**The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Getting Started for Institutional Leaders**

This guide outlines action steps that community college, district, and high school leaders can take to strengthen the equity impact of their dual enrollment programs. It is based on findings in *The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students*, published in September 2020 by the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program and Education & Society Program and the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University. These practices were identified through research on partnerships of high schools and community colleges in three states that have achieved high rates of access and success in dual enrollment among historically underrepresented students of color.

The guide is organized in three sections:

1. Envision the Potential for Dual Enrollment
2. Assess Current Practices and Equity Gaps
3. Collaboratively Set Goals and Implement Solutions

It includes discussion questions for internal and partnership-wide meetings, suggestions for whom to invite to those conversations, and recommendations for how to assess current practices.

Dual enrollment programs require cross-institutional collaboration. With each of the recommended action steps, there may be a need for both internal and cross-institutional discussion and planning. In this guide, we provide suggestions for when internal and cross-institutional discussion and planning should occur, but we encourage leaders to find the right balance as they build and sustain their partnerships. While this guide presents these action steps in a particular sequence, partners may want to follow a different order.

As a result of internal and partnership work, educators should be able to better understand existing inequities in the participation and outcomes of Black, Latinx, and other underrepresented and underserved students in dual enrollment; identify what institutional practices are creating these equity gaps; and work with their partners to reform policy and practices to deliver on the potential of dual enrollment to advance equity.



## Step 1: Envision the Potential of Equitable Dual Enrollment

**Gather a core internal team of leaders working to advance equity in dual enrollment.** While the composition of the team will depend on many factors, including institutional size, responsibilities of different staff, and the number of dual enrolled students, the group convened should include one or more senior leaders with responsibility for strategic goals, the person most responsible for directing the dual enrollment program, and at least two staff who work directly with students.

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| *Suggestions for stakeholders to consider including on this team at the college:* | *Suggestions for stakeholders to consider including on this team at the district and high school:* |
| * College President * Provost, Vice Presidents, and Deans * Chief Financial Officer * Enrollment Manager, Director of Admissions * Dual Enrollment Director * Career and Technical Education Director * Director of Advising * Faculty * Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion * Director of External Partnerships and/or TRIO Programs | * Superintendent * Chief Academic Officer * Chief Financial Officer * Chief Schools Officer/Portfolio Officer * Chief of Staff or Director of Policy Office * Principal and Assistant Principals * Counselors * Teachers * Career and Technical Education Coordinator * AP/IB/Cambridge AICE Coordinator * Students and Parents |

**This team should meet to discuss the following:**

* What are the purposes of dual enrollment for our institution?
* What goals are we trying to achieve for students? For our institution?

*Prompts for consideration:*

* + - 1. *Reducing costs for students and families and reducing the time to earn a degree*
      2. *Increasing academic rigor in high school in preparation for college and increasing the chances of attaining a degree, especially for underrepresented students*
      3. *Introducing high school students to college-level expectations and helping them develop self-confidence*
      4. *Advancing students’ sense of purpose by exposing them to postsecondary fields of study*
      5. *Promoting upward mobility in the community by connecting historically underrepresented students to a high-opportunity postsecondary pathway in high school*
      6. *Growing the local talent pipeline and pathing students to well-paying, in-demand jobs*
* What goals are we trying to achieve for our institution?

*Prompts for consideration:*

1. *Increasing revenue*
2. *Increasing enrollment of dual enrolled students and post-high school students*
3. *Meeting K-12 state accountability metrics that reward dual enrollment participation*

* What are the potential benefits to our institution of closing racial gaps in access and success in dual enrollment? How might our partners benefit?

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| ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE: See Chapter I of *The Dual Enrollment Playbook*, pages 10 to 18, for more on setting a vision, strategy, and goals for dual enrollment. |

## Step 2: Assess Current Practices and Equity Gaps

**Examine data on equitable access and success in dual enrollment**

The school, district, and college leaders should examine disaggregated measures of access to dual enrollment and success (both in high school and within one year after high school). Some suggestions for assessing equitable access and success are presented in the table below, and a more detailed data template is available in the appendix (pages 6-8). Leaders may also want to review qualitative data, such as answers to student experience and aspirations surveys conducted by the college or district. These data exercises can help leaders identify inequities in access to and success in dual enrollment, as well as specific school-college pairs to prioritize as partners to better advance equity in dual enrollment.

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| *Suggestions for Assessing Equitable Access* | *Suggestions for Assessing Equitable Success* |
| Measures of access can be derived for individual schools or districts or for a collection of schools (e.g., all schools in the college’s service area, all schools within a district). For each of these measures we recommend disaggregating results by race and ethnicity, free or reduced-priced lunch status, gender, English Language Learner status, and other relevant characteristics:   * Demographic composition of high schools compared to demographic composition of dual enrollment participants at the high schools * Disaggregated dual enrollment participation rates and gaps between participation rates of white students and students of color. | For each measure, disaggregate outcomes for students by race and ethnicity, free or reduced-priced lunch status, gender, English Language Learner status, and other relevant characteristics:   * Average GPA in dual enrollment courses * Dual enrollment course pass rates (C or better) * Percentage of students who complete three or more college courses through dual enrollment while in high school * Rate of college enrollment within one year of high school graduation * Fall-to-spring persistence rates in the first year of college after high school |

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| ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE: See Chapter II of *The Dual Enrollment Playbook*, pages 20 to 28, for more on expanding equitable access. See Chapter III, pages 30 to 38, for more on providing strong advising and support services. See Chapter IV, pages 40 to 46, for more on providing high-quality instruction. |

**Complete Aspen and CCRC’s institutional self-assessment tool.**

The Aspen Institute and Community College Research Center have created supporting self-assessment tools, The Dual Enrollment Playbook: Tool for Assessing Equitable Practices at Community Colleges and The Dual Enrollment Playbook: Tool for Assessing Equitable Practices at High Schools. Assign a subset of the core team to complete the self-assessment. Again, while the composition of those completing the assessment will vary, it is important that participants include those from different departments who together have strategic insights, operational responsibilities, and direct interaction with students.

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| *Suggestions for stakeholders to consider including on this team from the college:* | *Suggestions for stakeholders to consider including on this team from the district and high school:* |
| * Vice Presidents and Deans * Enrollment Manager, Director of Admissions * Dual Enrollment Director * Career and Technical Education Director * Director of Advising * Faculty * Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | * Chief Schools Officer or designee (e.g., Principal Supervisor or Secondary Schools Office representative) * Principal and Assistant Principals * Counselors * Teacher * Career and Technical Education Coordinator * AP/IB/Cambridge AICE Coordinator |

**Reflect on areas of strength and improvement for advancing equity through dual enrollment**

*Questions for internal discussion*

* What strengths do we see in our data? How can we build on those strengths?
* What opportunity areas for improvement do we see in our data? In our institutional self-assessment results?
* To what extent does our institution follow the practices outlined in *The Dual Enrollment Playbook*?
* Is our biggest need to improve equity in access to dual enrollment, success among participants, or both?
* What opportunity areas for improvement should we discuss with our partners? Where will we need their support and coordination to make changes to current practices?

*Questions for internal and cross-institutional discussion*

* To what extent does our partnership follow the practices outlined in *The Dual Enrollment Playbook*?
* Is our biggest need to improve equity in access to dual enrollment, success among participants, or both?
* What assets do we have as a partnership that we can strengthen to better advance equity?

## Step 3: Collaboratively Set Goals and Implement Solutions

**Meet with counterparts at your dual enrollment partner institutions to identify goals and implement improvements to advance equity.** While the participants in specific meetings may vary, the list below includes individuals whose engagement with counterparts has been critical to effective strong equity-focused dual enrollment partnerships. We would encourage each of those listed below to read *The Dual Enrollment Playbook* and build insights into conversations with their counterparts at partner institutions.

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| *Suggestions for representatives to consider including from the college:* | *Suggestions for representatives to consider including from the district and high school:* |
| * College President * Provost and Deans * Dual Enrollment Director * Career and Technical Education Director * Director of Advising * Faculty | * Superintendent * Chief Academic Officer * Chief Schools Officer/Portfolio Officer * Principal and Assistant Principals * Counselors * Teachers * Students and Parents |

**The college and K-12 representatives should discuss the following:**

* What are the purposes of dual enrollment for our partnership?
* What goals are we trying to achieve for students?
* What goals are we trying to achieve for our institutions?
* What are our near-, medium-, and long-term goals for advancing more equitable student access and outcomes in our dual enrollment partnerships? What specific measures are aligned to these goals?
* Will our current systems enable us to meet these goals? If not, why not? Discuss ways to strengthen current policy and practice (drawing on institutional self-assessments).

*Prompts to consider: outreach, admissions processes (including testing prep and admissions cut scores), financial supports for students, transportation, advising, career and college counseling, curricular alignment, academic preparation, academic supports for students, professional development for faculty and staff, staff relationships and coordination across the partnership, data-sharing across the partnership*

* Who will be responsible for executing these policies and practices?
* How will we monitor progress toward these goals? How often will we meet to discuss progress and make course corrections? Who will be in those conversations?
* Who is responsible for managing our partnership work? Who will, for example, schedule meetings, organize agendas, distribute reports, and serve as a point person to troubleshoot challenges as they arise?

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| ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE: See Chapter V of *The Dual Enrollment Playbook*, pages 48 to 55, for more on building strong underlying partnerships. |

## Appendix: Data Analysis Templates

This appendix provides sample analyses to examine equitable access and success in dual enrollment, as mentioned on page 3. We have prepopulated the tables with racial and ethnic categories, but these analyses could be disaggregated by other relevant student characteristics, such as free or reduced-priced lunch status, gender, and English Language Learner status.

**Equitable Access to Dual Enrollment: Representation and Rates of Participation**

These data analyses are intended to help college and district leaders identify which high schools and student groups are underrepresented among dual enrollment participants in two ways: 1) By comparing the composition of dual enrollment participants to that of the high school population overall, and 2) By comparing dual enrollment participation rates across subgroups. We recommend running these analyses overall for the college’s service area, as well as for individual districts and schools. The table below provides an example template and results (in *italics*) to illustrate these analyses. From these data, leaders can further summarize and target inequities by calculating percentage point gaps in participation between student groups (e.g., the white-Black gap is the participation rate for white students minus the rate for Black students).[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| **Example Table Template: Equity in Access to Dual Enrollment** | | **All Students** | Disaggregation by Student Characteristics | | | | | | | |
| *Asian* | *Black* | | *Indigenous* | | *Latinx* | | *White* |
| Total for all district(s) and high school(s) in college service area | High School Composition | *100%*  *(5,000)* | *20%*  *(1,000)* | *20%*  *(1,000)* | | *5%*  *(250)* | | *25%*  *(1,250)* | | *30%*  *(1,500)* |
| Dual Enrollment Composition | *100%*  *(800)* | *25%*  *(200)* | *10%*  *(80)* | | *2%*  *(17)* | | *20%*  *(160)* | | *43%*  *(343)* |
| **Dual Enrollment Participation Rate** | ***16%***  *(800/5,000)* | ***20%***  *(200/1,000)* | ***8%***  *(80/1,000)* | | ***7%***  *(17/250)* | | ***13%***  *(160/1,250)* | | ***23%***  *(343/1,500)* |
| *Separately for every high school in the district and/or college service area* | | | | | | | | | | |
| High School 1 | High School Composition |  |  | |  | |  | | **2) Gaps**: Compare participation rates between groups (e.g., a 10 percentage point white-Latinx gap) |  |
| Dual Enrollment Composition |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| **Dual Enrollment Participation Rate** |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| High School 2 | High School Composition |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| Dual Enrollment Composition |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| **Dual Enrollment Participation Rate** |  | **1) Representation**: Compare high school composition to dual enrollment composition to assess proportionality (e.g, Black students are underrepresented in DE) | |  | |  | |  |  |
| … and so on, for each high school… | High School Composition |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| Dual Enrollment Composition |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |
| **Dual Enrollment Participation Rate** |  |  | |  | |  | |  |  |

**Equitable Success through Dual Enrollment**

These analyses reflect five dual enrollment outcomes for school, district, and college leaders to examine to identify equity gaps in dual enrollment student success. On the next page, we provide an example table for disaggregating these outcomes by student characteristics and partner high school. To complement these quantitative analyses, leaders may also want to review disaggregated responses to surveys about students’ experiences, aspirations, and sense of expectations and supports. Furthermore, these are suggested metrics and we encourage leaders to work with institutional research professionals to clarify definitions and consider related metrics that are best aligned to local context.

The first three metrics capture student success in dual enrollment courses taken during high school, based on administrative records typically collected by colleges.

1. ***Average student*** ***grade point average*** ***across all dual enrollment courses***
   1. For each student, calculate a standard GPA (e.g., 4.0 scale) based on grades in their dual enrollment courses. Then, report the average for each student subgroup.
2. ***Average student dual enrollment*** ***course pass rate***
   1. For each student, calculate a course pass rate:
      1. *Numerator*: Number of dual enrollment courses completed with C or higher
      2. *Denominator*: Number of dual enrollment courses attempted (including withdrawals)
   2. Then, report the average for each student subgroup.
3. ***Credit accumulation rate***
   1. *Numerator:* Number of students in the high school graduating class who completed three or more dual enrollment courses (with a grade of C or higher)
   2. *Denominator*: Number of students *who attempted at least one DE course* in that high school graduating class.

The final two metrics require matching college student records to the National Student Clearinghouse to track outcomes of former dual enrollment students after they complete high school. These metrics allows leaders to assess rates of college attendance and persistence among students who participated in dual enrollment.

1. ***College-going rate***
   1. *Numerator*: Number of former dual enrollment students in the high school graduating class who *enrolled for at least one term* *at any college* within one year of completing high school.
   2. *Denominator*: Number of students *who attempted at least one dual enrollment course* in that high school graduating class.
2. ***College persistence rate***
   1. Numerator: Number of former dual enrollment students in the high school graduating class who *enrolled for two or more terms at any college* within one year of completing high school.
   2. *Denominator*: Number of former dual enrollment students in that high school graduating class who *enrolled for at least one term at any college* within one year of completing high school.

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| **Example Table Template: Equitable Success through Dual Enrollment** | | All Students | Disaggregation by Student Characteristics | | | | |
| *Asian* | *Black* | *Indigenous* | *Latinx* | *White* |
| Total for all district(s) and high school(s) served by the college | Avg. GPA in DE courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avg. DE course pass rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Credit accumulation rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College-going rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College persistence rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Separately for every high school in the district and/or college service area* | | | | | | | |
| High School 1 | Avg. GPA in DE courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avg. DE course pass rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Credit accumulation rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College-going rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College persistence rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| High School 2 | Avg. GPA in DE courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avg. DE course pass rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Credit accumulation rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College-going rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College persistence rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| … and so on, for each high school… | Avg. GPA in DE courses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Avg. DE course pass rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Credit accumulation rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College-going rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| College persistence rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. For more detail and examples of racial equity gaps in participation rates, see CCRC’s analysis of US Dept. of Education data on the 2015-16 school year: https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/mapping-racial-equity-ap-dual-enrollment.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)