

# A Cumbersome Enrollment Process Named the Top Challenge to Dual Enrollment in California

*“The recruitment and enrollment process continues to be difficult for confirming students in Dual Enrollment sections. The process is cumbersome, confusing, and not streamlined for students. For example, it takes 24 hours or more for a student to receive their college ID number after they complete the application process. It should be instant, so they can continue the application process in one sitting.”*

Dual enrollment is a powerful acceleration strategy for college completion. Students who participate in high-quality dual enrollment while in high school are more likely to graduate, enter college, and persist in college to completion than their peers who don't, according to multiple studies. Research has shown that students who are identified as low-income, first-generation, or students of color can benefit from dual enrollment (An, 2012; Lee & Villareal, 2022; Mechur Karp, 2012; Rarig, 2019; Taylor et al., 2022). And dual enrollment also offers a low-cost or no-cost way to earn college credit and may help students obtain a degree faster. Yet, as colleges and high schools across California work to develop and expand dual enrollment, it will be essential to focus on equity. This will help ensure that dual enrollment opportunities continue to expand college access and success for student groups who have been systematically excluded.

Between October 14-24, 2022, Career Ladders Project partnered with Engage R+D, with support from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, to field a survey of college leaders and practitioners engaged in dual enrollment efforts. The purpose of the survey was to better understand implementation barriers encountered by participants and what is needed to ensure equitable access and success. This report describes key survey findings and concludes with prompts based on learnings from the survey that practitioners can use to guide reflection and discussion.

Total Respondents

300

Colleges Represented

85

Districts Represented

22

Overall there were 300 respondents representing 85 of the system's 116 colleges and 22 of the 73 districts. Respondents were overwhelmingly from community colleges but included small numbers from K12 districts, county offices of education and other organizations.

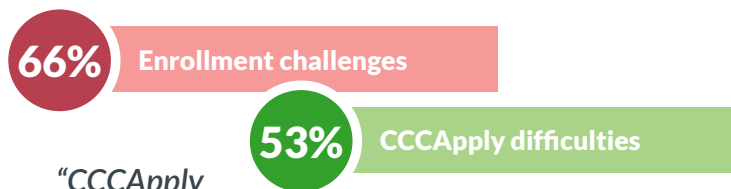
Participants held a variety of roles including: educational administrator (29%), tenured/tenure track faculty (16%), classified administrator (13%), part-time faculty (12%), executive administrator (10%), classified professional (7%), and other (9%) or decline to state (4%).

Respondents were asked about the top barriers to *implementing* dual enrollment and what gets in the way of *equitable access and success* for their dual enrollment partnerships. For each response, participants were given the option to provide more detail.

## Barriers to Implementation

Overall the top implementation barrier named was challenges with **enrollment (66%)**, and closely related was the number four barrier, challenges with CCCApply (53%).

Challenges with the enrollment process, including CCCApply, are widely felt. Respondents commented on the equity implications of these barriers.



*“CCCApply is one of the largest barriers. Approximately 20% of the students who don’t participate or who don’t get enrolled is because they **don’t provide a social security number** and/or they got **lost in the application process**. The application is long and most of it does not apply to 9th-12th grade students taking dual enrollment courses.”*

*“CCCApply is the single biggest barrier to dual enrollment at [our college]. We’ve received feedback from students, guardians, and high school staff that its **unintuitive and confusing** design leads to increased attrition rates - particularly in students from marginalized student groups who may not have adult guidance through the process.”*

*“CCCApply [is the biggest barrier]. This is “hazing by dual enrollment” and **no resources** I know of have been created to support students through this process.”*

Dual enrollment is heavily legislated in California. The two different tracks or types of dual enrollment, CCAP<sup>1</sup> and non-CCAP, have different rules which can cause confusion. Twenty-eight percent of respondents cited state regulations as a barrier to implementation.

*“State regulations for CCAP and non-CCAP dual enrollment are complex and contradictory, making it challenging for colleges to provide dual enrollment opportunities in a manner that is flexible and responsible to student and partner needs.”*

*“The requirements for the special admit permission form. It’s great that CCAP now allows one form for the duration of a student’s high school attendance but that just made the process more complicated because now we have **two different forms and requirements** for the permission form. These requirements should be aligned.”*

<sup>1</sup> College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) also known by the bill number AB 288 is a type of dual enrollment designed for students who are underrepresented in higher education or who might not otherwise be college-going. CCAP allows partnerships to hold courses on the high school campus open only to high school students if other criteria are met.

The number two and three challenges named were lack of alignment in the schedules of high schools and colleges (59%) and a lack of support staff (58%),

*“Once we have the students enrolled, our college lacks a support system that can maximize student retention, such as individualized academic advising, tutoring and peer mentoring.”*

**59%** Aligning HS & CC schedules

**58%** Lack of support staff

*“Community college and high school schedules often don’t align which becomes a challenge for community college faculty scheduling, entering courses into our registration system (high school schedules are sometimes confirmed only a week before classes begin), and ensuring enough time is spent in class for both the high school calendar and the Carnegie unit requirement. A lot of very strategic math has to take place in order to get it to all come together – and even then it’s very manual and piecemeal.”*

*“Lack of adequate support staff [is a big barrier]. We are a small district and do not have the funds to have a dedicated position to manage contracts, follow through on paperwork, coordinate with HS, etc. Everything is haphazard, steps get missed, and the people who work with it are confused because of all the complexities.”*

*“Availability of qualified instructors. Constant recruitment and onboarding of instructors, semester to semester is cumbersome. [It’s] difficult to appropriately plan and maintain sequence of course offerings. [This] ultimately impacts students, and the scheduled courses for pathways.”*

## Barriers to Equitable Access and Success

In responding specifically to what gets in the way of equitable access and success for students, respondents named a **lack of personnel to support enrollment (57%)**, a lack of personnel to support students academically (50%), and gatekeeping behavior (i.e., not sharing this opportunity with students who could benefit from it) on the side of high school staff (36%). Fifteen percent also cited gatekeeping on the part of college staff.

**57%** Lack of personnel to support enrollment

**50%** Lack of personnel to provide academic support

**36%** Gatekeeping behavior on the part of HS staff

*“Perception that dual enrollment is for gifted or elite students not for the intended student groups in minoritized and low-income communities.”*

*“K12 and community colleges see “advancing equity” differently, and need better data analysis.”*

# Prompts for Discussion

College and high school practitioners can use the questions below to explore how their dual enrollment partnership can overcome barriers to implementation and to equitable access and success.

- Are the survey findings consistent with the experience of our dual enrollment partnership or does our experience differ significantly?
- How is our partnership ensuring the application, admission and enrollment process for dual enrollment is student-centered and supporting equitable access?
- How might our partnership use our respective resources and strengths to better address challenges in dual enrollment implementation?
- How might our partnership ensure that students have the supports they need to be successful?
- How might we address deficit mindsets about students and their capacity to succeed in dual enrollment and support asset-based approaches that value the capacity and capabilities of students?
- How can we turn gatekeeping into gate-opening, such that students of color, students experiencing poverty and students who might otherwise not go to college are included and succeed in dual enrollment opportunities?

## References

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Career Ladders Project  
678 13th Street, Oakland, CA 94612  
www.careerladdersproject.org

Engage R+D  
556 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Ste 101 #603, Pasadena, CA 91105  
www.engageerd.com

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