

Creating a Dual Enrollment Partnership —Strategies for Coordinators

Dual enrollment starts with a partnership of colleges and K-12 schools or districts. Sharing a solid understanding of each partner’s limits, strengths, and areas of flexibility is essential to a strong partnership. The partners will face numerous decisions together so a successful dual enrollment partnership depends on cooperation.

This information sheet, geared for partnerships in California, outlines five of the most important topics to discuss, and then offers a checklist of considerations in each area.

• Course offerings

Choosing courses: Coordinators should start by deciding whether they want to include courses that are part of defined pathways at the college. If the courses are part of pathways, do they build on high school offerings? Would the courses help address college access, completion, and transfer rates for groups of students that are typically underrepresented in college? If the courses are not part of a pathway, would they fill an immediate or long-term need at the high school? Would they help students prepare to continue in college? What supports will the dual enrollment partnership offer students?

Scheduling and location: Where the courses meet and at what time of day also has implications for the shape of a dual enrollment partnership. Courses held on the high school campus during the regular school day are accessible to more students, including those who may not otherwise go to college. But scheduling is a challenge. High school and college schedules rarely line up; the college semester may start before or after the high school semester and end sooner or later. Sometimes, a college can delay starting a course and offer flexibility in how often it meets. And the total time a student must spend in class and on related coursework is governed by Carnegie units (a time-based measure of educational attainment used by American universities and colleges). Holidays, assemblies, and fire drills also play a role in locating and scheduling dual enrollment courses.

• Type of agreement governing the partnership

Dual enrollment in California takes on different characteristics depending whether the partnership chooses to make an agreement governed by the College and Career Access Pathways law (known as CCAP or AB 288) or a different kind of agreement.

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Resources

Find links to more information on this topic at www.careerladdersproject.org/dual-enrollment-links

Privacy laws

When a minor enrolls in a college course, privacy rights under FERPA (the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act) related to the class transfer from parents to the student. This difference from K-12 schools can be confusing when an instructor teaches in both institutions, especially if a parent is used to that instructor or to having more access to the student’s information. (For exceptions and other details, see “Federal Privacy Law and Dual Enrollment—Strategies for Coordinators,” linked at www.careerladdersproject.org/dual-enrollment-info-sheets.)

Colleges may provide orientations and specialized information to dual enrollment students. College and high school personnel may share information with each other about dual enrollment students. To avoid any ambiguity around privacy rights, dual enrollment students can sign FERPA waivers if they want their high school’s staff or faculty to speak with the college’s personnel, including an instructor or disability counselor.

Special needs

Dual enrollment students with special needs can request accommodations in college courses to gain access or support their success, but those accommodations will not modify college course or program standards. Students must follow the college’s procedures to gain accommodations related to a college course; their individualized education plans (IEPs) with the K-12 district may be helpful if they are recent, but the college will have to determine eligibility for special services. This means students must declare themselves to the college’s Special Resource Center.

Following CCAP allows college classes that are offered on a high school campus during the school day to be limited to high school students and focused on students who may not otherwise be college-bound. Under CCAP, dual enrollment classes must be designed along pathways, and the college may collect funding for the classes (without reducing funding to the high school).

A non-CCAP partnership must focus on advanced scholastics or career technical education, or both, and its courses must be open to the public in order for the college to claim state funding. (A high school or K-12 district that independently funds non-CCAP dual enrollment courses can limit access to them.)

● **Ensuring strong communication among the partners**

Planning for continuing, open communication among the partners will help them to anticipate concerns before they become problems. And it will help the partners to resolve the logistical challenges of dual enrollment that are inevitable, especially in scheduling and transportation.

● **Student recruitment and enrollment, external communication**

Partners should consider all the steps that students must follow to learn about and then to complete the college application and enrollment process. Applying for and enrolling in college can be especially challenging for first-generation college students who don't have "college knowledge" in their families. It is essential for dual enrollment partnerships to reach out to underrepresented groups, and to communicate clearly with families, to ensure everyone understands the power of dual enrollment to serve all students.

● **Instructor selection and support**

As college courses, all dual enrollment courses must be taught by instructors who meet minimum qualifications set by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Generally, to teach an academic class, a college instructor must have a master's degree in the discipline, and to teach career technical education, an instructor must have an associate's or bachelor's degree and a certain amount of recent experience. Individual colleges may impose additional requirements.

Dual enrollment instructors are hired and approved by the college, whether they are high school teachers who meet the college's qualifications or they work regularly as instructors at the college. And colleges must always follow their own bargaining agreements, which may mandate that they offer a dual enrollment course first to senior instructors at the college before a new hire (even if the new hire is a teacher at the high school who is qualified and eager to teach the course).

Once instructors are selected, they need support. Those who regularly work as college instructors may not have expertise in pedagogy, even if they have specialized knowledge in the subject area they are teaching. And high school teachers may need support learning the college's grading system, course outlines and objectives, and expected learning outcomes.

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Planning checklist for dual enrollment partners to consider together

Note: This list is meant as a starting place for building a partnership. Other issues will come up.

Course offerings

Choosing courses:

- What criteria are we using to select our dual enrollment courses? Are they part of a pathway? Will they fill immediate or long-term needs at the high school?
- How are we embedding supports such as tutoring and college knowledge? Are we utilizing non-credit college classes for additional support?
- How do we design outreach and support to serve traditionally underrepresented students?

Scheduling and location:

- Are the classrooms we plan to use appropriate (size, lecture hall vs. properly equipped lab, sufficient internet access)?
- If students have days without colleges classes (for example, at the beginning of the high school semester, before the college semester begins), how will they spend their time? Can we arrange relevant workshops or college speakers?
- Will the college course meet twice a week? Five days a week? Will student schedules consistently match?
- If a class held at the high school must remain open to the public (due to requirements attached to funding), how can the school prepare for members of the public being on campus?

Type of agreement governing the partnership

- Are we comfortable with courses being open to the general public, or do we prefer to limit them to high school students, as CCAP allows?
- Do we want to use funding available through the high school? A mix of funding?
- Will the college's enrollment cap accommodate increasing dual enrollment?
- Are we consulting with collective bargaining units?

Ensuring strong communication among the partners

- Is there a planning team or advisory group?
- What is our procedure for sharing student data, such as grades, between schools?
- Who are the points of contact on each campus?
- How will we convey campus policies to instructors? How will we determine who is their point of contact and convey that to them?

Student recruitment and enrollment, external communication

- How do we ensure all students know about dual enrollment? Do we have events? What other outreach are we planning?
- How do we support students in applying and enrolling? Will instructors, counselors, and outreach personnel from the college or high school lead this?
- How do we communicate about and address incomplete applications or enrollments?
- Who is the point of contact for parents regarding dual enrollment? How will parents know?

Instructor selection and support

- Are our dual enrollment instructors a strong fit for teaching younger students? Do they have training in pedagogy? Do they know the local students?
- Do the instructors have support in using innovative classroom methods?
- Do the instructors understand adolescent development and how to respond to behavioral issues? Do they know how to work with special needs students?
- Do instructors know how to ensure student safety and privacy? Do they understand parents' rights and how to respond to parents? What if a student is ill?