

**Federal Policy Recommendations to
Increase College and Career Readiness and Completion**

***Supporting and Scaling Early College Designs and
Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Strategies***

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Policy Goals

- Improve college access and college completion for all students.
- Reduce college costs and improve efficiencies for all students.
- Help students gain the skills and behaviors needed to succeed in college and the workplace and become responsible citizens.
- Raise the standards of teaching and learning in secondary school and better align secondary and postsecondary education.
- Increase student engagement, graduation rates, and momentum into college in secondary school.

Policy Principles

- Provide college courses and credits in high school at no or reduced cost to students, particularly those who are low-income and underrepresented in higher education.
- Promote improved alignment and resource sharing between secondary and postsecondary education systems, through faculty collaboration and institutional partnerships.
- Create a more efficient college cost structure for students by reducing time to degree completion and remedial education needs.
- Promote secondary school accountability systems that support and encourage students to take college courses and earn credits while in secondary school.
- Promote the integration of supports and counseling into dual and concurrent enrollment partnerships to improve student success, particularly among low-income and underrepresented students.
- Invest in creating and scaling up of evidence-based early college designs and dual and concurrent enrollment programs that support secondary and postsecondary success among all students, including low-income and underrepresented students.
- Leverage ongoing, flexible funding streams to support scaling up.
- Encourage college faculty, high school teachers, and others with graduate degrees in specific subject areas to teach in early college programs and dual and concurrent enrollment courses, and create a pipeline of qualified teachers, faculty, and advisors.

Policy Priorities

Secondary Education

ESEA reauthorization

- Encourage the development and growth of Early College designs and dual and concurrent enrollment programs serving low-income communities at no cost or low cost to students by authorizing flexible federal support via:
 - The *Fast Track to College Act* and similar legislation;
 - Broadening the *Access to High Standards Act*, which authorizes the Advanced Placement (AP) Test Fee Program and the AP Incentive Program, to include dual and concurrent enrollment courses for low-income students. Funds under this Act should be available for college tuition as well as AP test fees; and
 - The *College Pathways and Accelerated Learning* proposal in the President's FY 2013 budget, to provide competitive grants to states and school districts to support expansion of activities such as dual and concurrent enrollment courses and Early College High Schools, especially in high-poverty, low-performing schools.
- Allow states to use performance-based indicators, such as the completion of college coursework in high school, to demonstrate progress towards college- and career-readiness goals in high school accountability systems. [Continue this practice under current ESEA waivers]
- Preserve subgroup accountability for on-time graduation success in high schools, including extended year graduation rates. [Promote strengthening of subgroup accountability for graduation success under current ESEA waivers]
- Promote the inclusion of postsecondary credit attainment, persistence, and completion in state and local data reporting.
- Include early college designs and dual and concurrent enrollment partnerships as reform strategies for low-performing secondary schools.
 - U.S. Department of Education guidance encourages dual and concurrent enrollment as a Transformation Model strategy within School Improvement Grants. The use of such evidence-based strategies serving low-income students should be encouraged and codified in law.

Postsecondary Education

Higher Education Act

- Support incentives for colleges to expand early college high schools and dual enrollment programs to promote college completion.
 - To encourage more colleges and universities to establish early college and dual enrollment programs, the Higher Education Act and higher education policy proposals, such as the *First in the World Competition*, should include flexible funding and incentives for evidence-based early college designs and dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities that have no cost or reduced cost for the student.
- Broaden sustainable federal resources for programs that provide college courses to high school students while also offering student supports.
- Continue *College Access Challenge Grants* with an increased emphasis on low-income student participation in early college and dual and concurrent enrollment, as well as improved college and career counseling supports.
- Continue *GEAR-UP* local partnerships to prepare low-income students for college.

Resources for Innovation

- Use innovation funding (e.g. *Investing in Innovation*, *Race to the Top*, and the proposed *First in the World Competition*) to support and scale evidence-based early college programs and dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities.
- Continue to support ongoing research and development of new school models that show promise in helping disadvantaged students to complete postsecondary education, in particular, students with low incomes, students off-track from four year graduation, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

Career and Technical Education

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

- Require or incentivize the adoption and implementation of evidence-based program designs that promote accelerated pathways to secondary and postsecondary credential attainment in high demand sectors, including dual enrollment and early college options.
- Include early college, dual and concurrent enrollment in the definitions of career pathways, programs of study, and career academies.
- Include accountability indicators that show early progress (e.g. academic milestones) along a pathway to postsecondary and career success, such as completion of college courses in high school.
- Promote better alignment of outcome measures across systems, such as secondary and postsecondary credential attainment and first-year postsecondary persistence.