

Act Now for Our Future 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

#ActNowForOurFuture



IMPROVE

Create a More Transparent Dual-Credit System

Entering the Texas and global workforce now requires more than a high school diploma — it requires post-secondary success. In order to prepare students for college and career we must expand existing college and career pathways including dual-credit programs.

What is dual credit and why is it important?

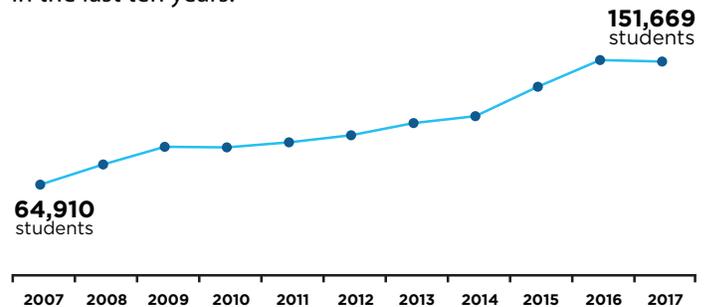
Texas' dual-credit program allows an eligible high school student enrolled in a college course to receive credit from both the college and the high school. These programs help shorten the time and reduce the cost to college graduation. Research shows students completing dual-credit coursework not only graduate from high school and enroll in college at higher rates, but also have greater post-secondary success. Students with dual-credit coursework are two times more likely to stay in school after their first year of college and three times more likely to complete college in four years. They also graduate, on average, one semester earlier than those who do not take dual-credit courses. Results like these are key to the state's success in reaching its 60x30TX goal, which states at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or college degree by 2030.^{1,2,3}

How can dual-credit programs in Texas continue to improve?

Enrollment growth in dual-credit courses more than doubled in the last ten years, increasing to 151,669 in 2017. In 2015, state legislation removed restrictions on the number of dual-credit courses a student can take and the grade levels in which a student can enroll. Nonetheless, just a fraction of all the state's high school students take dual-credit courses. Continued effort to attract more students from all backgrounds is a necessary goal to broaden the reach of this program.

Dual-Credit Enrollment

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Additionally, there is confusion on issues such as course transfer policies, sequence of study, and courses not fulfilling specific degree requirements.

State legislation in 2017 required the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to create statewide goals for dual-credit programs that bolstered academic supports, defined the respective roles of the school districts and institutions of higher education, and provided sources of funding for the coursework. Defined goals will remedy some of this confusion, allowing advisors to better guide students through the process. The state must monitor dual-credit programs to ensure progress toward these goals.

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Implement a coherent set of policies to align dual-credit programs among high schools and two- and four-year institutions of higher education.



References

- ¹ Miller, T.; et al. (2017) *Dual Credit Education in Texas Intrim Report*, Rand Corporation https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2043.html
- ² Villarreal, M. (2017) *The Effects of Dual Credit on Postsecondary Student Outcomes* <https://texaserc.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/65-Brief-Villarreal-HB18-PB-11.16.17.pdf>
- ³ *Dual Credit and Success in College* (2018) University of Texas System <https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/default/files/documents/ut-system-reports/2018/dual-credit-and-success-college/utsystem-dualcreditstudy.pdf>