

DUAL CREDIT IN KENTUCKY

A significant body of research indicates that a high school diploma is not sufficient for the skills required in most jobs of the 21st century. As educators strive to provide students with the academic, employability, and occupational skills needed to succeed in the workplace, they must instill a desire for life-long learning and training beyond high school. One means of helping students achieve these needed skills and experience postsecondary training is through dual credit courses.

In dual credit, a student is enrolled in a course which allows him/her to earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. This course may be taught on a college campus, on a high school campus, or at an area technology center, but it will be in conjunction with a college or university. Dual enrollment is very similar to dual credit. However, with dual enrollment, the student will actually be enrolled in both high school and college. The classes are nearly always taught on the college campus and the student will often be taking multiple college courses.

Dual enrollment programs allow high schools and community colleges to share limited resources while offering students opportunities to take college classes, explore careers, save money and shorten their time to a degree. Once intended for high-achieving students, dual enrollment is now perceived as a means of helping more students, especially low-income students and first-generation college-goers, get and stay on pathways to postsecondary attainment.

Dual Credit in the United States

According to a report from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) (Zinth, 2014), dual credit is offered in every state in the nation. In 47 states, the policies related to dual credit are statewide; however, in Alaska, New Hampshire, and New York the policies are created at the

local level. National data shows an increase, in recent years, in the number of high schools that offer dual enrollment programs. The ECS report states, in 2011-2012, 82 percent of high schools provide students the opportunity to take dual credit courses.

A report prepared by the National Center on Education Statistics (Thomas, Marken, Gray, & Lewis, 2013), states, “Nearly half of the schools had students participating in dual credit with a career and technical education (CTE) focus.” Thus, about 601,500 students were enrolled in CTE dual credit courses during the 2010-2011 academic year.

The report from the Education Commission of the States detailed many benefits of dual enrollment. The data shows that students participating in dual credit courses share several characteristics.

- more likely to meet college-readiness benchmarks
- more likely to enter college, and enter shortly after high school graduation
- more likely to be placed in credit bearing courses without taking remedial English or math
- higher first-year grade point average (GPA)
- higher second-year retention rates
- higher four-and six-year college completion rates
- shorter average time to bachelor’s degree completion for those completing in six years or less.

Also, studies find that students enrolled in CTE dual credit courses are more likely to earn a high school diploma, enroll in a bachelor’s degree program, and enroll in college full-time.

A recent study by the Southern Regional Education Board highlighted dual credit/enrollment programs in southern states.

In North Carolina, the Career and College Promise dual enrollment program, allows high school juniors and seniors to earn college credits that lead to certificates, diplomas and degrees or high-wage jobs. The law includes three components: a college transfer pathway for students headed to four-year institutions, a series of CTE career pathways leading to community college

programs, and an innovation pathway for students enrolled in early college high schools located on community college campuses. Under the CTE career pathway option, students meeting college-ready eligibility requirements – for example, a weighted GPA of at least 3.0 or a principal’s recommendation and completion of pathway prerequisites may earn tuition-free college credits.

The Georgia Legislature passed House Bill 186 which increases access to dual credit courses and restored full-time equivalent (FTE) support for students enrolled in courses bearing high school and college credit. Under this system, districts and colleges receive funding for the portion of the day in which dually enrolled students participate in their courses.

In 2010 the state of Tennessee commissioned a study that recommended that dual credit be made available for free to all students and that it be better aligned with other initiatives. To do this, the state uses legislation, policy and articulation agreements to ensure that dual credit courses are designed and approved by the state’s postsecondary institutions, eliminating the need to certify high school teachers to teach college courses.

Florida uses several strategies to accelerate college credit-earning in high school, including:

- credits earned in AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) and Florida Virtual School programs,
- credit by examination,
- dual enrollment, which allows high school students to enroll in community college and earn credits that may be applied to graduation requirements, career certificates, associate’s or bachelor’s degrees. Courses are free and can be taken during the school day, after school or in the summer.

Dual Credit in Kentucky

After the passage of House Bill 160 in 2010, a statewide Dual Credit Work Team was formed as directed in the Kentucky Transfer Action Plan. This team was charged with creating a

statewide Dual Credit Policy. The dual credit policy was created to define dual credit and outline the terms and conditions through which opportunities for dual credit would be provided for secondary students taking college-level courses and for which they would receive both college and high school credit.

In the policy it states, “In order to offer this seamless path of education and training for students, the Council on Postsecondary Education worked with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and the eight public universities to create this Dual Credit Policy for Kentucky Public Postsecondary Institutions. This policy reflects national standards and best practices for dual credit as outlined by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment partnership (NACEP) and aligns with regional accreditation standards set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC).”

In addition to the CPE Dual Credit Policy, the Kentucky Department of Education entered into a memorandum of understanding related to dual credit with KCTCS. The Governor, President of KCTCS, Secretary of the Education & Workforce Development Cabinet, and Commissioner of Education signed this agreement in 2011. According to the memorandum of understanding, the agreement reflects national standards and best practices for dual credit as outlined by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). The agreement addresses the following items: eligibility and approval of dual credit courses; dual credit course requirements; dual credit delivery methods; grading for dual credit courses; awarding of dual credit; selection of faculty to teach dual credit courses; faculty evaluation; student eligibility; tuition and other charges; student admission to KCTCS programs; and institutional responsibilities. After the signing of the MOU, a cross-functional team was

established to create a dual credit handbook that would guide both secondary and postsecondary institutions in the implementation of dual credit.

There are areas of the state where dual credit programs are working well. Students in Floyd County are participating in the school district's Early College Academy. As part of the academy, students are enrolled in their local high schools and attend classes at the Big Sandy Community and Technical College at no cost. While Early College Academy is in its infancy stages, the academy is laying the foundation for students to reach their postsecondary goals.

In Kentucky, some smaller school districts have used dual credit as a way to stretch their resources to offer more rigorous coursework for the students. An example is the Falcon Academy in Hickman County. Every student at the small high school graduates with college credit from either West Kentucky Community and Technical College or Murray State University. Also, Western Kentucky University offers dual credit courses at about an 80 percent discount from traditional college courses. This has allowed several students from eight school districts to earn college credit while in high school.

Unlike the national trend of increasing participation in dual enrollment programs, Kentucky has experienced a significant decrease in participation. The Council on Postsecondary Education presented data on March 19, 2014 that demonstrated the decrease. During the 2011-2012 academic year dual enrollment peaked at 29,113. The following year, the enrollment dropped to 19,718. The decrease can be attributed to the significant decline in CTE dual credit.

Unlike other states, dual credit tuition in Kentucky is primarily the responsibility of the student/parent. There are some colleges in Kentucky that provide up to a 100 percent discount on a dual credit three hour course while a couple offer no discount. There are a few local school districts that subsidize tuition for high school students participating in dual enrollment, but the

majority of high school students in Kentucky must pay for the tuition, textbooks, and materials associated with dual enrollment.

Even with the CPE policy and the MOU between KCTCS and KDE, there are inconsistencies among institutions in the implementation of dual credit. Items of concern that have been identified by secondary administrators and teachers include:

- different admission requirements among the 16 KCTCS colleges;
- large variations in tuition fees among the universities and colleges;
- inability to transfer credits among institutions;
- not being allowed to work with universities and colleges outside the service region;
- different requirements for teacher credentials;
- seven KCTCS colleges do not offer dual credit for CTE courses (prefer articulated credit)

Secondary administrators and parents regularly express these concerns to the Kentucky Department of Education. The issue is one of equity related to access, cost, and rigor. Many students have limited access to dual-credit opportunities because of the region of the state in which they live. The colleges and universities in certain regions have implemented additional admission requirements, and they offer minimal discounts on tuition which decreases the number of students that can participate. The different requirements in acceptance of teacher credentials prohibits some regions of the state from offering dual credit courses to students at the high school or area technology center. The preference of articulated credit to dual credit creates issues related to transferability and inconsistent implementation procedures. Also, it is more difficult to track the number of students utilizing articulated credit once they matriculate to a postsecondary institution.

Kentucky Regulations and Statutes

There are numerous regulations and statutes related to dual credit programs in Kentucky. Below are some of the regulations and statutes that define or mention dual credit.

KRS 164.002 Definitions for chapter

(4) "Dual credit" means a college-level course of study developed in accordance with KRS 164.098 in which a high school student receives credit from both the high school and postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled upon completion of a single class or designated program of study, including participating in the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=4157>

KRS 164.098 Duties of Council on Postsecondary Education relating to advanced placement, dual enrollment, and dual credit programs:

(3) The Council on Postsecondary Education, in conjunction with the Kentucky Board of Education and the Education Professional Standards Board, shall develop guidelines for content knowledge and teacher training in dual enrollment and dual credit programs offered in Kentucky.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=4203>

KRS 160.348 Advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and dual credit courses.

(1) (b) Each secondary school-based decision making council shall offer a core curriculum of AP, IB, dual enrollment, or dual credit courses, using either or both on-site instruction or electronic instruction through the Kentucky Virtual High School or other on-line alternatives. In addition, each school-based decision making council shall comply with any additional requirements for AP, IB, dual enrollment, and dual credit courses that may be established cooperatively by the Kentucky Department of Education, the Education Professional Standards Board, and the Council on Postsecondary Education in accordance with the definitions in KRS 158.007.

(2) Each secondary school-based decision making council shall establish a policy on the recruitment and assignment of students to AP, IB, dual enrollment, and dual credit courses that recognizes that all students have the right to participate in a rigorous and academically challenging curriculum. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum shall be admitted to AP courses, including AP courses offered through the Kentucky Virtual High School and accepted for credit toward graduation under KRS 158.622(3) (a), IB courses, dual enrollment courses, and dual credit courses, if they have successfully completed the prerequisite coursework or have otherwise demonstrated mastery of the prerequisite content knowledge and

skills as determined by measurable standards.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=3719>

KRS 158.810 Definitions for KRS 158.810 to 158.816.

(7) "Career pathway program of study" means a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career and technical education courses, including dual credit opportunities, that prepares secondary students for postsecondary study leading to postsecondary degrees, industry certifications, or licensure.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=40071>

KRS 158.140 General Assembly findings and intent -- Importance of students' reading and mathematics skills in achieving scholastic goals -- Roles of statewide entities in improving student achievement.

(3) (c) The academy and the home school district shall ensure that student transcripts from each institution accurately reflect the dual credit coursework.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=40140>

KRS 158.007 Definitions for chapter

(8) "Dual credit" means a college-level course of study developed in accordance with KRS 164.098 in which a high school student receives credit from both the high school and postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled upon completion of a single class or designated program of study.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=3417>

KRS 157.072 Career and technical education accessibility fund

(1) (d) "Career pathway program of study" means a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career and technical education courses, including dual credit opportunities, that prepares secondary students for postsecondary study leading to postsecondary degrees, industry certifications, or licensure.

(2) There is hereby created a trust and agency account to be known as the career and technical education accessibility fund, to be administered by the Kentucky Department of Education. The fund shall consist of proceeds from grants, federal funds, contributions, appropriations, or other moneys made available for the purposes of the fund. The fund shall provide grants to be used for: (a) The development of career pathways and programs of study in high-demand occupational fields for students in middle schools and high schools; and (b) The establishment of career academies in secondary schools. Each career

academy shall employ general education faculty who teach the academic core content and career and technical education faculty who focus the majority of the content around a broad career area and, when possible, employ career guidance coaches to advise students. Career academies shall provide students an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and simultaneously earn postsecondary education credit. They shall also provide opportunities to earn industry certification in high-demand fields, including biotechnology, environmental sustainability, agriculture, health, engineering, information technology, and other emerging career areas. [emphasis added.]

(7) Pursuant to KRS Chapter 13A, the Kentucky Board of Education shall promulgate administrative regulations that specify the : (a) Eligibility requirements for participation in the grant program. Low graduation rates, as determined in accordance with the methodology established by the National Center for Education Statistics, shall be high priority for participation in the grant program;(b) Matching requirements;(c) Application and review process;(d) Accountability and data requirements for grant recipients;(e) Procedures for the reallocation of any unused fund balance;(f) Grant continuation requirements; and(g) Other components essential to the implementation of this section. [emphasis added.]

(9) Schools receiving grants shall have an active local advisory council comprised of industry leaders and employers and postsecondary education faculty to provide input on long-range goals for career and technical education.

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/statute.aspx?id=40074>

The state legislature and state agencies have addressed dual credit many times over the past two decades; however, there are still inconsistencies in how dual credit programs are implemented across the Commonwealth.

In comparison to other high school students in the United States, Kentucky students are less likely to have access to rigorous dual enrollment programs at a minimum cost to the student and/or parent.

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