

FAST FORWARD CALIFORNIA

# THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DUAL ENROLLMENT DATA

NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

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## **ADDITIONAL DUAL ENROLLMENT RESEARCH**

Discover additional research on dual enrollment in the appendix of this report and in [\*Dual Enrollment and Pathways Data for Storytelling\*](#), a companion brief that presents data on dual enrollment and pathways.

# Introduction

The postsecondary data landscape in California provides critical insights into which students are accessing and completing postsecondary education in the state. Data on postsecondary dual enrollment specifically also provides key information on how these programs are helping to increase postsecondary access and completion rates for high school students. At the same time, data shows unacceptable disparities in access and enrollment across race, ethnicity, and geography. As a proven successful acceleration strategy, there is a strong evidence base that illustrates the power of dual enrollment to change the educational and economic trajectories of students. But we need sophisticated, current, and comprehensive data tracking technology as well as data sharing agreements and funding to continue making the case for dual enrollment.

The literature and research over the last two decades in particular have allowed the field to better understand nuances of effective dual enrollment program design and implementation as well as policy implications that can maximize the benefits of dual enrollment for students. In fact, the emphasis on including a minimum of 12 college credits in the [Golden State Pathways Framework](#)—for which Fast Forward California (FFCA) strongly advocated—was directly linked to the data supporting the positive impact this important threshold has on student outcomes.

FFCA aims to continue elevating and advocating for strong data collection policies, infrastructure, and funding. To this end, we've compiled important reports, research, and existing state and local databases and resources on dual enrollment in order to advance our statewide dual enrollment data agenda.

## Our objectives are to:

- Highlight and provide context for what dual enrollment data already exists
- Shine a light on exemplars in dual enrollment data collection and technology
- Make dual enrollment data more accessible to a range of stakeholders
- Identify gaps in the dual enrollment data
- Identify solutions and recommendations to improve our state's dual enrollment data collection capacity and infrastructure
- Use dual enrollment data in policy and programmatic decisions that prioritize equity

# Existing California Data

There are a few main state-level organizations and government entities that are responsible for tracking and analyzing dual enrollment data.

- [California Department of Education \(CDE\)](#)
- [Policy Analysis for California Education \(PACE\)](#)
- [Public Policy Institute for California \(PPIC\)](#)
- [California Community College Chancellor's Office \(CCCCO\)](#)
- [Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership Research](#)
- [Launchboard/Strong Workforce](#)

In February 2024, PACE released a report, [A Strong Start for College and Career from 9th to 12th Grade](#). The report analyzed data from two sources: 1) student-level enrollment data from CDE for the census of 9th through 12th graders enrolled in a California LEA (defined as a County Office of Education, a public school district, or a charter school) during the 2021–22 academic year; and 2) student-level course enrollment data from CCCCCO between summer 2021 and spring 2022. As a result, the authors state, “by merging data from both segments, we can identify all public high school students in Grades 9–12 who enrolled in community college courses, whether through formalized programs or independently.”

Additionally, some individual community colleges across the state capture and publish their own data on dual enrollment participation. One example is Pasadena City College's [Dual Enrollment Dashboard](#).

## What The Data Tells Us

On a broad scale in California, the data tells us that (excerpted from [A Strong Start for College and Career from 9th to 12th Grade](#)):

- Roughly 10 percent of California high school students are taking advantage of dual enrollment programs at their high school either through formalized pathway/CTE programs or individual course enrollment.
- Higher percentages of students are dual enrolled in 11th and 12th grades compared to 9th and 10th grades.
- Disparities in dual enrollment participation persist across different racial/ethnic student populations, with Black students representing the lowest percentages of enrollment and Asian American students representing the highest across all grade levels.

- There is little variation in dual enrollment across socioeconomic status.
- Geography, district size, and school program type (e.g., middle/early college) all influence students' ability to access dual enrollment.
- Some course subjects are more popular than others for dual enrollment:
  - Interdisciplinary courses are the highest enrolled
  - CTE dual enrollment represents roughly half of dual enrollment participation consistently across grades 9–12.

## Missing Data and Implications

In California, we do not currently have:

- Up-to-date, publicly-available data to identify students in pathways (who are taking dual enrollment courses).
- “Student-level” qualifier data (so we can't say whether dual enrollment courses had any influence on GPA or college enrollment).
- Data on course-taking patterns.

The main consequence of not having this data is that we don't have an honest, accurate, or comprehensive picture of dual enrollment from the student perspective. This missing data means that we cannot make informed decisions about areas of investment.

## How Data Can Drive a Collective Vision

Moving forward, an important step in driving a collective vision is to create a common definition of a pathway before we can collect data on dual enrollment students in pathways.

In addition, we also need:

- More investments in intersegmental data capacity and tracking. This means people at both the K–12 and postsecondary levels with the right level of training and expertise, and with the ability to share/communicate effectively across systems.
- Better ways to collect and document exemplars and case studies of places that are doing dual enrollment and pathways well.
- To determine the best agency or agencies to own the data, and the best way to make that available.

## APPENDIX

# California Dual Enrollment Research Database

## Sources

California Community Colleges: [Special Admit Data](#)

California Department of Education: [California Exemplary Dual Enrollment Awardees](#)

California Department of Education: [College/Career Indicator Downloadable Data Files](#)

California Department of Education: [Data Reports by Topic](#)

The Campaign for College Opportunity: [Greater Equity in College Access Through High School/College Dual Enrollment Programs](#) (October 2023)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University: [DEEP Insights: Redesigning Dual Enrollment as a Purposeful Pathway to College and Career Opportunity](#) (October, 2023)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University: [Dually Noted: Understanding the Link Between Dual Enrollment Course Characteristics and Students' Course and College Enrollment Outcomes](#) (May 2023)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University: [How Can Community Colleges Afford to Offer Dual Enrollment College Courses to High School Students at a Discount?](#) (February, 2023)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University: [Rethinking Dual Enrollment as an Equitable On-Ramp to a Career-Path College Degree Program After High School](#) (October, 2023)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University & The Aspen Institute: [The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students](#) (2020)

Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University: [What Happens to Students Who Take Community College "Dual Enrollment" Courses in High School?](#) (September, 2017)

Community College Review: [The Answer Is Yes: Dual Enrollment Benefits Students at the Community College](#) (December, 2016)

Community College Review: [Dual Enrollment, Performance-Based Funding, and the Completion Agenda: An Analysis of Post-Secondary Credential Outcomes of Dual Enrollment Students by Credential Type](#) (2022)

The Greater LA Education Foundation and Los Angeles County of Education: [Los Angeles County Toolkit to Equity-Centered Dual Enrollment Partnerships](#) (August, 2023)

JFF: [Dual Enrollment in California: Applying National Lessons to State Challenges](#)

JFF and Career Ladders Project: [Unlocking Potential: Advancing Dual Enrollment in California](#) (October, 2018)

The Education Trust West: [Jumpstart: Mapping Racial Equity in California's Community College Dual Enrollment](#) (December, 2021)

MDRC: [Dual Enrollment: Increasing College Access and Success Through Opportunities to Earn College Credits in High School](#) (July, 2022)

PACE: [A Strong Start for College and Career: Dual Enrollment Participation From 9th to 12th Grade](#) (February, 2024)

PACE: [A Rising Tide: Dual Enrollment is Growing Among California High School Students](#) (December, 2020)

Public Policy Institute of California: [Dual Enrollment in California: Promoting Equitable Student Access and Success](#) (October, 2021)

Public Policy Institute of California: [Improving College Access and Success through Dual Enrollment](#) (August, 2023)

Public Policy Institute of California: [Policy Brief: Dual Enrollment in California](#) (October, 2021)

The Research and Planning Group of California Community Colleges: [A Guide to Launching and Expanding Dual Enrollment Programs for Historically Underserved Students in California](#) (June, 2014)

U.S. Department of Education: [Dual Enrollment: Participation and Characteristics](#) (February, 2019)

**Fast Forward California** is co-led by three organizations with a history of collaboration and more than a decade of experience accelerating students on the path to college and career success. These partners are building on their distinct networks and areas of expertise to bring the promise of Golden State Pathways to life for California communities.



The Linked Learning Alliance leads a movement to connect all youth to college, career, and purpose. We partner with education systems to accelerate the adoption of high-quality Linked Learning educational pathways that engage adolescents, strengthen workforce readiness, and advance equity and economic justice. Our actions drive rigor and improvement in the Linked Learning practice, research that establishes evidence and informs learning, communications that enhance public understanding and center the voices of students and educators, and the supportive policy and resources required for success.

[LinkedLearning.org](https://www.linkedlearning.org)



**The Education Trust—West**

The Education Trust—West is committed to advancing policies and practices to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the California education system. Through our research and advocacy, EdTrust-West improves racial equity in education, engages diverse communities dedicated to education equity and justice, and increases political and public will to build an education system where students of color and multilingual learners, especially those experiencing poverty, will thrive.

[West.EdTrust.org](https://www.west.edtrust.org)



Career Ladders Project promotes equity-minded community college redesign. We collaborate with colleges and their partners to discover, develop, and disseminate effective practices. Our policy work, research, and direct efforts with colleges lead to system change—and enable more students to attain certificates, degrees, transfers, and career advancement.

[CareerLaddersProject.org](https://www.careerladdersproject.org)