description of Services Provided

OSPI's dual credit proviso funds were directed to schools and districts in the following ways:

- Consolidated Equity and Sustainability (CES) Grant
- AP/CI/IB Test Fee Waiver Program for students qualifying as low-income
- Allowable grant activities were categorized in seven priority areas: Contracts and Consultancy, Professional Development and Training, CTE Graduation Pathways, Program Fees, Equipment and Supplies, Exam Fees and Other Student Expenses, Outreach to Underrepresented Student Populations, and Summer Administrative Costs

Examples of activities in two categories that cover multiple priorities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Contracts and Consultancy:** Contracting, licensing, and/or partnering with Always Be Learning, Equal Opportunity Schools, South Central Workforce Council, Core Plus, the Army Corps of Engineers, WestEd, Educational Service Districts (ESD) 101 and 105, Numetrix, Xello,



iCEV, ImBlaze, Identifix, and Pierce County Careers Connection to improve master scheduling practices, evaluate programs, and provide tools and resources to students in dual credit programs;

- **Professional Development and Training:** Investing in professional development through the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Bridge to College, National Indian Education Association (NIEA), the College Board's AP Institute, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Boomerang Project's Link Conference to ensure teachers were adequately prepared and/or certified to teach dual credit courses and administrators were equally equipped to manage the programs or advise students about them.

CES Grant funding also further subsidized one-time dual credit costs (RS costs, exam fees, textbooks, supplies, etc.), outreach and marketing to students and families from groups underrepresented in dual credit, collaboration with institutions of higher education (IHEs) on Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit articulation agreements and curriculum development, and purchase of industry-standard equipment for CTE Dual Credit programs.

Related to test fee subsidies, \$273,574 were awarded to subsidize CI and IB exam fees (down slightly from \$278,176 in 2023) at 19 schools (up from 16). OSPI funded \$795,112 for AP exams taken by students from low-income families at 267 schools throughout the state (an 18% increase from 2023). In total, over \$3.3 million in proviso funding was allocated to dual credit exams.

The balance of the dual credit proviso was utilized for OSPI staff, professional development, and operational needs associated with dual credit. These activities focused on:

- Statewide policy and program coordination among K–12 and postsecondary partners
- Dual credit technical assistance and grant management services to schools and districts
- Provision of academic guidance and support about dual credit opportunities related to the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP)
- Professional training provided to school counselors and CTE directors and teachers, and
- Data collection and analysis required for local and statewide reporting and program improvement purposes.

## Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

**Consolidated Equity and Sustainability (CES) Grant:** With the elimination of CiHS subsidies due to the passage of [Substitute Senate Bill \(SSB\) 5048](#), the CES Grant was expanded to include two new priority areas: Outreach to Underrepresented Student Populations and Summer RS Administrative Costs. To ensure local needs were considered and met, it was transitioned from a competitive grant to a directed grant. A pre-application survey was required to serve as an evaluation tool for the grant administrator. Awards were based on the applicant's need, the stated commitment to equity and access, the applicant's capacity for effectively utilizing the

funding, the alignment of proposed activities to the grant purpose, and the number of schools and programs served. Additional considerations included the Local Education Agency's (LEAs) proportion of free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligible students, school/district size, past subsidy/grant utilization, and when applicable, prior consistency in submitting required annual reports.

**AP Test Fee Waiver Program:** AP exam costs for qualified low-income students were reduced by the College Board and further subsidized by state funding to ensure students paid no fee.

**CI/IB Test Fee Waiver Program:** Similar to AP, students receiving test fee waivers must be enrolled in and classified as low-income by demonstrating eligibility for free or reduced-price lunches or through other accepted additional methods outlined in the [Low-Income Verification Form](#). CI/IB exam costs for eligible students are not reduced by partner organizations, but students are still fully subsidized to ensure no exam fee is paid by the family.

## Beneficiaries in the 2023-24 School Year

<b>Number of School Districts</b>	CES Grant: 59 IB/CI Test Fee Program: 17 AP Test Fee Program: Not reported in College Board data
<b>Number of Schools</b>	CES Grant: 100 IB/CI Test Fee Program: 19 AP Test Fee Program: 267
<b>Number of Students</b>	CES Grant: 82,902 based on annual report estimates IB/CI Test Fee Program: 1,059 (2,227 Exams) AP Test Fee Program: 9,344 (14,552 Exams)
<b>Number of Educators</b>	Unknown, although 26 of 59 CES Grant recipients (44%) utilized funding for professional development for over 20 distinct trainings.
<b>Other</b>	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	Districts: 72, excluding AP Test Fee Program (unknown) Schools: 386 Students: 93,305 (estimated based on annual reports)

## Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

## State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$4,894,000	\$3,704,134
2023	\$4,894,000	\$4,696,501
2022	\$4,894,000	\$4,894,000
2021	\$4,894,000	\$4,894,000
2020	\$4,894,000	\$4,894,000

## Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	CES Grant: 100 Schools AP/IB/CI Test Fee programs: 286 Schools AP Exams Subsidized: 14,552
2023	CES Grant: 128 Schools/Districts AP/IB/CI Test Fee Programs: 280 Schools AP Exams Subsidized: 12,453
2022	CES Grant: 102 Schools/Districts AP/IB/CI Test Fee Programs: 308 Schools AP Exams Subsidized: 12,588
2021	CES Grant: 137 Schools/Districts AP/IB/CI Test Fee Programs: 318 Schools AP Exams Subsidized: 12,957

## Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

The legislature continues to invest in expanding course-based dual credit programs by changing eligibility rules, enhancing funding streams and increasing student access to opportunity. Consequently, OSPI staff continue to refine and improve the process for aligning distribution of the dual credit proviso funds with the intent to promote equitable access and sustainability.

In 2021, with the expansion of CiHS eligibility to the 9th and 10th grades, course fee subsidies were made available to these students and total credit limitations were lifted. The CES Grant was competitive and allowed LEAs to request funding for CiHS subsidies and/or additional equity and sustainability activities.

In 2022–23, changes were made to the format and content of the CES Grant application to better differentiate between requests for one-time fee subsidies and more sustainable activities. CiHS subsidy applications were streamlined (including only six questions), while Equity and Sustainability applications included more detailed questions (12) about program intent, outcomes, equity, and long-term planning. Applications were scored using a new rubric including demographic and enrollment data and evaluated for quality and demonstrated need.

Final award recommendations were compared to prior years' expenditures (when available) and adjusted to reflect the applicants' grant utilization more accurately. With over \$7.3 million in requests for just \$3.32 million in available funding, \$500,000 in available one-time ESSER funding was also provided to address the needs of applicants that received less than 50% of their initial request. 45 CES Grant recipients received supplemental awards of \$5,000–40,000.

Also, in 2022–23, the CI/IB test fee waiver process was streamlined into one application for schools and districts; however, with no recent legislative changes around exam-based dual credit programs, there have been no programmatic changes made to either the AP or CI/IB test fee programs.

In 2023–24, SSB 5048 established a state funding structure for CiHS, making course fee subsidies unnecessary. The CES Grant became a directed grant with more allowable uses to ensure districts could dedicate funding to areas of greatest need. New priority areas included Outreach to Underrepresented Student Populations to address known participation gaps in dual credit programs and Summer Administrative Costs to address high school and district staffing challenges related to the newly opened summer quarter RS established by [Substitute House Bill \(SHB\) 1316](#). Changes in grant administration included a pre-application survey to identify applicants' needs and proposed activities and a revision of year-end reports to more clearly identify how grant funds were being utilized, what dual credit programs were being supported, how many students were served, and what specific professional development was occurring.

## Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

As districts continue to support students' academic recovery post-COVID, and as the legislature continues to expand funding support for dual credit programs, the data shows improvements in student outcomes from these investments. In 2023–24, 17.7% of all AP exam-takers received low-income fee reductions and utilization of test fee waivers subsidized by this proviso increased for a third consecutive year with 2,099 more exams taken by students from low-income families and subsidized exam costs increasing by an unprecedented 18%. Overall, AP exam-taking reached an all-time high of 95,008 exams taken by 52,868 students. Almost 72% of all exams (68,058) were scored 3 or higher, earning potential college credit for those students. While this data is not reflective of the proportion of all Washington state high school students who are FRPL-eligible, the rate has been increasing modestly since 2021.

The \$273,574 awarded for CI/IB exam subsidies was down less than 2% from 2023, which saw a 13% increase over the previous year. While the number of exams administered declined modestly, three more schools applied for funding. The 1,059 students receiving exam subsidies represented 39% of all CI/IB test-takers as reported by grant recipients. As this figure more accurately reflects the proportion of the state's students who are qualified as low-income, OSPI will need to investigate differences in practice or reporting that might account for the discrepancy between AP and IB/CI subsidization levels. Nevertheless, the \$1 million invested in the test fee waiver program is effectively used and the \$0 co-payment for students eligible for

free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) has helped eliminate barriers to students attaining dual credit.

In 2024, fewer schools/districts applied for CES Grant funding because there was not a need for CiHS subsidies. However, the figure was comparable to 2022 (102), suggesting that there is still significant need for dual credit support throughout the state. Historically, approximately 90% of applicants used the CES Grant to subsidize CiHS and 75%-80% of the funding was earmarked for that purpose. With \$2.38 million available to LEAs through the CES Grant, 100 schools received between \$1,000–75,000 in awards, with the average award at \$40,303. All applicants received funding with over 80% receiving their full request. The CES Grant was instrumental in supporting a wider variety of local needs with higher awards used to invest more strategically in specific priority areas. In their annual reports, recipients provided details on the amount expended in each category and for each dual credit program.

**Figure 1: Reported Expenses in Each CES Grant Category**

Priority Category	Amount Expended	Percentage of Total Expended*
Contracts and Consultancy	\$403,291	22%
Professional Development and Training	\$206,410	11%
CTE Dual Credit and Graduation Pathways	\$67,396	4%
Program Fees	\$170,757	9%
Equipment and Supplies	\$293,705	16%
Exam Fees and Other Student Expenses	\$278,957	15%
Outreach to Underrepresented Student Populations	\$212,449	12%
Summer Administrative Costs	\$37,527	2%

\*9 of 59 CES Grant recipients did not report expenses, accounting for roughly 9% of the total expense.

**Figure 2: Reported Expenses in Each Dual Credit Program**

Dual Credit Program	Amount Expended	Percentage of Total Expended*
College in the High School	\$311,956	17%
CTE Dual Credit	\$386,158	21%
Running Start	\$133,517	7%
Advanced Placement	\$403,747	22%
Cambridge International	\$10,360	0.5%
International Baccalaureate	\$0	0%

\*9 of 59 CES Grant recipients did not report expenses. In addition, some respondents did not account for expenses by program and others classified them as "Other."

With CiHS fees paid by the state, over 80% of CES Grant recipients received their full request, which was a significant increase from 2023 when 59% received less than half of what they had requested. Even with the larger awards, 83% of the CES Grant funding awarded was expended,

which is evidence of the LEAs' need and capacity to utilize CES Grant funding even without the administration of CiHS subsidies.

## Major Challenges Faced by the Program

As evidenced by the 22% share of the total CES Grant going to fund AP exams, schools and districts continue to rely on the dual credit proviso to subsidize the one-time costs of exams, which discourages investment in program design, expansion, and innovation that sustainably increases student access to opportunity. Fortunately, the state investment in CiHS has mitigated the impact of the increase in test fee subsidies and freed up funding for other purposes.

It is encouraging to see 21% of the CES Grant invested in CTE Dual Credit. However, with 16% of all expenditures classified as Equipment and Supplies and only 4% classified as CTE Dual Credit and Graduation Pathways, it appears that most of the CTE funding is being invested in equipment rather than program expansion, articulation development, and collaboration with postsecondary partners. While this is evidence of a need for additional investment in expensive CTE equipment and supplies, reliance on the CES Grant for that purpose is not a sustainable practice. A recurring theme in annual reports was the need for uniformity in CTE Dual Credit administration and colleges' reluctance to establish new articulation agreements. Grant recipients reported the need to reallocate funding when their initial plans for CTE Dual Credit program expansion did not materialize.

Recipients also report that the June 30 fiscal year deadline impedes the use of grant funds for professional development, postsecondary collaboration, marketing and outreach, and academic planning over the summer months. Understandably, some complained that they could not use the funding for "Summer Administrative Costs" for the because the funding did not extend far enough into the summer. Only 2% of the grant was used in that category despite the expressed need for support with administering summer quarter Running Start.

Proviso funding recipients tend to address immediate and administratively uncomplicated needs or projects that can be outsourced (e.g. 22% in Contracts and Consultancy, 16% in Equipment and Supplies, and 15% in Exam Fees and Other Student Expenses). Annual report feedback suggests there is little capacity and time at the local level to invest the funding in more deliberate and far-reaching initiatives. In addition, the very process of applying for proviso funding through a competitive grant process is administratively burdensome. While funding is often prioritized for small, under-resourced schools, those are the very schools least likely to apply for it due to staff size or limitations. Ultimately, students suffer when access to funding is dependent upon the LEA's capacity to apply for it.

## Future Opportunities

In 2024, the CES Grant was simplified to encourage maximum participation and address many of the challenges identified above. The allowable uses are primarily focusing on practices that promote sustainability, equipment and supplies are being limited to small schools and districts,



additional emphasis is being placed on increasing CTE Dual Credit and Graduation Pathways and Outreach to Underrepresented Student Populations, and funding will be awarded for college coursework to increase the number of teachers qualified to teach CTE Dual Credit and CiHS. The CES Grant awards will prioritize schools and districts with the greatest need with respect to family income levels, the proportion of underrepresented students served, the number of dual credit offerings, overall enrollment, and organizational capacity to utilize the funding. OSPI will continue to refine this and other grants, while providing technical assistance and professional development to spur innovation, collaboration, data-informed decision-making, sustainable systemic change and equity-focused program improvement.

As reliance on the exam fee subsidy programs continues to rise, OSPI will need to set aside additional proviso funding just to meet the existing need, while investigating options for expanding the program. OSPI has inquired with the College Board, International Baccalaureate Organization, and Cambridge International about adjusting the low-income threshold to the Washington College Grant level or further discounting their exams but have been told these strategies cannot be supported for a single state.

While the influx of early applications for the CES Grant and annual increases in dual credit exam subsidies suggest that the dual credit proviso will again be well-spent, OSPI is considering new investments that would be funded by this proviso, including:

- Licensing of a comprehensive dual credit enrollment platform like DualEnroll or Canusia
- The establishment of a National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) state chapter to support K–12 and higher education collaboration
- Further subsidizing dual credit exams
- Contracting with partner agencies, institutions, or third parties to conduct root cause analysis of participation gaps in dual credit programs
- Investment in tools for data analysis and display, and
- Support for personnel costs to administer summer quarter RS.

## Other Relevant Information

Several factors contributed to the uncommonly low expenditure for this proviso during the 2023–24 school year, including challenges like districts' inability to fully expend 100% of their CES grant funds, staffing vacancies took time to fill, and an inability to get a contract approved to pilot a dual credit enrollment platform. OSPI is restructuring this proviso for FY25 to ensure these critically needed funds are utilized to increase equitable and sustainable access to dual credit opportunities for students.

## Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)



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