



# Dual Credit System Improvement Guide

## For Building and District Leaders

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### Introduction

Dual credit is a strategy that states and districts are using to ensure all students graduate high school ready to succeed in college, additional training, and/or a career. Dual credit programs provide high school students with the potential to earn college credit for courses and/or exams they complete while in high school. In Washington state, students may pursue dual credit coursework in a variety of programs, including but not limited to:

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Offered by</b>	<b>Taught by</b>	<b>Credit earned by</b>
<b>Advanced Placement (AP)</b>	High school	High school teacher	Passing an exam
<b>Cambridge International (CI)</b>	High school	High school teacher	Passing an exam
<b>College in High School (CHS)</b>	High school	High school teacher (trained by college)	Passing college course
<b>Career and Technical Education Dual Credit (CTE Dual Credit)</b>	High school	High school teacher	Passing course (some colleges require a B or better grade)
<b>International Baccalaureate (IB)</b>	High school	High school teacher	Passing an exam
<b>Running Start (RS)</b>	College campus	College faculty	Passing college course

Dual credit completion is a key performance indicator in our state and many school systems are expanding access to and staff support for their programs in an effort to help students meet the 24-credit high school graduation requirement while also advancing their career and college readiness goals.

## USING THE GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you and the key stakeholders in your building or district use your data to:

- Understand and interpret dual credit statistics for your district and for the state
- Engage in a collaborative self-assessment of your strengths and challenges in this area
- Develop concrete plans to improve dual credit opportunities in your district



Beginning in 2018, as part of Washington’s transition to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will provide every school district with access to data, including statistics on local dual credit completion. District and school leaders are uniquely positioned to use these data to drive positive action, such as increasing equitable participation in and staff support for dual credit programs and closing gaps in high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment and completion, and career preparation for historically underserved students.

Individual leaders can use this guide, but it will be most effective when used by a team of district and school staff members and community members charged with developing and carrying out plans for career and college readiness improvement. To enrich the data review and planning process, consider including administrators, postsecondary partners, school counselors, teachers, students, and family members.

The four sections of this guide are organized sequentially. The first section describes the rationale for dual credit expansion. The second section provides a step-by-step process for analyzing the dual credit data available for your district and reflecting on the current status of dual credit participation. The third and fourth sections prompt team members to interpret this information and to develop goals and strategies for improvement. By the end of this system improvement process, the team will have answered key focus questions and developed an informed action plan.



## SECTION 1

### Why Dual Credit?

**Focus Question:** What are the benefits of and rationale for implementing and expanding dual credit in Washington?



## SECTION 2

### Understanding Your Data

**Focus Questions:** What is the status of dual credit participation in our district? What is going well and where are the opportunities for improvement?



## SECTION 3

### Self-Assessment

**Focus Question:** What are areas of strength and barriers to improvement within our dual credit system?



## SECTION 4

### Action Steps

**Focus Question:** What will we do over the next one to three years to increase dual credit access and equity in participation and completion?



## SECTION 1

# Why Dual Credit?

### OBJECTIVE

- Understand the rationale for implementing and expanding dual credit in Washington.

### FOCUS QUESTION

- What are the benefits of and rationale for implementing and expanding dual credit in Washington?

### DIRECTIONS

- Read the dual credit research summary below.
- Respond to the discussion questions at the end of the section.

## Dual credit is an improvement strategy and a key performance indicator in Washington state.

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law in 2015, introduced new ways of measuring school effectiveness using School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicators. OSPI considered 36 SQSS indicators for Washington's ESSA plan and selected the following three:

- Regular Attendance (reducing chronic absenteeism)
- Dual Credit Completion
- Ninth Grade on Track

In addition to this dual credit guide, there are System Improvement Guides available for Attendance and Ninth Grade on Track. These guides provide a process for examining and evaluating all three SQSS indicators and helping district and school leaders use data to assess their strengths and challenges and to formulate action plans for system improvement.

## Dual credit completion is a critical equity issue in Washington.

Increasing access to dual credit and ensuring adequate student supports also feature prominently in the Washington State Board of Education's (SBE) strategic plan<sup>i</sup> and in the Washington Student Achievement Council's (WSAC) 10-year roadmap<sup>ii</sup> as a vehicle for ensuring underrepresented students have equitable access to college opportunities.

## Opportunities for high school students to earn college credit are prevalent and on the rise.

Nationally, 4 of 5 high schools offered at least one dual credit program in 2011.<sup>iii</sup> In 2015-16, 97 percent<sup>iv</sup> of Washington state school districts that enrolled high school students offered dual credit and 57 percent<sup>v</sup> of all public high school students (grades 9-12) completed at least one dual credit course. Students across our state can pursue dual credit through a variety of programs.<sup>vi</sup>

Since 2011, the number of Washington state school districts and students participating in dual credit has increased, and the average number of dual credit courses taken by high school students has been rising, reaching 3.5 in 2015.<sup>vii</sup> In 2015, the Washington State Legislature passed ESSHB 1546,<sup>viii</sup> which increased fiscal support, broadened eligibility, and supported improvements in the quality of dual credit programs. The state superintendent of public instruction, in his published six-year vision for improving the K–12 education system,<sup>ix</sup> lists “dual credit fees paid for all students” as one of OSPI’s goals for the 2019-21 budget biennium.

## **Research supports dual credit as an evidence-based practice with educational and financial benefits for students, although questions around access and implementation persist.**

National studies find that dual credit participation is related to increased rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and college persistence. Dual credit may help students gain the academic skills needed for success in college and can provide students with the confidence that they are “college material.” A recent large-scale national study found that dual credit is associated with less time to college completion—by as much as half a year of enrolled time for students pursuing an associate’s degree—saving students tuition dollars and enabling them to enter the workforce sooner.<sup>x</sup>

However, most of the research on dual credit has not found evidence that dual credit causes better outcomes for students, only that dual credit is related to positive outcomes. For example, these outcomes could be influenced by student motivation: Students who are more motivated often self-select into these accelerated courses. Moreover, there is a lack of consensus around the primary purpose of dual credit programs: Is their role to provide students with rigorous academic experiences that help prepare them for college, to reduce college tuition costs, or both? There are also issues related to implementing dual credit programs, such as staffing, access in rural areas, and the transferability of college credits to the college or university that a student attends after high school.<sup>xi</sup>

## **Dual credit programs often benefit historically advantaged students.**

National and state research indicates that participation in dual credit has been increasing.<sup>xii</sup> However, some studies show that students who participate in dual credit differ significantly from their peers who do not. For example, a Florida study concluded that dual credit participants were more likely to be female and white and less likely to be economically disadvantaged and English learner students.<sup>xiii</sup> These differences may be a result of variation in access to dual credit options across schools. For instance, small, rural, and low-income high schools are much less likely than large, urban, and high-income schools to have the capacity to offer dual credit options.<sup>xiv</sup>

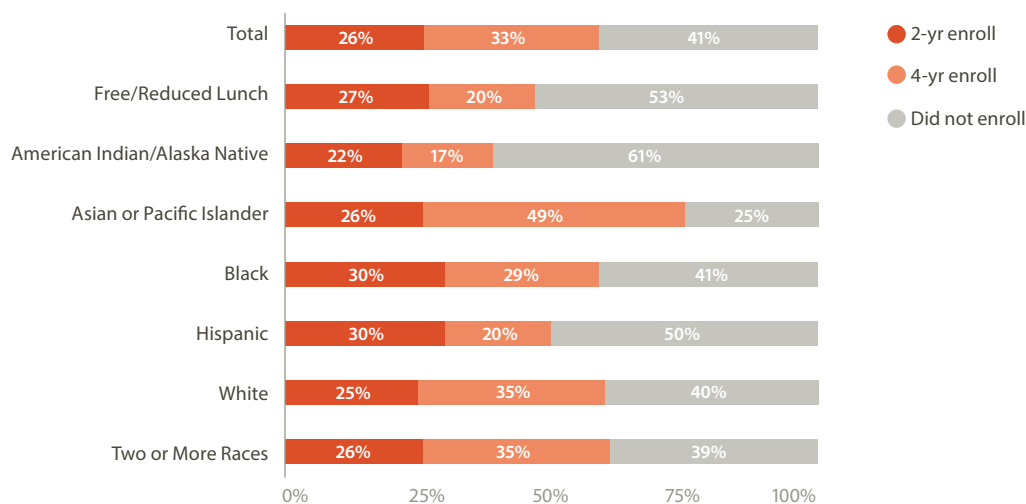
## **Washington has made progress in closing dual credit equity gaps, but significant gaps remain.**

CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech Prep) serves a population that more closely mirrors the overall high school population, but due to a reduction in federal Perkins funding since 2011 many of the articulation agreements between school districts and colleges have lapsed. Thus, many students taking CTE courses are now meeting high school career and technical education (CTE) graduation requirements but do not have the potential to receive college credit for their courses.<sup>xv</sup> In contrast, Advanced Placement (AP), College in the High School, and Running Start all show more significant participation equity gaps. Low-income students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and students with disabilities are overrepresented in CTE Dual Credit and underrepresented in other dual credit programs.

## Dual credit equity gaps mirror later college-enrollment and degree-attainment gaps in Washington state.

In Washington, lower percentages of students identifying as black, two or more races, Hispanic, or low-income enroll in postsecondary education compared to white, Asian/Pacific Islander, or not low-income students (Figure 1).<sup>xvi</sup> These enrollment equity gaps are similar to those for dual credit programs. Among all Washington residents aged 25–44, equity gaps in educational attainment persist: Only 39 percent of Hispanic adults have some college education or a degree, compared to 74 percent of white adults (Figure 2). In Washington, low educational attainment is directly correlated with higher unemployment and lower incomes.<sup>xvii</sup>

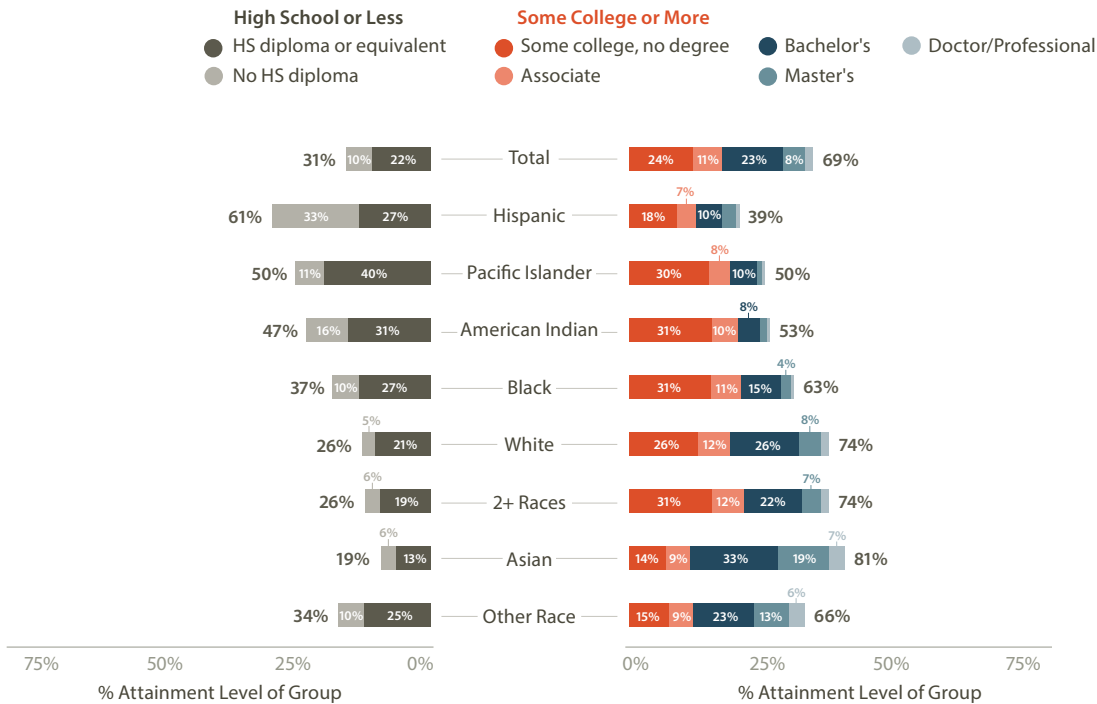
**Figure 1. Postsecondary enrollment, high school graduating class of 2016**



Source: Retrieved from Education Research and Data Center website: P-20 Reports for Statewide History <http://www.erdcddata.wa.gov/hsfb.aspx>

<sup>1</sup> Changes in CTE Dual Credit raise questions about the accuracy of data for this program. Enrolling nearly 120,000 students in 2015, CTE Dual Credit appears to be the state’s largest dual credit program, with twice as many students as AP and six times as many students as Running Start and College in the High School. Loss of federal Perkins funding for CTE Dual Credit in 2011, however, reduced opportunities in this program for students to earn college credit. High school course-coding systems have been slow to recode CTE Dual Credit courses, leading to potential inflation in the number of students reported as participating in a dual credit experience through this program. The effectiveness of CTE Dual Credit in helping students earn college credit may be overestimated if coding systems count students as enrolled in a dual credit course through CTE Dual Credit, when, in fact, they are no longer able to earn college credit for the course.

**Figure 2. Educational attainment of Washington residents aged 25–44**



Source: Washington Student Achievement Council. (2016). 2017–19 Strategic Action Plan. From an analysis of 2011–2013 American Community Survey data. Retrieved from <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2016.12.01.SAP.pdf>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who in your district could use the information provided in this section? How would they use it?
2. Who are the key stakeholders in your district and community that are currently involved in dual credit?
3. Who are your local/regional higher education partners and how are they connected to your school?
4. Who should be part of the team in your district that will work on expanding and increasing equity in dual credit?



## SECTION 2

# Understanding Your Data

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand and analyze state and local data about your district’s dual credit programs.
- Identify additional questions and information needed.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What is the status of dual credit participation in your district? What is going well and where are the opportunities for improvement?

### DIRECTIONS

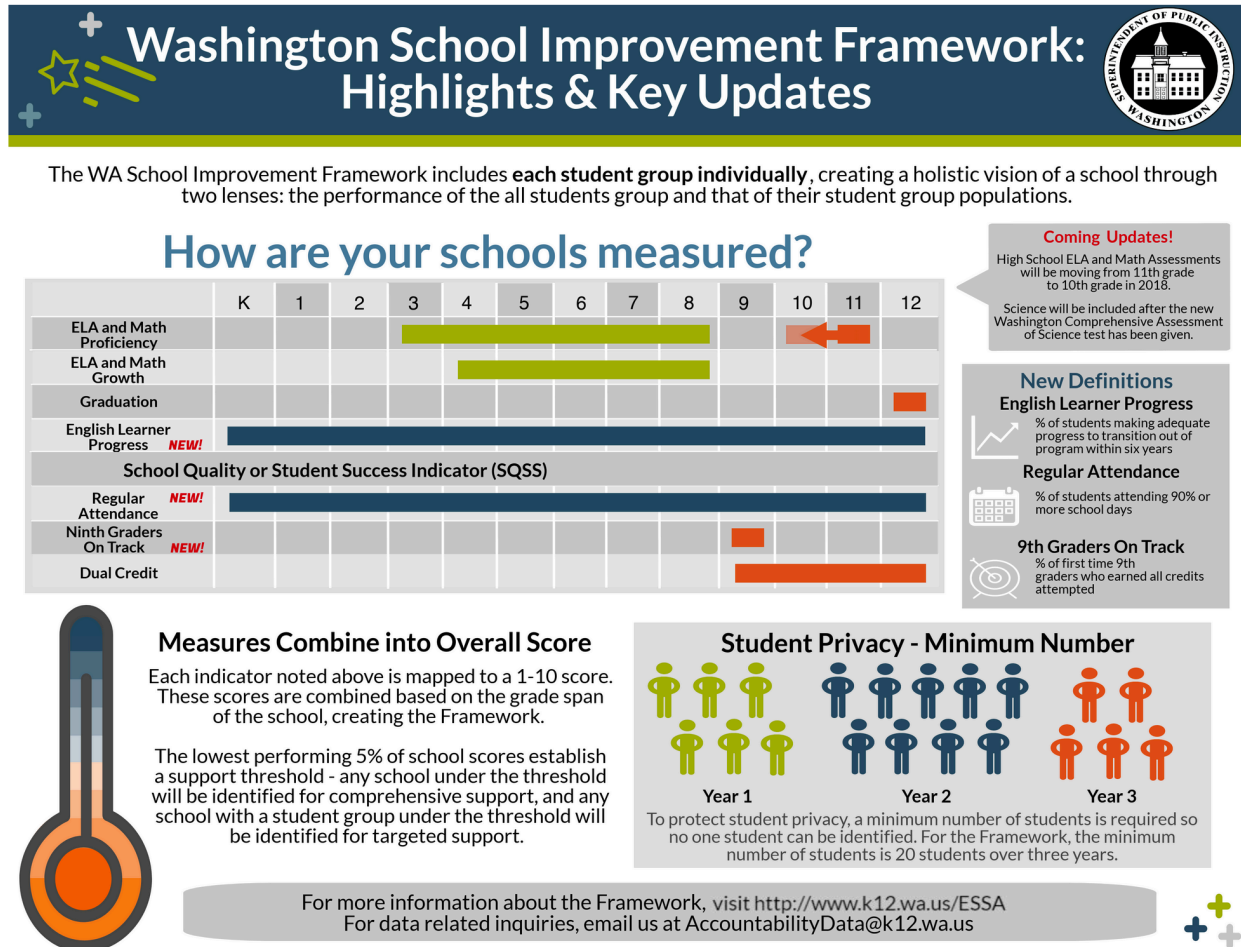
- Review the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF) and State Report Card dual credit data provided by OSPI.
- Using available state-level and building-level data, develop responses to the “understanding your data” questions in this document.
- Discuss and document responses to the “reflecting on your data” questions with your data team and/or district dual credit stakeholders.
- Discuss the “further analysis” questions to more deeply examine your district- or school-level data.

## What are the available sources of dual credit completion data?

Released in March 2018, the WSIF identifies how schools can improve the education of all students. The framework includes schools' regular attendance, graduation, and proficiency, as well as English learner progress, dual credit completion, and Ninth Grade on Track (Figure 3).

Although they allow for comparison of schools and can function as a helpful snapshot, WSIF's indicators are just the starting point for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a school or district. To gain a better understanding of your local context, it is better to accessing your individual school- and district-level data.

Figure 3. Washington School Improvement Framework

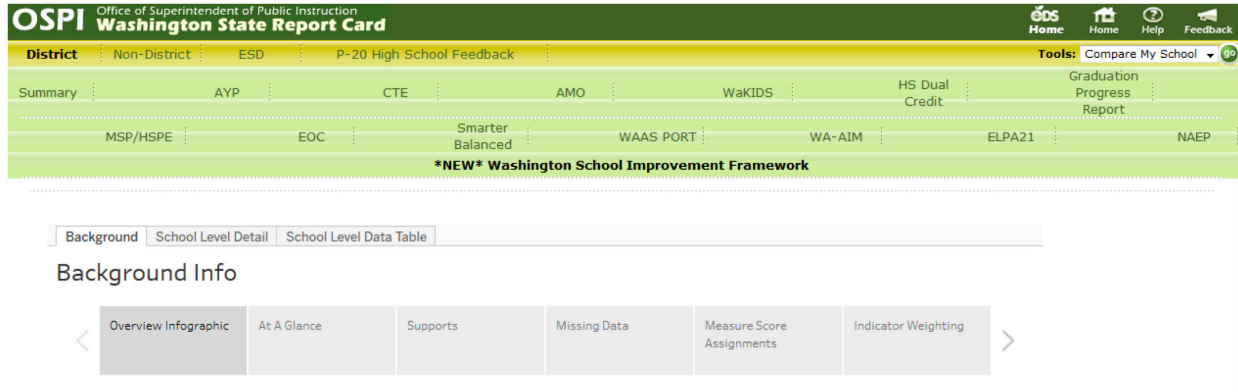




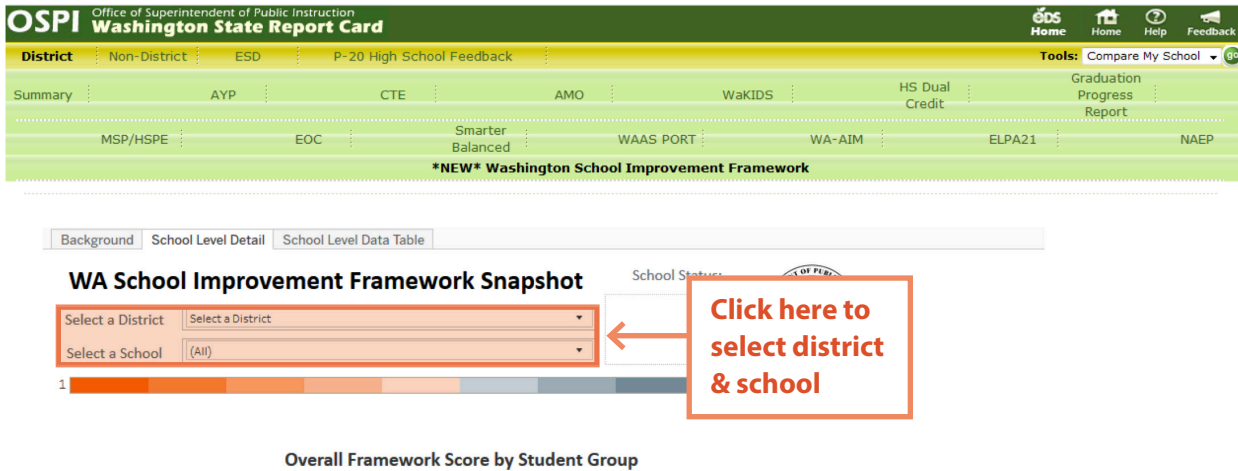
## Accessing and discussing your dual credit data using the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF)<sup>2</sup>

**STEP 1:** Click on the WSIF link *Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF)*

**STEP 2:** Select “School Level Detail” tab (see arrow on screenshot)



**STEP 3:** Select your district and high school to view



<sup>2</sup> [http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/SchoolIndex\\_2018.aspx?groupLevel=District&schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&yrs=2016-17&year=2016-17](http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/SchoolIndex_2018.aspx?groupLevel=District&schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&yrs=2016-17&year=2016-17)

**STEP 4:** Scroll down to the Measures by Student Group table

**Measures by Student Group**

	All Students	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latinx of any race(s)	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	English Learners	Low Income	Students with Disabilities
ELA Proficiency Rate	62.5%		65.0%	46.1%	54.5%			69.9%	22.0%	49.1%	26.4%
Math Proficiency Rate											
ELA Median SGP											
Math Median SGP											
Graduation Rate	85.9%		90.1%	83.4%	75.5%			88.2%	76.3%	80.5%	73.2%
EL Progress Rate*	78.3%										
Regular Attendance Rate	79.9%		89.2%	71.7%	72.7%		80.9%	82.9%	83.8%	74.1%	68.8%
Ninth Grade On Track Rate	81.2%		93.0%	59.1%			85.2%	93.0%	71.1%	63.4%	55.5%
Dual Credit Rate	73.6%		75.2%	62.1%	70.1%		76.2%	80.8%	52.1%	64.8%	41.3%

**STEP 5:** Record school’s dual credit completion rates in the tables provided

School 1 name \_\_\_\_\_

	All students	AI/AN	Asian	BLK/AA	Hisp/Latx	Hawaiian Pac Isl	2+ Race	White	Engl. learn	Low income	Students disabl
Dual credit completion											

*Repeat steps 3–5 to retrieve data for other schools in your district*

School 2 name \_\_\_\_\_

	All students	AI/AN	Asian	BLK/AA	Hisp/Latx	Hawaiian Pac Isl	2+ Race	White	Engl. learn	Low income	Students disabl
Dual credit completion											

School 3 name \_\_\_\_\_

	All students	AI/AN	Asian	BLK/AA	Hisp/Latx	Hawaiian Pac Isl	2+ Race	White	Engl. learn	Low income	Students disabl
Dual credit completion											

School 4 name \_\_\_\_\_

	All students	AI/AN	Asian	BLK/AA	Hisp/Latx	Hawaiian Pac Isl	2+ Race	White	Engl. learn	Low income	Students disabl
Dual credit completion											

## Overall dual credit completion vs. student group rates<sup>3</sup>

### Understanding your data (WSIF/State Report Card/local student information system)

- Which dual credit programs (e.g., CTE Dual Credit, IB, and/or Running Start) are offered in your district, by school?
- What percentage of students throughout your district and in each school completed any form of dual credit?  
*Find your district in the WSIF graph and/or search for your district's information in the State Report Card*
- Looking at the past three years of data, how has your overall dual credit completion rate changed? What rate changes can you see by dual credit program and by student groups?  
*Explore year-to-year differences by using the dropdown menu for "School Year."*

### Reflecting on your data

- What, if anything, surprised you about your district's overall dual credit completion rate?
- What might explain the differences between each building's average rate?  
*Considerations: school organization (size, master schedule, staffing); student interest (how assessed?); available dual credit programs; available academic supports; career and college readiness guidance; FRPL rate; proximity to Skills Center, college(s), and other options.*
- What systemic/programmatic changes, outreach efforts, partnerships, financial changes, and/or other factors might explain year-to-year differences in dual credit completion in your district?

<sup>3</sup>The definition of completion rate in the WSIF tool business rules is:

"Denominator: Students must have valid enrollment records in a district and school during the school year identified. [The] student must have been reported as completing (Non-Withdraw Letter Grade) in Student Grade History for a term ending within a given school year.

Numerator: Same as Denominator, with the addition that [the] student completed a course that contains a course designation code identifying one of the six [available] dual credit types (AP, IB, Running Start, College in the High School, Cambridge, CTE Dual Credit)."

## Completion rate by student groups

### Understanding your data (refer to the charts from the section on accessing state-level data)

1. First and foremost, does your student information system accurately reflect dual credit enrollment and completion?  
*Are course codes/titles/designators accurate? (Especially for CHS and CTE Dual Credit courses, current CHS "contracts" and CTE "articulation agreements" with the sponsoring college must be in place.)*
2. Which student groups have high dual credit completion rates or are overrepresented? Are there differences in overrepresentation by dual credit program (assuming more than one is available)?  
*Use the State Report Card or district student information system reports to analyze completion rates by dual credit program.*
3. Which student groups have low dual credit completion rates or are underrepresented? Are there differences in underrepresentation by dual credit program (assuming more than one is available)?  
*Use the State Report Card or district student information system reports to analyze completion rates by dual credit program.*
4. Looking separately at each school's dual credit program(s), what are the current year and three-year trend completion data for each student group? (Compare to building demographic data to determine whether there is representative participation for each student group.)
  - Where are you experiencing success?
  - In which program(s) and by which student group(s) is there a need for more equitable access?  
*Compare the rates for each student group to the average for all students.*

### Reflecting on your data

1. What are the beliefs and attitudes of school staff members around student access to dual credit? How do they communicate these beliefs and attitudes to students and families?
2. How and when do students and parents learn about available dual credit classes and programs? Are some dual credit options "marketed" differently?
3. Are any student groups in your district not represented in the WSIF data due to low "n" size? What are the dual credit completion rate(s) for these nonrepresented groups—higher or lower than the average for all students?  
*Use district student information system data to determine completion rates for student groups not reported on the state-level data sites.*
4. What are the possible barriers that underrepresented groups face in accessing dual credit?  
*Considerations: school organization (size, master schedule, staffing); student interest (how assessed?); available dual credit programs; available academic supports; career and college readiness guidance (High School and Beyond Plan?); FRPL rate; proximity to Skills Center, college(s), and other options.*
5. How might school and district staff members, higher education partners, and community members/organizations collaborate to close these equity gaps?

## Further analysis

### Examine your district and/or school-level data and policies to answer any additional relevant questions

1. What additional data do you need to answer questions about dual credit in your district?
2. Are students who fail a course in ninth grade more or less likely to take dual credit? What supports would be necessary to improve the Ninth Grade on Track rates and thus increase the potential for more equitable student access to dual credit?
3. What is the pass rate for dual credit courses in your district? Do pass rates vary by program and/or student groups and/or specific courses?
4. What remediation/acceleration programs are available to help students prepare for a successful experience in a dual credit program?
5. What academic, social-emotional learning (SEL), and career and college readiness support services are provided to all students?
  - Are academic planning and/or career and college readiness supports seen as “the counselors’ job” or are other/all staff members invested in helping students understand the different paths to post-high school opportunities?
6. How is the High School and Beyond plan used in each school?
  - Is it valued by staff members as an integral part of each student’s educational experience or is it viewed more as an “add-on” or “checklist” that must be done for graduation?
7. How is dual credit completion related to graduation rates and grade point average in your district/building(s)? Does this relationship vary by program and/or student groups?
8. What are the college enrollment, remediation, and completion rates<sup>4</sup> by student group for your district? Are there equity gaps present? If so, how might they be closed?

<sup>4</sup> National Student Clearinghouse data include information on student college enrollment and completion.

# SECTION 3

## Self-Assessment

### OBJECTIVES

- Assess the strengths and challenges of current dual credit programs in your district.
- Identify changes needed to systemically improve equitable dual credit participation and outcomes.

### FOCUS QUESTION

- What are areas of strength and barriers to equitable access within your dual credit system?

## Activity 1: Identifying Your District's Dual Credit Offerings

*Directions: Answer the following questions individually, then discuss as a group.*

1. What dual credit programs does your district offer to students? *Check all that apply.*
  - Advanced Placement
  - Cambridge International
  - College in the High School
  - CTE Dual Credit (formerly Tech Prep)
  - International Baccalaureate
  - Running Start
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the primary purpose of dual credit from your perspective? How might different stakeholders' (e.g., students, families, partner organizations) answer this question?
  - Provide students with rigorous and engaging academic experiences that help prepare them for further post-high school education or training?
  - Reduce post-high school education and training costs, and/or time to degree completion?
  - Both
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What implications do these perspectives have for how you communicate about dual credit and which actions could you take to improve dual credit opportunities in your district?
4. Have you taken any steps in the past three years to strengthen and/or expand your dual credit programming to reduce inequities in participation or outcomes? If so, what is the status of your actions?

## Activity 2: Assessing Specific Dual Credit Strengths and Challenges

**Directions:** This activity invites you and your team to assess the development of your dual credit programming across four key components:



### **STEP 1.** For each of the four components, work individually to:

- Answer the “reflection questions.”
- Review the rubric for each component and give each element a score indicating whether this aspect of your dual credit programming is in a (1) developing, (2) implementing, or (3) mature and sustaining phase. Choose the rating that most accurately reflects your current dual credit program status.
- Answer the “summary questions” inviting you to identify strengths in your system, barriers to improvement, and ways your district might address barriers and needs. For example, strengths or barriers could include the presence or absence of:
  - Shared vision and goals
  - Outreach and awareness of dual credit options
  - Resources (e.g., program size, funding, staff capacity)
  - Priority alignment (e.g., graduation requirements, other district initiatives)
  - Reliability of data
  - Coordination with college and workforce partners
  - Sufficient staff, including instructors
  - Instructor preparation
  - Transportation
  - Counseling or academic preparation

### **STEP 2.** As a group:

- Compare and discuss your answers and ratings.
- Note areas that your group feels are district strengths.
- Note areas in which your group feels the district could improve.
- Use these areas for improvement to develop dual credit goals for your district. From these goals, you can develop action steps in the next section of this guide.

## **COMPONENT 1: Career and College Readiness Vision, Goals, and Program Alignment**

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Does your district have a vision for career and college readiness? Is your district actively building and/or strengthening a college-going culture? Does the vision include an understanding of the role dual-credit programming plays in realizing the vision? Is that understanding shared by district and school staff members? How about postsecondary partners, community members, students, and families?
2. Does your district have specific, measurable goals for strengthening and/or expanding dual credit programming in your district? Do those goals include equitable access and outcomes for all students? If so, how were those goals developed? Who knows about them?
3. To what extent are your career and college readiness programs coordinated with each other and aligned with other district initiatives (e.g., dropout prevention and reengagement)? How does this coordination and alignment look across elementary, middle, and high schools?
4. Do you use data to track progress toward your goals and refine your strategies? Does your data system enable you to identify groups of students who are underrepresented in dual credit and other career and college readiness programs?



## Component 1 Rubric: Career and College Readiness Vision, Goals, and Program Alignment

THEMES	DEVELOPING (1)	IMPLEMENTING (2)	MATURE/SUSTAINING (3)
<b>Vision</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Vision for career and college readiness and dual credit program is being developed, but may not yet be known to district and school staff members and has not been used to guide planning.</p>	<p>Vision is established and used to guide planning. It is visible to most district and school staff members and some stakeholders (e.g., via the school website).</p>	<p>Vision is fully established, vetted through a stakeholder input process, highly visible, and consistently used to guide planning. District and school staff members and stakeholders can articulate the purpose and goals of the dual credit program, and statements are routinely reviewed and may be adjusted.</p>
<b>Goals</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>District is developing goals to strengthen and improve dual credit—including data-informed equity goals—but these goals are not specific or measurable and few district staff members are aware of them.</p>	<p>District has specific and measurable goals to strengthen and improve dual credit, including equity goals. Some district staff members are aware of these goals. The goals are infrequently reviewed or revised.</p>	<p>District has specific and measurable goals to strengthen and improve dual credit, including equity goals. Most district staff members are aware of these goals. The goals are routinely reviewed and revised based on data and evidence.</p>
<b>Program Awareness and Alignment</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>District has some career and college readiness programming, including dual credit, but student interests are not considered in programmatic decision making. Programs may focus on older grades and are not well coordinated or aligned with other initiatives. Some staff or students are aware of the programs.</p>	<p>District has coordinated career and college readiness programs, including dual credit, and has aligned them with other district initiatives. Many students and staff members are aware of these programs and limited information on student interests is considered in programmatic decision making. Career and college readiness activities are only present in middle schools and high schools.</p>	<p>Career and college readiness programming, including dual credit, is well coordinated and is aligned with other district initiatives. Students and staff members are aware of opportunities and all students participate. Student interests are considered in programmatic decision making. Career and college readiness activities are present in elementary, middle, and high school grades.</p>
<b>System-Level Data for Progress Monitoring</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Data on dual credit enrollment and outcomes are available, but the district has not developed a systematic plan to use data to track progress toward goals and to refine strategies. Data are not disaggregated by demographic groups and are not coordinated across the secondary and postsecondary systems.</p>	<p>The district has a monitoring plan to collect and analyze aggregated and disaggregated data to track progress toward goals, including equity goals, and to inform the development of new goals or strategies. There is some coordination of data across the secondary and postsecondary systems and reports are occasionally shared with key stakeholders.</p>	<p>District has developed a monitoring plan to continually collect and analyze aggregated and disaggregated data across the system to track implementation of dual credit initiatives, refine strategies, track progress toward goals, and inform the development of new goals. Data are coordinated across the secondary and postsecondary systems and reports are routinely shared with key stakeholders.</p>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What's going well in this area? How can your district sustain progress?
2. What barriers might get in the way of improving the career and college readiness vision, goals, and program alignment in your district? List possible barriers and brainstorm potential strategies to remove them.
3. Discuss how your district can address these barriers to improvement. How can your district build on its strengths in this area?

## **COMPONENT 2: Partnerships, Systems Coordination, and Resources**

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How does your district work with colleges and universities, employers, and other dual credit stakeholders to expand and improve dual credit? What communication structures are in place?
2. Are there dual credit stakeholders that are not currently involved in your district partnerships? If so, why not? How could you engage these stakeholders?
3. Do staff members involved with dual credit programs have adequate time, resources, knowledge, and skills to advance the district toward its dual credit goals (for example, registrar, counselor/college access staff, teachers, dual credit coordinator)?
4. How much do dual credit programs cost the school/district? How much does this programming cost your partner colleges? Are cost-sharing programs in place between the school/district and area colleges? If not, what programs could be instituted to reduce costs?
5. Does your district collect and analyze cross-sector data about dual credit? If so, how are these data used by all stakeholders in the system?
6. What processes are in place at the high school and college levels to ensure the accuracy of dual credit data used to track student participation? Are data systems set up for accurate dual credit coding, reporting, and transcribing? Have secondary and postsecondary staff members received recent professional development in these areas?

## Component 2 Rubric: Partnerships, Systems Coordination, and Resources

THEMES	DEVELOPING (1)	IMPLEMENTING (2)	MATURE/SUSTAINING (3)
<b>Partnerships and Communication</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Individuals at the secondary and postsecondary levels communicate about dual credit programs, but communication is ad hoc, infrequent, uncoordinated across different programs, and focused primarily on operations, not improvement or expansion.</p>	<p>A dual credit lead and cross-sector team are identified to design and lead program improvements. Team includes district, school, and postsecondary representation. Team uses communications structures and protocols for planning and program development and monitoring, but routines are not yet established, and the team does not yet engage a broader range of stakeholders or learning networks to support improvement.</p>	<p>The dual credit lead and the cross-sector team (including postsecondary partners) routinely and continuously improve communications structures and protocols and engage stakeholders (staff, students, families, community partners) to ensure ongoing program maintenance and improvement.</p>
<b>Staffing</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Staff members have been assigned but competing priorities may be preventing them from devoting sufficient time to advance dual credit goals. Some project team members have the necessary skills and knowledge to advance dual credit goals.</p>	<p>Implementation is a priority for the majority of project team members. They are able to devote sufficient time and to advance dual credit goals. Roles and responsibilities have been outlined but may not be well understood or coordinated. Most project team members possess the skills and knowledge necessary for implementation to advance dual credit goals.</p>	<p>Successful implementation is a high priority for all project team members. Roles, responsibilities, and staffing allocations are clear and coordinated to promote and advance career and college readiness. Project team members all possess the skills and knowledge necessary for successful implementation and systems are in place to train new members.</p>
<b>Resources</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Some available resources (e.g., funding, technology, transportation) have been identified and allocated to support implementation. Additional resources are still needed to support maximum implementation.</p>	<p>Multiple available resources have been identified and allocated to support implementation. Current resources may not be sustainable or sufficient to support maximum implementation.</p>	<p>Ample and sustainable resources have been identified and allocated to support maximum implementation.</p>
<b>Cross-Sector Data Accuracy</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Dual credit courses are tracked in the district's data system, but coding may be inaccurate and no review process is in place to check accuracy. There is little communication between school/district data system staff members and school counselors or other relevant stakeholders to coordinate and align course descriptions and codes.</p>	<p>Dual credit courses are tracked in the district's data system fairly accurately (e.g., CTE Dual Credit courses have been reviewed and recoded as needed). There has been informal review to check accuracy. Some communication occurs between school/district data system staff members and school counselors or other relevant stakeholders. Staff training and data review occurs on an ad hoc basis.</p>	<p>High school and college course titles and codes are aligned across partners, and college credit requirements are established. Monitoring systems are in place and routinely reviewed to ensure data accuracy. School/district data system staff members are provided with the necessary supports, training, and time to ensure accurate data entry and reporting.</p>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What's going well in this area? How can your district sustain progress?
2. What barriers might get in the way of improving partnerships, systems coordination, staffing, and access to resources in your district? List possible barriers below.
3. How can your district address these barriers? How can your district build on its strengths in this area?

## **COMPONENT 3: Instruction and Program Design**

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What are the qualifications needed for high school teachers in your district to be able to teach each type of dual credit course? Are there a sufficient number of teachers with these qualifications?
2. Does your district or educational service district offer professional development or other guidance to help high school teachers become qualified to teach dual credit courses? How else might staff members access relevant training?
3. How are the rigor and content of dual credit courses offered in your district established and monitored to ensure continuous alignment with college-level standards? Do high school teachers routinely collaborate with postsecondary faculty members and/or each other to review rigor and alignment?
4. Does your district have access to the necessary data to evaluate the dual credit curricula and instruction it offers? Does the district use those data for this purpose? If so, what kinds of data do you use (e.g., observation, student feedback) and how do you use them?

## Component 3 Rubric: Instruction and Program Design

THEMES	DEVELOPING (1)	IMPLEMENTING (2)	MATURE/SUSTAINING (3)
<b>Instructors</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>A certification process to teach dual credit courses exists, but teachers must navigate it with minimal guidance and support from the district.</p>	<p>Dual credit instructors routinely receive guidance and support from the district, but the guidance and support are not standardized.</p>	<p>The district provides a standard package of professional development, stipends, and/or release time for dual credit instructors and helps them navigate the certification process. Where possible, multiple teachers in different disciplines offer dual credit courses.</p>
<b>Course Content</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Dual credit course content is at the college level, but not necessarily aligned with college course requirements and no process is in place to ensure rigor.</p>	<p>Course content is designed to meet specified content standards and objectives for secondary offerings and college course requirements but checks for rigor are performed only occasionally.</p>	<p>Colleges and districts ensure that all dual credit courses are equivalent to and aligned with instruction offered at the college level (e.g., level and rigor of content). A process is in place to regularly check and align courses with college rigor and content.</p>
<b>Collaboration</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Secondary and postsecondary instructors sometimes collaborate to align coursework across their systems but are not part of a professional learning community (PLC).</p>	<p>A cross-level PLC of secondary and postsecondary instructors collaborates to align coursework across their systems, but this work is not informed by data and the focus is on implementation, not improvement.</p>	<p>The PLC regularly and consistently collaborates to align coursework across their systems. The PLC implements an inquiry-based continuous improvement process, uses data to inform its practice, and shares its learning widely.</p>
<b>Implementation Data</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Some data on the quality of dual credit curricula and instruction exist, but those data are not routinely used to evaluate progress or make program adjustments.</p>	<p>A team collects and uses some sources of data to monitor implementation and make program adjustments. The sharing of data across secondary and postsecondary partners is sporadic.</p>	<p>A team routinely collects and uses multiple sources of data to make adjustments to courses and to improve instructional training, policies, procedures, and practice. Data are securely shared across secondary and postsecondary partners, when needed, to ensure continuous improvement in program quality and implementation.</p>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What's going well in this area? How can your district sustain its progress?
2. What barriers might get in the way of improving dual credit instruction and program design in your district? List possible barriers below.
3. How can your district address these barriers and improvement needs? How can your district build on its strengths in this area?



## **COMPONENT 4: Student Participation and Support**

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. How do staff members communicate to students, families, and community members about dual credit opportunities in your district?
2. Do your district's outreach efforts address linguistic, logistical, or cultural differences to ensure dual credit awareness and participation among underrepresented groups?
3. What eligibility requirements does your district have for dual credit participation? Could any of these requirements influence patterns of underrepresentation in the data?
4. How and when do students receive counseling on dual credit options? What professional development do school counselors and other college-access staff members receive to stay abreast of current trends and best practices in career and college readiness programming? What other academic and/or social supports (e.g., tutoring, mentoring) does your district provide to help students successfully complete dual credit coursework? Are these supports adequate?
5. Are dual credit options explored as part of each student's High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP)? What other tools (e.g., handbooks, interest inventories, electronic portfolios) does your district use to work with students and families around planning courses of study that incorporate dual credit and college and/or workforce experiences? To what extent are these tools culturally responsive? What other tools might your district need?
6. What costs do students and families face upon enrolling in, attending, and completing a dual credit class? Are fee waivers and other assistance available to students in need?
7. Does your district use student-level data to identify students who need support and to monitor their progress through dual credit coursework?

## Component 4 Rubric: Student Participation and Support

THEMES	DEVELOPING (1)	IMPLEMENTING (2)	MATURE/SUSTAINING (3)
<b>Outreach</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Processes for marketing dual credit programs exist, but they are not informed by stakeholder input and do not focus on reaching underrepresented students.</p>	<p>Processes for marketing dual credit programs are informed by stakeholder feedback and some outreach efforts address barriers such as language, transportation, event timing, child care, and cultural bias (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation).</p>	<p>All marketing and outreach are informed by stakeholder input and address linguistic, logistical, and cultural barriers. Data indicate widespread awareness and interest in dual credit opportunities among all students and their families, including members of historically underrepresented groups.</p>
<b>Recruitment</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>Dual credit recruitment is ad hoc and driven by individual relationships between adults (e.g., counselors) and students. There is little to no systematic focus on encouraging underrepresented students to enroll.</p>	<p>A team has established a recruitment plan that engages multiple adults and peers in recruiting students. There is an application process in place that opens dual credit opportunities to all students (e.g., provides fee waivers, removes eligibility barriers), but there is no system in place for tracking the impact of these efforts.</p>	<p>Systemic, collaborative recruitment efforts are implemented. A team routinely analyzes data to track the impact of these recruitment efforts on reducing equity gaps in dual credit enrollment and to inform modifications to the recruitment plan and access processes.</p>
<b>Counseling and Student Supports</b> <hr/> <b>SCORE</b> <b>1 2 3</b>	<p>School and/or college counselors and instructors are available to students enrolled in dual credit courses, but students typically must seek them out. Training is needed to ensure school counselors are equipped to provide consistent, accurate information and refer students to appropriate supports.</p>	<p>School counselors are trained and proactive in addressing the needs of students enrolled in dual credit courses. They use systematic career awareness and the HSBP to guide students' course choices. They are equipped with tools and information that help students understand each dual credit program's purpose, values, expectations, policies, and procedures. Counselors are able to refer students to appropriate supports but have limited time and access to monitor students' progress.</p>	<p>In addition to being trained, proactive, and equipped to support dual credit students, school counselors communicate routinely with all dual credit students to ensure student success and to gather feedback for program improvement. They arrange appropriate supports for students (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, healthcare, transportation); have adequate time to conduct their work; and use student data to routinely monitor students' progress, often in collaboration with the district's dual credit lead and relevant members of the cross-sector team.</p>

THEMES	DEVELOPING (1)	IMPLEMENTING (2)	MATURE/SUSTAINING (3)
<p><b>Financial Assistance</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>SCORE</b></p> <p>① ② ③</p>	<p>Some financial assistance is available, but it does not address all aspects of student/family costs.</p>	<p>Fee waivers and other assistance options (e.g., transportation to classes, money for books) are available to families but are not widely known or understood.</p>	<p>Fee waivers and other assistance options are available and widely used and promoted.</p>
<p><b>Student-Level Data</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>SCORE</b></p> <p>① ② ③</p>	<p>Student-level data are available but are not reported or used in a systematic way to monitor progress and guide supports to dual credit students.</p>	<p>Student data are collected and examined post hoc by dual credit leads, counselors, and teachers to gauge progress toward students' course and HSBP goals, but they are not used to identify and direct help to students who need extra academic or social supports to be successful.</p>	<p>Student data are used by dual credit leads, counselors, and teachers to target supports and resources to struggling students and to monitor their progress in real time. Patterns in the data are used to refine outreach and recruitment efforts, school and district policies, counseling approaches, and financial assistance.</p>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What's going well in this area? How can your district sustain progress?
2. What barriers might get in the way of improving student participation and support in your district? List possible barriers below.
3. How can your district address these barriers and improvement needs? How can your district build on its strengths in this area?

## SECTION 4

# 1 → 2 → 3 → Action Steps

### OBJECTIVES

- Identify areas that are working well and need to be maintained.
- Revisit current goals and/or set new goals for improving dual credit outcomes.
- Identify strategies you will pursue to achieve your goals.
- Map action steps for your improvement efforts.
- Set an implementation timeline and monitoring agreements.

### FOCUS QUESTION

- What will we do over the next one to three years to increase dual credit access and equity in participation and completion?

### DIRECTIONS

- Identify the areas in which your district is doing well, what you want to keep, and which strategies are helping you sustain your progress.
- Pick one or two areas you most want to improve and use the template provided in this section (or your own district-based strategic planning tool) to record current and/or new goals for improvement in these areas.
- For each goal, discuss and record strategies\* and action steps you will take toward your goals. Identify a strategy leader and describe how you will monitor the effectiveness of the strategy over time.
- For each action step, record a most responsible person (MRP), timeline, and how you will monitor implementation.

*\*Note: Rubric components and themes in this guide can also serve as strategies.*

# DUAL CREDIT ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

**SMART Goal:** [District name] will increase participation in [dual-credit program] among [student group, e.g., Latino male students] by X percentage points (from X percent to X percent) by [date].

**Strategy 1:** For example: outreach, partnership development/coordination, staff/resource development, instruction, curriculum, counseling/tutoring/mentoring, financial/logistical support, data use.

**Rationale:** For example: Latino male students are consistently underrepresented among participants in X program. Research finds that dual credit participation is linked with improved secondary and postsecondary outcomes for students. Our district does not effectively target outreach about dual credit programs to our Latino community, therefore we will focus on strengthening our outreach efforts to increase participation among Latino male students in dual credit courses.

**Strategy lead:** [Name, role]

**Monitoring effectiveness:** What ongoing formative evidence will be gathered to show this activity is making a difference in student outcomes? When will we collect and reflect on this evidence?

<b>Activities to implement this strategy?</b>  <i>What activities will take place? What steps will staff members take?</i>	<b>Professional development</b>  <i>How will staff members acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to implement the activities?</i>	<b>Timeline</b>  <i>When will this action begin and end?</i>	<b>Resources available</b>  <i>What are the existing and new resources that will be used to accomplish these activities?</i>	<b>Who's most responsible? Who's involved?</b>  <i>Who will provide the leadership? Who will do the work?</i>	<b>Accountability</b>  <i>Who will check for completion? Who will provide needed support to ensure action plan steps are finished?</i>

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Achievement gap</b>	The disparity in academic performance among identified groups or the difference between how a group performs compared to what is expected of that group.
<b>Action plan</b>	A step-by-step outline of the actions that need to be taken to implement an initiative and achieve a desired outcome. For each major action, plans typically identify the resources needed, measures of effective implementation, who is responsible for the action, and a timeline for implementation.
<b>Aggregation</b>	Data that are presented in summary (as opposed to individual student-level data or data broken down by a given student demographic or group).
<b>Capacity building</b>	Providing opportunities—such as staff development, data analysis, and time for collaboration—that enhance the ability of staff members to increase access to dual credit programs.
<b>Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS)</b>	The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) is an electronic warehouse for collecting education data over multiple years. Districts report data on courses, students, and teachers. Course data include standardized state course codes. Student data include demographics, enrollment information, schedules, grades, and program participation. Teacher data include demographics, certifications, and schedules.
<b>Collaboration</b>	To work jointly with others, especially on an intellectual endeavor.
<b>Correlation</b>	A mutual relationship between two or more things. Correlation does not imply causation.
<b>Cycle of inquiry and action</b>	The cycle of inquiry is a process in which educators analyze data—such as demographic, perceptual, school process, and student achievement data—in order to understand how these elements are interrelated and what they suggest about students’ learning needs. As a multistep process, the cycle of inquiry often involves analyzing data to better understand student needs, developing hypotheses about instructional practice, formulating and implementing action plans to improve student learning and achievement, and then once again analyzing data to evaluate student progress and inform next steps.
<b>Data-based decisionmaking</b>	Systematically collecting and analyzing various types of data to guide a range of decisions and improve the success of students and schools. Also referred to as data-driven decisionmaking, data-informed decisionmaking, and evidence-based decisionmaking.
<b>Data champion</b>	An individual who is passionate about using data and who can lead the quest for a culture of inquiry and systemic data use.

<b>Data coach</b>	A data coach is an individual charged with helping schools or districts use data effectively to make decisions. Often, data coaches organize school-based data teams, lead practitioners in a collaborative inquiry process, help interpret data, or educate staff on using data to improve instructional practices and student achievement.
<b>Data culture</b>	Data culture describes a school and/or district environment that includes attitudes, values, goals, norms of behavior, and practices, accompanied by an explicit vision for data use by leadership. In a data culture there is a widespread appreciation for the importance and power that data can bring to the decision-making process. This also includes the recognition that data collection is a necessary part of an educator’s responsibilities and that the use of data to influence and inform practice is an essential tool that will be used frequently.
<b>Data inventory</b>	A catalog of the data available in a school, who controls the data, the location of the data, access to the data, and how the data are being used.
<b>Data literacy</b>	The ability to ask and answer questions about collecting, analyzing, and making sense of data.
<b>Data manager</b>	Generally, a staff member within the Information Technology department who coordinates the systems for the collection, storage, and dissemination of data at the district and/or school level.
<b>Data point</b>	A data point is one score on a graph or chart, which represents a single point in time.
<b>Data quality</b>	The attributes of a dataset that make data useful, such as validity, reliability, completeness, accuracy, timeliness, and relevance to the question being investigated.
<b>Datasets</b>	Collections of data that can be manipulated and analyzed in an effort to answer a question.
<b>Data teams</b>	<p><i>School data team:</i> A representative group of individuals that builds the capacity of school-level staff members to effectively use data by providing structures, training, and support. A primary mission of a school data team is to create a culture of inquiry and data use at the school level.</p> <p><i>District data team:</i> A representative group of individuals that builds the capacity of district-level staff members to effectively use data by providing structures, training, and support. A primary mission of a district data team is to create a districtwide culture of inquiry and data use and to support school-level data teams.</p>
<b>Data use improvement plan</b>	An action plan designed to eliminate one or more barriers that limit effective data use in the school.
<b>Disaggregation</b>	Summary data split into different student groups (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, economic status).



<b>Disproportionality</b>	Disproportionality occurs when a given student group is represented in a larger or smaller proportion in a particular program or educational environment than would be predicted based on the representation of that group in a total population.
<b>Dual credit</b>	The opportunity for a student to potentially earn college credit, either through passing an exam or passing a course, while also earning high school credit and meeting high school graduation requirements.
<b>Enablers and barriers</b>	Terms used in the Data Use Theory of Action to describe policies, structures, capacities, or processes that either support (enablers) or hinder (barriers) effective data use in the schools.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation is the comparison of actual impacts against strategic plans. It looks at original objectives, what was accomplished, and how it was accomplished.
<b>Evidence</b>	An outward sign or indication. Something that provides proof.
<b>Evidence-based practices</b>	Evidence-based practices are educational practices and instructional strategies that are supported by scientific research studies.
<b>Factual observations</b>	A statement about what the data say without any interpretation. Factual observations are the first step in the data analysis process and they provide the basis for making sound inferences.
<b>Fidelity of implementation</b>	Fidelity refers to the accurate and consistent provision or delivery of a dual credit program in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed.
<b>Formative evidence</b>	Student, school-level, and district-level data focused on dual credit access, participation, and outcomes. Analysis of these data occurs routinely and systemically with the express goal of improving student achievement.
<b>High-level data</b>	Typically aggregate data that can be used to initiate the inquiry process. The review of high-level data will result in the creation of focus questions that will help to identify more granular data that can be used to extend the inquiry.
<b>Impact</b>	A high-level result of the initiative that is not always directly measurable, such as increased motivation to do well in school.
<b>Objective</b>	A specifically stated measurable result of a strategy or action steps taken to implement that strategy, such as adjusting the master schedule to increase access to a dual credit opportunity.
<b>Outcome</b>	A long-range measurable change in behavior, such as continually improving AP test scores or increased student participation in College in the High School courses.

<b>Population</b>	Every student who is eligible to become a member of a specific sample of students. For example, the population of grade 10 students is all grade 10 students enrolled in the district.
<b>Problem statement</b>	A clear, succinct, evidence-based statement of the problem revealed through analysis of data related to the issue under investigation.
<b>Question types</b>	<p><b>Clarifying question</b> – A question that guides deeper inquiry into the initial issue and suggests additional data that may need to be collected and analyzed.</p> <p><b>Focus question</b> – A high-level question related to an issue of interest that serves to initiate an inquiry and suggest the preliminary data that need to be collected and analyzed.</p> <p><b>Reflection question</b> – A follow-up question that encourages further exploration of an issue and leads to next steps.</p>
<b>Sample</b>	A group of students included in a dataset. For example, the group of grade 10 students in one school for any one school year is a sample of the entire population of grade 10 students enrolled in the district. The extent to which that group of grade 10 students is representative of the entire population is the extent to which generalizations can be made to all grade 10 students.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	Any individual that is involved with or is affected by a course of action or who has a vested interest in the enterprise and its policies, practices, and outcomes.
<b>Standards</b>	<p>In the context of dual credit programming, standards can refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What students should know and be able to do in order to access dual credit</li> <li>• What students should know and be able to do in order to be successful in dual credit opportunities</li> <li>• Measurable criteria the dual credit program must adhere to in order to maintain</li> <li>• quality and rigor</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy</b>	A plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.
<b>Target</b>	A relatively short-range measurable change, such as an annual increase as part of a multiyear goal.
<b>Timeline</b>	The date at which an action step will be completed or, for an ongoing action, when it is “up and running.”
<b>Trend line</b>	A trend line is a line on a graph that represents a line of best fit through a set of data points.

*Glossary adapted from: Geier, R., & Smith, S. C. (2012). District and School Data Team Toolkit. Retrieved from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Comprehensive Education Data and Research System website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/Data/Toolkit.aspx>*

## Endnotes

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