

Dhaliwal, Navi, Sayeeda Jamilah, McKenna Griffin, Dillon Lu, David Mahan, Trey Miller, and Holly Kosiewicz. (2025). Do Dual Enrollment Students Realize Better Long-Run Earnings? Variations in Financial Outcomes Among Key Student Groups. (EdWorkingPaper: 25-1137). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/ae9y-xn57>

Purpose

The study examines whether high school dual enrollment (dual credit) leads to improved long-term financial outcomes—specifically wages and student debt—over a twelve-year period after graduation. It also explores whether these benefits are equitably distributed across student subgroups.

Methods

Researchers analyzed a cohort of 20,858 Texas high school graduates from 2011 using longitudinal administrative data spanning K–12, higher education, and workforce records. Propensity score analysis with inverse probability weighting and mixed-effects models was used. Outcomes included annual earnings, student loan debt, and college enrollment, with subgroup analyses by race, socioeconomic status, gender, English proficiency, and academic performance.

Findings

Dual credit participants earned 4–9% more than non-participants by year twelve, despite lower earnings in the first four years due to higher college enrollment rates. Benefits were uneven: White, male, and non-LEP students experienced the greatest wage gains, while African American, Hispanic, and low-performing students saw limited or no significant improvements. Economically disadvantaged students showed modest but consistent long-term earnings growth. Student debt differences were largely insignificant overall, though some underserved groups incurred higher debt early on.

Implications

Dual credit can enhance long-term earnings but does not uniformly benefit all populations. The authors recommend intentional program design—aligned course pathways, robust advising, and culturally responsive teaching—to close equity gaps. Future research should employ causal designs and examine newer models like P-TECH to assess whether modern implementations yield more equitable outcomes.