

Millions of College Students are Still in High School: Implications for Student Affairs

Aurely Garcia Tulloch & John Fink, Community College Research Center

2025 NASPA Conference

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community college research and
reform for over 25 years.***

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Teachers College, Columbia University

Today's Conversation:

1. What is dual enrollment?
2. Major barriers (*access to who? access to what?*) and reform efforts (*dual enrollment equity pathways*)
3. Connecting dual enrollment reform to the student experience for current and former students
4. Implications for student affairs
5. Q&A with dual enrollment researchers

What is Dual Enrollment?

Dual enrollment (DE) programs allow high school students to enroll in college courses, earning both high school and college credit.

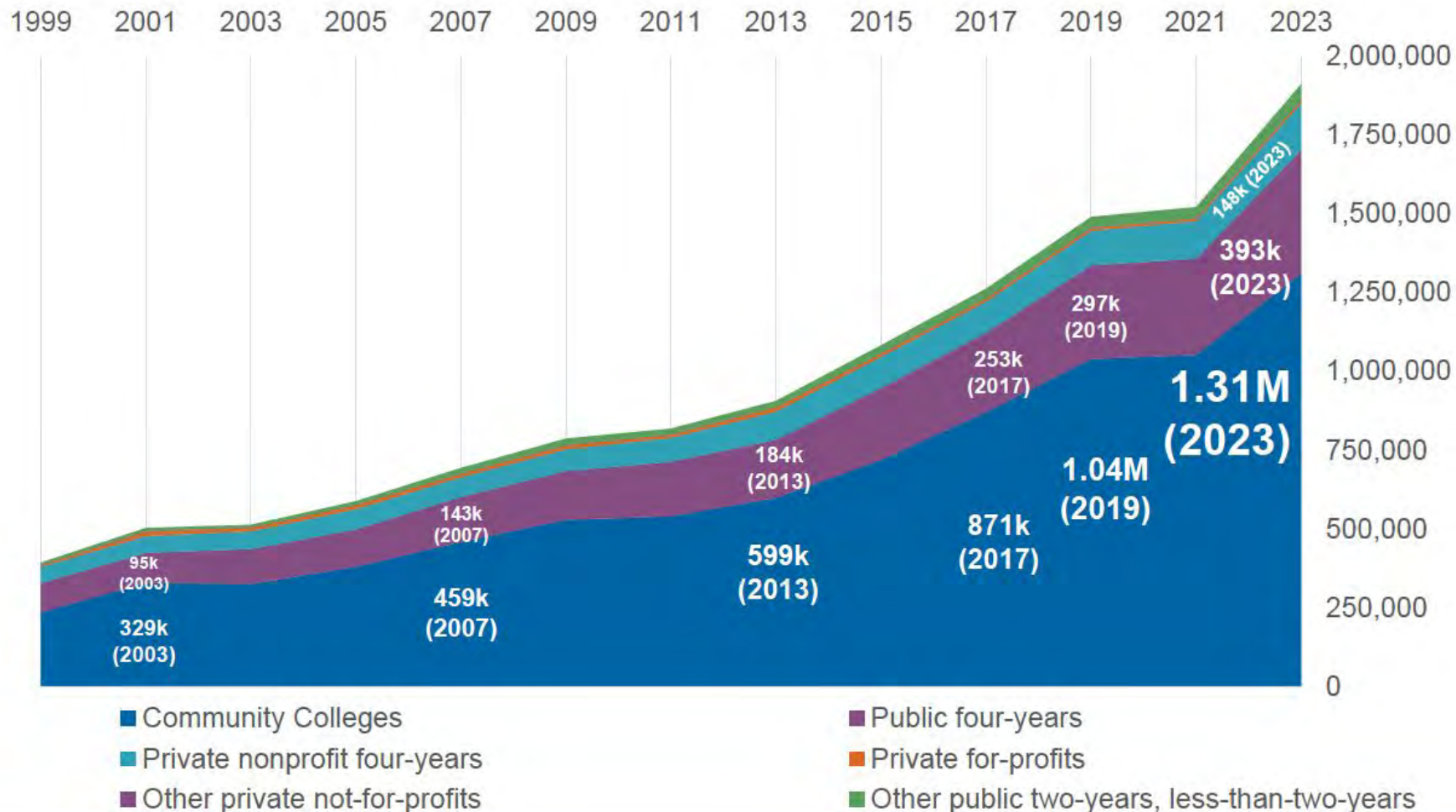
The term DE varies from state-to-state. DE courses also vary by location and instructor type.

Growth of Dual Enrollment

1999-2023

IPEDS Fall Enrollments

Fall Undergraduate Enrollments among Students Aged 17 or Younger



Expansion of Dual Enrollment Concentrated at Community Colleges

2.5M First Ever National Dual Enrollment Count 2022-23 in IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey

	Dual Enrollment	Total Undergraduate	Percent DE
Total	2,489,859	21,220,413	12
Community colleges	1,784,966	8,618,323	21
Public four-years	445,224	7,121,611	6
Private not-for-profit	207,652	3,504,732	6
Other public two-years, less-than-two-years	46,249	237,969	19
Private for-profits	5,768	1,737,778	0

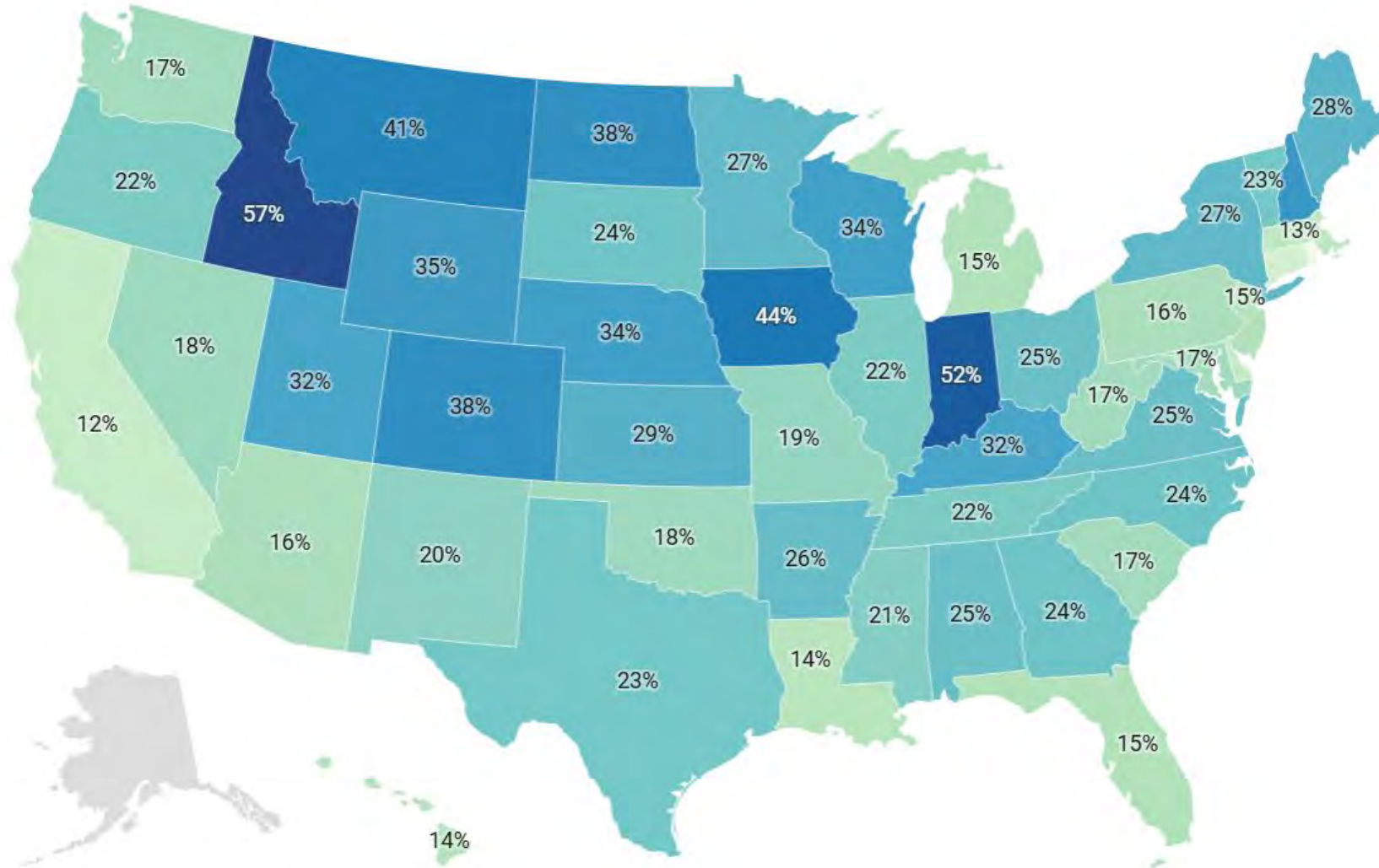
IPEDS 12-Month Enrollment Survey, 2022-23 Academic Year

Percentage of Community College Students in High School in 2022-23

Dual enrollment as a percent of community college headcount



6% 57%



Dual Enrollment:
21% of 2022-23
Community College
Enrollment

Findings on the Effects of DE

- Accumulation of descriptive and quasi-experimental evidence, stronger experimental evidence on effects of ECHS
- WWC Report: Positive effects of taking college courses in HS include stronger HS grades, more HS completion, more college enrollment, more credit accumulation, more degree completion
- DE can benefit students who were falling behind in HS (Lee & Villarreal, 2022)
- Outcomes for DE students differ by state and student subgroups (Velasco et al., 2024)

What We Know About Dual Enrollment

What Is Dual Enrollment?

In dual enrollment (DE), high school students are enrolled in a college course and complete all the assignments that would normally be completed as part of the course. At the end of the course, they are given a final grade on a college transcript and course credit that can be applied toward a college degree. Dual enrollment programs differ from Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs in that students take college courses rather than high school courses with college-level content.

WWC Intervention Report

February 2017

Dual Enrollment Programs

Program Description¹

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to take college courses and earn college credits while still attending high school. Such programs, also referred to as dual credit or early college programs, are designed to boost college access and degree attainment, especially for students typically underrepresented in higher education. Dual enrollment programs support college credit accumulation and degree attainment via at least three mechanisms. First, allowing high school students to experience college-level courses helps them prepare for the social and academic requirements of college while having the additional supports available to high school students; this may reduce the need for developmental coursework. Second, students who accumulate college credits early and consistently are more likely to attain a college degree. Third, many dual enrollment programs offer discounted or free tuition, which reduces the overall cost of college and may increase the number of low socioeconomic status students who can attend and complete college.²

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Should Students Falling Behind in School Take Dual Enrollment Courses?

Han Bum Lee^a and Michael U. Villarreal^b

^aUrban Education Institute, University of Texas at San Antonio
^band Policy Studies, University of Texas at San Antonio

ABSTRACT
This study examined the effect of dual enrollment (DE) on enrollment and degree completion for students with academic achievement who attended public high school. We employed a propensity score matching method to control bias arising from DE participation and supplement with a bounds test. The results showed that DE students had a higher likelihood of entering college after high school by 20 percentage points and completing within four and eight years of high school graduation percentage points, respectively, compared to similar students who did not take DE courses. This evidence suggested that DE contributed to a reduction in educational inequities in enrollment and degree attainment for students at risk of academic failure. On the other hand, students who were racial or ethnic minorities from low-income families were not only less likely to participate in DE programs but were also predicted to have smaller participation effects on college degree attainment. The findings stress the need for higher education institutions and partnering school districts to provide more robust supports for underserved students for participating in DE programs to facilitate a successful transition into college.

Five studies of dual enrollment programs in the Transition to College review. Two studies of dual enrollment programs to medium to large for the following outcomes: college access and enrollment, credit accumulation, completion (high school). The WWC considers the extent of evidence on the following student outcome domains—staying in school, college enrollment, and degree completion. There were no studies that met the WWC criteria for a strong recommendation.

REPORT | OCTOBER 2024

The Postsecondary Outcomes of High School Dual Enrollment Students

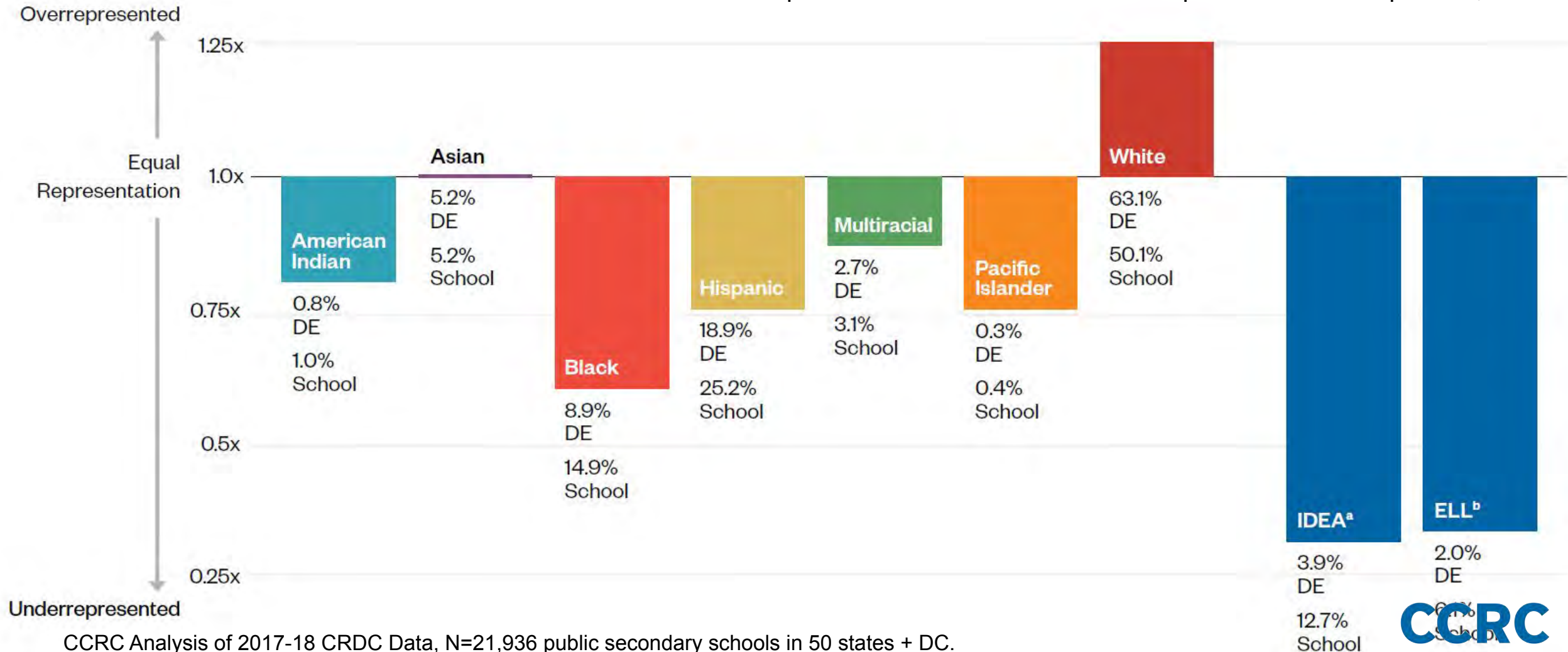
A National and State-by-State Analysis

Tatiana Velasco | John Fink | Mariel Bedoya | Davis Jenkins
Community College Research Center

“Programs of Privilege”

Access to Dual Enrollment Uneven

Representation in Dual Enrollment compared to School Population, 2017-18



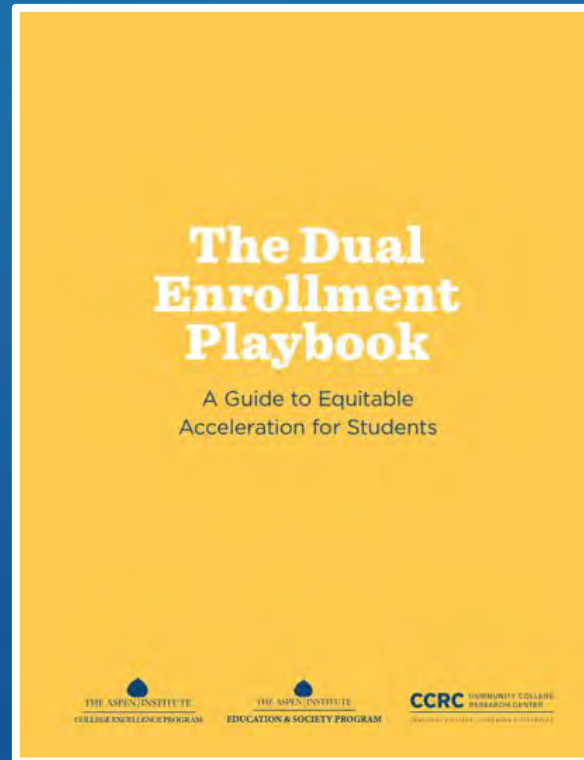
CCRC Analysis of 2017-18 CRDC Data, N=21,936 public secondary schools in 50 states + DC.

Major Barriers to Dual Enrollment Programs

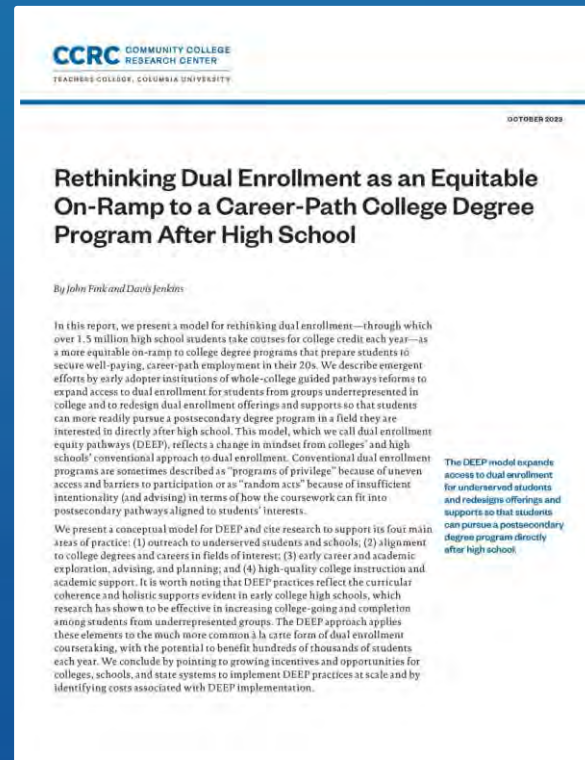
- **Policies:** Lack of funding, instructor qualifications, student eligibility
- **Practices:** Lack of outreach, advising, supports
- **Mindsets:** Beliefs that dual enrollment is only for “advanced” students



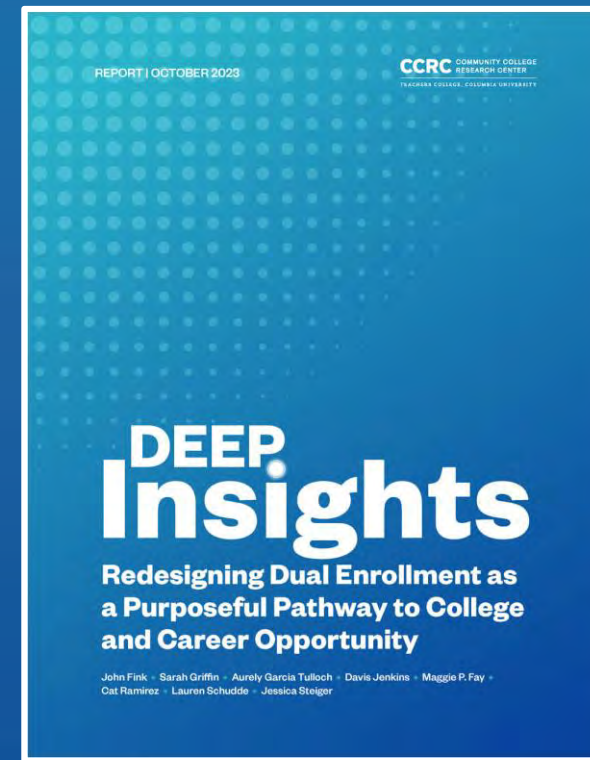
How are Practitioners Strengthening DE as an Equitable On-Ramp to College Degrees?



The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students (October 2020)



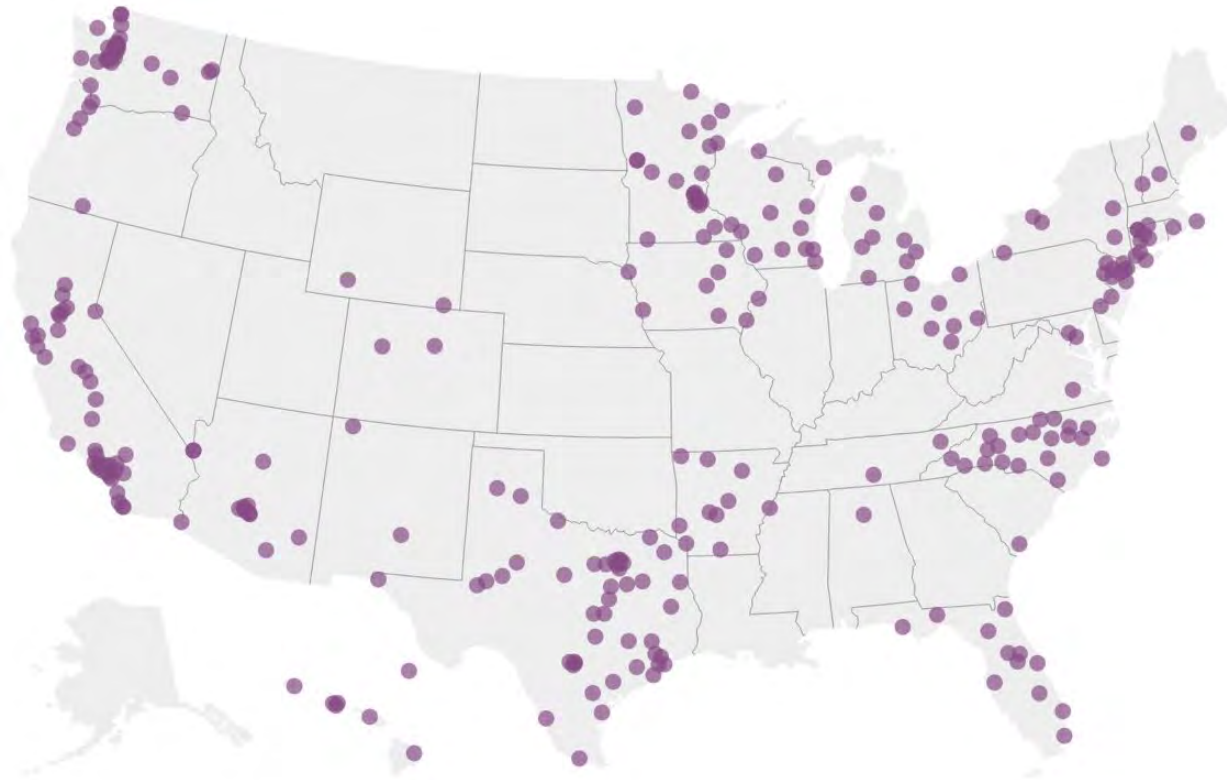
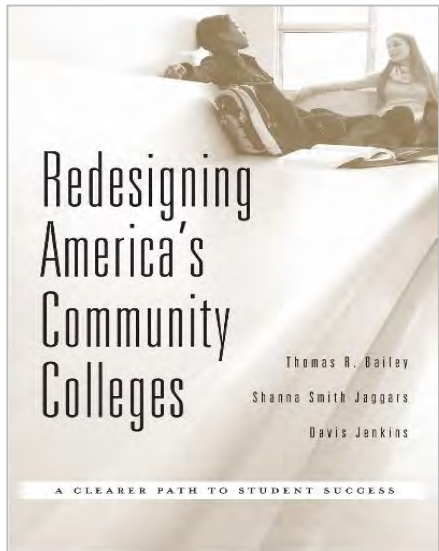
Rethinking Dual Enrollment as an Equitable On-Ramp to a Career-Path College Degree Program After High School (October 2023)



DEEP Insights: Redesigning Dual Enrollment as a Purposeful Pathway to College and Career Opportunity (October 2023)

Access for *whom?* Access to *what?*

Extending college “guided pathway” reforms to dual enrollment

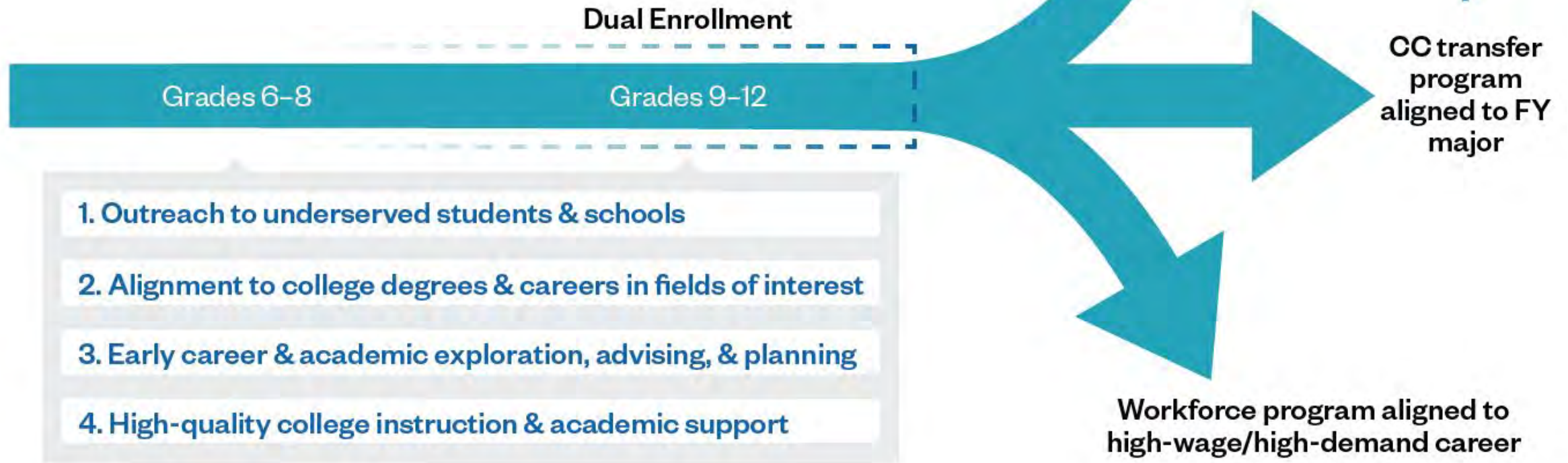


Updated January 2022

Over **400 community colleges** nationally have participated in national and state guided pathways reform initiatives.

CCRC has **studied guided pathways at 120** of these colleges.

Dual Enrollment Equity Pathways (DEEP) Framework



Rethinking DE as a Purposeful Pathway

Conventional Approach: “Programs of Privilege” and “Random Acts”

DEEP Approach: DE/CE as an On-Ramp to Career-Path Degree Programs

Who is it designed for?

- Primarily students who are already headed to university after HS

- All students, especially those who might not otherwise attend college

What courses are offered?

- Primarily gen eds, whatever is easy to offer based on annual teacher availability

- Foundational coursework (including gen eds) aligned to college degree programs in fields of interest to students and communities

Philosophy on growth

- Grow if there are more students who are academically qualified and quality standards can be maintained

- Cast a wider net, assume all students will struggle and need supports. To grow, keep standards high, broaden access, and increase student supports

Student advising and supports

- Ad hoc, as needed, if students reach out for help

- Unavoidable, frontloaded to early coursework, college-provided advising to explore degree options and create an individualized plan

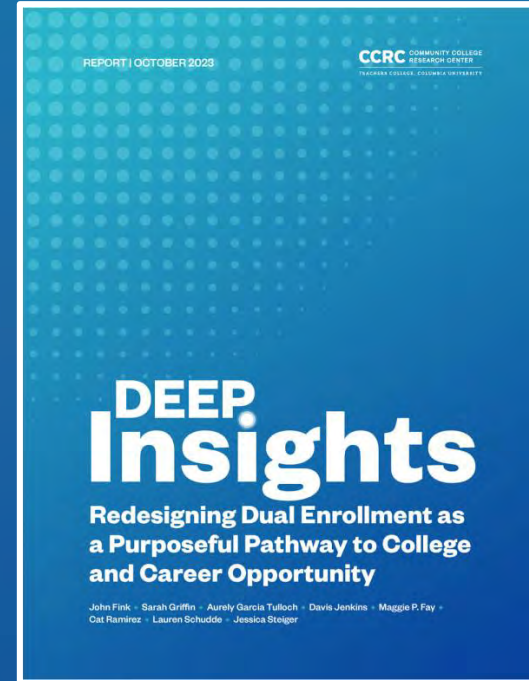
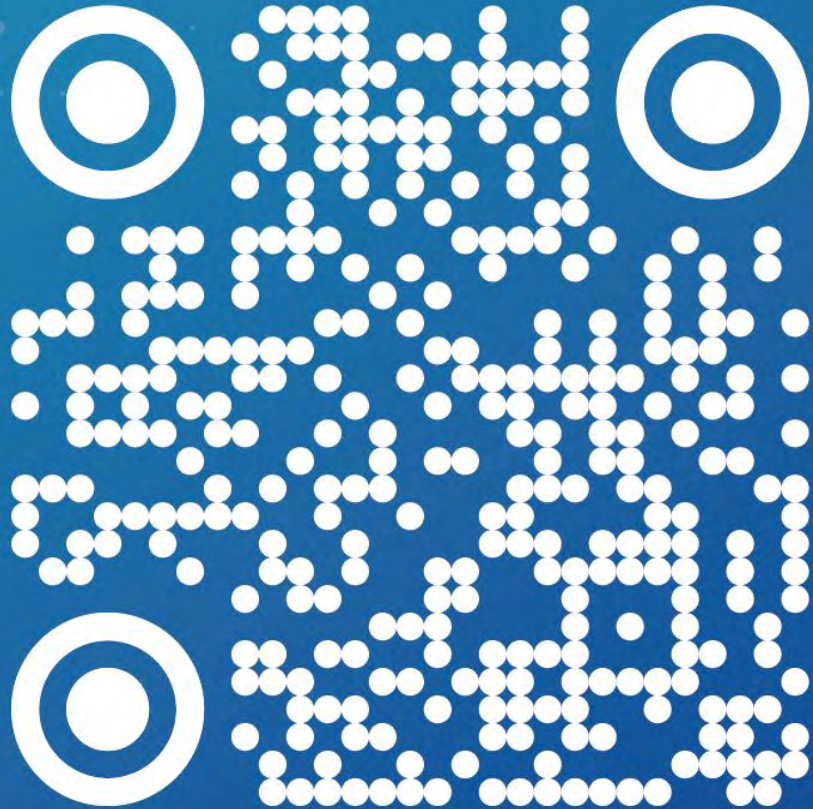
Business model

- Low-cost, low-revenue: Fewer staff required, lower instructional costs, lower yield rates leads to lower revenues

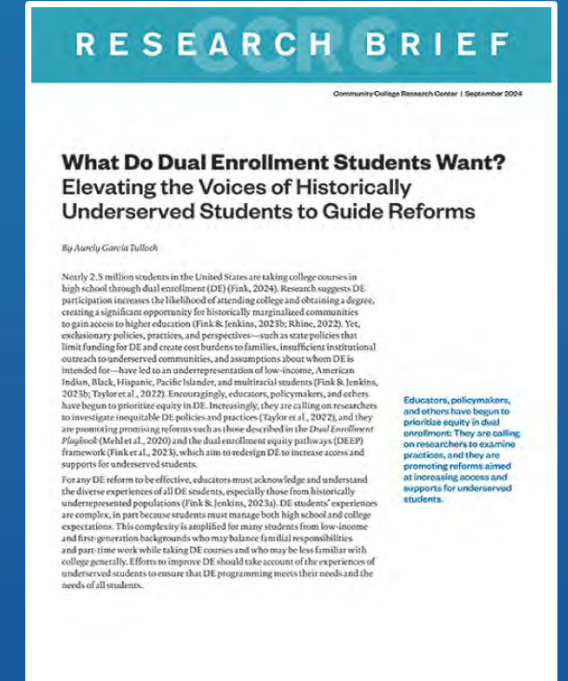
- Higher costs, more staff (e.g., advising, program leaders) and instructional costs. Larger revenues driven by increasing college access and re-enrollment among former DC students who would not otherwise have attended any college without DE/CE

DEEP@CCRC

Resources on dual enrollment equity pathways for K-12 and college practitioners.



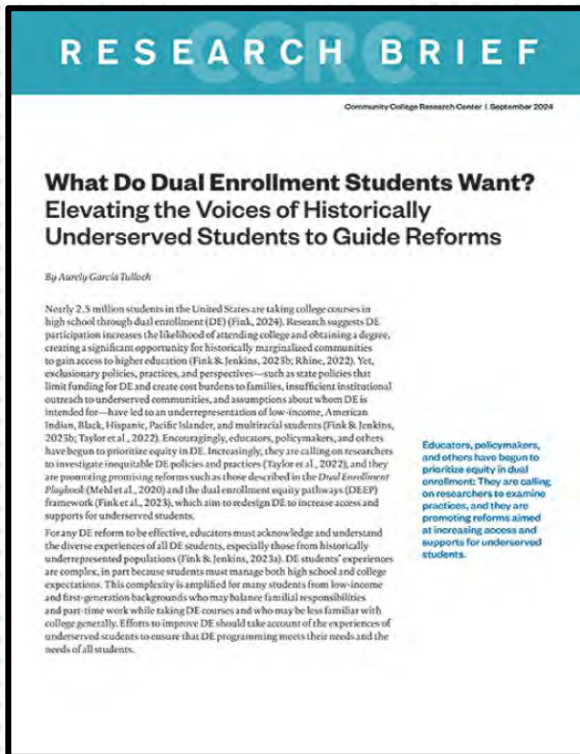
DEEP Insights: Redesigning Dual Enrollment as a Purposeful Pathway to College and Career Opportunity (October 2023)






What Do Dual Enrollment Students Want? Elevating the Voices of Historically Underserved Students to Guide Reforms (September 2024)




Connecting Reform to the DE Student Experience

What do historically underserved DE students “want” and how can we connect this to DE reform?

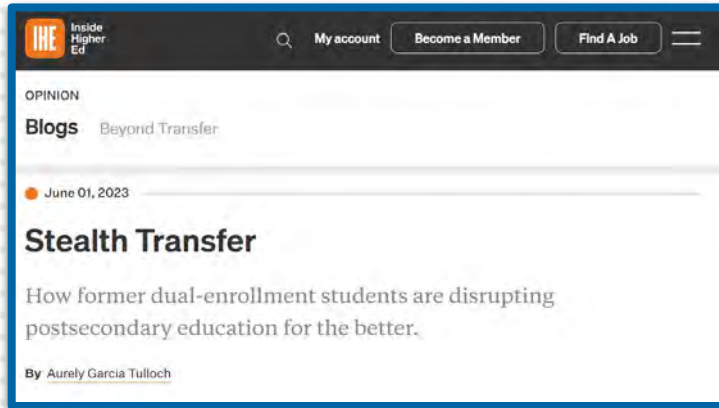


- Students want know about DE options earlier.
- Students want well-informed DE advisors who empower them.
- Students want their DE courses to be aligned with career and academic pathways in their fields of interest.
- Students want engaging learning experiences in their online courses.
- Students want to know how to balance the high school experience and DE coursetaking.
- Students want to know how to find scholarships and manage debt to help them attend college after high school.

What Dual Enrollment Students Want	Strategies to Support Dual Enrollment Students	
 <p>to know about their DE options earlier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform students of DE options through outreach to elementary and middle schools. Advertise DE in local media outlets, community organizations, and social media outlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a standard of what information about DE should be known to your local community. Dedicate a school day to academic and career advising for prospective and current DE students.
 <p>well-informed DE advisors who empower them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform students of the rigor of their DE courses without discouraging. Improve DE staff training (with discussions of the potential of DE to benefit a broad range of students) to help shift mindsets toward more inclusive approaches to DE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure students know DE is not only for good test-takers by providing test prep, re-testing options, and/or alternatives to placement testing for eligibility.
 <p>DE courses to be aligned with career and academic pathways in their fields of interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with students to create college program plans aligned to their academic and career goals. Inform students of their options for transferring DE credits at the baccalaureate level and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly update program maps with DE partner institutions to ensure DE courses align to degree programs at local community colleges and universities. Offer DE courses applicable to various majors.

What Dual Enrollment Students Want	Strategies to Support Dual Enrollment Students
 <p>engaging learning experiences in their online courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask students about their experiences in online DC courses to inform professional development for DC faculty. ▪ Dedicate classroom time for DC students to receive extra support. ▪ Raise awareness of office hours and tutoring resources that are available online or in-person at the high school or college.
 <p>to know how to balance the high school experience and DC courses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be transparent with students and families about the trade-offs of participating in DC. ▪ Create clubs or student-led organizations at the high school where DC students can share their experiences. ▪ Advertise extracurricular activities that DC students can participate in at the college. ▪ Provide transportation to events at the college.
 <p>to know how to find scholarships and manage debt to help them attend college after high school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform students of costs associated with transferring credits in-state versus out-of state and to public versus private institutions. ▪ Establish an online repository that informs students of various scholarship opportunities, including local offerings and those tailored to high school seniors and transfer students. ▪ Create dedicated classroom time to discuss financial aid, grants, scholarships, and other opportunities for students to reduce the cost of attending college after DC.

What about former dual enrollment students?



Former dual enrollment students represent a growing proportion of undergraduate enrollment. We refer to these students as “**stealth transfers**” due to their “hidden” pathway as transfer students.

Stealth transfer students account for...

1 in every 5

entrants at two-year public and four-year private nonprofit institutions

1 in every 4

entrants at four-year public institutions

scan the QR code:



**What are the
implications of the
large and growing
number of college
students in high school
for student affairs?**

Implications for Student Affairs

- **Student development theories** may not fully address “dual identities” of DE students as both college course takers and high schoolers – how do we adjust current theories to address the needs of our students? what mental health services (e.g., support groups) are available to support DE student development?
- Rethinking how **orientation** serves “first-year” and “transfer” students – where do DE students fit in?
- **Policies**, such as FERPA and/or related to student conduct, and parent involvement – how do current policies apply minors enrolled in college courses?
- High schoolers may come in with numerous credits or even an associate degree – how does **academic advising** address this? how will **enrollment management** use this opportunity to engage and build back college enrollment?
- **Career services** may need to redesign what milestones student should be expected to complete and/or achieve at what points of their college journey – how will this impact students coming in with 5-30 credits/units vs. an associate degree at 18-years old?
- Bias and debunking myths – how do we ensure all functional areas in students affairs (including faculty and leadership) are aware of DE students strengths and what they add to the educational community?

Q&A

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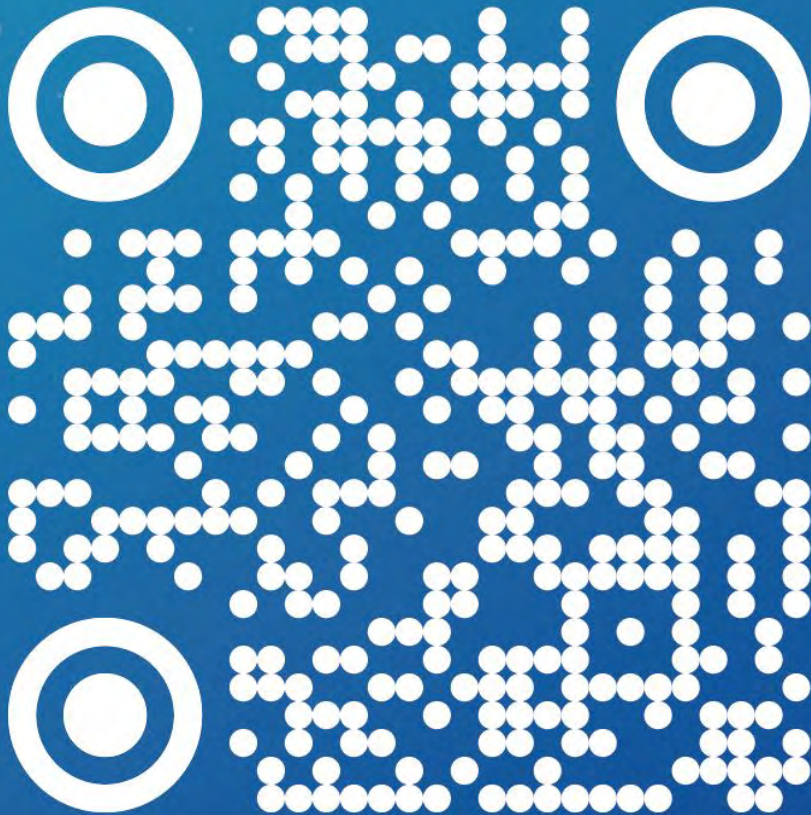
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FOREWORD BY
Kay M. McClenney



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Resources on dual enrollment
equity pathways for K-12 and
college practitioners.



Thank you!

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