



Success Starts Early

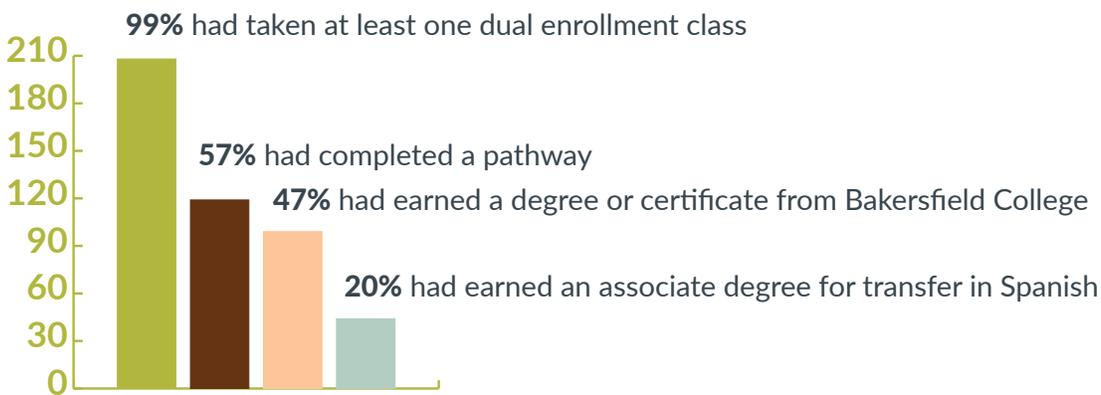
Dual Enrollment Pathways at McFarland High School

For students in the McFarland community, the college journey begins in 8th grade. By the time they enter high school as 9th graders, each student will have completed a college application, and some will have already taken their first college courses through dual enrollment.

[McFarland High School](#) enrolls about 940 students each year. The high school counselors partner with [Bakersfield College](#) and local middle schools to work with all 8th graders to ensure that, by the time they get to 9th grade, every student has a completed college application on file. Their efforts also ensure that every incoming 9th grade student and their family has had the opportunity to learn about the dual enrollment pathways at McFarland, understand the benefits of each pathway, and explore how their college and career interest will be served by the pathways offered at their future high school.

What Success Looks Like for McFarland High School

In 2024, 210 students graduated from McFarland High School. By the time they graduated:



The table at right provides an overview of McFarland’s current dual enrollment pathways. Students can enroll in more than one pathway. Some students enroll in one of the CTE pathways for their electives and also take general education courses towards an AA degree.

| Pathway | Units | Award |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Spanish | 60 units | Associate Degree for Transfer |
| Public Health | 22-29 units | Certificate of Achievement |
| Business | 15 units | Job Skills Certificate |
| Welding | 17 units | Job Skills Certificate |
| Media Arts | 12 units | Units apply to certificate & degree |

How Students Learn About the Pathways

Counselors at McFarland's feeder middle school introduce the dual enrollment pathways to students in their first 8th grade one-on-one meeting with the students. The McFarland High counselors then follow up by going to middle schools to orient the students to the dual enrollment pathways available to them at the high school. They discuss the first two classes in the pathway for students who start a pathway in 8th grade—College and Career Preparation and a Music History class.

The Bakersfield College dual enrollment team also provides information days and enrollment workshops for the 8th graders to help them get the college applications completed before they graduate 8th grade. A Bakersfield College counselor is also assigned to work onsite at McFarland High School one day a week to provide navigational support and college guidance.

Success Tip

McFarland High School counselors attest much of their success with enrollment to a Bakersfield Early College Mentor. This was a student worker who was onsite at the high school and at enrollment workshops helping students and counselors navigate the college systems, checking on enrollment holds, and processing necessary forms.

How Families Learn About the Pathways

The high school and college dual enrollment teams also hold caregiver information sessions where parents/guardians or other caregivers meet with the high school counselors and receive information about the dual enrollment offerings. These presentations explain the benefits of dual enrollment, the importance of doing well in the first two dual enrollment classes and the rigor of the associate degree pathway. The goal of these early communication efforts is to help students and parents understand the opportunity provided by dual enrollment pathways and the differences in the pathway options.

How Students Are Supported to Explore

All students are provided the opportunity to participate in a dual enrollment pathway. Students complete an interest survey in 8th grade, in the first semester of 9th grade with the student development class, and again in the second semester of 9th grade as part of the exploration of college and career. This is used to help identify which dual enrollment pathway the student might be most interested in. The high school counselor uses the information in the survey in one-on-one meetings with students to guide them toward the pathway that they are interested in pursuing, encouraging students to try the pathway they are most excited about while also encouraging them to not be afraid to reach for the associate degree pathway if that fits their life and schedule.

The high school and college counselors explain to both students and caregivers that the student's mental health is paramount, emphasizing the need to consider how the student can ensure they have a balanced high school experience while participating in a dual enrollment pathway. When a student is struggling academically, they are still encouraged to participate in a pathway. Counselors support students to make a "success plan" to help them manage their time and the workload. Students are never discouraged from pursuing one pathway or another. When students are struggling academically but want to pursue the most

rigorous pathway, the Spanish AA-T pathway, they are supported to do so. Similarly, when students who are excelling academically express interest in a less rigorous academic pathway, the counselors talk them through the benefits of the associate degree program to encourage the student to try it.

How Students are Supported Through the Pathway

The following highlights key ways students are supported in dual enrollment pathways in the McFarland and Bakersfield partnership.

Mid-semester Check-in Survey

The survey helps counselors identify the dual-enrolled students who may be overwhelmed in college courses. Counselors meet with students who indicate that they are struggling to see how they can help.

Celebration of Milestones

The counselors work to celebrate every milestone that students achieve, from submitting their application to completing their first class and throughout their pathway. These celebrations help to build community by bringing students together to celebrate each other and their successes. It also helps keep students motivated by recognizing progress and celebrating the pathway journey and educational goal.

Regular One-on-one Meetings

The high school counselors are assigned a caseload of students by academic year. Each counselor meets with their assigned students to provide regular touchpoints at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester where students can share their experiences and have an opportunity to get connected to support resources. The counselors also meet with students as needed when they may be struggling in a class. Counselor-to-student ratios are a factor with this intervention.

Progress Updates

A high school teacher is in each classroom with the community college faculty. Throughout the semester, the high school teacher provides the high school counselors with progress updates to alert them about students who may benefit from a one-on-one check in with a counselor. The high school teachers can also provide this kind of communication support for the college instructor, especially if the class is online or hybrid.

Pathway Communication

Counselors and other support staff work to keep students engaged and excited about the pathway that they are on in their one-on-one meetings, through pathways events, and on registration days. Their goal is for every student to be aware of the pathway they are on, the transferable skills they are learning, the degree and certificate options available to them either in high school or after high school, the economic benefits of earning a college degree or certificate, and the personal growth opportunities offered in dual enrollment pathways. They also support students to understand the community that is built in the pathways and in college. They find this communication helps students to stay connected and motivated.

Access the full Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy to Practice Guide: <https://careerladdersproject.org/resource/equitable-dual-enrollment/>